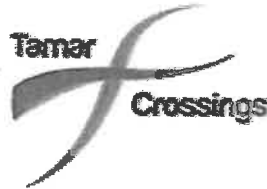


TAMAR BRIDGE & TORPOINT FERRY JOINT COMMITTEE

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PRESS RELEASE

New 'Bridging the Tamar' Visitor and Learning Centre opens to the public

21 May 2019

The new Bridging the Tamar Visitor and Learning Centre which tells the story of the iconic Tamar Bridge and Royal Albert Bridge has opened to the public.

The new Centre, which adjoins the Tamar Bridge Office, celebrates the engineering legacy of the historic bridges, bringing them to life through interactive exhibitions and hands on activities.

Open daily to the public between 10 am and 4pm (including weekends), a team of enthusiastic local volunteers are on hand to answer questions and provide guided tours of the bridge. Entrance to the Centre is free of charge.

The space has been designed around a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) theme as part of a wider programme to encourage young people to consider future careers in this sector. Staff from Tamar Crossings have worked closely with local partners, including schools, universities and community organisations, to develop a learning and events programme with a range of workshops and bridge building activities for young people.

The Centre opened its doors to visitors at the end of last week, ahead of a formal opening event on June 21.

"The bridges have played an historic role in linking Devon and Cornwall and our new Visitor and Learning Centre reflects this heritage" said David List, General Manager of the Tamar Crossings.

"As well as learning about history and construction of the bridges, visitors can also see how we manage and monitor the road bridge, the Saltash Tunnel and the tolling system to keep traffic moving smoothly across the river."

As part of the official opening of the Centre in June members of the public are being offered a rare opportunity to climb the Tamar Bridge towers and experience the stunning panoramic views over the river.

There are two opportunities to gain a place on the tour of the towers: applying for a place via an open ballot or entering an image in a special photography competition.

Entries for the ballot need to be submitted at <http://www.bridgingthetamar.org.uk/> before 31 May. More than 160 people have already submitted applications for the ballot so make sure you don't miss out.

Entries for the photographic competition, which will be independently judged by the Saltash and District Camera Club, also need to be submitted at <http://www.bridgingthetamar.org.uk/> before 31 May. Judges will be looking for a photo which captures the Tamar Bridge or the Royal Albert Bridge and will reflect the STEAM theme.

The Centre has been funded largely by a £272,700 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee providing the remaining 25 per cent of the cost.

Note to editors

Please contact Trisha Hewitt for more information or interviews. E : trisha.hewitt@tamarcrossings.org.uk Mobile : 07946654121

For information about the National Lottery Heritage Fund visit <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>

Visit www.bridgingthetamar.org.uk for more information about the project and for details of how to apply for the tower-top tours or to enter the photographic competition.

For more information about the Tamar Crossings visit www.tamarcrossings.org.uk

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Ferry returns to Torpoint after major refit completed ahead of schedule

20 May 2019

Tamar II has arrived back in Torpoint following the successful completion of its five yearly refit at A & P Falmouth. Having returned safely to port after its 44 nautical miles sea journey, the towing gear will be removed and the ferry prepared for service which will take a few days to complete.

This means the ferry should be back in service for the start of the May Bank Holiday weekend – a full week ahead of the original scheduled date of 1 June.

The Torpoint Ferry is the world's biggest and busiest chain ferry service and the UK's busiest inland waterway ferry crossing – providing crossings for up to 8,000 vehicles and 1,500 pedestrians each day.

The refit has been a very complex project and both Tamar Crossings and A&P Falmouth are delighted that the works have been completed and the ferry returned to Torpoint ahead of schedule.

"The programme for TAMAR included a longer time in the dry dock than for PLYM and included a contingency period in case of bad weather" said David List, General Manager of Tamar Crossings. "Thanks to the hard work of everyone involved with the refit project really good progress was achieved, and subject to final inspection and clearance to operate from the MCA, we should have three ferries in service for the busy bank holiday weekend."

Tamar II's refit has included a number of key elements, including:

- replacing systems and equipment that are becoming obsolete and unsupported by spares, including replacement of major components within the sewage treatment plants and updating the power management systems for the diesel generators to the latest generation
- removing the prows to enable repairs to the steel structure, renewal of all the hinges and bearings, and an extensive overhaul of the 'above deck' hydraulic systems and then reassembling the prows once the refurbishment has been completed.

- carrying out an extensive package of electrical work required because of the age of the vessel which is now 14 years old; including the installation of a new CCTV system
- cleaning the hull and repainting the vessels both above and below the waterline - this has included blasting the decks back to bare metal, stripping the 'non-slip' paint from the vehicle deck, prows and upper decks, and then applying primer and the new paint,

"A&P Falmouth has been working in partnership with Torpoint Ferries to deliver Tamar II's five year refit" said Steve Jones, from A&P Falmouth.
"Under the leadership of A&P Falmouth's Production Director Darren Rice, the A&P team has executed the programme of works on schedule, ensuring that Tamar II will be back in service in time for the Bank Holiday weekend."

Tamar Crossings operate the ferries 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in all weathers. Achieving this requires a significant planned maintenance programme. While the majority of maintenance is carried out while the vessels are afloat or during off peak periods while an individual vessel is not on scheduled service, some maintenance activities have to be carried out during refits in dry dock conditions.

"We recognise that the reduction in service during refit periods is not desirable, however these refits are essential to maximise the life of the ferries and ensure that we continue to provide a safe and reliable service." said David List. **"During the period of two ferry operation the staff at the ferry have worked hard to minimise disruption to service, and defect repair has been carried out as quickly as possible."**

"I would like to thank drivers and passengers for their patience during this period."

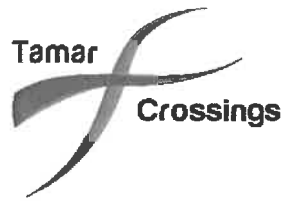
"We are also working hard to find innovative solutions to improve the overall life, reliability and resilience of the ferries."

Ends

Notes to editors

The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry are jointly owned by Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council, with the operation of the service overseen by a governing Committee comprising Councillors from both local authorities.

The crossings are operated together as a single business which does not receive any financial subsidy from either of the two councils or from Central Government. This means that, unlike crossings in other parts of the country, the service is entirely self-financed through the tolls charged which pay for the operation, maintenance and improvement of both crossings.



BRIDGING THE TAMAR PRESS RELEASE 09.05.19

Win a trip up the towers of the Tamar Bridge

A rare opportunity to climb the iconic Tamar Bridge towers is being offered to mark the imminent opening of a new Visitor and Learning Centre.

A handful of lucky visitors will be able to climb the towers and experience the stunning panoramic views over the river when the new 'Bridging the Tamar' Visitor and Learning Centre formally opens on 21 June.

There are two opportunities to gain a place on the tour of the towers: applying for a place via an open ballot or entering an image in a special photography competition.

Entries for the ballot need to be submitted at www.bridgingthetamar.org.uk/ before 31 May.

Entries for the photographic competition, which will be independently judged by the Saltash and District Camera Club, also need to be submitted at www.bridgingthetamar.org.uk/ before 31 May. Judges will be looking for a photo which captures the Tamar Bridge or the Royal Albert Bridge and will reflect the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) theme which runs through the Centre.

The new interactive exhibition space in the Visitor and Learning Centre tells the story of the bridges and celebrates their engineering legacy. The Centre will offer a range of workshops for schools and provide guided tours for the public. The Centre will be open free of charge, daily to the public, 10am - 4pm and full details can be found at www.bridgingthetamar.org.uk

The official opening will coincide with the beginning of the national Explore Engineering Weekend, which includes International Women in Engineering Day on 23 June.

The General Manager of the Tamar Crossings David List said, "The bridges have played a historic role in linking Devon and Cornwall and our new Visitor and Learning Centre will reflect this heritage. Very few people are normally permitted to climb the towers and so we decided to offer this virtually unique experience to help mark the opening of the Centre."

The Centre has been funded largely by a £272,700 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee providing the remaining 25 per cent of the cost.

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The Centre will welcome schools who can participate in workshops, and the public will be able to enjoy guided tours of the bridge. The programme is being developed with local partners including schools, universities and community organisations. A group of enthusiastic local volunteers have been recruited and trained and will be delivering tours and welcoming visitors.