

# THE LLANTHONY LOG

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM NEWSLETTER NO.1 - JUNE 1988.

## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR...

WELCOME to the Friends of the National Waterways Museum, and this, our first newsletter, "The Llanthony Log."

MEMBERS are invited to try their hand at writing an article for the next newsletter before the copy deadline of September 1.

LLANTHONY LOG aims to provide detailed coverage of the Friends activities, information about the museum's exhibits and interesting items 'dredged up' from the inland waterways system !

THANKS to all who donated material for this edition, and to Mr. Phil Moss for providing the mast-head. Send all future stories, articles etc., to Llanthony Log, c/o Phil Conway-Jones, 1 Grovelands, Barnwood, Glos., or telephone Glos. 619679 with your news.

## FRIENDS SET SAIL

The Schools Room of the National Waterways Museum was filled to capacity on 21 May for the public launch of the Friends. Following a brief welcome by Hugh Conway-Jones, Chairman of the Steering Group, Janet Illingworth-Cooper presented the report of the Group that had been preparing for the public launch. The report recommended the formation of an association of Friends who would support the Museum through voluntary activities and donations. A range of activities had been identified, and many individuals had already been helping at the Museum. The report recommended a subscription of £6 for individuals and £9 for families, which would include free access to the Museum. After a brief discussion, the report was accepted unanimously.

Janet Illingworth-Cooper then highlighted parts of the draft constitution which had been circulated just before the meeting. The constitution was based on a model provided by the British Association of Friends of Museums, and so it was expected that it would be approved by the Charity Commissioners. After a brief discussion, the constitution was adopted unanimously.

Nominations for the committee had been requested before the meeting, and the following were approved unanimously: Chairman Hugh Conway-Jones, Vice-Chairman Peter Collins, Secretary Janet Illingworth-Cooper, Treasurer Les Dalton, other committee members Trevor Hill, Ian Parsons, Nick Rowles, Peter Thompson, Peter Wallace and Tony Conder (ex officio). Gordon Lowthian was appointed auditor.

The Chairman then outlined the events that were being planned for the Friends, including training sessions for Museum Helpers, a research evening, a trip to Worcester and a series of lectures starting in September. In discussion, there were suggestions for a visit to Sharpness and a social evening. There was also a request for a Friends sweat shirt with a distinctive logo.

Tony Conder thanked the Friends for their interest in and support of the Museum. Replying to a question, he said that about 22,000 visitors had come through the door since the opening day on 1 April. With regard to group visits in the evenings, the Museum were planning to advertise specific evenings so that with several groups attending, it would be worthwhile to have exhibits working. In response to another question, he said that the Museum's insurance covered volunteer helpers.

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Contacts

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DATA PROTECTION ACT

To ease the task of maintaining up-to-date records and generating address labels, the information from the membership application forms is being computerised. Under the Data Protection Act, any member is entitled to object to this, and your own entry is available for your inspection. Please check that this Newsletter was correctly addressed and notify any changes to the Membership Secretary.

Newsletter copy dates: first of March, June, September and December.

*All opinions expressed in The Llanthony Log are those of the editor and contributors, and do not necessarily represent the official views of The Friends of The National Waterways Museum.*

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked the members of the Steering Group for their work and said the activities of the Friends would help to make the Museum a great place to visit.

### FOUND NOTES

#### Diary Dates

- 9-10 July Gwent Waterways Rally at Canals Junction, Pontypool.
- 11 July Research Group at the Record Office at 7pm.
- 17 July IWA coach trip to the Droitwich Canal and Tardebigge Locks or Avoncroft Museum. Contact Des Pinnock on Glo.856233.
- 26 July Teach-in at the Museum for helpers and restorers at 7pm. Social evening at the Museum starting at 8pm.
- 5 Aug Formal opening of the Museum by Prince Charles between 3 and 4pm 4pm with a firework display in the evening.
- 10 Aug Mikron Theatre Co. at the Museum at 7.30.
- 21 Aug Visit to Worcester's riverside and canal basin. Meet in Worcester Cathedral car park at 12.00.
- 27-29 Aug IWA National Rally at Castlefield, Manchester.
- 13 Sept Research Group at the Library at 7pm.
- 20 Sept The Wilts & Berks Canal - an Illustrated History. An IWA talk by Jack Dalby at Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club at 7.30.
- 19 Oct Waterways on Film with John Huntley at the New Olympus Theatre at 7.30.
- 25 Oct Creating the Museum. A talk by Tony Conder in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.
- 15 Nov The Clyde Puffers. An IWA talk by Hamish Dawson at Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club at 7.30.

#### CRAFT WEEKENDS IN THE MUSEUM SCHOOLS ROOM.

- July 2 & 3 GILBERT BROWN. Hand printed etchings and drawings for sale, and the process being demonstrated.
- July 9 & 10 GUILD OF KNOT TYERS demonstrate the intricacies of decorative and useful ropework.
- BRIAN COLLINGS demonstrates the art of narrowboat decorating and adds a display of his own oil paintings.
- July 15 to 17 GLOUCESTER SOCIETY OF ARTISTS display their varied work, mainly with a local theme.
- July 25 to 31 HARLEY CROSSLEY paints beautiful oils with a palette knife - no brushes.  
(incl)
- Sept 3 & 4 MODELLERS WEEKEND; canal/railway layouts by the Glos. Society of Model Engineers and others.

Sept 17 to "BEAUCHAMP TOWERS": a Science Museum travelling collection  
Oct 29 getting to grips with the principles of lubrication !  
Oct 22 to 31 PATCHWORK QUILTS from the National Patchwork Championships  
"Waterways Theme" section.

### MUSEUM FOCUS

#### THE FIELDING OIL ENGINE

by *Pauline Hill, Secretary,*  
*Mid-Gloucestershire Engine Preservation Society.*

The story of the Fielding Engine now at the National Waterways Museum began when about 5 years ago one of our club members was told that there was a large engine rusting away at Quenington. On inspection, this was discovered to be a Fielding & Platt 80 HP engine manufactured in Gloucester in 1928. It had been installed at Godwin's pumps at Quenington in 1928 and had run the line shafting in the factory. The engine house had some years previously burnt down around the engine and one or two spare pieces had gone missing. However, as our hobby is preserving old engines, we could not sleep easy in our beds if this fine example was to be scrapped. The present owners of Godwin Pumps were more than willing to donate the engine to any museum able to take it.

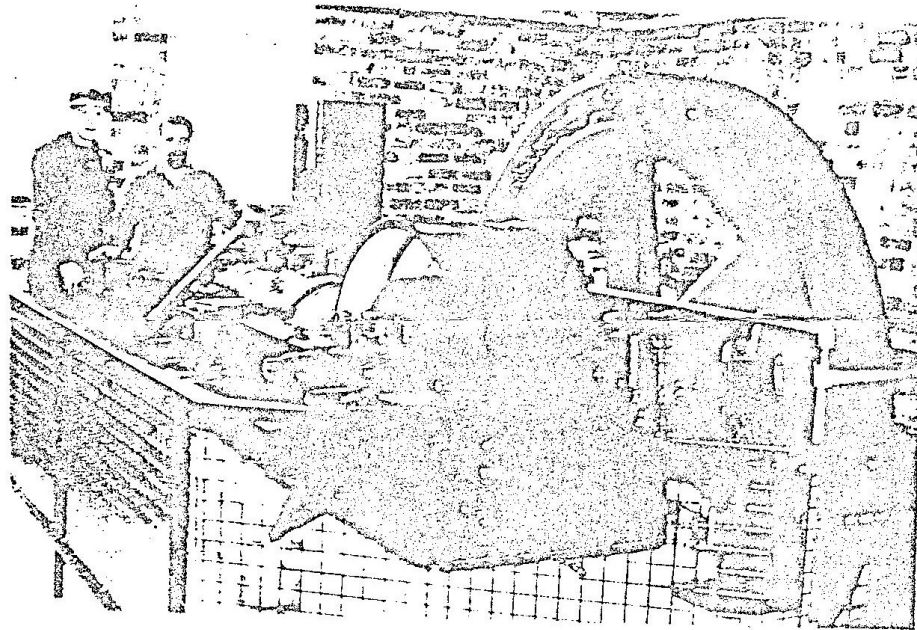
The plan for the redevelopment of Gloucester Docks had just got on to the drawing board and we had heard a rumour that there would be a museum there. Eventually the Fielding was provisionally accepted by Tony Conder for the National Waterways Museum, provided we could transport it to the docks to be stored in what had been Romans' timber premises. Ray Swan and Trevor Hill then proceeded to make enquiries about Fieldings and discovered a gentleman who had been an apprentice there about the time the engine was manufactured. He had worked for Fielding & Platt all his working life and was now retired. Mr. Jack Hobbs then joined our club and gave us invaluable advice and mechanical help with the engine.

The next problem was transport. This was solved by the kind offer of transport and manpower by both A. T. Poeton and Ermin Plant Hire. Godwin's kindly organised cranager. Ray made a framework for the flywheel and this was jacked up and lifted on to the low loader. On it's journey home to Gloucester, Mr. Hobbs followed closely behind to ensure there were no problems. The engine pit had to be pumped out because with no roof over it's head, the engine had collected a good deal of water. The base was broken up and the engine delivered to the Docks. There she sat waiting for her new home. All sorts of red tape had to be gone through before Tony had the money to go ahead with the grand plan. Meanwhile, Trevor and Ray, helped by Jack Hobbs, Charlie Mayo and Fred Howells (all members of our club) began the long process of getting the engine back to working order. Some bits had to be remade and some had to be cleaned off, filled up with filler, where the years had taken their toll, and then primed.

Mr. Hobbs was beginning to get impatient to see this engine run and at last we had the news that it was all systems go with the Museum. Building began and Mr. Hobbs provided the plans for the engine base. The workmen proceeded to make this using 36 cubic metres of concrete. There was a slight problem with the base, but Trevor and Ray soon rectified that.

At last the day came to lift the body of the engine into place and long hours were spent getting her level before the flywheel could be hoisted into place. The engine house was beginning to go up around the engine and a roof was floated down river from Diglis Basin, Worcester, to keep the Fielding dry. The engine began to take shape but there were many hours of work to go. Mr. Hobbs, bless him, died just three weeks short of the engine's first running. This has left rather a sad feeling to our engine but it also made us even more determined to see her run.

Mr. Silvey and Mr. Gabb, elderly engine gentlemen, took over from Mr. Hobbs with technical help. Mr. David Foster our head painter began to put the undercoat on the engine and we set a date for her first running. On Sunday February 29, the engine was going to run, so Trevor, Ray and Mr. Silvey, helped by Mr. Gabb, Charlie Mayo and Fred Howells began the initial stages towards getting her started. This involved getting the compressor up to 200 lbs pressure using the Ruston Hornsby engine that had come from the Grand Union Canal. Running was set for three o'clock. Quite a crowd had assembled, but like all well-laid plans it did not work out. After several attempts, each preceded with the hard work of barring the engine over into the right firing position, she still would not fire. Mr. Silvey thought that it was because of a failure with the compressor, so we enlisted the help of a modern compressor but still she would not start. We all had a cup of tea and decided to warm up the hot bulb on the engine (although the engine is in fact designed for a cold start). With the help of a blowlamp, and Mr. Silvey operating the fuel injection, finally with a small explosion she fired into life at 5.10 pm. The explosion had been caused by a build up of fuel which had been ignited by the blowlamp.



*(Ray Swan and Trevor Hill stand beside the Fielding Engine.)*

It was both a marvellous and a sad moment, because after all those years of lying idle, the engine lived again, whilst the one man who helped to make it possible had died too soon. It was a lovely feeling of achievement even though I personally had done very little toward this. Since its first running, the maintenance crew have had to re-site the exhaust because of oil smuts which messed up someone's coat. Mr. Silvey has had to service the spray boxes (where the fuel is injected), the timing has had to be rectified and the compressor has had to be overhauled. But the engine ran for Press Day and the opening of the Museum. It is Tony's intention to run a line shaft from the engine into the Blacksmith's shop, which will in effect put the engine back as it was in 1928.

#### ROYAL SEAL OF APPROVAL

Prince Charles will be visiting the Museum between three and four o'clock on Friday 5th August. Detailed plans are still being worked out, but it is hoped that he will mark the formal opening by unveiling a weather cock on top of the Schools Room. Later that evening, there will be a grand firework display in the docks. For further details see the local press.

#### LEVEL THREE DELAYED

The third level of the Museum was to have opened in the late summer, but work to complete the parts already open has taken precedence, and the Museum's designer has recently withdrawn from the project. Tony Conder said "Level Three is vital to the future success of the Museum and the important thing is that it should be right when it opens." It will probably be delayed until the spring of 1989.

#### FACT FINDING AT THE RECORD OFFICE

For those interested in carrying out research, a meeting has been arranged at the Gloucestershire Record Office, Alvin St, Gloucester on 11th July starting at 7pm. David Smith, the County Archivist, will outline the work of the office and explain the finding aids that are available. Then there will be an opportunity to browse through documents related to local waterways. A similar meeting will be held at the Library in Brunswick Rd, Gloucester, on Tuesday 7th September starting at 7pm to sample the Gloucestershire Collection.

A list of possible topics for research will be available, including various aspects of trade on the Severn, transcribing records to get them on the Museum's computer and recording boatmen's memories relating to Museum exhibits. Members will be encouraged to follow their own interests, and meetings will be arranged so that individuals can benefit from the experience of others in the group.

#### WATERWAYS PIRATES AND SMUGGLERS

Pumpkin Pie, otherwise known as husband and wife entertainers John and Norma Wills from Stroud have been commissioned by the British Waterways Board to write a canal show for the official opening of the Museum.

In their research, the duo have uncovered stories of pirates and smugglers on the county's waterways. They hope to provide an hour of family entertainment featuring songs and stories, illustrated by specially made puppets recreating the busiest days at Gloucester Docks.

The show will tour county schools and appear at the Museum from time to time.

#### ARCHIVE WATERWAYS FILM SHOW

Enjoy a fascinating evening of waterway entertainment with the National Waterways Museum at the New Olympus Theatre, Gloucester on October 19.

Starting at 7.30 pm John Huntley will present a 2½ hour long programme, featuring Ice Breakers (1911), The Basingstoke Canal (1913), The Kennet & Avon Canal in 1961, Painted Boats (1945) and Barging on the Prince Regents Canal in 1924.

Tickets £3 in advance from:

The Leisure Centre Box Office, tel. Glos. 306788

Audiosonic, Eastgate Shopping Precinct, tel. Glos.302280

Starline Travel, London Road, Stroud, tel. Stroud 5578.

Tickets also available on the night (if unsold beforehand), price £3.50 .

## SOCIAL EVENING

All Friends are invited to a get-together at the Museum on Tuesday 26th July starting at 8pm. Please bring along something to eat or drink - sandwiches, savoury snacks, dessert, beer or cider etc. The Museum has promised to provide some wine, but an extra bottle or two could also be welcome. This will be an opportunity to get to know other members who share common interests.

## VISIT TO WORCESTER RIVERSIDE AND CANAL BASIN

On Sunday 21st August, Friends are invited to walk around Worcester in the company of a local guide. The plan is to meet at 12.00 in the Worcester Cathedral car park - when approaching from Gloucester, turn left at a motorcycle shop called Bladders. We will walk down to the Watermans Gate and along the riverbank to the Diglis Hotel for a lunch break. A range of food will be available or we can eat our own in the garden. After lunch, we shall walk along to the river locks, come back to the basin of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, go along the canal past the first two locks and then return to the car park through the old vinegar works. The total distance is about three miles. We will collect a small donation to pass on to our guide. Those who would like a lift or can offer a spare seat in their car should get in touch with Ian Parsons on Gloucester 712096.

## WINTER TALKS

A programme of interesting talks is being arranged in co-operation with the Gloucestershire Branch of the Inland Waterways Association. The Friends meetings will be held in the Schools Room at the Museum and the IWA meetings will be held at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club (off Bredon Rd B4080 on the left 250 yards north of the junction with A38). The talks arranged so far are given in the list of Diary Dates. Members of either group are welcome at any meeting.

## PUBLICITY

The Museum staff are building up a good set of slides covering the development of the Museum and the main exhibits, and it is intended to prepare a commentary to go with them. When these are ready, they will be made available to volunteers who have some experience of giving talks and have their own projector and screen etc. Hopefully this will appeal particularly to members living well away from Gloucester who will cover their own locality.

In the meantime, please spread the word about the Friends to anyone who might be interested. Publicity information and membership application forms can be picked up at the Museum or can be obtained by ringing Janet Illingworth-Cooper on Gloucester 20306 during the working day.

## ADMISSION TO THE MUSEUM

Your Friends membership card gives you free admission to the Museum - please sign it to confirm that it is yours. You will receive a subscription reminder well before the expiry date shown on the card. This should allow time for the subscription to be renewed and a new card issued before the old one runs out.

When approaching the Museum admission desk, you should show your card, so please be sure to carry it with you. Regular helpers will have their own Friends badge, and usually it will be sufficient just to show this. Please show it every time you pass the desk, even if you have already been in once and you only popped out to get something from your car. However well known you are, please do not walk past the desk without showing some form of identification - this would not only make life difficult for the staff, it would also give a bad impression to visitors.

#### VISITING CRAFT AT GLOUCESTER DOCKS.

compiled from information provided by Peter Collins.

MADE IN BRITAIN - A mini conference/business function venue contained in a narrow boat will be Gloucester from 4 - 10, spending the last two days at the Museum.

HOTEL BOAT CALDON - This 60 foot narrow boat will be mooring at the docks from August 12 - 14 to change passengers.

LOYAL MODERATOR - A220 will be moored on the West Quay in Gloucester for two weeks from September 3 for crew training. She is a training/port defence/boarding craft for RNXS.

AVON VENTURER is running a series of trips from Penarth and Clevedon to Sharpness and also Gloucester Docks throughout the Summer. For details, ring Bristol Channel Cruises, 0272-221472.

#### ANOTHER FIELDING ENGINE

The Mid-Gloucestershire Engine Preservation Society, who were instrumental in the rescue and restoration to working order of the Museum's Fielding Engine, have found an even bigger one!

The engine was manufactured in 1921 and installed in a foundry at Stourbridge. Pauline Hill, Secretary of the Society said:

*"We hope to find a home for this one locally to enable us to easily maintain both. This one comes with all its line shafting, some of which the Waterways Museum will have, and is in very good condition."*

The engine is temporarily housed in the Museum car park.

#### VISIT LLANTHONY LOCK

The old Llanthony lock on Alney Island near Gloucester has been made more accessible by work carried out under the MSC's Community programme.

A waymarked path from the new Castle Meads car park now runs right through the lock.

It was built in 1871 when the weir was constructed nearby to increase the depth of water in the river in order to improve navigation. The lock was used mainly by boats bringing coal from Bullo Pill near Newnham, but it was closed in 1924 when the walls had to be shored up to prevent them from collapsing.

The lock chamber has subsequently been largely filled in, and like an iceberg, the part that can now be seen is small compared with what is hidden.

An enthusiast from Newnham has recently enquired about restoring the lock, but so far has had little support.

A leaflet describing the walks around the riverside is available from Gloucester's Tourist Information Centre.

#### OLDEST SURVIVING NARROWBOAT IN TUNNEL

A study is to be carried out into the possibility of opening up more workings in the Dudley tunnel complex, enabling trip boats to follow a circular route. Dudley borough council have allocated funds for the project over the next two years.

The old workings are believed to contain the remains of what is thought to be the oldest surviving example of a narrowboat.

#### HORSE PLAY AT THE MUSEUM

Most visitors to the Museum cannot fail to notice Peter, the handsome gelding standing proud in his dockside stable or taking great delight in pulling his cart.

Peter, owned by Mick Holder, was taken in as a sick horse and is now well on the road to recovery, adding to the Museum's interesting list of 'live' exhibits !

Shire horses were a common sight in the docks during it's hey day, pulling wagons of corn from warehouse to mill or taking flour to bakery. They also shunted cargoes around the docks railway system. Warehouse corners were negotiated by turning the wagons individually on special turn-tables.

Horses also used to pull large ships up and down the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, and smaller horses pulled narrow boats and barges throughout the inland waterways network.

A replica of a bakers delivery cart has been obtained by the Museum, so that Peter will be shortly giving rides to the public.

#### MIKRON THEATR CO.

The Mikron Theatre Company are performing at the Museum on August 10 at 7.30 pm.

The company live and travel on the inland waterways system, stopping at popular haunts to perform their lively plays which would delight both parents and children!

They write their own plays, based on facts from an abundance of material relating to the waterways past, and sometimes perform in the open air.

Faced with the dilemma - to go or not to go, I'd certainly recommend it !

#### ANOTHER MUSEUM IN THE DOCKS ?

BVE are holding discussions with the Fairmile Society, owners of the ex-Navy motor launch ML293 and the air sea rescue launch RAF 2748, about the possibility of establishing a museum of coastal forces craft in Gloucester.

The two craft moved to the Docks from Bristol and permission to stay for six months is likely to be extended.

ML293 will go to Bristol for painting and engine repairs before sailing on to Portsmouth for a Navy Day, where she will be joined by another launch CMB 113 of 1917 vintage.

In future, one craft will be in the Docks, and the other on Bakers Quay.

#### MUSEUM FILM RUN

An HTV film crew spent a week in Gloucester, recording scenes and interviews for a half-hour documentary about the Museum and Docks. Look out for it on the television later this year.

#### DESIGN A LOGO

Following a suggestion at the inaugural meeting, ideas are invited for the design of a logo that could be used on a sweat shirt or on Friends material. A rough sketch will be quite sufficient, and entries should be sent to the secretary by July 16.

## Helping at the Museum

### Talking to Visitors

Can you spare a morning or afternoon occasionally to talk to visitors about the historic boats and see that they are not mistreated? You will find many of the visitors like to chat for a while, and you can learn from them as well as answer their questions. Notes will be provided to help you be informative. If you can help, please contact Cherry Tomlinson on Gloucester 304547 to join the weekend rota or Doris Toller on Gloucester 424272 to join the weekday rota. The rotas will cover several months ahead so that it will be possible to fit you in whether you can come frequently or just occasionally. The normal time for the morning period will be from 11.00 to 1.00 and for the afternoon from 2.00 to 5.00.

### Restoring Exhibits

Would you be keen to help restore potential exhibits such as a Widop twin cylinder boat engine, a Rapier warehouse crane or an early hire boat? Work is also due to start soon on refurbishing the Andrew Barclay fireless locomotive that used to work at Castle Meads power station just across the river. This will be carried out in the Museum yard so that visitors can see the work in progress. If you can help, please contact David McDougall at the Museum on Gloucester 307009. Work days will be Tuesdays, Thursdays and some weekends.

### Demonstrating a Craft

Can you demonstrate a craft that is related to waterways and talk to visitors about what you are doing? Possible examples are traditional painting, sign writing, rope splicing or crochet work, while model boat making or sketching would also be welcome. If you can help, please contact Peter Wallace on Gloucester 24686 to discuss arrangements and convenient times.

### Operating Exhibits

Could you qualify to operate the steam engine on the dredger? Training will be provided, and preference will be given to those who can attend reasonably regularly. If you can help, please contact Alan Conder on Dean 44384 to discuss training arrangements and convenient times. David McDougall is also looking for people interested in operating the blacksmiths forge or the wood turning lathe - contact him at the Museum.

### Teach-in at the Museum

For all those already helping at the Museum or wanting more information about these activities, there will be a meeting in the Museum Schools Room on 26th July starting at 7pm (entry direct from the car park). One group will hear about the history and features of each boat and another group will see the restoration work that needs to be done. This will be a convenient opportunity to agree more attendance times on the various rotas and to discuss arrangements for demonstrating a craft or learning to operate an exhibit. After this, there will be a social evening to allow members to get to know one another better. (For details of this, see separate item.)