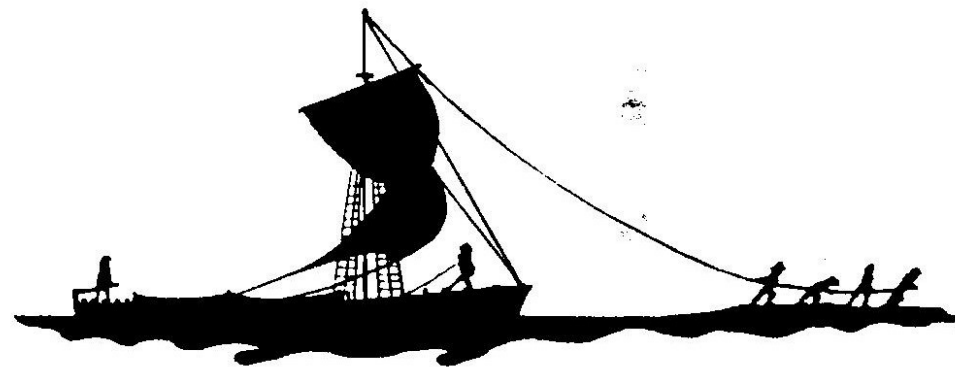


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LLANTHONY LOG



Newsletter of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum

ISSUE NO.15 - DECEMBER 1991

Diary Dates

- Jan 14 Video Evening including the Cheshire Ring. An IWA meeting at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club starting at 7.30.
- Jan 16 The Newent to Dymock Section of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal. H&G Canal Society meeting at Dymock Parish Hall (behind the Beauchamp Arms) starting at 7.30. All welcome.
- Feb 18 Members Evening. A chance for Friends to share waterways reminiscences and slides/videos etc in the Museum Schools Room starting at 7.30. To offer a contribution lasting up to ten minutes, please contact Doris Toller on Glo.424272 by the end of January so she can plan a balanced programme.
- Mar 3 Doon the Watter wi' the Weans - illustrated reminiscences of the Clyde steamers by Hamish Dawson. An IWA meeting at Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club starting at 7.30.
- Mar 27 IWA AGM in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30 followed by a talk on the Willow Trust by Jeremy Hope.
- Apr 5 Boat and Watersports Jumble in the Museum car park between 10am and 4pm. For details and help needed, see page 5.
- Apr 9 The Anderton Lift. An illustrated talk by William Rowley in the Museum Schools Room starting at 7.30.
- Apr 28 Friends Open Evening. A chance to hear about Friends activities and meet the organisers. Gather in the Museum car park at 7pm for a pre-meeting trip down the canal on Queen Boadicea II. For further details, see page 14.
- May 3-4 Friends demonstrating at the Museum Crafts Weekend. For further details, contact Peter Wallace on Gloucester 24686.

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 Inland Waterways Association meetings. Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club is off the Bredon Road B4080, on the left, 250 yards north of the junction with the A38.

Dredger Boiler Steams Again

All the hard work carried out on the boiler by Museum staff and Friends over the last few months, and particularly in the week before the Lifting & Shifting Week-End, was well rewarded, as the boiler, whistle and aft winch were operational for this special event. An account of the work done appears on a later page. The insulation now fitted to the boiler is more efficient than the original. As well as giving a saving on fuel costs, this has made a marked reduction in the temperature in the engine room which should make working conditions for the drivers more bearable in the summer.

Noel Michelli, with a contact at Lister-Petter, enquired if they would be willing to overhaul the Petter diesel that is used to operate the forced-draught burner fan and lighting generator drive when the dredger is away from mains electrical supply. Instead they have donated a new one which has now been positioned on the dredger, although it is not yet available for use.

Plans for Future Work

Now that the boiler is steaming again and the aft winch has turned, curator Tony Conder has set out the plans for the next phase of restoration for No 4 dredger. He emphasises that the aim of the whole exercise is to do the job right - even if this takes longer, it is still justified as only being a short span in the whole life of the boat.

The boiler will be kept in steam over the winter to provide a good working environment and to help in its own preservation. The Tuesday and Thursday volunteers will continue to clean the steam engine components down to metal surfaces and repaint, and the Wednesday volunteers will soon be starting on engine reassembly. Meanwhile, the Sunday volunteers will be doing a variety of painting jobs inside and out. In mid February, the dredger will be dry-docked for work on the hull plates and the water tanks, and there will be a need for a hull-blacking working party.

During next year, more parts will be brought back to life, the next item being the bucket ladder winch. This will allow occasional if limited steaming weekends, leading up to eventual operation of the engine and buckets again. British Waterways are currently dredging out the Main Basin, but they have promised to leave some mud in the Barge Arm adjoining the Museum for No 4 to tackle when ready.

Friends Pay Dredger Bills

£2020 has been paid out from the Friends Dredger Restoration Fund, and £4000 more has been authorised. This will pay for half the cost of materials and work done by contractors during this year - the other half will come from a grant from the Science Museum.

The main expenditure during the summer has been concerned with refurbishing the boiler - not only rectifying the effects of last year's sinking but also giving it a thorough overhaul. At an early stage, a contractor was paid to carry out a hydraulic pressure test to show that the boiler hadn't come to any real harm and that refurbishment was therefore feasible. Inspection of the boiler showed that the mud holes used for removing sludge were wasted where they had been leaking for years, and so a contractor was employed to build up the surfaces with weld metal and grind back to the required shape.

The smoke doors on the front of the boiler were sent away for shot-blasting prior to repainting, and the electric motor used to power the burner fan was sent away for refurbishing. Two replacement valves were purchased, other valves were sent for repair and new gaskets were bought. Most of the studs used to attach valves and other fittings were found to be rusted and some of the threads were damaged, so it was decided to replace them all with new ones. Some new firebricks were required to replace originals that were cracked, and various pieces of pipework have also been purchased. The final step to be paid for was the relagging of the boiler by a firm of insulation specialists.

Also during the summer, money has been spent on items needed for other parts of the dredger. New piston rings have been obtained for the low pressure cylinder of the steam engine, and new phosphor bronze plungers have been bought for the bilge pump and the boiler feed pump. A new mast has been constructed as the original was badly bent, and new steel panels have been purchased to fit around the bucket well as the original ones were badly rusted. The engine-room companionway was also badly rusted near the bottom, so the affected bits have been cut out and new footings welded on, and the whole thing has been shotblasted. Wood has been bought for panelling the crew's quarters, and contractors are making good progress in fitting the panelling into place. Quantities of paint have been purchased, and finally, money has been spent on a power drill and other tools which will also be useful for other restoration projects.

Gloucester Boat and Watersports Jumble

Planning is well under way for the second boat and watersports jumble to be held in the Museum car park on 5 April 1992. The Friends have set up a special Boat Jumble Group, led by Stuart Darnley, to organise the event, and all the proceeds will go towards improving or extending the Museum's collection.

This year, Stuart is aiming to attract around 150 traders and private individuals selling boats, dinghies, canoes, sailboards, engines, outboards, chandlery, fishing tackle, diving equipment and trailers etc. New features this year include the facility for selling boats on the water and the possibility of a boat auction.

Although primarily aimed at boating and watersports enthusiasts, those who attended last year's jumble will know that there will also be a good range of tools, fastenings, paint and clothes etc that will have wider appeal. As well as second-hand goods, traders will be selling surplus new stock at discounted prices to improve their cash flow. So put the date in your diary, and come along to see the bargains on offer.

If you have some unwanted items to sell, a car boot or dinghy space will cost £10 or a boat and trailer space will cost £15. Alternatively, Stuart will arrange to sell things for you on commission. For further details, contact Stuart Darnley on 0367 52343.

Volunteers Needed

A good number of volunteers will be needed on the day to collect admission fees and supervise car parking. A few people will also be required to help lay out the site on the day before, to direct traders to their spaces and to tidy up afterwards. If you can help, please contact Hugh Conway-Jones on Gloucester 619679 or Charlie Wallace on Gloucester 304267. This is the Friends major fund-raising event of the year, so please come and join in.

Late News

Stuart has managed to secure sponsorship for the jumble from Exchange and Mart. This will provide help with setting-up costs and will ensure widespread publicity.

Dredger Boiler and Winch Refurbishment

Alan Garnett provides a further update on the work done by volunteers supervised by Dave McDougall and Des Fforde

The examination and cleaning of the aft winch has been finished, with all the parts removed now back in place, and the exhaust steam pipe relagged. As part of the steam supply pipe was in a poor state and fractured during removal, a new pipe has been fitted and lagged so that the winch is in an operational condition. It was, in fact, run during the Lifting & Shifting Week-End, but as it was sometimes reluctant to start, the valve timing will need checking at a later date.

With the Funnel pulled back to a vertical position, completely new pipe lengths for the whistle steam supply and safety relief valve steam discharge, both of which are clipped to the Funnel, were purchased, as those previously installed were in a badly corroded state. When the necessary connections, ie screwed couplings or flanges as appropriate, had been fitted, the pipes were painted with heat resistant primer, the whistle reconnected to its pipe and the two pipes were fitted on the dredger. A coat of heat resistant black paint completed this part of the restoration work.

The smoke-box doors on the front of the boiler were removed and lifted out of the dredger via the ventilation shaft above the boiler, preparatory to their being shotblasted by a local firm, this having now been done and the doors refitted. The refurbished Forced Draught Fan components were then taken back on to the dredger by the same route, and the fan runner assembly replaced in its casing, together with the primary air control damper and air intake grille. The badly cracked refractory bricks in the oil burner casing have been replaced with new bricks and the casing refitted on to the fire tube of the boiler. With the reinstallation of the forced draught fan unit and overhauled electric drive motor on to their bedplates, and the reconnection of the air ducting and burner, the restoration of this part of the boiler unit was completed.

The blowdown valve internals have been removed and remedial work to a damaged spindle carried out. New studs have been fitted where required to the steam outlet connections on the boiler, and all necessary valves and other mountings (such as gauge glasses) fitted preparatory to steam raising. Blank pressure retaining flanges were fitted where valves could

not be reinstalled. A very important job entailed securing the three mudhole doors, using new gaskets, thus enabling the boiler to be filled with softened water, prior to refitting the dome closure manhole, also with a new gasket.

Noel Michelli put in sterling work in rewiring and recommissioning the electrical supply to the fan motor. This necessitated a late change of the 415 volt starting coil incorrectly fitted in the new starting contactor to one suitable for the available 230 volt supply. Des Fforde and Noel spent much time in ensuring that the controlled start pulley for the fan belt drive contained the correct quantity of lead shot before the boiler could finally be steamed in time for the Lifting and Shifting Week-End.

The recent temporary berthing of the dredger on the far side of the docks to allow British Waterways to dredge its normal berth has provided good access for a mobile crane to lift out the steam condenser from the engine room and lift in the new Lister-Petter diesel engine. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to lift off the bucket ladder side panels and replace the fold-out mud chute removed during salvage.

It is hoped that this report will show that restoration work is proceeding satisfactorily, if of necessity a little slowly, and that refurbished or new components are now actually being put back in place on the dredger.

Kennet in the Limelight

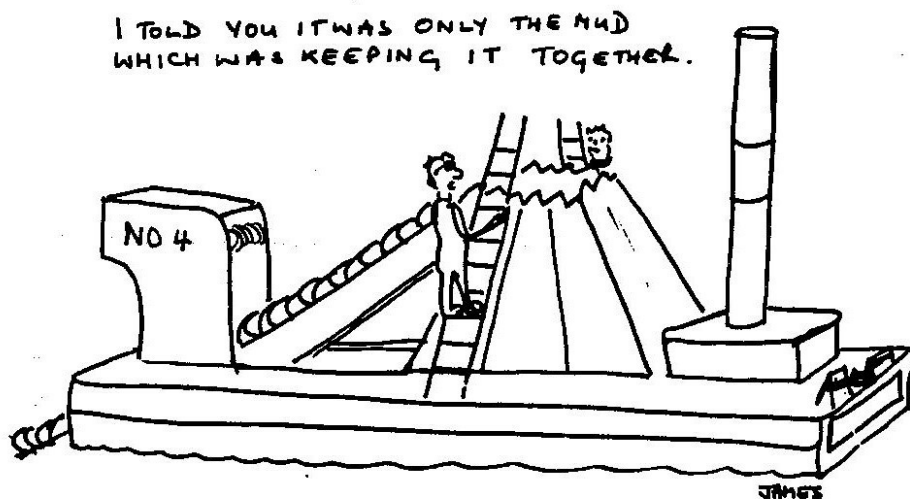
The vintage tug Kennet, crewed by Friends, helped to transport Father Christmas following the switching on of Gloucester's Christmas lights. The old gentleman was brought down to the docks in Peter's carriage, and he boarded Kennet opposite Merchants Quay, watched by a huge crowd. Then as Kennet, crewed by Alan Morgan, Terry Delibridge and Des Fforde, moved out into the Main Basin, Father Christmas was given a good send off with a superb display of fireworks.

Earlier in the autumn, Kennet stood in for Queen Boadicea II when the larger boat went on a whole day trip to Sharpness and back. Operating from just opposite Merchants Quay, Kennet ran trips down the canal to Monkmeadow Dock and back. The money collected on this, as on other occasions, goes towards the Dredger Restoration Fund.

Work Starts on Dredger Exterior

Three Sunday working parties have made a great start on refurbishing the outside of the dredger. Regulars Graham Earle, John and Sue Millican, Neil Kemp and Janice Lyall were joined by other Friends, all working under the supervision of Des Fforde. Chipping hammers and wire brushes were used to clear patches of rust from the boiler casing, the funnel and parts of the bucket ladder. A new aid also tried was an electric-powered whirlaway wheel which had 21 toothed disks to attack the rust, and this proved very effective. Once an area had been cleared of rust and loose paint, it was given a coat of primer. The new steel panels to go around the bucket well were also painted.

At the same time, good progress was made in removing caked mud from the top of the dredger tower and down the bucket ladder. Initial work with scrapers and brushes was slow because of the awkward shapes and difficult access, but all was to change when Des Fforde produced a pressure washer. This was able to search out mud from parts that other methods had not reached, and most of the mud was soon washed away. However, difficulty was encountered trying to clear the hard caked mud in the cowls enclosing the lower half of the main drive wheels at the top of the tower. An attempt was made to use the pressure washer to liquify the mud, but initially it would not drain out of the hole at the bottom of the cowl. John Millican tried to clear the drain hole by using a long steel rod while standing on the deck, but this was only partially successful. Eventually, he climbed a ladder, poked a spike up the hole and just managed to keep to the side as the mud came pouring out.



Friends Go Lifting and Shifting

Friends were out in force for the Museum's Lifting and Shifting Weekend in October. Half the Museum car park was enclosed by barriers, and the area was busy all weekend with demonstrations by vintage and modern cranes and other equipment. Friends were selling tickets at the gate and also working many of the Museum exhibits.

BET Ltd, who sponsored the weekend, brought along a huge hydraulic platform which could reach up to 200 feet above the ground. It was said to be the largest in the world, and it had been doing jobs all over Europe. They had a camera mounted on the platform looking down, and those on the ground were invited to wave whilst watching themselves on a television screen. Members of the public were not taken up on the platform, but one Friend managed to talk his way into having a go and so obtained some unique photographs.

BET were also showing some other items of heavy plant, including a dumper truck, a digger and a fork-lift truck, which carried out demonstrations at various times during each day. The British Waterways floating crane Gloucester moored in the Barge Arm was also in action at times. Just across the car park was a huge Scammel heavy tractor that had been restored by an enthusiast, and other vehicles on show ranged from a Model T Ford van to a David Brown mini-tractor which chugged around the car park most of the weekend.

For children of all ages, the horse and cart rides provided by Peter and some of his friends proved very popular, and a miniature train ride was also kept busy. There was a fine display of stationary engines by the Mid-Gloucestershire Engine Preservation Society and an interesting collection of working model boats shown by Tim Vale (described on a separate page). Also in the car park were publicity and sales stands from the Inland Waterways Association, the Cotswold Canals Trust and the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society. In the Schools Room were two fantastic displays of model cranes which both owners thought were unique until they met at the Museum.

Around the Museum yards and quayside, many of the Museum's working exhibits were being operated by staff and Friends. The steam crane was demonstrating the transfer of sacks from the motor boat Oak into a railway wagon and was then putting them back again later. The Mercury tractor shunted the fruit van and an open wagon out into the car park and back again. The Rapier crane lifted boxes and barrels on and off the

railway wagon, and a Lister auto-truck chugged round the yard from time to time. The Fielding engine was running much of the time, and there were demonstrations of wood turning and ropework in the Carpenters Shop.

Friends were also busy operating the Museum's historic craft. The dredger boiler was in steam for the first weekend since its sinking last June, and it was great to hear the whistle sounding again and to see the aft winch turning (albeit somewhat spasmodically). The tug Kennet was taking passengers on trips around the docks, with the money raised going towards the dredger restoration fund, and Severn Progress was in action too. Progress is not so suitable as Kennet for taking passengers, but she did provide an opportunity for many of the helpers to get afloat, and she gave a couple of former boatmen a nostalgic reminder of their younger days.

Another major contribution from the Friends was helping to sell tickets at the gate. The original idea was just to sell tickets for the outside Lifting and Shifting area, with visitors paying extra if they wanted to go into the Museum building. But when it became apparent that many of the visitors wanted to do both, it made sense to sell both tickets at the gate. Although this was a bit more complicated for the Friends, they coped very well and were able to provide excellent support for the member of staff who was also at the gate. A further part of the duty was to open a way through the barriers when a horse and cart needed to pass through.

The weekend was a great success in providing a wide range of activities for visitors to watch, but it was disappointing that more did not come to enjoy what was on offer. Attendance was not helped by a very heavy rainstorm on Saturday morning. This was not appreciated by the exhibitors either, as the rain was blown in under the shelters, and water was streaming down the car park on its way to the drains. Sunday was a much better day with a good amount of sunshine, and there is no doubt that those who came enjoyed an excellent show.

As things were coming to an end on Sunday evening, both Kennet and Progress set off down the canal taking many of those who had been helping during the day. On their return, however, they found that there was no one to open Llanthony lift bridge to let them get back into the main dock. Unfortunately, it was just the time when the bridge keeper has to walk round to open the bridge giving access into the Victoria Dock, but eventually he returned and the helpers were able to get back to what was by then an almost deserted Museum.



Model Boats on Show

One of the exhibits adding variety to the Lifting and Shifting Weekend was a collection of working model and toy boats brought along by Tin Vale. A temporary pool had been set up for him in the car park, and he kept a selection of boats in action throughout the weekend to entertain the visitors.

Tin's interest in model boats developed from experience with his full size Dawncraft cruiser based at Hanbury Wharf on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. He built a radio controlled model of this and then discovered the fun of collecting toy boats through visits to toy fairs and swapmeets.

Tin now has over fifty boats in his collection, ranging from pre-war Hornby clockwork speedboats made in tinfoil to a radio-controlled hovercraft and an electrically driven hydroplane with a three-bladed air propeller made in Hong Kong. Of particular interest was a clockwork paddle steamer with huge wheels which splashed around the pool in great

style - the wheels also work on dry land if necessary! Although not strictly a boat, another popular exhibit was an electrically driven shark which cruised around just under the water menacing a clockwork frogman, much to the delight of the younger spectators.

Tim had several sailing boats on show, which took their turn on the water. He also produced a West German Schuco wire-controlled cruiser and several modern Japanese and Taiwanese radio-controlled toy boats for hands-on use by younger members of the public. Towards the end of the weekend, the latter were performing somewhat erratically due to water in the works, but they subsequently dried out with the aid of a hair drier!

Woodturning in the Workshop

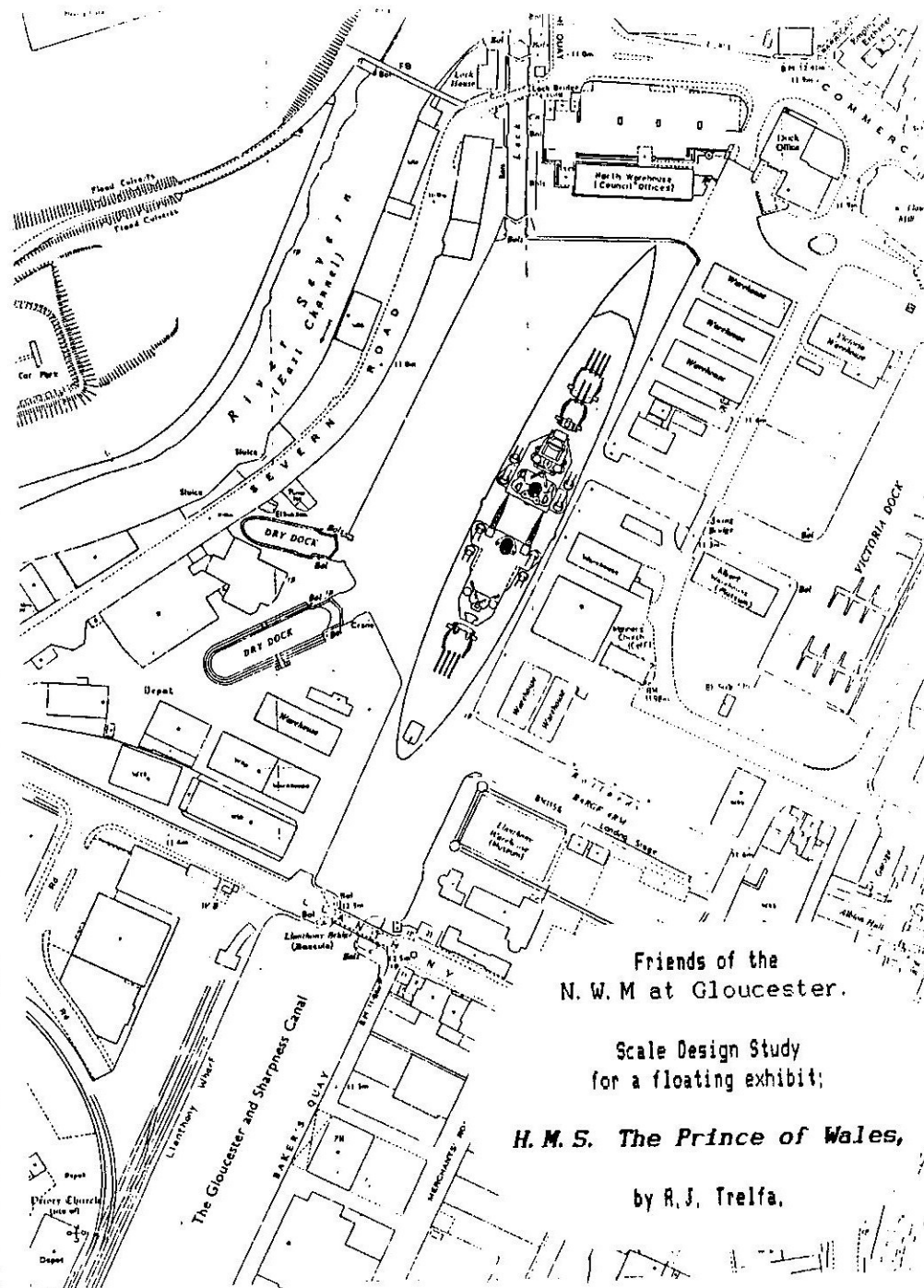
Les Drewery's contribution to the Lifting and Shifting Weekend was to set up his own lathe in the Carpenters Workshop and demonstrate the art of woodturning while chatting to those passing by. He started making greenhouse dibblers for pricking out seedlings and also some small spinning tops which he gave to the children, but he soon found his services were in demand for special requests.

One of the modellers in the Schools Room asked if Les could make some barrels to go on a model lorry, Les soon had two simple shapes made, and after prompting by Colin Jones, he did a bit more turning to leave four rings standing proud to represent the hoops. For the next batch, however, he found it was better to represent each hoop by making two fine grooves and painting with a felt tip pen between them.

After this, the modeller asked if Les could make a vertical boiler for a model crane. They worked out the sizes by scaling from the Museum's steam crane, and Les turned the boiler and its chimney out of one piece of wood, leaving the modeller to paint in the fire door later.

Another special job followed from a conversation with a visitor who had his own lathe but was not sure how to meet his wife's request for some lace bobbins. Les immediately set to work and soon had some examples for the visitor to use as patterns in making his own.

Although Les was not trying to sell his wares, some money was donated, and Les has passed this on to the dredger fund.



Friends of the
N. W. M at Gloucester.

Scale Design Study
for a floating exhibit;

H. M. S. The Prince of Wales,

by R. J. Trelfa.

Friends Back Museum Purchases

The Friends Committee has agreed to allocate £550 to pay for a number of small items that will improve the Museum's collection. A colour print of Constable's Flatford Mill, showing a Stour lighter under construction, will be specially mounted to go on view on Level 1 as part of the boat-building display. In a rather different style, a poster for a film called *The Bargee* (starring Harry Corbett of *Steptoe* fame) will be framed and mounted near to the boatmen video on Level 3.

Another item to be paid for is an old type of battery with black rubber around the outside to suit the Mercury tractor. These are now hard to find, and the Museum is fortunate to get one. The jib of the steam crane is showing signs of rust as its surface was not properly prepared before painting, and so it is planned to get the whole thing shot-basted and hot-zinc sprayed. This treatment is recommended in a book on corrosion that is one of three being paid for by the Friends. The other two are 'Shipshape and Bristol Fashion' (the story of the shipbuilders Charles Hill and Sons) and 'A Rudimentary Treatise on the Construction of Cranes and Machinery' (a reprint of an 1850 publication).

Friends Open Evening

If you would like to learn more about the voluntary activities undertaken by the Friends or if you would just like a friendly evening out, do come along to the open evening on 28 April. Gather in the Museum car park by 7pm for a short trip down the canal on *Queen Boadicea II* or meet in the Museum Schools Room at 7.30. Topics to be covered will include acting as a host to visiting parties, restoring and working exhibits, research, crafts, helping with special events and publicising the Museum at shows. This will be an opportunity for new and established Friends to learn about helping the Museum and to meet the organisers and Museum staff. Whether you are willing to join in or prefer watching, you will be welcome.

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 invite them along to the open evening noted above.

Hosts and Helpers Wanted

The Museum will be staying open late on several evenings next summer when hosts will be required to escort booked parties, and there will be special weekend events when helpers will be wanted to act as marshalls etc. 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, try to come along to the Open Evening noted opposite or please contact Richard Trelfa on Gloucester 304116.

Winter Gales On The River

By Josephine Jeremiah

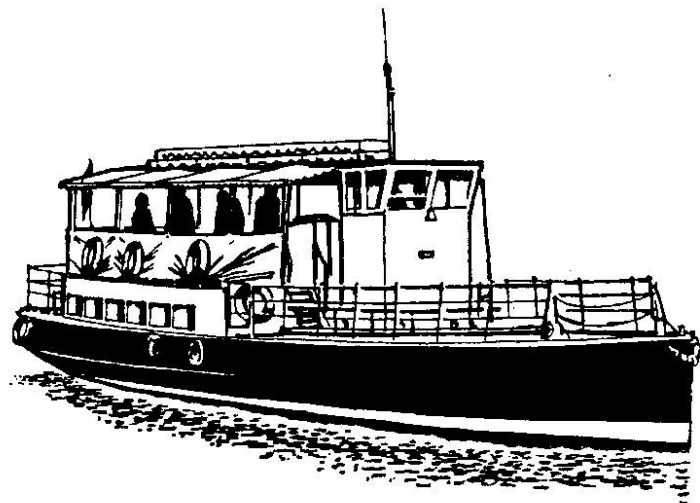
Winter gales are quite alarming for people living afloat. Imagine what its like lying in bed in a boatman's cabin and listening to the wind whirling up river and pounding on the back doors, for all the world sounding like someone demanding to be let in. It's difficult to get to sleep when the rain is pelting down on the cabin roof and the waves are lashing against the side, next to the very spot where my head is on the pillow. On particularly turbulent nights the rain drives right under the roof hatch and sprays my face as I lie, trying to stay calm, while the boat sways backwards and forwards.

All sorts of thoughts stray into my mind. Suppose the ropes were to snap and the boat go sweeping down river towards the weir! No, the boat is securely tied with four ropes. It couldn't happen, could it? Well then, suppose the wooden pontoon, to which the boat is so securely tied, should break away from the main walkway and both pontoon and boat go shooting down to the bridge! It's a chance in a million, isn't it? Suppose the boat were to topple over in a whirlwind! How can it, with at least five tons of paving stones as ballast? These are the considerations which spin around my head in the early hours.

Turning over, I try to find a cool spot in the bed. It's roasting in the back cabin because the wind has whistled down the chimney and whipped up the fire in the black coal range. The copper kettle, filled ready for the morning, is steaming away merrily before time. Anyone for a cup of tea? When the first dawn light is filtering through the glass bull's eye, set in the roof of the cabin, I fall asleep at last. In the morning everything seems different. Even though the wind is still blowing quite fiercely, the sun is shining and I'm ready to brave the elements - again!

Six Glorious Months

*Relief skipper
Doug Griffey
describes some
highlights of
the first six
months operation*



When QB2 arrived in late March, she went straight into service running trips on the canal as though she had been here for years, thanks to Mr Tony Conder who picked a great team to operate her. Des Fforde acted as marine superintendent, Pete Evans was commodore skipper working during the week and Doreen and Mary did great work as PR girls, also adding glamour and a personal touch on board to make parties a success.

At the public launch, we had on board Mr Raymond Baxter, founder of the association of Little Ships, and many Gloucester veterans of Dunkirk, including the Rev Gethyn-Jones of Berkeley. When we pulled away from Merchants Quay, the QB2 was brought to a halt in the docks and the Rev blessed the ship. This day's event gave the boat national coverage, and shortly after we had a soldier on board who was rescued by QB2 at Dunkirk. There was a party of children also on board, and we got them to sing 'For he's a jolly good fellow' which brought a tear to his eye.

The work picked up quickly, and we were getting evening disco and jazz parties, birthday anniversaries and company sales promotions. This is where Sallie and Caroline, the catering staff from the Museum, became involved. They put on board food fit for a king - but then we already had the Queen.

July 24th was a happy day. We had to pick up a coach load at Merchants Quay and drop them off at Tewkesbury. Les Rae was skipper, and as the party boarded, he realised they were the old regulars from his pub, the Kings Head at France Lynch. It was just like the 'This is Your Life' programme with Les as the star.

June, July, August and September were very good months, the weather being just right for pleasure craft. Our normal sailings were to Hempsted Bridge and back, but we tried some two hour morning trips up the River Severn to Ashleworth and also some two hour trips down the canal, and these were also successful. A long trip to Sharpness brought a great turnout, again thanks to publicity arranged by Tony and Co.

This was followed by the BV Ecological and Environmental Department running a trip from Sharpness to Gloucester with lectures explaining the ecological and environmental nature of the canal and its banks. Mr Stumpf, the local waterways manager, gave an interesting talk on the redevelopment of Sharpness and Gloucester Docks and the prospects for the future of his kingdom.

Its been six glorious months for the QB2 in this historic port of Gloucester. Yes, she has earned some money, but she has been pushed very hard, doing 12 hours work some days. She has recently been into dry dock for overhaul, and soon she will have her annual survey, as safety is the prime factor when carrying passengers. There is a DTI talk we go through before we sail on every trip to make sure everyone knows the abandon ship drill and where are the lifebelts, rafts and firefighting apparatus. Hopefully these will never be needed and QB2 will long continue proudly to cruise the river and canal.

River Trip on Queen Boadicea II

Back in July, Friends joined with members of other societies for a very successful evening cruise up the river on QB2. Well over 100 people joined the boat near Merchants Quay on a fine evening, and once through Gloucester Lock, the bar opened and there was a salad supper for those who had ordered it. During the cruise up the river, Fred Rowbotham pointed out sights of interest and recounted some of his fund of stories.

At Ashleworth, skipper Doug Griffey took the boat into the bank so that some could get ashore to sample the different brew at the Ship. About half the party remained on board, continuing the cruise to Haw Bridge, and on the return journey the boat stopped again at Ashleworth to pick up those who had gone ashore. As coffee had not been provided as intended, the Museum gave a refund on the cost of the suppers, and this has been donated to the Dredger Fund. Thanks to John Foley, Alan Garnett and Alan Bailey for making the arrangements.

Education Award for Museum

The Heritage Education Trust has nominated the Museum for their annual Sandford Award for excellence in the provision of educational services and facilities. The citation notes that a wealth of artefacts, documents, pictures, photographs and maps affords all visitors focussed educational experiences which provide information, understanding and, above all, enjoyment. The award recognises the staff's work in providing a service which is in tune with current developments in both museum and national education.

My Trip to the Waterways Museum

By Rebecca Starkey, age 8.

On the 10th of October, my year from Hall Green Junior School went to the National Waterways Museum. When the teacher told us we were going, I was excited because I am a Friend of the Museum and Granny (Doris Toller) and Rosemary work there, I have been lots of times before. I like the Waterways Museum because there are lots of things to do and see.

First we got off the coach and went through the Museum, and then we went into the Schools Room and played with the jigsaws and the rubbings, then we dressed up. Then we went outside and had a go on the pumps and played with the toy boats.

Then we went on a boat through the canal to a bridge and then we turned round and went back again. I liked the boat trip. We had dinner on it. We were split up into groups and my group went into the shop next. I bought a stained glass window, a pencil and a sew-on badge. Then we went out of the shop and went in the Museum. We had some worksheets and we had to look out for things and tick the boxes and write about things. We had a go on the computer game and put our heads in the helmets and we saw fish, but my pony tail got in the way and my head wouldn't go in properly. We had a go on the tiller, and this man kept telling us to do things and I was getting fed up with him.

Then we went outside and went on two boats. I had a go on the steering wheel on one of the boats and in the other one we saw a bed in a cabin. We went back to the Schools Room and got our coats and bags, then we got together and went through the Museum and back to the coach. Then we went back to school.

Steam Bonus at Diglis Open Days

An added bonus for the thousands who visited Diglis Locks for the open days in October was the chance to see British Waterways last steam powered dredger in action.



The prime attraction at Diglis was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the maintenance work being done on the river locks, and visitors were able to climb down into the smaller of the two lock chambers. Here they could appreciate the huge size of the chamber and the lock gates, and they could see the lasher holes through which water flowed to fill or empty the lock. Also noticeable were three distinct vertical grooves in the upper cill, presumably caused by wear from repeated impacts from narrowboats, tugs and barges. For those prepared to queue, it was also possible to climb down a shaft to see a section of culvert between the locks.

In the workshop was a video taken inside the culverts that were no longer accessible as they were back in service. These had been inspected for the first time since the lock was built almost 150 years ago, and not surprisingly quite a bit of maintenance work had been required. Also on show was equipment used by the maintenance staff and some old photographs of the area.

On the river, the tug Severn Active was open to the public, there were occasional diving demonstrations and the Severn Traveller, now a trip boat at Worcester, was running boat trips.

A surprise bonus was to see a curl of steam rising from No.3 bucket dredger and to go on board while she was working. No.3, originally named John Bradley, was built in 1934 for the Severn Navigation Commission by Charles Hill and Sons of Bristol. She still works on the Severn between Gloucester and Stourport and in an average year will dredge over 60,000 tonnes of mud and sand from the river. Her general design is very similar to that of No.4 at the Museum, although the height of her tower is reduced, presumably to help get under the fixed bridges on the river. Originally coal fired, she has been converted to oil burning, and as a further concession to modern times, a Lister diesel has been installed recently to power improved lighting. It was good to see the old lady is still going strong and is well looked after by her crew.