Scottish Maritime Museum hopes crowdfunding can keep Clyde heritage vessel afloat

**To raise vital funds for repairs on what is thought to be the oldest floating Clyde-built vessel in the UK, the Scottish Maritime Museum has taken its appeal for public support to Crowdfunder.**

The institution hopes to raise £15,000 through the Keep the Kyles Afloat campaign on Crowdfunder in order to carry out “essential repairs” needed immediately if the historic vessel is to remain part of the nation’s living maritime heritage for years to come.

The 1872 cargo coaster MV Kyles is labelled by the museum as a “rare and nationally important” example of a vessel crafted in a transformational period when the River Clyde harnessed steam power a global shipbuilding hub.

Kyles, currently moored on Irvine Harbourside at the Scottish Maritime Museum’s main site, has performed many roles for its 24 different owners and, if preserved, will mark its 150-year anniversary in 2022.

“A mark of the magic of Kyles is that, unusually for a vessel, it has retained the same name despite such a long and varied working life. With new interpretation we can bring to life the many stories this old iron hulled coaster hauled aboard over a hundred years and engage visitors and schoolchildren with this significant example of our shipbuilding history for decades to come,” states Matthew Bellhouse Moran, curator at the Scottish Maritime Museum.

If the funding goal is met then the museum’s curatorial teams will work alongside the organisation’s Scottish Boat Building School to carry out the repairs. The projected scheme will include repainting the Kyles inside and out, restoring the cabins to their original condition and introducing new interpretation to better engage young visitors.

The Keep the Kyles Afloat Crowdfunder campaign runs until Tuesday 22nd December and offers backers a range unique pledge benefits. More details on the fundraising drive can be found [here](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/keepthekylesafloat).