



Kihnu Marine Society was founded in 2009 with an aim to collect and introduce naval-related information (history, boat and shipbuilding traditions, fishery, marine environment) about Kihnu island and the Kihnu strait region.

The naval history of Kihnu Island extends back to the 14th century, throughout ages where the men of Kihnu have been the bravest of seamen. As they say themselves - "kihnlane equals seaman".

For hundreds of years they ran small ships in the region, but from the 1850's until the turn of the century they'd extended their fleet to 70 self-built ships – the larger watercraft having 3 masts for sailing the high seas.

Their main cargo was stones - stones were needed in Pärnu, Riga, Tallinn and elsewhere to build breakwaters, harbours and paved surfaces.

Kihnu stone-ships were capable of transporting heavy loads without sacrificing speed or performance. The ships were also surprisingly easy to maneuver.



Throughout the ages, ships from Kihnu transported an approximate 2.5 million tons of stones.

The best years for the Kihnu fleet were between 1850-1914. Most of the early ships were destroyed during World War I, while sailing ships built later had become smaller and challenged by motorized watercraft.

In 1940, a new era of shipbuilding had arrived at the dawn of World War II. Even though the smaller wooden boats continued to be built, the tradition of shipbuilding began to fade up until its current extinction.

One of the main actions the Kihnu Marine Society plans is to reanimate the tradition of wooden boat building. In addition, the society also encourages young people to become interested in the marine environment (fish, seabird,

sea animals, plants), as Kihnu Island and the strait region are very rich in different species. Overall, it will serve to develop young people's "marine-knowledge", in general.

In 2010, 2 smaller wooden boats have been built with the help of schoolchildren, but the society is already making preparations to begin building the once famous Kihnu stone-ship. Despite various sized models, the common stone-ship was a 60 foot long sailing ship.

The society has a 24 meter-long facility that was previously used as a local power station (diesel generators). In autumn 2009, the facility's rooms were cleaned parts of the exterior were newly renovated. Wooden material has also been collected, so upon receiving drawing plans for the project (summer 2010), the building process will commence.

The members of the Kihnu Marine Society are mainly islanders and most of our activities take place in Kihnu.

All people who love Kihnu Island and are interested to take part in our activities are welcome and encouraged to join us!

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