

The Princess Margaret is one of two former Hoverspeed SR.N4 Mk 3 hovercraft residing at the Hovercraft Museum at Lee-on-the-Solent since December 2000 / MARTIN GRIMM photo



PRINCESSES FACE FINAL DETHRONEMENT

THE PAIR OF BRITISH Hovercraft Corporation SR.N4 Mk 3 hovercraft, *The Princess Anne* and *The Princess Margaret*, which have been sitting in the Hovercraft Museum at Lee-on-the-Solent in the UK since December 2000 are now in immediate danger of being scrapped.

The largest commercial hovercraft in the world, the 400-passenger, 55-car craft operated with Hoverspeed across the English Channel between Dover, England and Calais, France until October 2000, being superseded by Australian built wavepiercing catamarans.

Says The Hovercraft Museum Trust, "As developers move in with bulldozers, the Hovercraft Museum Trust is now fighting desperately to save one of the two remaining cross-channel SR.N4 hovercraft from destruction."

"Due to essential building work on the Hovercraft Museum buildings at Lee-on-the-Solent, the Hovercraft Museum has not been open to visitors for nearly two years and only re-opened in January 2016. It has been a difficult period. But since then, visitor numbers have been encouraging and the future was looking promising for this small volunteer run museum.

"Whilst being stored at the museum, the SR.N4s are not owned by the Hovercraft Museum Trust and there has been a protracted legal battle between the craft and site owners which these gentle giants have found themselves caught in the middle of."

The SR.N4s are an important part of British transport history and the Trust is dedicated to preserving the craft and hopes a deal can be reached shortly. The final decision does not lie in the hands of the Trust, however.

A petition for the saving of at least one of the SR.N4s has been set up by the trustees and more information can be found on The Hovercraft Museum Trust's homepage at www.hovercraft-museum.org . **cff**



Left : SR.N4 Mk 3 hovercraft *The Princess Anne* in its active days / CHRIS POTTER photo