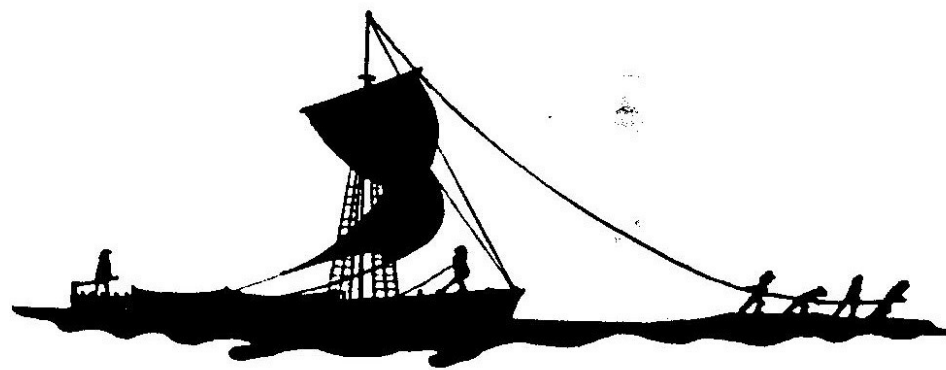


## Contacts

Chairman & Research	Hugh Conway-Jones 1 Grovelands, Gloucester, GL4 7JF.	Glo. 619679
Secretary	Janet Illingworth-Cooper 2a Oxford St, Gloucester, GL1 3EQ.	(work) Glo. 504294
Treasurer	Les Dalton 4 Conway Rd, Gloucester, GL3 3PL.	Glo. 617236
Crafts	Peter Wallace 16c Grosvenor Rd, Gloucester, GL2 0SA	Glo. 24686
Dredger Drivers	Alan Garnett 16 Honeythorne Close, Gloucester, GL2 6LU.	Glo. 303489
Fielding Engine	Trevor Hill 154 Cheltenham Rd, Gloucester, GL2 0JR.	Glo. 25578
Helpers and Hosts	Richard Trelfa 23 Honeythorne Close, Gloucester, GL2 6LU.	Glo. 304116
Meetings	Doris Toller 5 Hemmingsdale Rd, Gloucester, GL2 6HN.	Glo. 424272
Membership Secretary	Marian Palmer 17 The Firs, Heathville Rd, Gloucester, GL1 3EW.	Glo. 20885
Newsletter Editor	Philip Conway-Jones 1 Grovelands, Gloucester, GL4 7JF.	Glo. 619679
Restoration	David McDougall Nat.Wat.Mus., Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EH.	(work) Glo. 307009
Steam Crane	Alan Conder 12 Bathurst Park Rd, Lydney, GL15 5HG.	Dean 844384
Talks Service	Peter Thompson 43 Forest View Rd, Gloucester, GL4 0BY.	Glo. 20442

# LLANTHONY LOG



## Newsletter of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum

ISSUE NO.11 - DECEMBER 1990

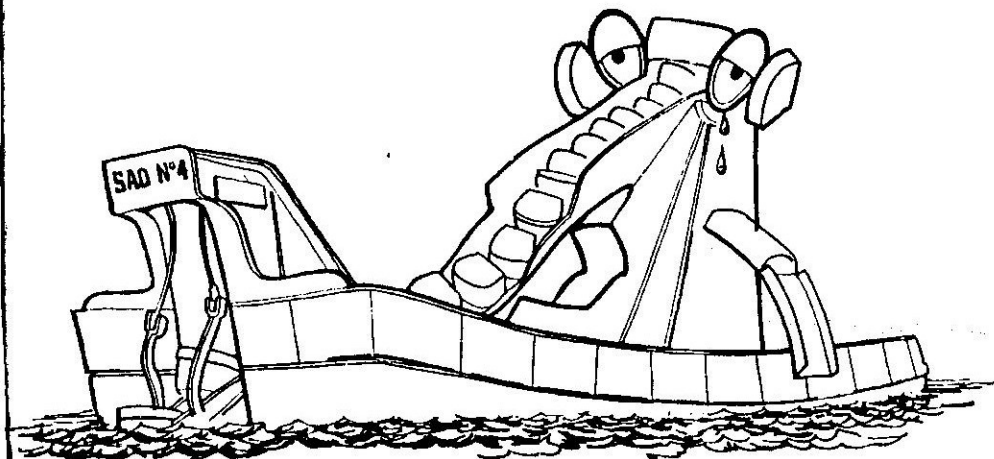
*All views expressed in Llanthony Log are those of the Editor and individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum.*

## Diary Dates

- Jan 15 IWA Video Evening including one of the National Waterways Festival presented by Graham Ettles at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club starting at 7.30.
- Feb 14 The Tame Valley Canal - Birmingham's First Bypass. John Foley describes the major engineering works on this canal and the traffic which passed along it, Museum Schools Room at 7.30.
- Feb 20 Severn Navigation by Dr Barrie Trinder of the Ironbridge Institute. A B&G Archaeological Society meeting at the Post Graduate Medical Centre, Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Rd at 7.30. Admission charge £1. (For further details, see later page.)
- Mar 15 IWA Branch AGM followed by a social in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30.
- Mar 19 Friends Open Evening. An opportunity to hear about Friends activities, meet the organisers and Museum staff in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30. (For more details, see later page.)
- Mar 29 Friends helping with Easter Crafts Weekend at the Museum. (For - Apr 1 more details, see later page.)
- Apr 14 Gloucester Boat and Watersports Jumble '91 in the Museum car park, (For further details and help needed, see later page.)
- Apr 16 Severn Scrapbook. The ever popular Fred Rowbotham returns with more slides and stories. Museum Schools Room at 7.30.
- May 18-9 Horses Weekend at the Museum.
- May 21 Friends AGM followed by more vintage films from the Museum's collection, Museum Schools Room at 7.30.

For evening meetings, car access to the Museum is from Southgate St. Non-members are welcome. Raffles will be held to raise money for the Dredger Restoration Fund.

Friends are welcome at the Inland Waterways Association meetings which are held at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club, off the Bredon Road B4080, on the left, 250 yards north of the junction with the A38.



*Philip Moss*

### The Dredger Needs Your Help

Have you responded yet to the Chairman's letter asking for donations to help restore the dredger? The Museum has to raise £40,000 to pay for repairing damaged metalwork, re-lagging the boiler, refurbishing the electrics, replacing the wood panelling and repainting inside and out etc. A good start has been made as the Science Museum has agreed to match other contributions up to a limit of £10,000, and a grant has been promised by the Area Museum Council for the South West. The Chairman is looking for a good response from the Friends before widening the appeal to the general public and local firms. Many donations have already been received, mostly in the range £10 to £30, with one as much as £100. The Treasurer has opened a special account, and donations should be sent to the Friends Dredger Restoration Appeal, National Waterways Museum, Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EH.

Would you be willing to organise a fund-raising event to help the dredger appeal? For example, if your local society would like a talk on the Museum and the dredger in return for a donation, please contact Peter Thompson on 610.20442.

To make sure of hitting the target, we also need help to obtain sponsorship, so if you know a senior manager of a company who might be willing to make a contribution in cash or kind in return for some publicity, please contact Hugh Conway-Jones on 610.619679 or Tony Conder on 610.307009 so that an appropriate deal can be arranged.

## FRIENDS ASSIST DREDGER RESTORATION

Once the dredger was refloated and the worst of the mud removed, an urgent task has been to protect the critical metal surfaces as well as possible to minimise the development of corrosion. Alan Conder, Les Drewery, Alan Garnett, Jim Simmons and Ray Swan have spent many hours on this first-aid measure. Early on, the relief valves were taken off the main engine, and a mixture of oil and paraffin was put into the cylinders to preserve them. The winch cylinders were given a similar treatment. Also the volunteers have started working round all the readily accessible bearings and lubricator pipes on the engine and the winches, cleaning out the mud that seems to have got in everywhere. Then the components are smothered in oil or grease and reassembled to await a more thorough treatment in the longer term. Also, mud has been cleared from the boiler tubes and an oily rag passed through to minimise rust formation.

Particular attention was paid to the bucket ladder winch as there was a need to use it. While the dredger was lying on its side, one of the cables supporting the ladder came off the winch drum, and when the dredger was refloated, the ladder was suffering a twisting strain as it was only hanging from one cable. Once the winch was refurbished, therefore, a supply of compressed air was connected up, and the winch was used to lower the bucket ladder until it rested on a balk of timber. Then the wires were taken off, cleaned, oiled and put back properly.

While this has been going on, Friends have been helping Museum staff to strip out moveable and damaged items and clean out mud from under the floor level. The Petter diesel, the electric motor and the air fan for the burner have been removed to improve access to the boiler. The electric motor was found to be full of mud and the armature had seized up, but it has now been cleaned and restored. All the panelling and lockers have been removed from the crew's quarters and the captain's cabin. They were badly affected by their period under water, but a careful record has been made so that replica fittings can be reinstated. A picture of the dredger donated by Wallace Spence has also been affected by water, but it is intended that this should hang again in the captain's cabin, with the staining serving as a reminder of the capsizing.

A Friend's working party in September set about clearing out the contents of the workshop/store on the starboard side of the dredger. This had been well filled with silt while the dredger was under water, and it had been the last section to be cleared during the refloating operation. Everything inside was coated with sticky or hard-caked mud, and every item had to be lifted out through the hatch, washed with a pressure hose

and carried ashore for storage. Amongst the items removed were large numbers of spare bearings, links and bushes for the bucket chain and many tools used for maintenance and repairs. There were bits of wood of all shapes and sizes, including some branches of ash that apparently were used as levers when the bucket chain came off its rollers. Other items included a lifebuoy, a shunter's hook, various tins of paint and several long lengths of flexible tubing that were particularly difficult to handle when covered in slime. Finally, there was a half-full chemical toilet that had probably last been used over ten years ago.

A second Friend's working party in October, led by Richard Trelfa, removed the boiler insulation which had become impregnated with mud. The insulation was held in place with chicken wire, and this had to be cut up into sections, which was not easy in the confined space around the boiler. Since handling the fibrous insulation created a certain amount of dust, all the volunteers wore face masks. The work went so well that it was almost completed by lunchtime, and the afternoon shift set about removing the insulation tapes from the steam pipes, cleaning and oiling the bare metal surfaces of the boiler and clearing some of the remaining mud. A photograph of the morning shift taken by Janet Illingworth-Cooper later appeared in the Gloucester Journal.

Meanwhile, Museum staff have also been busy, clearing out the last of the mud and washing off the general soot that had covered everything in the engine room, and Betty Conder and Doris Toller have started cleaning up some of the smaller items already removed. Two large vehicle bodies have been loaned by a local transport firm, and they are being prepared to provide workshop and storage facilities. The crane that lifted them into place on the quayside was also used to lift the bucket chain back on to its rollers. Once these facilities are ready, work will start on properly stripping down all the working parts so that they can be thoroughly cleaned and inspected before being put back into service.

If you can help with this work reasonably regularly, please contact Des Fforde at the Museum. For those who can only manage occasional weekend working parties, please contact Richard Trelfa on Glo. 304116.

## Late News

A hydraulic test on the boiler to 1.5 times the working pressure was successfully carried out at the end of November. This removes the earlier concern that if any repairs had been needed to the boiler, they would have added significantly to the cost of restoration.

## MUD, MUD (NOT VERY) GLORIOUS MUD

*By Philip Conway-Jones*

It wasn't until I went down into the dredger that I actually began to appreciate what a job the cleaning and restoration would be. The mess was unimaginable - the greatest surprise for me being the sheer volume of silt that had accumulated in every nook and cranny of the vessel.

I climbed aboard not long after she had returned from the dry dock to the Museum quay. She was well down in the water, partly due to the ballast which had been placed on one side to balance the mud that remained on the other side. The distance between the portholes and the canal appeared to be just a few centimetres, but I was undeterred from climbing down the steps to the engine room. The first impression I received was a lasting one - the combined stench of damp and silt hit my nose immediately, and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw the mud! Wherever a floor-plate had been raised, the bilge space underneath was full of sticky mud, and all the walls and the equipment were covered in a smear of dried mud.

Realising the sheer magnitude of the cleaning operation, I volunteered my services to join the other helpers who were intent on seeing SND No 4 steam again. By the time I had located a boiler suit, dug out some 'old' clothes and commandeered a pair of wellington boots, the panelling in the cabin had been taken out leaving the bare metalwork and a skeleton of wooden battens to which the panels had been attached. Walking along the dimly lit cabin, I inadvertently stepped through a gap in the floor where a plank had been removed and found myself wallowing in between four and five inches of mud. No part of the dredger had escaped!

As Des Fforde had discovered, the mud could be abstracted quite easily by adding water from a hosepipe to liquify it into a slurry and then sucking it out with a petrol-driven sludge pump on deck. This procedure worked very well and saved the need for mud to be dug out by hand. However, there were all kinds of foreign items concealed in the mud, ranging from nuts and bolts to splinters of wood and blobs of oil. All these had to be scooped up and collected into a bucket before being manually ejected overboard. On one occasion, I made the mistake of leaning over the side to watch my bucket-full of rubbish fall into the water - much to the amusement of some visitors who roared with laughter when I received a filthy facefull in return.

I spent about four Saturdays helping to clear mud from under the cabin floor, while Museum staff took on the workshop which had earlier

been cleared of all manner of equipment by a Friend's working party. I felt very privileged one Saturday morning to witness the bucket-winch turn over for the first time since the dredger went down. Alan Garnett and Ray Swan had carefully cleaned down and oiled the winch so that the bucket ladder, which was hanging lop-sided, could be lowered to rest evenly on a balk of timber. After a few minor problems, the winch sprung to life, powered by compressed air.

The next time I went down to help, the weekday workers had really been moving apace and had started on the major mud clearance of the bilges under the engine room. By now, the dredger had risen out of the water quite significantly, which was a real morale-booster. The ballast had also been taken off and she was almost floating level. I pressed on with work which had already started around the boiler area. Des showed me how to create a siphon to drain the water which had accumulated in the narrow spaces between the water and oil tanks and the metal boxes in which they sat. Working under the boiler was quite claustrophobic for the first five minutes or so, but it was really quite interesting once I had become accustomed to the cramped conditions. I had not previously realised that it was just about possible to stand up behind the boiler!

After a few more weeks, most of the mud clearance had been completed and Des was pressing on with the steam cleaning, which really made a difference in the engine room. The old paint began to reveal its true colours and the vessel had taken another step on its long journey to normality. Pressure washing was the order of the day, once the steam cleaning had been completed. The powerful jet managed to scour out the stubborn bits of filth in the floorspaces which had earlier refused to move, and then it was possible to remove the final deposits with a very effective industrial vacuum cleaner. This however filled up very quickly, and Des was frequently nipping up and down the stairs to throw its contents overboard.

With all the bilge compartments now clean and the connecting limber holes clear, it will be possible for bilge water to drain down to where the dredger's own pumps could remove it. As Des pointed out, No 4 probably has cleaner bilges now than at any time since she was new. Mind you, Dad's boiler suit has definitely seen better days!

## Spirit of Freedom Launched

The Willow Trust's new boat was craned into the water at Sharpness in October. The boat is fitted out to take parties of disabled and seriously ill people for trips on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal.

## GLoucester Boat and Watersports Jumble '91

*Introduced by Stuart Darnley*

How does one go about raising a considerable sum of money in these days of so many demands on your purse, pocket or business budget? One way is a jumble sale - no, not the usual bric-a-brac, good as this may be, but a professional boat and watersports jumble.

Before you say "I wouldn't be interested", let me explain in more detail. It is an opportunity for private individuals and companies to sell their surplus stock and unwanted items at realistic prices to improve their cash flow. What kind of things? For example:- fishing tackle, boats, canoes, engines, outboards, tools, chandlery, sailboards, clothing, trailers, dinghies, brassware, copperware and accessories of all kinds.

So why don't you look around your garage, shed, loft etc and turn your unwanted items into cash? For advice please ring me or ask for a car boot space booking form. A car boot space costs £10 including a free admission ticket - cheaper than advertising! If you feel really generous, you may wish to consider donating your bits and pieces to the Friends who could sell them at their own stall!

Who will be there? Hopefully over 100 traders, large and small, and 2,500 plus visitors from all over. So even if you are not into boating, fishing etc, but would like some cheap paint, varnish, tools, copper kettles and pans, nuts and bolts, why not come and pick up one of the thousands of bargains to be had? And don't forget to tell your friends!

When and where is it? 14 April 1991 in the Museum car park. Admission £1.50 - accompanied children free. Who is organising it? We are - that is to say a small committee of the Friends and their friends. **BUT WE DO NEED HELPERS** for the 13 and 14 of April.

- \* We need help at the entrances to collect the admission fee.
- \* We need helpers to act as marshalls for car parking.
- \* We need helpers to direct traders and car booters to their allocated site position.
- \* We need helpers to clear up after the jumble.
- \* We need help!

So please, if you can give change for £5, lean on a broom or direct some idiot into a parking space, don't be shy - **VOLUNTEER!** We will be grateful for any assistance to make this event a success which can then

be repeated annually and so provide the Friends with a substantial income. If you can help or would like more information, please telephone me, Stuart Darnley on 0367 52343 or write to me at Downham Fields, Lechlade-on-Thames, Glos. GL7 3DL.

### Friends Stall at the Jumble

Do you have any unwanted watersports related items you would be willing to donate to the Friends to be sold in aid of the dredger appeal? Karlo and Sheila Miklausic are organising a stall at the jumble, and they are looking for any equipment, fittings, buoyancy aids, clothes, tools, books, pictures, ornaments etc connected with boats, canoes, windsurfing, angling, sailing or water skiing. If you can help, please ring them on 610.305292 as soon as possible.

### Wanted Dead or Alive (Preferably Alive!)

The Museum is looking for Friends who are keen to become part of a promotion team and spend a day (or more) at either the London Boat Show or the Boat, Caravan and Leisure Show at the Birmingham N.E.C. at the beginning of 1991.

During these promotions, the team will be expected to wear traditional canal costume to represent the Museum and let the great British public know what a wonderful attraction the Museum is, British Waterways and Museum staff will be manning the stands daily, and the promotion team will brighten up the display and show off the costume. For the Birmingham Boat Show, we would also like Friends 'in civvies' to promote the Museum through the sale of raffle tickets (the raffle will take place at the end of the exhibition). The Museum can provide costumes if Friends will provide the goodwill. Husband and wife teams can be catered for if you would rather go in pairs.

The London Boat Show is open to the public from 3 - 13 January 1991, and the Boat, Caravan and Leisure Show at the N.E.C. is open from 16 - 24 February. Train tickets will be provided by the Museum and, of course, entrance to the shows will be completely free. Both shows are well worth a visit and should provide a good day out (even if it is essentially work!).

If you would like to help promote the Museum, please contact Tony Conder or Clare Caldicott on Gloucester (0452) 307009 or call in to the Museum for a chat.

## INSTALLATION OF NO. 1 TURNTABLE

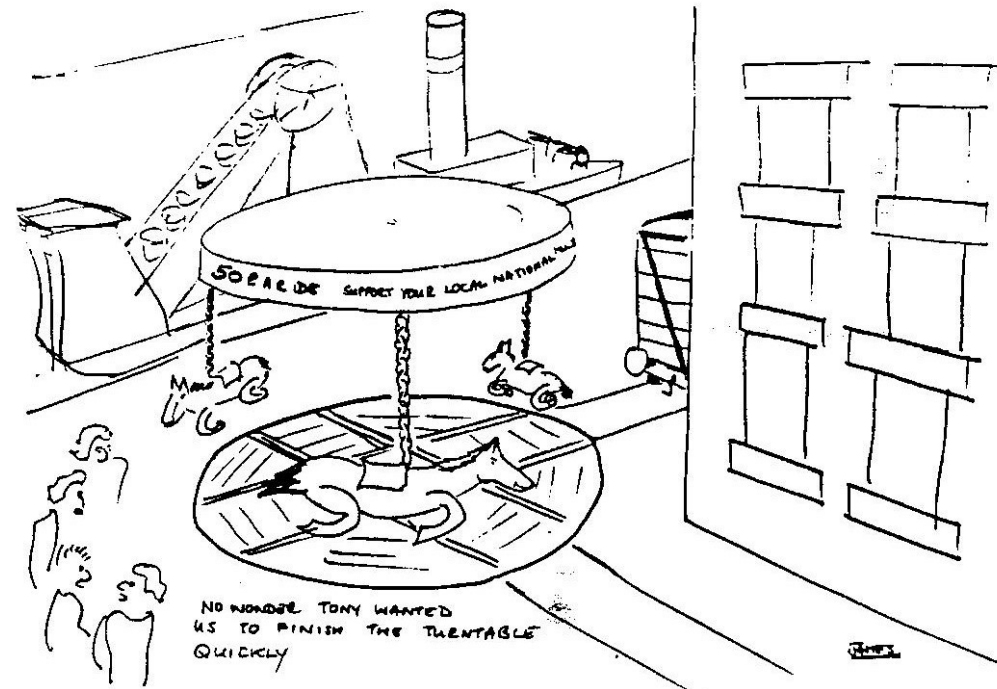
By Alan Russell who was a regular member of the restoration team throughout the project.

During the early planning stage of the Museum, provision was made for the installation of two turntables at the south west and north west corners of Llanthony Warehouse, these to replace the original tables scrapped several years ago. In the past, there were many such turntables around the docks, a total in all of 21, I believe.

During Summer 1989, the Museum was fortunate to be offered two suitable turntables from the Watson Street Warehouse of the old Great Northern Railway in Manchester. They had been installed in the Manchester warehouse around 1906 and were donated free of charge by the owners. The diameter of each turntable at 13 feet is sufficient to accommodate a standard ten ton railway wagon. A complete turntable comprises four basic components:

- a) A cast iron rim 13' diameter x 1' 11" deep made of eight curved panels bolted together and resting on 16 steel base plates. The plates bed on to a concrete slab. Bolted to these base plates is a 3.5" x 3" wide circular steel rail to carry the wheel assembly.
- b) A wheel assembly made up of 12 radiating spokes, each with a 7.75" diameter cast iron wheel, restrained in position by a steel band at the outer circumference and a 15" diameter cast iron ring at the centre.
- c) A structural steelwork platform 9" deep fabricated with R.S.J.s and channels to run on the wheel assembly b) and supporting on top the wagon rails and a boarded infilling deck.
- d) A cast iron hub in the centre of the table resting on a concrete cube base and supporting wheel assembly b) and platform c).

Work commenced in October 1989 to excavate the pit and expose the previously installed concrete base at a depth of 2'. This was carried out by two prisoners from the nearby H.M. prison. The first task for the restoration volunteers was to dismantle the cast iron panels, wheel assembly, platform, rails, etc. in order to assess the condition of the components. In passing, it is worth mentioning that badly rusted bolts take a long time to take apart. It was inevitable, considering the age of the fabric, that large amounts of rust and scale had to be removed and everything thoroughly cleaned. This was achieved by means of wire brushes and chipping hammers, a very noisy operation judging by the frequent



protests from the adjoining offices. The larger components were then grit blasted (a specialist task carried out by others), spray primed, and reassembled ready for painting.

Rebuilding in situ started in earnest during the early part of 1990, commencing with the outer cast iron panels and base plates and followed by the running rails, pit drainage, hub base and wheel assembly. Work also proceeded on painting the entire structure with a total of six coats. The platform was eventually lowered into position by a friendly crane driver on July 18, during the Museum's preparations for the cranes weekend. The final operations during August and September saw us bolting on the rails and, after preservative treatment, the timber boarded deck.

Completion was finally achieved on September 27 1990, and after ceremonially running on and rotating a railway wagon, we celebrated in the time honoured manner by scoffing a bottle of Tony Conder's best bubbly! This has been the largest joint project carried out by the Museum staff and Friends, the main participants being staff members David McDougall and Pete Evans with Friends Keith Varney, Ian Parsons and Alan Russell. Work is now proceeding on turntable No. 2, and this hopefully should be completed by summer '91. Once both turntables are in place and rails relaid, it will be possible to move wagons around three sides of the warehouse pulled by Peter the horse.

Battered by wind and rain from a long spell at the helm, the boatman could descend a couple of steps to the cabin and sink his aching feet into the luxurious deep pile of a rag rug. The art of making this welcome and cosy home comfort was the theme of the Craft Afternoon at the Museum under the direction of Doris Toller on October 7.

A crisis had arisen during the preceding week due to the shortage of the essential base ingredient, a common-or-garden hessian sack; but Doris scoured the district and located (where must remain a secret) a supply of sacks, and the session went ahead.

Ann, Vicky, Liz and Janet soon applied their skills with prodder or hook, and rows of muted shades soon appeared in the traditional manner of these splendid rugs. Knowing that three young ladies from Churchdown School were coming, Doris had brought some offcuts of vivid coloured cloth and encouraged Emma, Nicola and Joanne to let their imaginations loose on design. By the end of the afternoon the start of a joint rug was well under way with the promise of a brilliant rug when completed.

Many of the Museum visitors that afternoon took a keen interest in the work and contributed several different versions of "the way mother did it."

Peter Wallace

#### Easter Crafts Weekend

The Museum is arranging for a variety of crafts to be on show over the Easter weekend and has asked Friends to join in. The crafts need not necessarily be related to waterways and can include activities such as painting, woodwork, model making, embroidery etc. If you could spend a few hours demonstrating that weekend, please contact Peter Wallace on 610,24686. He is particularly keen to get a number of volunteers for rag rug making, so that there will be at least one on duty each day.

#### Peter and Kennet Help Father Christmas

It is not easy to find reindeer in Gloucester, so after Father Christmas had turned on the city centre lights this year, he accepted a lift down to the docks on a decorated carriage pulled by Peter, the Museum's shire horse. Following a visit to Merchants Quay, Father Christmas went aboard the tug Kennet, which was specially illuminated for the occasion, and he was conveyed off into the darkness, back to Lapland.

#### Friends Open Evening

If you would like to learn more about what the Friends are planning for next summer or if you would just like a friendly evening out, do come along to the open evening on 19 March in the Museum Schools Room starting at 7.30. Topics to be covered will include acting as a host to visiting parties, restoring and working exhibits, research, crafts, helping with the jumble and publicising the Museum at shows. This will be an opportunity for new and established Friends to hear what others are doing and to meet the organisers and Museum staff. Whether you are willing to help or prefer watching, you will be welcome.

#### Hosts and Helpers

The Museum is planning several action evenings next summer when hosts will be required to escort booked parties, and there will be several special weekend events when helpers will be wanted to act as marshalls. No special knowledge is required - you just need to know your way round the Museum and to like talking to people. If you can help in this way, please contact Richard Trelfa on 610,304116 or come along to the open evening noted above.

#### Recruit a Friend

New members are always welcome whether they want to become actively involved or just follow events at the Museum through the newsletter. If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining the Friends, please bring them along to the open evening noted above.

#### Canal Boat Records on the Computer

Hard work by a number of Friends has successfully transferred information from the Gloucester canal boat registers on to the Museum's computer. Thanks to the efforts of Chris Witts, Helena Wallace, Marjorie Yates and Denise Hazell, over 500 records have been entered into a database. Covering the period 1879 to 1950, these show the name of each boat, the owner, the steerer and various details about the boats and the types of cargo carried. Using the database program, it is possible to sort the records into any chosen order or search for particular entries of interest in response to queries from researchers. Work has now started on entering the canal boat inspection records. For further information or offers of help, please contact Hugh Conway-Jones on Gloucester 619679.

# REFURBISHING NORTHWICH

By Betty Conder

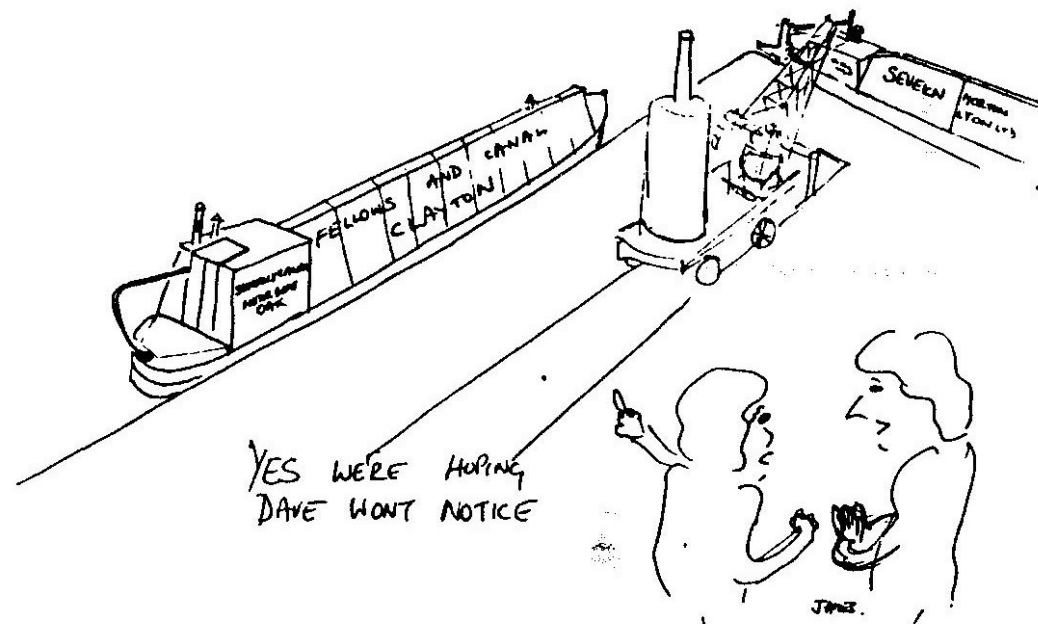
The Museum's narrowboat Northwich was built 100 years ago. Then she was horse-drawn and later she became a butty. I first saw her at Stoke Bruerne. She was home for Tony and his family for weeks on a long voyage to Birmingham with the steam-powered narrowboat President. On another voyage with President, our family helped to bow-haul Northwich through Ludlow locks. "Boat people always did have large families", remarked a towpath stroller as she was passed by a long, enthusiastic line of Conder descendants all hauling on the rope.

So it was joy to see Northwich snugged into the Barge Arm when we first arrived at the embryo Museum to help with restoration and conservation work. From that time, six months before the Museum opened, not much was done to Northwich beyond polishing her brass work, washing her curtains and bed cover and sweeping out the sweetpapers left by visiting schoolchildren. Her paintwork slowly deteriorated and the Fellows Morton and Clayton signs on her cloths grew dim as the white paint flaked.

There is always so much work to do at the Museum, but this summer Northwich's turn came. The Waterways Festival and President's impending visit were a spur to refurbishment. Our honour dictated that Northwich should be as well turned out as we could manage. The exterior paintwork was photographed and we took tracings of the lettering on the side of the cabin and stern. Pete Evans and John Morris cleaned off all the paint, replaced rotten wood and left a beautifully smooth surface for the signwriter to work on.

Meanwhile Doris Toller and I laboriously scraped off all the lettering on the cloths with Stanley knife blades. Luckily the outlines remained. We started this standing on the pontoon, bobbing up and down - and sometimes crashing up and down when schoolchildren jumped off the quay in droves. Of course work was spasmodic as we broke off to tell visitors about Northwich and show them her secrets.

The summer wore on, the temperature rose and we were glad to retire to a shady tunnel by the boiler house, wafted by any passing breeze. Trestle tables were set up and we scraped on. Then we washed all the cloths and were set to repaint the lettering. We used silk screen painting ink and fairly stiff brushes. The cloths are made of pimply vinyl, not an easy surface. Nor is the ink an easy medium. It thickens very quickly and thinner must be added very judiciously. Doris and I



Painted the centres of the letters and Julie Bunclark, Dave's assistant who has a fine arts degree, made a lovely job of the sharp edges. While she was on holiday Doris and I were bold enough to tackle the whole letters, edges and all. The letters appear to be stenciled on so we had to remember where the gaps occur. Eight times we painted Fellow Morton & Clayton Ltd in the familiar half moon enclosing the fleet number and curlicues. It was a long job.

The result was worth every hot minute when Reg Price clothed her up again in the week before the Festival, using new strings creosoted by Doris. We had our reward when President's men admired her appearance and found it hard to believe that a bunch of women had done the work. I was further rewarded when I voyaged on Northwich, breasted up with President, through the fleet at the Festival. I felt just like the Queen as the cameras clicked and the camcorders whirred. Doris had a trip later.

Julie continues to paint Northwich's exterior when she can get at her after the children have left. The Roses and Castles on her doors are in good order as is her interior scumbling. The red lining of all the beading must be replaced and her new stove has to be installed. We wish we could deck her cabin traditionally but then the public would have to be excluded and visitors really appreciate exploring her interior. So we will continue to polish her brass and sweep out the sweetpapers, and Reg Price will mop down outside.



## IMPRESSIONS OF THE THAMES

*By Jo Jerewiah.*

My first introduction to boating was on a camping trip to Thames-side Lechlade during the glorious hot summer of 1976. To cool off we decided to hire a rowing boat and seek shade along the riverbank.

"This is the life!" declared Ian. "I'd like to get a little boat and do more of this."

He did just that and spent the next winter ensconced in the garage, building a small cabin on to the hull of a 16 ft. day boat. The cabin was 6ft. long, 4ft. wide and 3ft. high and I spent a month crouched inside it during the dreary rainy summer of 1977!

After two weeks on the canals we retraced our steps to the upper Thames where we launched our small craft from the slipway at Lechlade. That was the last I saw of dry land for quite a while! It rained most days and as it was not practical for both of us to get wet I watched the Thames go past kneeling by the blurred and rain-streaked cabin windows. My only consolation was that the people in the numerous camping punts that were afloat on the river were infinitely worse off than me.

Managing to surface at Osney Lock, I called out a cheery greeting to the occupants of a large white boat who were waiting, like us, for the lock, only to be met with stony looks. This was my first encounter with a "gin palace". Having been used to the friendliness of canal boaters during the first part of our holiday, this came as quite a shock. I soon learnt!

We found that such "gin palaces" were often in a tearing hurry and never seemed to have heard about slowing down when passing moored boats. Consequently we could never erect our camping stove in the cockpit much before 8 p.m., by which time we were dying for a cup of tea! It was difficult, too, just staying afloat on the popular stretches of river downstream because the wash from those boats travelling at a fast and furious pace had our tiny vessel bobbing up and down like a cork!

Feeling just a little fed-up of this one Sunday afternoon, when the world and his wife seemed to be on the river, we decided to moor up below Cliveden and take a stroll up to the house through the woods. The way is quite straightforward, we found later, but of course we had to take the wrong turning and were plunging through the woods for ages before we reached our goal. However, the view over the Thames was quite splendid and the grounds delightful, so we didn't grudge the detour.

Cliveden was the turning point in our trip. The continuing inclement weather meant that I couldn't sample on the way back the charms of riverside towns and villages such as Cookham, Marlow, Henley and Sonning, though I remember re-emerging at Wallingford.

We pulled the boat out at Lechlade in the middle of a thunderstorm which was a fitting end to the voyage. At that moment, sodden and dripping, I could have blithely said goodbye to boats for ever, but this was not to be. Ian and I have had various craft since then but we have never yet managed to make it to the Thames again. Perhaps this year we'll be successful.

### Barge Origins Revealed

*By Hugh Conway-Jones*

Careful searching in the Public Record Office at Kew has thrown new light on the origin of the concrete barge rescued from the foreshore of the Severn estuary earlier this year. It was known that the barge had been based at Avonmouth during the second world war, but there was no firm knowledge about where it had been built. Local opinion suggested that it might have come from Newport or Chepstow, but enquiries in both these towns drew a blank. Further enquiries in Bristol produced the firm assertion that concrete barges had been built near where Portbury Dock now stands, but this turned out to be a first world war undertaking.

I knew that the Museum's barge was one of a large number built for the Government, and so I started a search in the vast archive of files in the Public Record Office. My first visit revealed that the topic of concrete barges had been discussed by the War Cabinet on 5 March 1940, when the First Lord of the Admiralty reported that twenty had been ordered. The Admiralty was responsible for ordering all such vessels, but further searches through their records did not provide any more clues.

On a subsequent visit, I discovered a listing of the files of the Ministry of War Transport, and running down the list, one particular title caught my eye. When the file was produced, I was delighted to find it contained a large collection of notes and inter-departmental memos referring to the construction of concrete barges over the period 1940-45. Although barges were built at various sites around the country, it soon became clear that the Museum's barge was one of the main group designed by L G Mouchel & Partners and built by Wates at Barrow-in-Furness.

Subsequent enquiries showed that both these firms are still in existence, and both have been extremely helpful in providing further information. There is much more work to be done, but already a fascinating picture is emerging of the important role these barges played in the war effort and how the same concrete technology was later used in the production of the famous Mulberry Harbours.

## Museum Wins European Award

The Museum has been judged to be one of the top seven in Europe in the prestigious European Museum of the Year Awards. Tony Conder travelled to Bologna in Italy to receive the citation which now hangs just inside the entrance door. Over 70 museums are visited each year before the final choices are made. The judges report praised the Museum for having used a strong poetic sense to unlock the images always latent in technology and for revealing canal and river travel not only as a means of transport but as a way of life with a character of its own.

## Friends Photographic Competition

The first Friends photographic competition, organised by Janet Illingworth-Cooper, produced 45 entries on waterways subjects. Judges Jack Farley, Tony Conder and Brian Rogers had a difficult task to choose the winners from a good selection of quality prints.

The first prize was won by Brian Marsh. All three judges were agreed that his photograph taken at Bristol docks was a dramatic and evocative picture. Railings along the quay wall lead the eye into the picture, and the warm colours with a strong interest are complemented by dramatic lighting.

In second place, John Hammond produced a fine view of Splatt Bridge on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. The quiet beauty of the scene is enhanced by the secondary interest of anglers, Frampton church and the bridge keeper's house, but all lines lead to the boat coming through the bridge.

Eight other views were selected as highly commended. Brian Marsh, Chris Witts, Janet Illingworth-Cooper and Hugh Conway-Jones submitted views taken around the docks in a variety of lighting conditions. John Hammond and Eileen Hart captured delightful pictures on the Avon. Chris Witts took a well composed close-up of the paddle steamer Waverley, and Richard Trelfa included a shot of Helen Hill putting yellow plastic ducks into a dredger bucket.

In the junior age group, there was only one entry from 7 year old Rebecca Starkey, and she has been awarded a special prize. Her close-up view of the stern of a butty at Gas Street Basin was considered a bold attempt, but the judges thought that a stronger focal point would have improved the shot.

All three judges hoped that such an excellent competition would continue and that more junior entries would come forward in the future. The prize-winning and highly commended entries will be on display at the Museum in January. All photographs will be returned when Janet comes back from her holiday in the New Year.

## Upper Severn Navigation

Friends are invited to attend a Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeology Society lecture on the navigation of the upper Severn by Dr Barrie Trinder of the Ironbridge Institute. The theme of the lecture will be the role of an old navigation in the rapidly changing economy of the 18th and 19th centuries. Dr Trinder will be drawing on evidence from a variety of sources including port books, probate records, recollections and archaeological evidence. The meeting will be at the Post Graduate Medical Centre, Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Rd, Gloucester starting at 7.30, and there will be an admission charge of £1.

## Donations

The Treasurer is pleased to acknowledge donations to our special project received from the following between 1 June and 30 November:

Ashby K J	Foster W H & J E	Riddick K J & G L
Badham N K & M S	Freeborn K G & J	Rowley W E & R
Bailey A D	Garrett A L	Simmons J R & S
Baker KR & CJ	Hatton I	Smith A J
Blackeby P G & E	Hazell D M	Stacey C
Beesley R J & R D	Hazell M J	Stone H
Boast D J & M L	Hill T R & P A	Tomlinson K F
Challoner J H & M	Howard E	Trelfall P M & H J
Colclough R T G & J	Illingworth-Cooper J	Trelfa R J & A C
Conder A G & E M	Jeffery A C	Vale T L & A
Connett J E	Lewis S C M	Varney R K & J K
Conway-Jones A H & J R	Mills D & J	Westcott D J & K E
Conway-Jones P	Mills R W & L M	Whitcombe R
Creswell D J	Morgan L A	Willavoys D M & M E
Dale A N & J S	Morris R V & P M	Willis O C F & J
Darbo K R	Newman D & L R	Witherington M J
Daw D A W & P A	Nichols R A	Windsor A & M F
Dell F F & S M	O'Connell G R & L	Woolley S E C
Dellbridge D K	Parsons I M	Yates M
Dellbridge T D	Pinnock D C	