The EMH Newsletter

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European Maritime Heritage

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Promoting the future of maritime heritage



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PHOTO: Itsasmuseum

Erain: Preserving a Boat, Safeguarding Knowledge

Maritime Heritage / Ship Preservation

Itsasmuseum

In the historic dry docks of the former Euskalduna shipyard in Bilbao, **Itsasmuseum** runs **Erain**, a project dedicated to safeguarding and transmitting the tangible and intangible heritage of traditional wooden boatbuilding and wooden vessels in Bizkaia. Launched in 2016, Erain brings together conservation, research, documentation, training and participation through an open workshop and a collection of historic vessels. From the outset, the project has been guided by the conviction that preserving this heritage means safeguarding not only the boats themselves, but also the knowledge required to build, maintain and understand them.

Its most ambitious undertaking has been the conservation and restoration of the **Nuevo Anchústegui**, based on scientific criteria, a wooden coastal fishing vessel built in 1958 at the Arriola shipyard in Ondarroa. Measuring 21.20 metres in length, it is the oldest surviving large wooden coastal fishing vessel in Bizkaia and an exceptional testimony to traditional shipbuilding and the fishing culture of the **Cantabrian coast**.

The intervention was based on a simple yet demanding principle: the aim was not to make the vessel seaworthy again, but to preserve it as a historical document. A multidisciplinary team assessed each decision by combining contemporary conservation-restoration principles with traditional wooden boatbuilding techniques. Priority was given to retaining original material and to minimum intervention,

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while components, construction techniques and conservation work were documented in detail through drawings, photographs, models and technical records.

Yet Erain is also a project about people. A community has grown around the workshop, bringing together technical staff, volunteers, students, professionals from a range of disciplines and partner institutions. Working side by side has encouraged the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and has enabled techniques at risk of disappearing to continue to be practised and documented.



PHOTO: Itsasmuseum

After years of work, the restoration of the Nuevo Anchústegui culminates in 2026, leaving a legacy that goes far beyond the preservation of a single vessel. The experience gained has been distilled into a **Good Practice Manual for the Conservation and Restoration of Traditional Wooden Vessels**, conceived as a way of sharing the methodology, principles and lessons learned with other institutions and communities working with maritime heritage. https://www.itsasmuseum.eus/en/best-practice/



PHOTO: Itsasmuseum

Because preserving a boat is not simply about preserving timber. It means safeguarding the traces left by those who built, sailed and repaired it, and passing on the knowledge that will allow future generations to understand it.

CESNI discussions: developments relevant to traditional ships

Technical / Repair / Legal Requirements
EMH

CESNI, the European committee responsible for developing technical requirements for inland water vessels, is currently discussing the use of doubler plates. Doubler plates are steel plates fitted over existing hull plating, for example as part of a repair or to protect the hull against wear. EMH, as recognized organisation, takes part in the regular held **CESNI meetings**.

The discussions concern possible changes to the requirements for both existing and new doubler plates. These developments are relevant to passenger vessels and could potentially also affect historic vessels used as pleasure craft over 20 metres. Under the current rules, the restrictions concerning doubler plates do not apply to pleasure craft.



Technical *Steel doubler plates*

Depending on the outcome, stricter requirements could have significant practical and financial consequences for some shipowners.

At this stage, however, these are ongoing European discussions. No conclusions should yet be drawn about the final requirements or what they may mean for individual vessels. Another topic on the CESNI agenda concerns updated requirements for the inspection and maintenance of rigs on passenger sailing vessels. Broadly speaking, the intention is to reduce the room for interpretation within the current goal-based requirements by making certain provisions more explicit and prescriptive.

European Maritime Heritage is involved in and closely following these discussions. Our priority is to ensure that the particular circumstances of traditional and historic vessels are properly taken into account. We will keep shipowners informed as soon as there is more clarity.

Mares da Fin do Mundo International Documentary Film Festival

Sailing / People / Maritime

EMH Editors

The **Mares da Fin do Mundo International Documentary Film Festival** is a locally rooted project based in Galicia (Spain) with a clear international outlook. The event is committed to the marine environment and fishing communities, raising awareness of the need to protect one of our most valuable natural resources: the sea. Its ninth edition took place from **14 to 18 October in the coastal town of Rianxo**, whose cultural heritage is deeply intertwined with the sea. This year, the festival focused on preserving small-scale coastal and artisanal fishing fleets as a cornerstone of food sovereignty, maritime and fishing heritage, and the identity of coastal communities.

The programme brought together **40 films from across the world**, spanning different languages, perspectives and approaches to documentary cinema.

Alongside the international Official Competition, the festival explored the boundaries of reality-based cinema through its Proa strand and revisited the past through archival and historical works in Popa. A dedicated Galician Section highlighted local filmmaking voices, while the **Children and Youth Section** introduced younger audiences to cinema as a space for curiosity, discovery and critical thinking.

A programme of complementary activities further explored the festival's central themes. **The Amicos Association** presented **CABALGA II**, an initiative dedicated to restoring vulnerable marine ecosystems. In collaboration with the **Rianxo shellfish gatherers' association**, the festival also organised an educational walk exploring traditional shorebased shellfish harvesting.

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PHOTOS: www.maresdafindomundo.gal

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The Sustainable Fishing Round Table, entitled Restoring the Sea: A Blue Commitment, brought speakers together to discuss the real impact of initiatives under the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), while marine biologist **Javier García Galdo** presented his book **Un mar de curiosidades** (A Sea of Curiosities).

On Saturday, the activity **Building a New Sancosmeiro** showcased an initiative by **Agalcari and Astilleros Catoira** to revive a traditional boat from the municipality of Outes, on the Muros-Noia estuary. Built by Ramón Collazo using ancestral boatbuilding techniques, the project brings new life to the region's traditional shipwrighting heritage.

Finally, in collaboration with **Bluscus Galicia Marinera** and the **Setefoghas Cultural Association**, the festival organised different sailing activities, allowing participants to explore the waters of the Arousa estuary aboard traditional vessels.

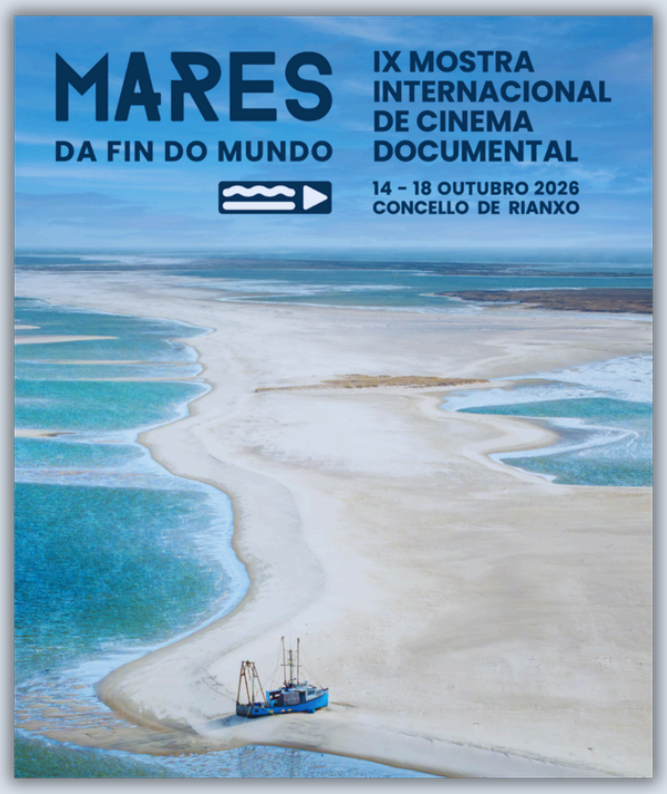






PHOTO: pascualflores.org

HISTORIC BOATS

The Pascual Flores schooner returns to Torrevieja after touring the major maritime festivals of Europe

The historic sailing ship has visited more than 21 ports in Italy, France, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain and has welcomed more than 52,000 visitors during its 2026 tour.

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