

A Fondation to preserve and support the Belem

- › The Fondation Belem was created in 1979 by the Caisse d'Epargne following the return of the Belem under the French flag, and was awarded the official seal of state approval in May 1980. The aim of the Foundation is to promote the maritime history of France and to preserve the Belem – a three-masted barque, the last in a line of French square-rigged tall ships and the sole survivor of France's merchant navy of the 19th century.
- › The Fondation Belem is managed by a board of directors and composed by 15 members representing the Caisse d'Epargne – her historical patron – and 4 Ministries (Interior, Defense, Cultural, Transport) as well as Marine national Museum and qualified people.
The budget is constituted by revenues from training ships, privatization, public visits and the Belem's shop; from the sponsors and principally with the historical patron of the Caisse d'Epargne and more recently with companies of Nantes. And well with donors associated to the Club des Amis du Belem.
- › The Fondation has set itself the goal of making the Belem accessible to the widest public and continue to sail thanks to promote the knowledge and understanding of France's maritime heritage.
Listed as an historic monument in 1984, the Belem welcome each year 1 300 trainees and 50.000 visitors. The Belem participate to tall ships gatherings, event for companies and local communities, for private events (sea cruises or harbor receptions) and exceptionally the Fondation organize sail with further destinations and the Belem becomes a real French ambassador.

Belem specifications

› Dimensions

Burden : 534 tons
Overall Lenght : 58 m
Width at midship beam : 8.80 m
Draught : 3.60 m

› The hull

Made of riveted steel plate
Length excluding bowsprit: 51 m
Length at waterline: 48 m

› Masts and rigging

Two-part steel masts (bottom mast, top)
Length of mainmast above waterline: 34 m
Number of sails: 22 (square sails and staysails) 1.200 m²
 200 belaying pins for standard handling
 250 single, double and triple blocks

› Performances

Maximum engine speed by calm: 12 knots
Can beat up to 60° winward
Time needed to trice up sail in flat weather: 30 to 40 minutes
Time needed to take in sail in flat weather: 50 to 60 minutes
Time needed for complete go about: 15 to 20 minutes, depending on prevailing winds

SAIL VISIT SUPPORT

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CAISSE D'EPARGNE
 Mécène historique du Belem



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Welcome aboard



TOUR GUIDE



The three masted Belem

The last French 3 masted-barque freighter is also one of the world's oldest sailing ships still operating at sea.

A few major landmarks in a hundred years of history

June 10, 1896, in Chantenay-sur-Loire, not far from Nantes, the Dubigeon shipyard launched the three-masted barque Belem, built to carry cocoa beans from Brazil to France. From the time of her launch until 1913, she completed 33 transatlantic crossings bound for Brazil and, subsequently, the West Indies.

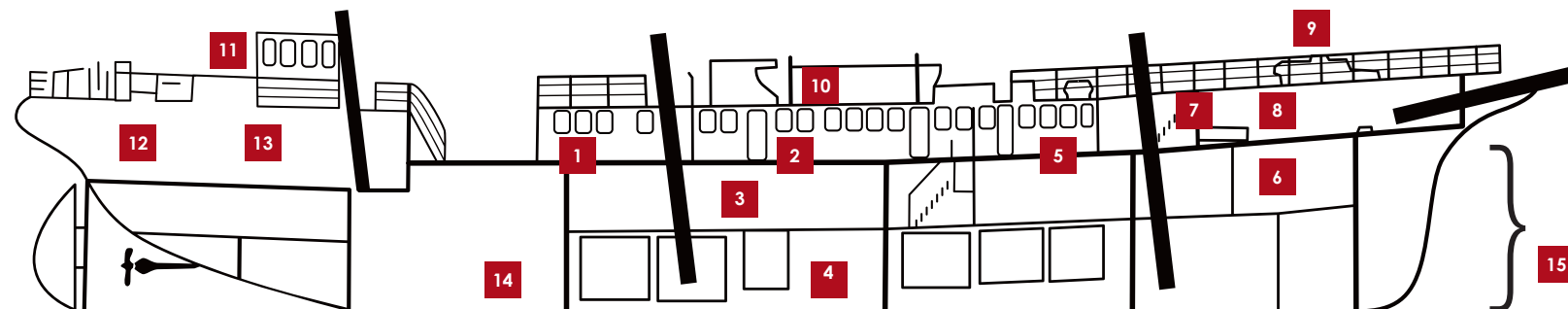
In 1914, the sailing vessel was put under the British flag. First the property of the Duke of Westminster, who converted her into a luxurious pleasure yacht and gave engines, she was subsequently sold to Sir Arthur Ernest Guinness in 1921, who renamed her Fantôme II. He took part in the large regattas organized in Cowes and cruised around the world between 1923 and 1924.

En 1951, after the 2nd World War, the ship was sold to the Cini Foundation in Venice, renamed Giorgio Cini and onverted into a training ship for sailors' orphans. Then, **in 1978**, the Giorgio Cini is sold : the Caisse d'Epargne financed the return of the Belem to France and entrusted the Fondation Belem, created by the French savings banks **in 1980**, with her preservation. The Foundation decided to use her as a sail training ship open to a wide public. The Belem is graded historical monument **in 1984**.

Several big journeys have made mark recently on the Belem history : **in 1986**, the ship participate to the centenary of Statue of Liberty in New York ; **in 2002**, taking advantage of her "Atlantic Odyssey," the Belem retraced her maiden voyages by entering the Brazilian port of Belém do Pará for the very first time since 1907. **In 2008**, she crossed the North Atlantic for being the French ambassador to the 400e birthday of the founding of Quebec; **in 2012**, the sailing vessel is the guest of the Queen Elizabeth II for her diamond jubilee and for the London Olympic Games; **in 2014**, the Belem come back on the traces of Giorgio Cini in Venice from 18 to 28 april.

The Belem Tour

- 1 - The small deck house** This part of the ship, dating back to Guinness' time. It was smaller first then extended for being adjoin to the main deck house. It, is now the officer's wardroom. At the foot of the mainmast, the "Nuremberg Safe" was belong to one of the first Belem captain's. The armchairs still bear witness to this long gone era.
- 2 - The main deck house** This majestic room dates back to the Duke of Westminster. Its walls are lined with Cuban mahogany. It was composed of 2 rooms : one roof and one small smoking room At one end, the splendid mahogany stairs used to lead to the guest suites. Guinness has joined these room in a big one. Today the main desck house is the meeting place for the trainees.
- 3 - The battery*** The living quarters of the trainees where meals are shared with the officers and crew about to take or coming off their watch. The long table can sit 36 people overall but meals are taken in shifts based on the watch schedules. Along either side of the battery are the 48 berths for the trainees.



- 4 - The hule*** In the lowest part of the ship, or bilge, the main hold houses the fuel and the waste tanks as well as part of the air conditioning system. There is also a storeroom. To the fore, stand two fresh water tanks, then the sail loft containing a complete set of spare sails.
- 5 - The gallery** The galley is modest in size, but 64 excellent meals are prepared daily by 2 merchant navy cooks. Refrigerated food stores are located under the main deck.
- 6 - The crew's quarters*** Traditionally, the crew are lodged under the forecastle, or focsle: the common crew quarters, and the cabins of the bosun, the master carpenter and the cooks.
- 7 - The carpenter's store** It holds a work bench and all the traditional woodwork tools, for indispensable repairs at sea.
- 8 - The bosun's store** This is the bosun's kingdom, his treasure trove of lines, cotton caulking cord and pitch, where every smell brings back the past, with an assortment of spares for the rigging (steel lines, blocks, etc).

- 9 - The forecastle** For a full view of the rigging, painted white. It's a three-masted barque square rigging, typical of the last "Antillais" ships. You can also see the bowsprit extending over a golden stem helix. The windlass and the mooring lines are the main equipment in this area.
- 10 - The spardeck** This superstructure also dates back to British ownership. The liferafts and the ship's service boats stand there. Several varnished skylights are apparent. The 34 meters long mainmast goes through the spardeck.
- 11 - The quarterdeck** This deck is the commanding post where the officer of the watch stands night and day at sea. The wheelhouse is a recent addition; it shelters modern navigation instruments, charts and other documents. Behind the weelhouse, a splendid skylight dates back to the construction of the ship. Situated behind the large steering wheel , the "Turtle", a wooden housing protecting a rather original steering gear (2 halves screws) is British made. The Duke of Westminster built some very Victorian looking balustrades, untypical of a merchant ship. They tend to make the ship look heavier, but they are now part of the history of the Belem.

- 12 - The officer's quarters*** Traditionally, the officer's quarters cabins and the captain's lounge are located under the quarterdeck. Five single cabins accommodate the ship's staff and a double cabin is at the disposal of the ship's owner. The officers work in the "deck office" complete with computers and photocopier. The pharmacy is also located in this quarter.
- 13 - The captain's lounge*** Nowadays it is in fact the captain's office with some beautiful Cuban mahogany furniture left over from the British owners, particularly Sir Arthur Ernest Guinness's great armchair.
- 14 - The engine room*** Houses two 575 HP John Deere propulsion engines, run and maintained by the Chief Engineer. They were installed in 2013. These engines deliver full power to two 4 blade screws at 1,500 rpm. The fuel tanks hold 40 tons of diesel fuel, allowing an autonomy of 24 days at 7 knots, i.e. 4,000 nautic miles. The ship also has 3 power generators and a fresh water system transforming 8 tons of sea water a day.
- 15 - The painted mock gunports** When she sailed under the colours of Mr Demange the ship, then painted in grey, already had mock gunports. The Duke of Westminster kept them, but painted the ship black and white. These used to be the colours of France's largest sailing ship company, Bordes.

* Not open to visits