

Diary Dates

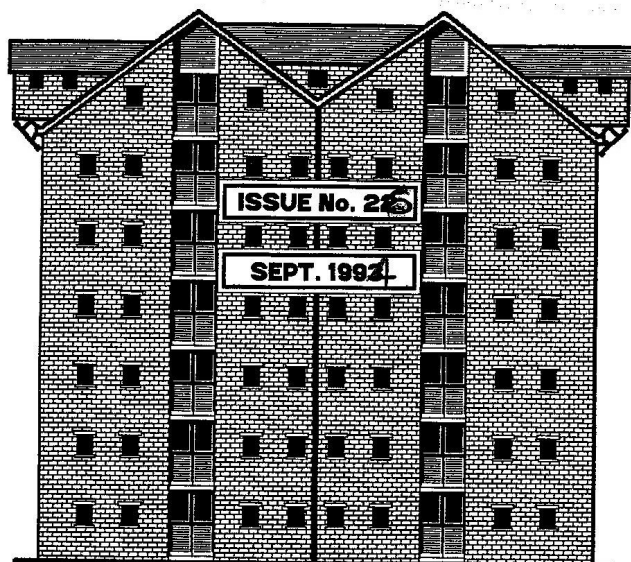
Friends Meetings to be held on the 4th. Tuesday of each month, alternating with the Gloucester & Hereford branch of the IWA, who hope to arrange meetings on the 2nd. Tuesday.

- Oct 1-2 - Preservation and Modellers Weekend. Live steam, horse rides, the world of precision modelling, cranes, boats and trains.
- Oct 11 IWA Meeting at Tewkesbury Yacht Club, 7.30pm. A talk by the Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation Co.
- Oct 25 - Edward Paget-Tomlinson will talk on 'Colours of the Cut', illustrated with some of his originals and slides. This promises to be a 'colourful' evening!
- Nov 8 - IWA Meeting 7.30pm. in NWM Schools Room. A talk by Mrs. A.McKenzie - Gloucester Fire Service on Fire Prevention & Safety on Boats.
- Nov 20-Dec 11 - Exhibition of paintings by Harley Crossley.
- Nov 22 - Hugh McKnight will show his film 'From the Rhine to the Danube'. This is an epic 2-reeler which includes footage of the new canal connecting these rivers, opened in 1992, an opportunity not to be missed.
- Dec 13 - IWA Meeting at Tewkesbury Yacht Club, 7.30pm. Meet R.J.Duffy, Solicitor and Secretary to the British Waterways Board.
- Dec 20 - (no, not the 4th. Tuesday). Members Night! Wanted, six to eight contributors! Here is a chance to tell other Friends of some interest or hobby you have. It is informal so there is no need to feel self-conscious. It is hoped that these contributions will take 1 to 1½ hours leaving plenty of time for a chat and mince pies. If you would like to take part, please inform William Rowley (Tel.Glos.415300) beforehand so that a sequence and any equipment needed can be arranged. Even if your contribution is only some mince pies, please come and make the evening a success.
- Jan 24 - Tony Conder will give a talk entitled 'In Cressy's Wake'.
- Feb 28 - Avril Lansdell will talk about 'Clothes of the Cut - Costumes connected with the history of the Canals'.
- Mar 28 - Harry Arnold talking about 'A Year in the Life of a Waterway Journalist' It is hoped that he will include some mention of the new canal that crosses the border in Ireland, and which was opened in 1994, an event which he covered.

All Friends Meetings are held in the Museum's Schools Room, entered by the grey stable door in the building to the left of the Museum Main Entrance. All meetings start at 7.30pm. Use Southgate St. entrance to the car park.

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Llanthony Log



Newsletter of the Friends of the
National Waterways Museum

The "Friends" is Registered Charity No. 800282

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EDITORIAL

Firstly, I wish to thank, both on behalf of those taking part and of myself, Museum Curator - Tony Conder for inviting the helpers at the 1994 Boat & Watersports Jumble to an evening up-river cruise and buffet meal aboard the Queen Boadicea II on 25 May. My thanks also to Skipper Des Fforde and his crew for a most enjoyable trip.

Secondly, as you will see in an article in this Issue, 18 May was quite a 'red letter' day as the restored main engine of No.4 Steam Dredger steamed again for the first time since the dredger sank on 22 June 1990! Much hard work, dirty hands and even maybe an occasional naughty word was fully justified and rewarded.

Finally I hope that you find the Llanthony Log to be interesting and informative. I am always prepared to receive any comments or criticism (but I hope constructive) that you may wish to make.

A.L.G.

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ON HOLIDAY IN GERMANY

by Tony Conder

A handwritten notice appeared on the camp site washing-up room door offering a trip to Bacharach on MV La Paloma, tickets available from an unknown source - 'Vorbereitung' - which defeated our knowledge of the language.

On the Monday by accident I met the owner of 'La Paloma' but the language gap was too great - yes, the trip was on, but where you got tickets remained a mystery.

So on the Tuesday, having been rebuffed by the only ticket office on Lahnstein's river frontage (belonging to KD Koln Dusseldorfer - a rather smart brand of huge ferry) we waited by a small gangway with a growing crowd.

True to timetable a boat appeared in mid-stream, came to shore downstream in Niederlahnstein, then crossed the river to Stolzenfels and then back towards us at Oberlahnstein. The crowd surged forward, no worries about tickets or money and we were on board and away upstream.

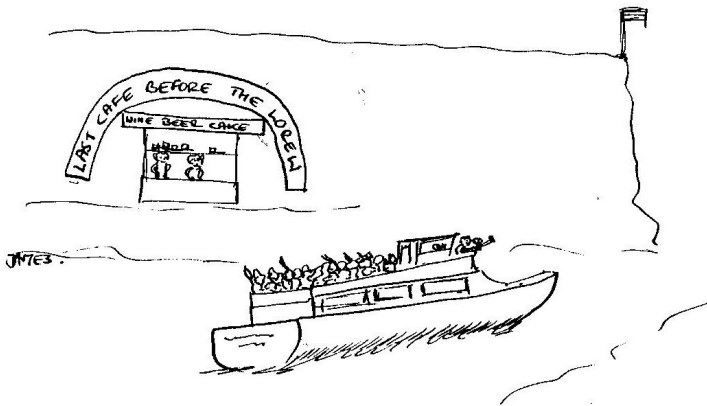
The Germans settled to a solid four hour eating binge, coffee and cake chased down by a beer followed by giant ice cream desserts and on into proper lunch. Their trip and their food was only broken by the stop at Bacharach, where they managed to stagger to the town's cafe for more ice cream and cakes.

We went upstairs to the front of the boat and watched the river flow by. MV Paloma turned out to be two years old in immaculate condition and beautifully fitted. The ship handling in the fast Rhine current was tremendous as we zoomed up the river picking up at every little landing stage until there were around 150 people on board. Just south of Boppard there was a brief German announcement and a man came to collect ticket money and we were away properly.

The Rhine is everything everyone has ever written about it. The vineyards

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sweep down to the river and on either side busy railways enliven the scene. Small towns cling to the banks threatened by such a variety of castles that a theory on narrow boat painting derived from a lost German bargee has to be on the cards. The castles are all real and have a similar history - built by minor German lords or major bishops to repel the French. Blown up by the French who found them repellent and then rebuilt by rich business men, German, American or Japanese who found them romantic (and profitable).



On the river, Swiss gas boats, Dutch container ships, 3500 ton German push tows carrying coal, aggregates and petrol flowed along, all mixed up with giant passenger hotel boats and day trippers.

We went up through the Rhine gorge under the towering height of the Lorelei where traffic is signalled through the narrowest section on a special light system. A small tug rushed downstream and swept through the traffic to put a line on board one of Rab Karsher's fleet of petrol tankers - either the captain was fed up pushing against the stream or his engine was overheating.

After four fabulous hours we arrived at Bacharach and toured the town - hoping that our understanding of German was correct and that we did have two hours ashore. We discovered an English speaking hole-in-the-wall to refill the coffers and a Riesling-flavoured ice cream to cool us down.

Yes the boat was still there, we raced back down the river in only two hours. We were passed by Peugeots, BMW's, VW's, even minis on the roofs of the boatmen's floating homes. The heat of the day was tremendous and some skippers had an arrangement to continuously pump fountains of water over their cabins cooling them even as the boats progressed. One family had a giant play pen in place of the car.

Once past Boppard, the stop-start journey recommenced as the Germans

left the ship and no doubt belted home for a slap-up supper to make up for the lack of a proper meal since lunchtime. Eat? - us? We'd scarcely had time sitting there with our mouths open watching the action and the scenery.

There are cruises every day from Koblenz but if you can't make that, then come to Hugh McKnight's Film Show which includes the Rhine, on November 22nd, 1994 in the Schools Room at 7.30pm.

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DONATIONS

The Treasurer is pleased to acknowledge the following donations received between February 1994 and August 1994, (with apologies for any errors or omissions).

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BROMYARD GALA 1994

This article has been provided by one of our regular contributors - Pauline Hill

The weekend started for Jane on Saturday 2 July preparing Peter, cleaning him up and trying to tidy up his feathers which had been singed when he stood in a bonfire left smouldering in his field. He was washed and brushed and had his mane put into elastic bands to keep it on the correct side and to stop it from becoming knotted during the night. The cart was dusted off and loaded on to the trailer ready to be transported to Bromyard on Saturday evening.

With Peter being such a large beast, transport had to be carefully arranged. Obviously he would not fit into an ordinary sized trailer, so Jane had to spend some time during the week arranging to borrow Eric's lorry and finding a driver. A friend of Jane's - Roger Parker - was kind enough to give up his Sunday to do the driving.

On Saturday, Trevor and I went to the Museum to find the cart loaded and roped ready to go. Peter was munching hay in the cart shed, - no chance of him rolling in the mud there. We hitched up the trailer and set off, slowly over the speed humps, and over Westgate Bridge, at which point the trailer decided to take on a wobble which felt extremely unsafe. Trevor decided that the problem was that the cart was too far back so that the weight was not properly on the back of the car and therefore the weight distribution on the car's wheels was incorrect. We pulled into the layby at Highnam, adjusted the load, re-roped it and proceeded on our way. Although I had done this last year, it still seemed very strange to me to be towing this load. It bounced quite considerably, unlike my caravan which travels behind so smoothly that you almost forget it is there. Anyway, we got to Bromyard and unhitched the trailer after having pushed the cart back into the middle of it as otherwise it would have tipped up with the weight so far forward.

On Sunday morning we went down to the Horse area to check that the cart was still O.K. Shortly afterwards Roger came in driving the lorry with a cab full of people and Murphy - Jane's dog - on the dashboard. Waving from the back was a hand. It couldn't be Peter!...no it was Helen, my daughter, who had travelled with Peter in the back of the lorry. She said that he had dozed all the way.

Jane unloaded the horse and tied him up to the back of the lorry, where he quite happily mowed the grass whilst the public came and looked and wondered at this massive beast who was so placid - well he is for most of the time. Jane had a request from a gentleman who wished to paint a picture of Peter to put on a plate with a narrow boat. Some of Peter's friends from the Museum's Horses Weekend were there together with some new friends. Jane and Helen dressed Peter up for the Parade and with the help of a

few strong men unloaded the cart and hitched him to it.

They headed for the Parade Ring where the Stewards, with the help of some ropes kept the spectators to the sides as horses can be unpredictable and dangerous. In the Ring, each horse was introduced and the commentator talked a bit about Shires and their role in our history. The horses behaved very well despite the fact that the Weston Cider Company horses wanted to gallop rather than walk. There was a very sweet 10 week old foal who behaved extremely well. Helen was quite chuffed when she was introduced as Peter's groom.

Peter was returned to the box to continue mowing the grass whilst Jane and her helpers looked around the show. The Bromyard Show is very interesting, much like a small Three Counties Show, with stalls and exhibits and a continuous programme in the Arena. Peter is very good when left at the lorry, just relaxing and enjoying all the attention he receives.

The tack was carefully put back on to the lorry and Peter given some water and a haynet. The tack had all been polished up for the weekend and would have to be done again before being out away for the next event. Peter is quite an ambassador for the Museum as people from many areas remember him. When his cart has the Museum location painted on it, which is the next job to be done, people who have not met him will then know where he lives and works.

Jane next loaded Peter on to the lorry and he was taken home to have a well earned roll and graze in his field. Later Trevor and I reloaded the cart on to the trailer and roped it on making sure that it was correctly positioned. The journey home was uneventful and we arrived at the Museum gate to hear the clatter of cans in the dustbin enclosure in one corner of the car park. It could have been some kind of wild animal, but on careful investigation, we found a fellow standing in one of the large bins throwing out the aluminium cans he found there. We did not challenge him as he could have had permission. I did wonder whether he also did this after the Horses Weekend when the bins were half full of something rather mucky and smelly. After removing the ropes from the cart and moving it to the centre of the trailer, we unhitched it from the car, locked the Museum gate and headed back to Bromyard to fetch our caravan. As we left the Docks, we again saw the 'can man' submerged in a large bin by the Barge Arm, again rummaging amongst goodness knows what for cans.

We finally arrived home at 11.30pm. to find Jane fretting as to where we had got to. She did not realise that Trevor and Ray Swan had had to load two very large stationary engines after which Ray had a spot of bother with his lorry for which we had stopped to help sort out.

We look forward to next year which will be our 15th. Bromyard Gala and Peter's 4th. We should also have Landrover to pull the cart as everyone keeps telling me that doing it with my Cavalier is not legal!

A Multi-Directional Roller Skate

This contribution comes from David McDougall who is responsible for the acquisition and restoration of exhibits at the Museum.

"Oily! Do Not Touch" the label says on the new lump of boat driving machinery at the bottom of the stairs from the Level 3 displays, adjacent to the Propulsion Room. The rest of the label, titled more to keep visitors' hands off the polished brass and copper parts than to stop them getting oily hands, then gives the essential details:

"Marine Steam Engine, Triple expansion, built by Savery & Co. of Birmingham, used in the river passenger steamer 'King', based at Tewkesbury, built and operated by Bathursts. Used from 1906 until replaced by a diesel engine in the 1960's." All that sort of thing.

What it doesn't say is anything of the story of how the engine was saved and how it came to be with us at Gloucester. When we have a larger label perhaps we can!

It started several years back with a visitor, one Stewart Lindsay, who in conversation mentioned that he owned this interesting engine, which he had bought from a dealer, and which was in his garage for 20 years and had then been on display at Kew Bridge Engines for some years. The wooden boat 'King' survived in Bristol, and there were hopes that one day it might get the restoration treatment and need its old engine again. Making a note of this I handed out a Museum card with name and phone number.

A phone call this June offered us the engine for display, details arrived in the post and negotiations over the loan were successfully made. Kew Bridge Engines needed more space and were happy to see it going to a good home.

Collecting the engine was something of an interesting experience, not only because Kew Bridge Engines was one of those places you have always wanted to visit but never quite managed, but also because 'King's' engine was a challenge to move. I knew it was on a trolley with castor wheels but didn't know that it was akin to a "multi-directional roller skate" to which it was not fixed at all. It became apparent how unstable this was when the fork lift truck nearly rolled it over as it was manoeuvred into the middle of the Museum's pick-up truck. Faced with a long M4 trip, a belt and braces lashing down job was thought appropriate.

Waved off by the engine's owner at Kew after a welcome guided tour (highly recommended), a worrisome trip followed. The engine, weighed before loading, was exactly the maximum load allowed for the Museum pick-up which slowed it down on the hills to say the least. The belt and braces held up fine watched all the way by Chris Perkins in case they didn't.

The oily, dirty bit followed for several days as Betty and Doris cleaned off years of grime, the engine still displayed on the pick-up. Ron Williams and Alan Garnett produced a new display base, and Alan Russell the wooden packings. The "multi-

directional roller skate" came into its own when manoeuvring the engine into the Museum after causing some consternation as it tried to escape sideways during unloading with our fork lift.

As a finale, the "roller skate" proved rather harder to extract than planned. It took the combined efforts of most of Thursday's volunteers with jacks and packings to swap the base over without tipping the top-heavy engine over in the process.

The engine should be able to join the restored engines in the propulsion display after further cleaning, some dismantling and repainting. Wax protection should make the 'Oily! Do not touch' label unnecessary.

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The Restoration of the 'LILY OF MIRFIELD'

Our Chairman, Peter Wallace tells the tale.

About 18 months ago, Tony Conder gave one of his entertaining talks about the Museum to a society in Chipping Campden and concluded by pleading with the audience not to throw away old items from the attic, but consult their local museum first. Among the listeners was Mrs. Phillipson who had inherited a sailing model boat and was concerned that others should enjoy seeing a unique example of craftsmanship. In due course, our leg-man, Dave McDougall, called to see the model which was, indeed in a sorry state of repair. Mrs. Phillipson recalls that Dave stared at it in silence, with a sphinx-like expression, for several minutes until she could stand it no longer. She burst out "Well, do you want it?" "Yes please" said David, with a beam.

After many months on a table in David's room, I took on the project of restoring it for exhibition in the Museum. The importance of the model soon became apparent, for inside was a note recording that it had been built by George Thornton of Mirfield, Yorkshire and it had been 'launched properly' on the River Calder at Shepley Bridge on 9th. July 1862, shortly before George's 10th. birthday! His father, William Thornton, was a barge builder and undoubtedly guided his son to produce such an excellent model, but as George shortly after became apprenticed to his father, his skill was certainly apparent. Tragedy soon followed, for George died on 5th. November 1865 aged 13 years. His parents naturally treasured the model and on their death it passed to George's sister Margaret who, luckily for us, left the note giving details and dates.

Dave had told me that it was a model of a Humber Keel, but on consulting Paget-Tomlinson's book 'Britain's Canal and River Craft' it transpired that it was a model of a Humber Sailing Sloop, which was larger than the square-sailed Keel and sailed on the wider stretches down-river, where a fore-and-aft rig could be used effectively. It carried general cargoes and could be termed the 'juggernaut' of the Humber estuary. The model's hull is 3 feet long, 9 inches beam and 8 inches draught, carved from a solid piece of oak and hollowed out to provide 3 compartments. A strip lead external keel adds greatly to the weight and it must have been an excellent model to sail. From its condition

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it was much in use in the 3 short years before George' death. The sails are Main, Staysail and Jib, the latter set on a short bowsprit and the overall length with the rudder is 46 inches.

In keeping with Dave's philosophy, I have tried to disturb as little as possible in carrying out the 11 repairs to the fittings on the hull, but the rigging had to be completely renewed and a new set of sails made, copied from the old ones which will be displayed with the model. Most of the blocks and deadeyes were re-used with some being made to match where they were broken or missing. An anchor was clearly a feature of the model, but was missing, so a reproduction has been made of the type used for the vessel. Like the Thames barge, these sloops used lee-boards and it may be deduced from the way the hull has been painted that the model had them. However, as there is no clue on how they were attached to the model, we have decided to omit them.

Another missing feature was a pennant at the masthead and here our friend Paget-Tomlinson supplied a fine drawing of the type of vane used on these craft and a copy was easily produced. Rigging the model proved a delight, for from another source I had a good photograph of this type of vessel under sail. Sure enough, as the work progressed, all the eyes on the hull, mast and spars were there in the right positions take the cordage. About 10 years ago whilst on holiday in Yorkshire, I had bought various reels of twine from the ropeworks at Hawes, so it has been re-rigged with the genuine article!

The final test was an inspection of the finished work by the family, including a lady from Mirfield who had known the boatyard in the old days. Thank goodness, they approved. All that now remains is for a glass case to be made, (not by me), and a little celebration when the model will be 'launched properly' as a Museum exhibit.

Friends ££££ Supports Boat Refurbishment

Friends money has helped with refurbishment of a recent addition to the Museum's collection of floating exhibits. The 1960s work-flat Hesketh was based on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and is named after the village near the north end of the Rufford Branch of that canal. When it was no longer needed by British Waterways, it was acquired by the Museum as a floating exhibit that would also be useful for boat maintenance and as a floating paint store.

The work-flat was lifted out by crane on to the West Quay and given a thorough examination. Rust was chipped out of corrosion pits along the sides, and some of the worst pits were filled with weld metal. Some loose fittings were welded back into place, anodes were attached to the hull to minimise further corrosion, the hull was painted and some floor boards were replaced. All this should keep the work-flat in good order for several years to come.

Money has also been spent on refurbishing the wooden dinghy which was

once used by the dredger crew. The work was carried out in Tomi Nielsen's yard, and the dinghy is now in fine shape again. It occasionally gets taken for a row around the dock which provides added interest for the many spectators around the quayside. H.C-J

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Not Madame Tussaud's

by Betty Conder

"Oh look ! Here's the Legger. You can hear his boots even if he's not moving. But I wonder what the other one's supposed to be doing. Polishing his boots or pointing the brickwork ? Funny place to put a model but clever to get its arm moving like that." What I am doing is touching up the tunnel brickwork with my little paintbox. It's like painting in the bloodstains in the haunted house or or even keeping up with the Forth Bridge. I am forever up on Level 3 dabbing away at fake stone and brick and forever being mistaken for a dummy. If only they wouldn't call me 'it'. I blame all these Theme Parks.

Or there are the occasions when you crawl out from some tight and dirty place on the dredger and some old codger yelps in tones of disbelief "It's a woman !" - that 'it' again ! I don't think that equal rights is making much progress, let alone militant feminism.

My funniest experience in this line was a few years back when a desperate looking man shot in through the door of the Sack Works where I was working and shouted "Eh lad, can yer tell me where to find a bog ?" So I told him and he fled yelling "It's a lass !" Nice to be called 'lass' but he still said 'it'.



More ££££ Aid Promised

The butty Northwich is in need of a major overhaul which could cost around £20,000. An application is being made to the Science Museum for grant aid, but this will only cover half the cost at most, and the Friends Committee has agreed to pay the balance.

The plan is to get the boat into dry dock for a thorough refurbishment of the hull and also to rebuild the interior of the cabin. The present cabin was only intended as temporary crew accommodation when Northwich was paired with the steamer President - it is mainly built of plywood inside a glass-fibre shell. All this has to be stripped out in order to be able to inspect the inside of the hull, and it is intended to rebuild the interior in solid wood which should last longer. Also the floor of the cabin will be provided with hatches so that future hull inspections can be carried out without having to strip everything out again. The glass-fibre outer shell of the cabin will be retained, although it is not authentic, because it provides an effective waterproof enclosure.

The Committee has also agreed to pay for new cloths for the motor boat Oak. The existing cloths have lasted seven years, which is longer than average, but they are now in poor condition. The new canvas supplied will be blue in colour and will have to be painted with white letters and black rubber tyre paint to make it look authentic.

H.C-J

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THE TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE AT THE NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM

Peter Thompson gives an insight into its function and operation.

As visitors enter the main door of the National Waterways Museum it is not immediately apparent that they are, in fact, in the Museum. They are confronted on the left with the entrance to the well stocked Museum shop and to the right, occupying what was once British Waterways reception desk, and taking up about one quarter of the foyer space a Tourist Information Office.

Some may well wonder why this should feature in the building at all. Surprisingly enough it has, in fact, an origin connected with waterways activity. Four years ago, when the I.W.A. National Waterways Festival was about to take place in the canal and dock area of Gloucester, Philip Cooke in his capacity of Leisure Services Officer in charge of Tourism, was anxious to ensure that our many expected visitors should have an adequate Information Service to enable them not only to enjoy the Festival, but to be certain that they could make the most of their visit to our City by seeing its many other places as well as offering details of all the essential services that they might require such as banking, shopping, eating places, medical care and the like during their stay in the City.

To this end he invited Gloucester Civic Trust volunteer staff, who for

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many years had served at the main Tourist Information Office at the Cross to discontinue their activity there and to set up, run and staff the new branch office to serve the needs of the Docks 'on a temporary basis !!!' How temporary is temporary ??? We have now been an integral part of the Museum facilities for more than four years !!

All volunteer staff of the Tourist Information Office are enrolled in the Gloucester Civic Trust but many are also members of the Friends of the National Waterways Museum and we work in close harmony and association with the Museum staff and other Friends of the Museum and regard ourselves as an integral part of the overall attraction.

The Office is open and staffed whenever the Museum is open, with the notable exception that, unlike Museum staff, we do not work on Boxing Day ! Otherwise if they are there we are alongside them.

We differ slightly from a full scale T.I.C. in that we do not offer accommodation booking service (although we can and often do advise visitors in this matter). Neither do we sell anything at all so that in no way do we conflict with the interests of the Museum shop. This apart, we carry a most extensive range of tourist information and also respond to many other enquiries which are only marginally linked to Tourism. It is our philosophy never to send a client away without some measure of help, be it only some suggestion as to where else they might seek the definitive answer to their enquiry. Frequently, however, with a little quick thinking, a spot of research and the surprisingly catholic knowledge of our staff we are able to satisfy some quite obscure and testing enquiries on the spot.

During the course of the four years, we have answered over 60,000 counter enquiries to say nothing of the hundreds, nay, almost certainly thousands, of visitors who have browsed around the display and gone away with leaflets about other things and places that they feel the impulse to visit. At any one time we reckon to have upwards of 100 attractions or venues for which we have leaflets and we can locate and advise on several hundred others. During the course of a year we distribute upwards of 150,000 leaflets. We are frequently complimented on the extensive range of information available. Because of the very wide appeal of the Waterways Museum we deal with visitors from all over the U.K. as well as many overseas tourists from the ends of the earth, from the U.S.A., and Canada to Australia and Japan and many countries between.

Why should we take all this trouble and go to great lengths to promote locations other than those of our own City which, heaven knows, has enough to keep any visitor busy for days. Well we believe that if our clients find a warm, cheerful, helpful welcome at the Tourist Information Office it creates in their minds a good and satisfying image of the City of Gloucester and all its attractions and we are sure that many of them will return in due course to 'GO GLOUCESTERING' yet again and, what is more important, they will tell their families and friends what a splendid place Gloucester is and especially how good the National Waterways Museum and all its accompanying facilities are and how worthwhile it is to pay a visit to us all.

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NO. 4 STEAM DREDGER

*The Restoration Story is brought up-to-date by Wednesday 'Gang' Member
- Alan Garnett.*

Since my last report in the March 1994 Log, very significant progress on the restoration of the main engine has been made, for on Wednesday 18 May, the engine had its first run on steam since the sinking in June 1990! It has taken a long time to reach this point, you may think, and you would of course, be correct, but by relying on part-time volunteers, the costs have been kept remarkably low, albeit with a lengthened time-scale. It has also been a satisfying undertaking for these volunteers.

The engine was only operated for about 10 minutes or so, and as was to be expected after a major overhaul, some minor 'teething' problems were encountered. The main one was a knock in the crosshead bearing block connecting the low pressure piston rod to its associated connecting rod. This is a multi-bearing block which also drives the oscillating linkage to power the condenser air pump together with the feed and bilge pumps. After cleaning, it had been hoped that the block was in a good enough condition to be used without further work, but even with careful shimming, it had proved impossible to obtain satisfactory running clearances. Dave McDougall therefore decided that the block should be removed and sent to a firm in Tipton to have its bearing surfaces refurbished, hard-chromed and reground. This has been completed and the component refitted to the engine. Subsequent steaming has shown that the knock has now disappeared, so the additional work was obviously worthwhile. It was also found that some of the bearings on the Stephenson Link reversing mechanisms were running hotter than was desirable, but some judicious scraping and shimming adjustments appear to have cured this situation. The five main bearings for the crankshaft were fitted with new oiling wicks made from the recommended material, viz. worsted wool yarn, kindly obtained by one of the Wednesday 'Gang' - Jim Simmons. No problems have been experienced with any of these bearings. The alignment of the engine speed governor pulleys required adjustment together with obtaining correct governor drive belt tension.

All running of the engine has, of course, been carried out without the bucket drive belts in position, as the bucket chain is not yet in an operable condition. Without normal load on the engine, the governor tends to 'hunt' i.e. speed-up and slow down the engine, so there is a cyclic variation in engine speed over the governor's 'dead band', which is not too wide so it is not really a problem. After some very recent runs on the engine, Dave McDougall is now satisfied that the main engine restoration is virtually complete.

Other work carried out on the dredger includes the production of two wooden platforms of the same height as the engine bedplate, one at the front and one at the back of the engine. The midships winch has now been dismantled and one of its two cylinders thoroughly cleaned externally, fitted with replacement fibre-glass insulation which is retained in place with a new piece of cleading made from galvanised steel sheet. Further work is continuing on this winch.

Apart from some miscellaneous items such as completing the lagging of steam pipes for the engine, the main outstanding work is to reinstate the bucket belt drives. Although, as previously reported, new belting has been obtained, there is some reservation concerning the durability in operation of the adhesive which bonds the plies which give the required belt thickness. This could be resolved by copper riveting, but it would be an extensive and therefore a time consuming job. Dave has however located some alternative and more suitable belting currently held by the National Trust, which he hopes to obtain in the near future, so that this work may proceed and, it is hoped then allow the dredger to be demonstrated again to visitors as it was prior to its sinking.

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NEW VOLUNTEERS JOIN MUSEUM

Anne Olliver welcomes some new and unusual volunteers to the Museum.

The curatorial department is delighted to welcome 3 new recruits joining our team of dedicated volunteers. They have rejected the dull world of polished carriages at the Railway Museum in York in favour of the real and rewarding work of the waterways. It is with pleasure that we can confirm that they have signed up for lifeservice, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. I will outline briefly their credentials and the nature of the task that they have opted to undertake.

Our first was formerly a cleric with British Rail but assures that the move from the white collar profession to the blue, or should we say black, collar occupation as legger in the tunnel will not be too much of a drop in status. In fact, he is so enthusiastic that he has already begun his work and can be seen on Level 3 stoically accepting the indignity of the filthy costume and having had his clean-shaven complexion dirtied up with boot polish. It is with relief that he has taken over so promptly as the previous volunteer was no longer up to the job - his legs are broken from the strain and he even has a hand missing from an industrial accident. He is being retired for a short period of rest and recuperation but should be back ere long to fulfil another vital role in the Museum's displays (depending on a successful leg operation, of course).

Our second new volunteer has blue blood, being one Queen Victoria Eugenie, who we are delighted to reveal will soon take over from our long-suffering boatwoman on bacon and egg duty in Cylgate's cabin. This is not, I hasten to stress, the Queen Victoria who would make a fantastic boatwoman but a much fairer and slimmer relation. A bit of skilful padding will be in order when the costumes are fitted. Luckily, being of Spanish descent and with auburn hair her face has a freckled appearance not too dissimilar to the ruddy complexion of someone who spends most of her life out of doors.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome a former Senior Steward with British Rail, a rather portly gent (known as the 'Fat Controller' to his friends), for whom we have created the position of Oakum Spinner in the boatbuilding display on the Ground Floor. He too feels no sense of having been demoted and is happy to adopt the pro-active 'hands-on' approach to his work. Let's just hope that come the freezing temperatures of

January with the wind whistling through the Propulsion Room, his enthusiasm will not also have frozen.



Hang on -
that ones Betty
this is the dummy
for level 3.

Joking apart, 3 new dummies have recently been bought by the Friends to replace worn-out existing ones and to make new displays. Advertised in 'Museums Journal', David McDougall jumped at the chance to acquire Gemm's quality models with lifelike waxed faces and fully jointed limbs at a knockdown price (you can expect to pay £1000 for them off the shelf). Initially it looked like all the Railway Museum had left to offer us were royal personages and we were preparing to demote the Georges V, VI and Queen Mary into the legger, oakum spinner and boatwoman with a bit of creative costume and makeup. The republicans amongst us were rubbing their hands with glee over disrespectful lines for the gutter press. As it turned out, however, an administration error on the part of the NRM meant that the wrong museum got our royals and we got what in fact, we had originally hoped for, 'anonymous' characters (Queen Victoria

Eugenie is practically anonymous as no one seems to know exactly who she was). The question of transport was an absorbing one. David suggested putting them on the train at York and sending a deputation to meet them at Gloucester Station, while others thought that the sight of naked limbs in the back of Tony's Montego would turn a few heads on the M5. In the end, however, they turned up courtesy of a Science Museum van.

This seems a good point at which to offer our apologies to the real volunteers who so frequently get mistaken for dummies when working in the Museum. Should new sweatshirts be ordered, I wonder, sporting the exclamation - "We're not dummies, we work here?"

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National Monuments Record Centre at Swindon

The Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England has moved into the former GWR General Office, Kemble Drive, Swindon, (Tel. 01793 414600). This gives us much easier access to the National Buildings Record formerly held in London. The Record Centre is normally only open on weekdays, but material requested in advance can be consulted on the following Saturdays: 15 Oct. 19 Nov. 17 Dec. 1994, 21 Jan. and 18 Feb. 1995. For more details, please contact Hugh Conway-Jones.

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1995 BOAT & WATERSPORTS JUMBLE

This gives advance notice that helpers will be welcomed for the 1995 Boat & Watersports Jumble to be held in the Car Park areas around the Museum on **SUNDAY 2nd. APRIL 1995**. Help with preparation work on Saturday 1st. April will also be much appreciated.

REVISION NOTES

Sometime ago, Hugh Conway-Jones gave us his collected notes on the Museum's outdoor exhibits. They have already been published in early issues of the Log but we have now thought it time to begin to re-release certain items, as space permits. The topics for this issue are **CONCRETE & STEEL, BOAT & BARGE**.

CONCRETE NARROW BOAT

The is the oldest surviving concrete narrowboat. It was one of two BCN type day boats built in 1917/18 by W H Guest of Stourbridge. It was intended as an answer to First World War shortages of conventional boatbuilding materials, but it weighs so much it couldn't carry an economical cargo. With traditional steel bar reinforcement the concrete had to be about 2in thick. It weighs almost twice as much as a normal boat and draws 16ins of water even when empty. Very little is known about its use, but it is thought it was hired out to Birmingham and Tame Main Drainage (now absorbed into Severn Trent). By 1936, it was laid up on the Stourbridge Canal and incorporated into bank protection works beside the Stuart Crystal glassworks, not far from where it was built.

During the summer of 1988 British Waterways planned to provide a new wharf and moorings for visitors to the glassworks. So they arranged to dig out the boat which was then brought down the River Severn to Gloucester. Despite its age the boat was found to be of excellent construction and in a good state of preservation. A small portion of concrete at the stern has been broken away. The Museum expect to repair this with advice from a local firm which is analysing the type of concrete used. It has a crack in the bottom and several smaller ones in the sides through which a certain amount of water weeps in but this does not seem bad enough to require putting the boat into dry dock.

CONCRETE BARGE

The barge was designed by L.G. Mouchel & Prtns. and built by Wates at Barrow-in-Furness about 1942. It was one of over 200 concrete barges built at various sites around the country when steel was in short supply during the Second World War. It was initially used at Avonmouth, and then after the war it was bought by Messrs G.T. Beard for service on the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. It was used once for lightning a steamer on the Northwick Ooze buoy in the Severn estuary, but this was unusual. When commercial traffic came to an end in the 1960s it was dumped on the foreshore at Purton as estuary bank protection and three holes were knocked in the stern to make sure it did not sink. Over the years it filled with tons of mud.

In 1989, Museum staff and volunteers begin an epic rescue by digging out the mud. The barge was eventually floated off on 28 March 1990. It was towed up to Gloucester on the following day amid much hooting and rejoicing.

STEEL BARGE - SABRINA 5

She was built by Charles Hill and Sons at Bristol in 1944 - one of six similar barges ordered by the Ministry of Transport to carry loads of about 160 tons of foodstuffs from the Bristol Channel ports to Stourport for forwarding to the Birmingham area. During the War, many vessels were diverted from London to the west coast ports and it was important to have adequate means of distributing the cargoes quickly.

These operations were managed by the Severn Carrying Company until 1949 when the vessels passed to the newly formed British Transport Commission. At the

same time the port of registry was changed from Bristol to Gloucester. The Sabrina barges continued in service into the 1970s carrying a wide range of cargoes such as copper, aluminium, margarine, tea and dried fruit. The dried fruit was fumigated while on board to kill off any parasites.

Since they stopped working, three of the Sabrinas have been cut up for scrap. Of the remaining boats, one is at Bristol, one at Purton, and No 5 has been restored for the Museum by R W Davis at the Saul Junction boatyard. The paintwork has been restored to the style used around 1960. Examination of the surviving layers showed that the original colour of the upper works was brown and the wheelhouse was grained. Sometime in the 1960s, the brown was changed to blue.

Under the canvas, there are many removable hatch boards running longitudinally and supported on four rolling frames. When loading and unloading, these frames can be pushed along to the ends of the hatch opening to allow large items to be handled easily. The canvas is held in place by battens and wedges around the hatch combing, and strings are lashed over the top to stop the canvas lifting. Early photographs show that the Sabrinas used to carry a lifeboat upturned on the hatches just in front of the wheelhouse. To avoid the boat getting caught on the railings during launching there used to be a plate standing up from the deck to the level of the hatches. Traces of this can still be seen. In later years the Sabrinas were modified to carry inflatable life rafts on the stern deck.

The stanchions and chains running along the side decks were intended to fold down when loading or unloading but they were easily damaged. If the barge came alongside another vessel with an overhanging side the stanchions could be bent inwards which then prevented them from being lowered. So in later years the original stanchions were cut off and new ones were mounted on brackets welded to the hatch combing. Now the original arrangement has been restored.

There are two latches at the top of the rudder post. These were disengaged when the barge was moored so that if the rudder was knocked by another vessel the steering mechanism would not get damaged.

In the wheelhouse the helmsman would often sit on a plank laid across the cabin hatch. The wheelhouse could be partly taken down to get under low bridges when the barge was empty. The roof is of plywood covered with canvas and is light enough to be lifted off. The upper parts of the four sides could then be folded down by undoing four butterfly nuts. This left the anchor winch forward as the highest point on the barge, although the wheel was almost at the same level. Water was stored in the tank in the wheelhouse.

The stern cabin provided living accommodation for the crew of three. There were originally three bunks (one suspended from the deck above) and there were two ventilators (now temporarily capped).

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