

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.

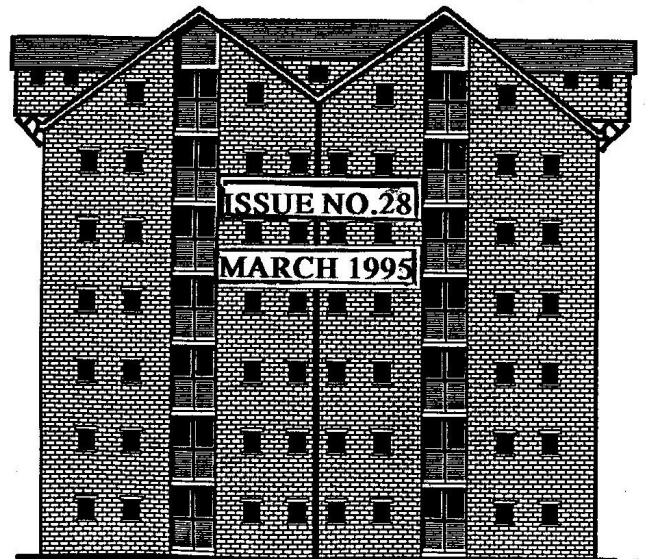
- Mar 25 QB II Round Trip Cruise to Sharpness 10.30am.-4.45pm.
Mar 28 Harry Arnold talking about 'A Year in the Life of a Waterway Journalist' It is hoped that he will include some mention of the new canal that crosses the border in Ireland, and which was opened in 1994, an event which he covered.
April 2 Boat & Watersport Jumble - Museum Car Park.
April 1 to April 30 Roses & Castles.(See page 6).
April 8 QB II Round Trip Cruise to Tewkesbury 10.30am-4.45pm.
April 7-9 IWA South West Region, AGM weekend, Symonds Yat Hotel.
April 11 IWA Meeting at Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club. 7.30pm. A mystery talk by Graham Ettles.
May 2 Annual General Meeting, to be followed by a talk from David McDougall on the role of the Friends in Restoring items for exhibition at the Museum. See also page 4.
May 9 IWA - Walk along Gloucester/Sharpness Canal, led by Charlie Phelps. Start at Saul Junction 7.30pm.
May 13 QB II Round Trip Cruise to Sharpness 10.30am-4.45pm.
May 16 IWA - Tour of Mythe Water Treatment Works. Meet 7pm. Severn Trent Offices, Southwick Park (A38 South of Tewkesbury).
May 20 IWA - Trip to Nottingham Boat Festival. Details from Mary Phelps (Tel. 01452 863437).

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.

Friends are welcome at Inland Waterway Association Meetings. Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club is off the Bredon Road B4080 on the left, 250 yards north of the junction with the A38.

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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.

On 1 April 1995, the Museum starts its 8th year of existence and judging by the remarks in the Visitors Book in the Entrance Foyer, it has become an important tourist attraction of Gloucester and its Docks. In spite of current economic difficulties, it continues to attract visitors in good numbers. Quite often, when I have been chatting to parents visiting for the first time, it transpires that one or more of their offspring has been before on a school party visit, so it seems that the school visits have this useful spin-off.

Although the 'Friends' organisation is in good shape and continues, I believe, to make very useful contribution to the successful operation of the Museum, you will see from the Annual Report on page 5 that our membership has dropped a little. Whilst this is not too significant it is nevertheless undesirable. I would therefore ask you to persuade any of your relations, friends or colleagues who are not already members to consider joining. There is no obligation to take an active part in the Friends' activities - apart from paying the subscription! - but if they can do so, even infrequently, so much the better.

Here is some good news which I have recently received from Dave McDougall. The Science Museum is prepared to make a grant of 30% of the estimated cost of £16,000 towards some much needed work on the butty boat 'Northwich'. This work will include dry-docking, a cabin refit and new cloths. I hope to give more details of this work in a later Issue of the Newsletter. A.L.G.

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BOAT JUMBLE SPONSORS.

Chairman Peter Wallace wishes to state that we are very grateful to the following organisations for their generous sponsorship of our Boat & Watersports Jumble on 2nd April:-

BANK OF ENGLAND,
BARCLAYS BANK plc.,
BIRDS EYE WALLS,
CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BUILDING SOCIETY,
ERMIN PLANT HIRE SERVICES,
EXCHANGE & MART,
WATERWAYS WORLD.

Their help with our heavy initial costs has enabled us to produce improved publicity and organisational features, which will help to make our efforts on the day an even greater success.

Annual General Meeting on 2 May

The Friends AGM will be held in the
Museum Schools Room at 7.30pm.

Agenda

1. Minutes of the last AGM.
2. Report from the Committee.
3. Annual accounts for 1994.
4. Election of Officers and Members of the Committee.
5. Appointment of Auditor.
6. Annual subscription rates.
7. Proposed change to the Constitution.

It is proposed to add a new paragraph at the end of Section 3 of the Constitution: Honorary Life Membership may be awarded at the discretion of the Committee to members who have given exceptional service and are severing their active connection.

After the formal business, which should be very brief, there will be an opportunity to raise comments on how things have gone over the past year and to put forward ideas for the future. Particularly welcome will be any suggestions for speakers or visits and any offers to organise new activities.

All this will be followed by David McDougall talking about the role of the Friends in restoring items for exhibition at the Museum.

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Report of the Committee for 1994

During the year, membership dropped to around 240, of which about 70 per cent were family members. Additional donations with subscriptions over the last two years have raised the £1000 needed for a computer in the Schools Room.

Regular working parties have continued with the restoration of the steam dredger, and a major step forward took place in May when the steam engine ran for the first time since the sinking in 1990.

The restoration volunteers have also renovated a timber trolley, fitted out the cabin of narrowboat Wye and worked on the new cloths for motorboat Oak. A special working party helped to clean and repaint the bottom of the barge Sabrina.

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The boat and watersports jumble in April raised over £6000 to support restoration work and drew appreciative comments both from the public and the traders. Some of this money has been used to pay for the continuing work on the dredger and the refurbishment of the work-flat Hesketh, the motorboat Oak and the wooden dinghy.

Volunteers have regularly operated the vintage tug Kennet, taking passengers around the docks and raising over £1100. Others have worked the Museum's steam crane on special occasions, and members of the Engine Preservation Society continue to operate the Fielding Engine.

Friends played major roles in the Museum's crafts weekend at Easter, the Horses and Tugs Weekend in May and the Preservation and Modellers Weekend in October.

Friends helped to publicise the Museum by providing staff for an event at Salford Quays, Manchester. The computer database of local canal boats has been used by researchers, and a complete print-out with an index of personal names has been supplied to the Gloucestershire Record Office.

A varied programme of winter evening meetings was very well supported, and a visit was arranged to the Black Country Museum. The quarterly newsletter has included a mixture of news, notices of future events and interesting articles written by Friends.

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THE NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM.

Museum Curator Tony Conder has provided the following information on Museum activities during 1994. (Space precluded its inclusion in the previous issue, but better late than never. Editor).

This year staff have visited sites from Burry Port in Wales to Goole in Yorkshire and a lot of other places in between. They have tackled enquiries both from British Waterways and the world at large, from Scotland to Somerset.

The Museum is part of the waterways scene, it is also important in museum terms. We are one of the very few museums to have been registered by the Museums and Galleries Commission with "National" in our title, outside the main government funded museums. Registration relates to the range of services, depth of collections and the comprehensive nature of our displays as well as our "museum worthiness".

We are entrusted by British Waterways to house and manage their National Collection of canal items. From this base the national activities of the Museum grow.

We are currently advising on schemes such as a new preservation trust for the Coal Lifts at Goole on Humberside. Tony is on the committee which is working out details of management, fund raising and preservation. Part of the Museum's collection of two Tom Puddings and a Jebus are on display at Goole already.

At Banbury, British Waterways, the Inland Waterways Association and private developers are discussing the fate of Toolleys Yard. Toolleys is where Tom Rolt sailed from in Cressy before writing 'Narrow Boat'. We are involved in advising on museum management issues and trying to assist in the best possible preservation outcome for the site.

Over the course of the year, Tony and Dave have been involved in a working party assisting the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port with a collections review and both have assisted authors and researchers from all over the country.

British Waterways also use the Museum's knowledge on a range of heritage and marketing issues from "Canals 2000" to the new "Canals Alive". The Museum is involved to a greater or lesser extent in committees, research providing photographs and actively organising events.

We have recently entertained canal managers from Ireland, Holland and France researching the leisure use of inland waterways and the re-use of old buildings.

Other activities include:

- writing and researching articles,
- local and regional committee work,
- British Waterways working parties on historic boats,
- Museum consultancy work.

This is just a quick "snapshot" of the work we do alongside the day-to-day running, the collections management and the local and regional marketing effort, all of which are perhaps more obvious.

It is this work however, which helps put the 'National' into the National Waterways Museum.

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Diary of Artists & Events for April ROSES & CASTLES Exhibition.

1st. 2nd.	Tony Lewery (Painting); Robert Cox (Hand Carving).
3rd:	Tony Lewery (Painting); Ron Hough (Painting).
4th:	PRESS DAY; Tony Lewery (Painting); Ron Hough.(Painting)
8th. 9th.	William Blunn (Painting); Robert Cox.(Hand Carving).
10th. 11th. }	David Williams (Painting).
12th. }	
(School Holidays) Staffed Activities Room for Children 0-100 years	
14th.	David Williams (Painting).
15th. 16th. }	David Williams (Painting); Avril Lansdell (Canal Clothes)
	} Robert Cox (Hand Carving); Paul Bullingham (Rope Making).
17th. 18th. }	
19th. 20th. }	Dick Harper-White (Painting)
21st. 22nd. }	
23rd. }	
(Children return to School).	
26th. & 28th.	Anne Bayston (Hand-painted Canal Ware).
29th. & 30th.	M.Hodson (Hand-painted Canal Ware).

One Less Railway Waggon.

With the acquisition of the two railway vans described in the last issue of the Newsletter, it has been decided to dispense with the two china-clay transport wagons which have served their purpose as exhibits in the car park since the Museum opened in 1988, but which of course, were not really relevant to a Waterways Museum. So far, Dave McDougall has been successful in finding a new home viz. the National Railway Museum in York, for one of them whose place has been taken by one of the Sharpness New Docks wagons from the Museum collection, a more relevant vehicle. Dave is hoping to find a suitable location for the other china clay wagon. If anyone can help in this respect, please contact him at the Museum. (Telephone 01452 318054).



Report of the Meeting of the South West Region - British Association of Friends of Museums - Saturday 18th February 1995, held in the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

The Friends of the National Waterways Museum is, of course, a member of BAFM, and three delegates viz: Chairman Peter Wallace, Secretary Hugh Conway-Jones and myself Alan Garnett, attended the above Meeting which was chaired by Dr. Elizabeth MacKenzie, Vice-Chairman of BAFM.

The theme of the Meeting was:-

"FRIENDS: THEIR ROLE IN FUND RAISING."

A welcoming address by Mrs. Jenny Ogle, Chairman and Organising Secretary of the Friends of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums on the 'Role of Friends'. Our Secretary Hugh Conway-Jones then gave an excellent presentation which included some good slide pictures, on our own fund raising efforts mainly concerning those associated with the restoration, following its sinking in June 1990, of No.4 Steam Dredger. In this respect, he mentioned the profitable use of the vintage tug Kennet in offering 50p a time trips around Gloucester Docks, Alan Drinkwater's 'paint the dredger' fund-raising idea outside the Museum during an 'event' weekend and the milk churn collecting box on the quay by the dredger. He emphasised however, that the main funds have come from the very successful Boat & Watersports Jumble Sale events held annually in the Museum and adjacent car parks since the first one in 1991, and was also at the same time able to give some publicity to the forthcoming 1995 Boat Jumble to be held on 2nd. April. Hugh's talk was very well received by the Meeting.

After this, Miss Beryl Kingan, Hon. Curator & Librarian, Wotton-under-Edge Museum Historical Society explained the apparently optimistic title of her talk ie. 'Raising £1,000 a week'. It transpired that an initial appeal for funds in fact realised some £51,000 in one year but was a once only record and obviously could not be a regular expectation. However it has enabled the Museum to become established and continue to operate successfully with less ambitious fund-raising activities.

A presentation by Miss Debra Skillicorn, Director of Fund Raising for Cansearch, on 'Corporate Fund Raising', gave some useful advice on the the best procedure to be used when appealing for funds from firms and corporate bodies. Mrs Ann Hopkins, Chairman of Friends of Holburne Museum in Bath completed the morning session with her talk 'Funds for Friends' with particular reference to the picture collection.

After a good buffet lunch, Ms. Isobel Churcher, Gloucestershire Museums Officer talked about 'Gloucestershire Museums, and Mr. Stephen Blake, Keeper of Collections, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums described the 'South West Federation of Museums.

A short discussion period was followed by a summary of the meeting by Mr. Robert Logan, Chairman of BAFM (who had travelled from Scotland to be present). The proceedings concluded with tea and cake.

I personally found it to be quite an interesting day and provided an opportunity to meet people from other Museums' Friends organisations and in doing so I hope helped to give some useful publicity to The National Waterways Museum.

Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal Society.

Further to the feature in the December 1994 Issue of 'Llanthony Log' on the new Pomona Lock on the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, Alan Bailey has received a letter from John Fletcher, Secretary of the M.B.&B Canal Society. I am reproducing part of this letter as I believe that it may interest our readers. Editor.

"Thanks for copy of 'Llanthony Log' received this morning.

Immediately before Christmas we got a visit on site at the new Pomona Lock and took another batch of photographs. A specific opening date has not been set but it is likely to be April or May.

As things stand at present its use will be free to Bridgewater Canal licensees. British Waterways licensed craft will have to pay, I understand, £13 per passage, unless they go down and come back the same day, in which case only one toll will be charged.

The lock will be open 1 May - 30 September each year.

Certificate of Compliance of Sea-worthiness will be mandatory.

BW licensed craft must give 3 days notice of intended passage to facilitate checking of documentation.

£1 million third party insurance is mandatory.

IWA locally is concerned that, despite building a new lock, the Ship Canal Company are being distinctly discouraging about its use.

I have at the time of writing (18 January 1995) two spare copies of "The Manchester SHip Canal, Pleasure Craft, Use of the Upper Reach *Conditions of Use and Cruising Notes*" which was printed by the Company in April 1994 and includes a nice A3 map of the whole Upper Reach (ie Mode Wheel to Victoria Station) and would gladly send a copy if anybody wanted one in return for 50p or so contribution to p&p. (Address - 36 Trawden Avenue, Smithills, Bolton, BL1 6JD). Further copies may well be available from Mike Webb, The Manchester Ship Canal Company, Quay West, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester, M17 1HH".

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Alan Garnett reports on the ongoing Restoration work undertaken by the 'Friends'.

Since the arrival of the two ex Ministry of Defence railway vans, Alan Russell, John Clayton and Chris Perkins have been working on the provision of replacement doors for the former Royal Ordnance Factory van.

Ron Williams has been heavily involved in making new door frames and general refurbishment of one of the glass fibre containers previously located in the yard near the Blacksmiths Shop. When complete it is to become an exhibit on the butty boat 'Wye' in the Barge Arm.

Several regular members of the restoration volunteers including Alan and Betty Conder, Doris Toller and 'Wednesday Gang' members, who usually work on the Dredger restoration, Jim Simmons, Dave Butler, Ken Dunn and myself have recently helped to rearrange part of the Propulsion Room display to make room for the Savery & Co. engine from the River passenger steamer 'King' now on loan from Kew Bridge Museum. This has also made space for the display of the keel boat model 'Lily of Mirfield' restored by our Chairman Peter Wallace.

As far as No.4 Steam Dredger is concerned, since my last report in the September 1994 Issue, work has progressed rather more slowly than previously partly due to the inclement weather hindering work on the bucket drive shafts at the top of the tower and some work on other exhibits being required as already mentioned.

Betty Conder has completed a good repainting job on the main engine bedplate, earlier work having also been done by Doris Toller and other volunteers. It is now dark green in colour and includes the highlighting of the maker's name and vessel number viz: DE KLOP LD, SLIEDRICHT, HOLLAND, N 146, in yellow, all of which looks very smart. Alan Conder has repainted some of the valve handwheels on the boiler.

Although not strictly part of the restoration work, time has lately of necessity been spent on the boiler, which has been out of commission for several weeks for its annual insurance survey, which I am pleased to say it has passed satisfactorily. Recent work has therefore involved replacing the components which had been removed for this inspection. These were mainly the burner unit, the three mudhole doors, the dome inspection cover, safety valves, various steam valves and the two water level gauge glass fittings, the latter with new inner glass tubes. When this work has been completed, the boiler will be returned to service. One of the items removed for the survey - the scum valve - was found to be badly corroded and inoperable, possibly due to electrolytic action as the materials of its construction were suspect. The valve makers Hattersley, have provided a free issue replacement as they wish to investigate the cause of the original valve problem. The new valve has now been installed.

More work which has been carried out on the midships winch engine has involved cleaning up the slide valve mating faces as they were badly worn and regrinding the piston rods. New valve operating rods and some new bushes will need to be manufactured.

At the top of the tower, the bucket chain has been moved a little by using a stout chain vice on the pinion drive shaft, and this shaft has now been raised a few inches enabling the bearing shells to be removed and checked for wear, which has also revealed some fairly deep score marks. Further remedial work is therefore required.

When the dredger is finally ready to put back as a working exhibit, it is intended to fit some purpose-made transparent screens in the engine room to enable an albeit limited number of visitors at any one time to be able to see the engine running, which should further improve its attraction as a prime exhibit.

Recent film making in Gloucester Docks, with some details of the square-rigged ship 'Maria Asumpta' which took part.

No doubt many of our readers, particularly those who live locally, will know that Gloucester's historic Docks have often been the setting for film and television programme makers when scenes needing a dockside location for costume dramas are involved. In this respect, films such as the 'Onedin Line', 'Treasure Island' and a scene for the recent production of Charles Dickens' novel 'Martin Chuzzlewit' come to mind.

The latest activity of this nature in January involved an American television film unit, and utilised the quay and area surrounding the Biddles and Shipton Warehouses on the other side of the Barge Arm from the Museum and was set up to recreate New York Navigation Co's Pier 23 in New York Harbour in 1887.



Please tell Big Chief Prancing Bull and his mates that we are neither a wagon train or in the film.

The name 'Llanthony Warehouse' on the Museum building was changed to 'Hudson Navigation Company' and various relevant names attached to several other dockside buildings. Apparently the film makers preferred this location to anywhere in America. The film starred Anjelica Huston and Jack Palance for a new TV mini-series entitled 'Buffalo Girls'. The film, from a novel by best-selling author Larry McMurtry follows the adventures of Colonel William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody who brought his Wild West show to Europe to thrill audiences which included royalty like Queen Victoria.

The scene shot here depicted Calamity Jane riding up to the docks in New York following her last-minute decision to join Cody's Europe-bound entourage as the ship was due to set sail. It is understood that 'Buffalo Girls' should be seen by American audiences in May but at present, there are no plans for a British screening.

The Museum was involved, as Des Fforde of the Museum Staff and one of our younger members - Bryan Brown, were recruited as 'extras'. They worked the Henderson hand-operated dockside crane, normally exhibited outside the Blacksmiths Shop, and loaned for the filming by the Museum. Bryan is more normally to be seen as a Queen Boadicea II crew member. (See also page 15). This vessel, skippered by Terry Dellbridge, was also utilised as a mobile floating camera platform, and some of the sailing ships in the Docks were cruising around during the filming to give additional background atmosphere.

The ship featured in the film was the wooden square-rigged brig 'Maria Asumpta' which sailed from Penzance for the filming, and for which purpose, the name on her stern was temporarily changed to 'SS Nebraska - New York' and a dummy funnel fitted.

Maria Asumpta is a living piece of maritime heritage and history and is the oldest wooden square-rigged sailing ship in the world still sailing. She was built in 1858 on the beach at Badalona near Barcelona, of pine from the Montseny forest behind Barcelona and was bronze-fastened. She embarked on her maiden voyage to Buenos Aires in 1858. In service, she carried general cargo, including textiles, and probably salt beef for Cuba. From there she would carry tobacco, rum, molasses, spices etc. before returning to Buenos Aires for more salted meat or sailing back to Spain.

The slave trade still flourished illegally (and Brazil did not abolish it until the 1880's), so one can but speculate...in any event the ship would certainly have been armed as there was always the danger of meeting brigands and pirates.

She had an extensive rebuild in 1981-2. She was named *Maria Asunta* (the spelling later changed to the present form) and rigged as a polacra brigantine, in the earlier part of the 20th. Century, MARIA was carrying salt from Torrevieja in SE Spain to Galicia, other parts of Europe and North Africa. Aged 82, a single cylinder 160 HP. diesel engine was fitted. In the 1940's, under the name of CIUDAD DE INCA, the ship may have been involved in smuggling based in the Balearic Islands.

She underwent a major rebuild in the early 60's, creating greater cargo space. The deck was somewhat scarred by an unlovely two-storey deck-house and an evilly belching funnel. The single engine was replaced by twin Baudouins. By 1964, she was down to a single foremast from which was sometimes set a big triangular sail to the derrick boom. Seldom venturing outside the Mediterranean, she carried grain and salt. Occasionally cars and even lorries were carried on deck athwartships, in the latter case with the ends sticking out from the bulwarks.

By the 1970's, she was used for storing naval oil drums in Malaga, tied up to a floating drydock.

In this sorry state she was found in 1980 awaiting the execution of her sentence, to be burnt at sea. Fortunately, the two Englishmen who found her handed the owner the amount he wanted for the engines and set about returning her to her former glory. Over the next 18 months the ship was stripped and virtually rebuilt in Barbate, just west of Gibraltar. As suitable timber was unavailable in Spain, 200 tons were shipped out from England. The heavy hull work was carried out by the local Spanish boatyard, while the construction of the masts and spars and all rigging and upperworks was done by a team of up to 35 "Brits" - carpenters, riggers, blacksmiths and engineers.

In June 1982, with single "full" topsails proudly hoisted, the ship once again put to sea under sail. It was a momentous occasion and she performed well on her "maiden" voyage to England.

Her cargo hold was now a warm, pine-clad saloon for the crew. In the years that followed she has circumnavigated Britain, crossed the Atlantic to the Caribbean and visited the Great Lakes of Canada. In 1988 she returned to England, and in honour of her 130th. Birthday was given back her original name of MARIA ASUMPTA.

Since then she has made many sponsored and goodwill visits to ports in Britain and northern Europe and is a popular visitor to Cowes Week. She has also been a star attraction at events like the Brest '92 Traditional Boats Festival and L'Armada de la Liberté celebration at Rouen. In 1984 MARIA returned to Spain, visiting ports she had sailed into 100 years previously. Her visit received a rapturous welcome and three generations of the families of her second owners came on board bearing information and artefacts of her past.

Her present owner and skipper is Captain Mark Litchfield and she is operated by Yalefleet Ltd. with support from the Friends of Maria Assumpta of 101 high Street, Lenham, Kent, ME17 2LA. Much of the cost of running and maintenance is provided through promotional visits to festivals and events, film and photographic assignments.

The following information may be of interest to our readers:

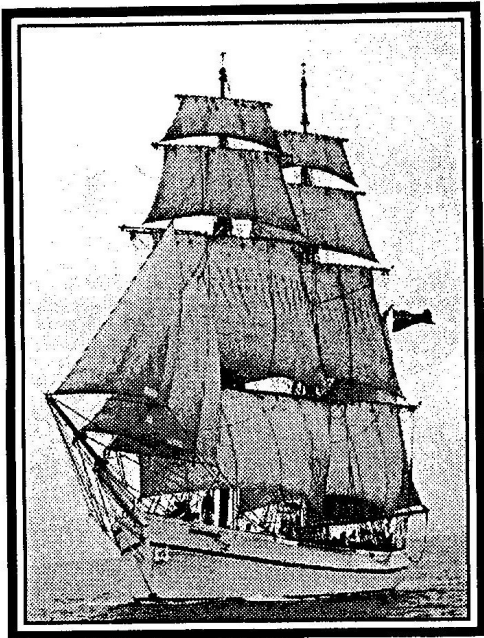
Dimensions:	LOA 125ft.(38m); Beam 24ft.(7.3m);
Draught	10ft.6ins.
Tonnage:	GRT 127 tons, Net 72.6, Displacement 260.
Machinery:	2 GEC Dorman 6 LET diesels, each 175 HP, driving a single propellor through a gearbox, Petter 10 HP 2 cylinder diesel for electrical and hydraulic power.

After some maintenance work in Gloucester Docks, the ship is due to move to Cornwall at the end of April.

(I am indebted to The Maria Assumpta News and other publicity leaflets and to the crew for the foregoing information on the ship, and to the Citizen for information regarding the film making.

Alan Garnett.

The Brig MARIA ASUMPTA



built 1858
THE OLDEST ACTIVE
WOODEN SQUARE-RIGGED
SAILING SHIP IN THE WORLD

A contribution from Bryan Brown

Future Film Stars ?

As you may have heard, Gloucester Docks were turned into a film set once more, this time from poor old Gloucester to a rich New York. The film starred Jack Palance and Anjelica Huston together with two from the National Waterways Museum, who are more usually to be found cleaning bilges or maintaining Site Services. They were Des Fforde and Bryan Brown. You will probably wonder how these two got into the film.

Well, one of the Museum cranes was used as a prop. because it was old and had not been used much.

The 'A' Team - Des and I, were called to report to the boss and he sent us to the Dressing Room where we were dressed in Docks Uniform. I was the rich one as I had buttons on my jacket. Then we were sent to Make-up where two blond girls awaited us. To my surprise, they made up Des and me to look grubby. I said "I look like this most days".

When we were ready, off we went. People say it takes 5 hours to get to New York, but it took us 3 minutes. Even Richard Branson cannot do it that quickly.

As we prepared for the filming, handles at the ready, rain poured down our backs. Then 'Cut - lunch time'. It's a fun business, filming, although you are standing around for most of the time. Here is a quick way to remember it:-

"Action on set. Roll film. Cut, we do not like that.

Roll again. Cut, you move the wrong way.

Action. Cut, not bad.

Everybody ready for the take. Action. Cut - it's in the can.

It took two and a half days to film the scene which will run for only a minute or two on the screen.

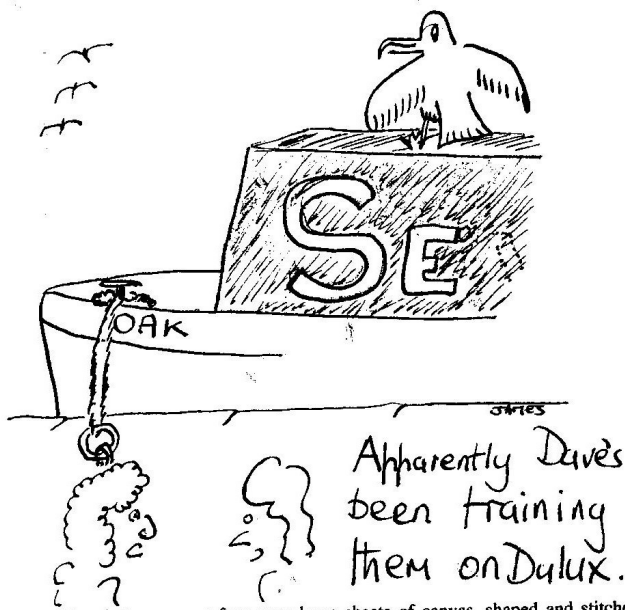
(PS. If you want any autographs, please see our Agent).

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This entertaining article comes from Betty Conder.

Tar Baby in Siberia.

I don't suppose you've given much thought to tarpaulins. Neither had I until this winter. David McDougall has had new cloths made for Oak. (the former Severn & Canal Carrying Co. motor boat - Editor). The old ones had lasted long in spite of the damage done by incontinent seagulls.



The cloths came as four very large sheets of canvas, shaped and stitched, with eyes at the corners, one with the reinforced mast hole in it, plus one smaller piece for the cratch cloth. The side cloths are plastic and don't concern us.

Our mission was to waterproof this canvas. We commandeered part of the upper storey of the Sack Works as a sail loft. To look at from the outside you wouldn't think that the Sack Works had an upper storey but there's oceans of space up there. We needed a lot, spreading two cloths at a time and they were a tight fit.

To carry out the task we used a lot of newspaper to prevent the cloths sticking to the floor (they stuck to the newspaper instead), large 'swipy' type paint brushes, plenty of wiper cloths and huge cans of rubberised black paint. Of course we should have been using tar and long handled stiff brooms but you can carry verisimilitude too far.

Thus equipped, in icy conditions, under the glare of halogen lamps, we removed our shoes and set to. There is a photograph of Doris and me, perfectly synchronised, sloshing our brushes to and fro. You wouldn't need to care what happened to your socks or your overalls or your hands.

We applied three coats of paint to each side of each cloth. The first coat took tedious time but the other two went on fast. The paint is fairly liquid so you can't afford to be too enthusiastic.

The drying time of each coat was affected by air temperature and humidity so the process was very long drawn out. The first coat on the reverse side of a cloth worked back into the other side and made it sticky so further drying was necessary.

The paint gave off spirit fumes and the ventilation was minimal so we had to work in pairs and take breathers.

That job is done now. When you look at Oak's cloths, remember the gallant band who slaved through the worst of the weather, in Arctic conditions, dirty, isolated and stiff. But don't be sorry for us - we'd do it again tomorrow. Come to think of it, I believe we will. Northwich needs new cloths. As for Oak, the next job will be to paint the letters along the cloths, out of doors, with people around us and, with any luck, in warm weather. But I suppose we will still be on our hands and knees.

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DONATIONS

The Treasurer is pleased to acknowledge the following donations received between September 1994 and February 1995, (with apologies for any errors or omissions - Editor).

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Chairman and Boat Modeller - Peter Wallace - contributed this feature on a special piece of boat modelling work.

Champagne Competition. Modelling the Narrowboat "X".

Our Curator has some brilliant ideas and an even greater talent for passing on the problems of bringing them to fruition. In this case, Tony dreamed up the idea of a 6 foot long model of a narrowboat for Tony Lewery to decorate as part of the 'Roses and Castles' event to be held at the Museum this Easter.

He asked me to prepare a basic hull complete with a cabin, but no interior detail, no working parts and solid stove chimneys. It had to be robust enough to survive outside a case, so overall it seemed to be a fairly simple task. I had only made one model before of a narrowboat and that was 15 years ago and based on a modern pleasure craft. How wrong I was to think it would be simple; for when I looked at the builder's plans of a Grand Union butty, what appeared to be a 'floating box' turned out to be a beautifully shaped hull with features of construction and operation that I did not understand.

Once again, that master of the history of canal craft, Edward Paget-Tomlinson, was on hand to rescue me with his book "Britain's Canal and River Craft" and I started work.

To obtain the necessary strength I used conti-board and MDF and the basic shape soon emerged, but then it struck me as to what will be the features that Tony Lewery will wish to paint. Back to Paget-Tomlinson and, (why did I not think of it before!), our own NORTHWICH. An inspection sent shivers down my spine and an urgent plea to have a re-think with the genius who started this.

It then transpired that when it is all completed it will be used by our Education Officer, Patsy Williams, to demonstrate to the countless children who pass through her care all the features which are decorated, which include the cabin interior, stands and mast. The two positions of the tiller should also be possible and the rudder should be realistically hung. The best solution seemed to be to complete the port side and leave much of the starboard side open. It also seemed sensible to build the model in public leaving it exposed to prying fingers so that we could see what is likely to get broken and strengthen it accordingly. There is also the problem of getting at the internal features to paint them, so they must be detachable until the model is finally completed. What started as a 'basic hull' has become an exercise of logistics!

Now it is your turn. As the model is a combination of three different sources and not of a particular craft, the name is wide open. This gives me an opportunity to record for posterity the name of one of the Museum staff, (as was done with the trow steering gear on Level 3). So when submitting your suggestion, bear in mind the qualities of the model in relation to the person, and send your entry to Tony Conder. A bottle of champagne will be awarded to the winning nominator, to be drunk rather than smashed on the model.

Please give:-

(a) Your Name;

(b) Name for the Model;

(c) Reason for the Name.

Entries to be sent to: Mr.A.J.Conder,
The National Waterways Museum,
Llanthony Warehouse,
Gloucester Docks,
Gloucester, GL1 2EH.

(Please mark the envelope: 'Narrowboat X Name').

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Some Recent Information.

The National Waterways Museum now has a 'Fax' machine installed.

It can be accessed on the following telephone number:

(01452) 318066.

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