

Diary Dates.

Friends Meetings to be held during the Autumn and Winter at 7.30pm on the 4th. Tuesday of each month, normally alternating with the Gloucester & Hereford Branch of the Inland Waterways Association, whose meetings are on the 2nd. Tuesday.

Sept.30/October 1 **Modellers Weekend - See Page 19.**

Oct.17 **Sydney Brewis will talk about Hull Trawlers.
This should be something different!! NB Venue***

Oct 21/Dec 3 **The Wheel - an Exhibition - See Page 19.**

Nov.21 **Mike Clarke - Author and Researcher, will give an illustrated
talk on European Waterways. NB.Venue ***

Dec.19 **Members Night - "Think Christmas"- see page 19.**

* All Friends Meetings are normally held in the Museum's Schools Room, entered by the grey stable door in the building to the left of the Museum Main Entrance. Please note however, that we cannot use the Museum, for the October and November meetings as the exhibition "The Wheel" (see above), will be staged in the Schools Room. These two meetings will therefore be held in the Friends Meeting House, Greyfriars, off Southgate St. in the turning by St. Mary de Crypt Church. As parking in this road is not encouraged, suggested alternatives are NCP Blackfriars Car Park, entrance from Ladybellgate St. or in the Docks below the new County Court Buildings and walk. All meetings start at 7.30pm. When the Museum is available as the venue, use Southgate St. Entrance to the car park.

IWA Meetings are as follows:

Oct 12 **River Severn - 1st. part of talk by Brian Draper.
(Part 2 - April '96).**

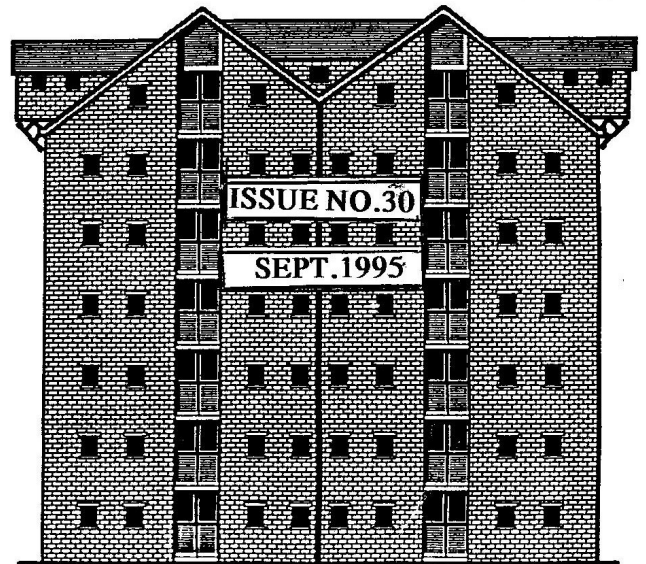
Nov 14 **River Wye - Illustrated talk by Will Fricknall - Another
chance to hear about the history and future for this navigation.**

Dec 12 **The Anderton Lift - a talk with slides by William Rowley
who was a BW engineer who has worked on the Lift and still
has much affection for this Victorian structure.**

Friends are welcome at these Meetings, which are usually held at 7.30pm. at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club which is off the Bredon Road B4080 on the left, 250 yards north of the junction with the A38.

- 20 -

Llanthony Log



Newsletter of the Friends of the
National Waterways Museum

The "Friends" is Registered Charity No. 800282

CONTACTS

Chairman	Les Dalton 4 Conway Rd, Gloucester, GL3 3PL.	(01452) 617236
Secretary & Research	Hugh Conway-Jones 1 Grovelands, Gloucester, GL4 7JF.	(01452) 619679
Treasurer	Charlie Wallace 7 Breinton Way, Longlevens, Gloucester, GL2 0BB.	(01452) 304267
Crafts & Publicity	Peter Wallace 16c Grosvenor Rd, Gloucester, GL2 0SA.	(01452) 524686
Fielding Engine	Trevor Hill 154 Cheltenham Rd, Gloucester, GL2 0JR.	(01452) 525578
	Alan Morgan 29 Bloomfield Rd, Gloucester, GL1 5BL.	(01452) 307699
Kennet	Eric Sturt 21 Purbeck Way, Prestbury, Cheltenham, GL52 5BZ.	(01242) 525240
Meetings	William Rowley 4 Sandstar Close, Longlevens, Gloucester, GL2 0NR.	(01452) 532030
Membership Secretary	Doris Toller 5 Hemmingsdale Rd. Gloucester, GL2 6HN.	(01452) 424272
Newsletter Editor, Dredger, Shirts.	Alan Garnett, 16 Honeythorn Close, Hempsted, Gloucester, GL2 6LU.	(01452) 303489
Restoration	David McDougall (work) Nat. Wat. Museum, Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EH.	(01452) 318054
Steam Crane	Alan Conder 12 Bathurst Park Rd, Lydney, GL15 5HG.	(01594) 844384
Talks Service	Peter Thompson 43 Forcst View Rd, Gloucester, GL4 0BY.	(01452) 520442
Committee Member	Ken Dunn, Ewelme Cottage, Rockstowes, Uley, Glos. GL11 5AF.	(01453) 860648

EDITORIAL.

The hottest Summer for a long time has unfortunately not helped to bring in the visitors to the Museum, people presumably preferring outdoor activities. Nevertheless, it still continues to be a major attraction in Gloucester.

As reported below, the No.4 Dredger buckets have been turned again for the first time since June 1990, a significant achievement both for the Museum and the 'Friends'.

For those of you who wish to attend the Autumn and Winter talks, please note the change of venue for the October and November Meetings. See Diary - page 20. Please also support 'Think Christmas' mentioned in the last Issue of Llanthony Log.

On behalf of the Friends, I would also like to wish Rosemary Conway-Jones a speedy recovery and return to work at the Museum following her recent spell in hospital for an appendectomy.

A.L.G.

..*.*.*.*.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON No.4 DREDGER RESTORATION.

Alan Garnett reports.

Over the past weeks, members of the 'Wednesday Gang' have been involved in installing the two new belts for the bucket drive. These were roughly cut to length, an 'Alligator' fastener fitted to one end, and then stretched in situ for 3 weeks using a purpose made clamp found in the dredger's store, and which only required some new screwed tightening studs as the original studs were missing. Each belt was then carefully measured, cut to its final length, removed from the dredger for the other half of the fastener to be fitted - not really feasible when on the pulleys - replaced in position, and the ends fastened together. Then on Wednesday 9th. August, with everything oiled and greased and a good head of steam in the boiler, the main engine was started and the buckets again turned for the first time since the dredger sank in June 1990. Those buckets which had been submerged had each filled with mud and been the home of a large number of freshwater mussels. The mud was returned to the dock though most of the mussels remained adhering to the buckets. Although the run was largely successful, some minor faults were discovered and are in process of rectification. During a subsequent run on 30th. August a check on engine speed showed that the current setting of the governor allows a speed of 100 revolutions per minute which is considered acceptable.

There is still some work to be completed and it is David McDougall's intention then to remove the belts for the winter so that they can be treated and possibly copper-riveted - as were the previous belts - as he considers that there are signs of delamination of the plies particularly at the scarf joints. It will therefore probably be next spring before normal demonstration runs for visitors can be resumed, but nevertheless the recent progress is a significant step towards completion of the restoration work.

Other useful work has been done by Alan and Betty Conder on cleaning and painting the midships and aft winches so overall the dredger is gradually achieving a state considerably better than it was in when it sank.

As readers of the last issue of Llanthony Log will recall there was a note from Peter Wallace on the 'Name the Narrowboat' Competition which was won by Betty Conder, who suggested the name 'Mildred'. The person after whom it was named - Mildred Bramley - has asked for the following note to be included in this Issue. - Editor.

H.M.S.MILDRED.

My particular distinction for the last few years has been that of being the oldest member of my immediate family. It is a position of privilege to which I hope to cling for a few more years. I am pleased with my family - all four generations - for their efforts and achievements but not one of them has as yet had a ship named after him or her.

The main reason, I suspect, for having had this honour conferred on me is that I am thin enough to squeeze behind No.4 Dredger's boiler to paint it (with Betty there too, of course).



When I came back to Gloucester to live, the first thing I did was to join the Friends of the National Waterways Museum and soon found myself engaged in hard labour. What a team to work with! Chipping, scraping, painting in the bowels of the dredger; cleaning and polishing her engine's huge copper pipes; black-leading Northwich's stove and cleaning her brass and still more brass on Alan's lovely steam crane. Dusting the exhibits in the Propulsion Room is an excellent way of becoming an expert (nearly) on movement on water from coracle to sophisticated engine. How many times did I see the video of the river journey one afternoon when David gave me a large ball of string and a huge needle and sent me upstairs to mend the sacks near the video display alcove?

What a feeling of achievement I got when Alan (Conder) at last approved, after frequent inspections, of the dredger engine condenser air pump chipped and scraped clean ready for painting - my masterpiece - now lost in the splendid engine edifice surrounding it. What a lovely sight the engine is now with all those polished pipes curling round each other and functioning properly. There must have been some bits left over after Betty, Doris and I had spent so many summer afternoons on the quayside polishing everything we could find.

AND IF YOU DON'T CHIP IT RIGHT
MILDRED ITS BACK TO
SEWING MAIL BAGS ON
LEVEL 2.



The time has come all too soon for me to relinquish my efforts as an "active" Friend with the interest and fun it generated: so, now I am relegated to the position of gatekeeper on Boat Jumble Day!

Many Thanks and Happy Days - Mildred.

(Mildred is one of our more senior members and I quite understand her reasons for being less 'active' as she puts it. Nevertheless I am sure I express the hope of all the Friends that we shall continue to see her for many years, not just as a gatekeeper at the Boat Jumble, but at any of the Friends' and Museum's functions that she feels able to attend. Well done Mildred and many thanks for all your good work. Incidentally we have not so far discovered any bits left over. - Editor.)

HORSES WEEKEND.

Pauline Hill describes the 1995 Event on 20th./21st.May 1995.

It is hard to believe that a whole year has passed since the last Horses Weekend. Yet again we arrived on Saturday morning to move the railway wagons to make way for Peter's friends.

Jane had spent the previous few days getting Peter smart and the yards ready to receive the four-legged friends. Hopefully the weather was going to be kinder than it was last year, when we all got rather wet.

The weather, as it happened, was perfect for the horses, dry and not too hot. The horses began to arrive. I was in the kitchen preparing food, so I don't know what order they arrived in. However when I had time to look around there were Captain, Skipper, Duke, James, Snell, Striker, Dillie, Tegwyn, Sampson, Peter, Brig and another Duke. Some of the owners had also brought along their dogs, so Jane's Murphy was in his element with friends to romp with and people to give him titbits, (not a good idea we realised later).

Having unloaded the horses, one owner proceeded to put up the back of the lorry only to discover just in time that the dog was still tethered to the end of it. Luckily the dog's feet had not quite left the ground when they realised this.

One lady had a young stallion, not very big but very much a stallion. As soon as a mare arrived he was very difficult to cope with. He had to be moved into Peter's yard to avoid anyone getting hurt by flying feet. However he did not want to go through the alley, so after much messing around and flailing of feet it was decided to put the mare at the end of the alley. It worked like magic, he trotted through only, much to his disgust, to be tethered in the cart shed and for the mare to be removed to the other yard. He spent the rest of the day stood in the corner with a sign saying "He has been a naughty young man and has been told to stand in the corner". Actually it was his choice probably because he was miffed at not having fun with the mare.

Jane prepared for a parade. There were not many people about, as unfortunately it was Cup Final Day so everyone was glued to their television sets. Not being much of a sports fan I was quite happy where I was. The parade went without a hitch as there were none of the usual traffic problems. There were quite a few people milling around by lunchtime. The owners had a break to enjoy lunch and a chat to catch up on the last year's gossip. Everyone is so friendly and pleased to see each other. After clearing away the crumbs etc. I joined Jane on the next parade. Again the streets were very quiet and the parade managed to stay together quite well. One horse managed to get his tongue over his bit, but this was soon rectified and he seemed none the worse for it.

After arriving back and having a cup of tea, it was decided to have one more parade about 5 o'clock. One of the horses-Snell- who is quite old, was looking a little tired so it was decided to leave her to rest. Although we thought this was a good idea, Snell did not and as the horses moved off she became like a young horse and began fretting and fussing. At one point we thought that she might pull the ring out of the wall. A lady who knew her quite well talked to her and she calmed down a little.

We were in no doubt when the parade was coming along Llanthony Road as Snell pricked up her ears and fidgeted and fretted until her mate James had returned and was securely tethered alongside her. Apparently any horse with age-related problems, like rheumatism, when enjoying life amongst friends or getting stroppy about something, makes a natural hormone which overrides the pain. She obviously did this because she was not bit stiff or hurting once she began to fret. I think that she will be fit enough to attend again next year.

After returning from the last parade, a welcome cup of tea and a biscuit, everyone began to load up tack and horses. Carriages were stored and Sampson, Peter and Duke prepared to spend a peaceful night. Peter and Duke were settled in the cartshed where they seemed quite happy as long as they had a haynet each. We did a bit of tidying up, some mess being left however as it would be added to tomorrow and we all went home for a late tea and to recharge the batteries for Sunday. Murphy went home with an upset stomach, due we think, to the titbits which he had been fed the previous day.

Sunday dawned dry and again we headed off with the sandwiches for a day with even more horses, cars and people. Peter had spent a peaceful night with Duke, but unfortunately they had a bit of a fight over the breakfast, Duke deciding that Peter's looked better than his own so there was a bit of pushing and shoving before Jane settled them down and separated them so that they could enjoy their food.

Horses began to arrive and very soon there were quite a lot of visitors around, leaning on the rails and watching the horses prepare for a day of parades. The Weston Cider horses arrived looking very impressive. Horses present on Sunday were Captain, Skipper, Duke, Bertie, James Snell, Colonel, Barley, Bonnie, George, Gem, Pride, Prince, Sampson, Pete and Joe. The noises and smells are unique to the Horses Weekend and it is nice to see so much activity about the yards. There were three parades during the day. Gem proved to have a swollen leg but it did not prevent her walking round half of the parade. The parades were a bit too long to do the whole length on foot (for the handler), but I don't suppose that the horses found it too much.

The traffic proved a bit of a problem because, unlike Saturday, it was very busy. The parades became a little broken up, but nevertheless the public seemed to enjoy seeing the horses and carts passing by. Some car drivers seemed somewhat impatient but they usually ended up smiling and not too annoyed to be held up.

At the end of the day, Peter was taken to his field to have a well earned romp around and did not seem to miss his horse friends. The other horses were loaded and taken home.

We had a good clean up making sure that we dug out the muck and seeds from the railway tracks. The yards seemed too quiet when everyone had left.

Thank you to the 'Friends' who manned the barriers and helped with the cleaning up etc. The weekend would be much more difficult to put on without this help.

A Day out in Belgium.

By Tony Conder.

As a holiday away from the canals the Conder family spent two weeks in an ex-canal-side bar on the Canal de St. Quentin in northern France. Needless to say it didn't look like an ex-bar during their stay, but that's another matter.

Apart from the odd trip to look at tunnels tugs, canal-side railways and the like, we can recommend a canal maniacs day out in Belgium.

As a relatively cynical employee of some twenty years on canals it takes a lot to make me go "wow!" A day spent visiting the four hydraulic lifts on Belgium's Canal du Centre, the replacement lift at Strepv Thieu and the inclined plane at Ronquieres close by was a day to spend going "wow!"

The four lifts combined with Strepv Thieu are linked by a tourist train. Much loved on the continent, they consist of a road train of suitably decorated tractor and carriages running on the towpath.

The four lifts raise 350 ton barges some 50ft. each. In operation they are almost silent and to see heavy loads so easily handled is incredible. You can experience the ride on board a trip boat.

The four lifts are expensive to maintain and for many years were under threat of closure when the replacement at Strepv Thieu opens.

Money worries and the declining use of all continental waterways has held up construction and thanks to the enthusiastic work of a volunteer society, the lifts have been given a reprieve as state monuments.

The new lift will open in 1996. At present all the major structures are in place. The lift will raise 1350 ton boats in two tanks over 200 feet. The top of the lift is as large as a football pitch. There is a small visitor centre on site which includes a film in English on the lift and Belgian canals.

A few miles away the canal coming south from Brussels to Charleroi also has to overcome the same rise in the ground. The mile long inclined plane at Ronquieres can shift 1350 ton barges in about 15 minutes. At the top are a museum of natural history, a viewing gallery over the winches and an observation gallery some 300 ft. up the top of a tower which gives a fabulous view over the canal and surrounding countryside. "Wow!"

The whole experience is easily accomplished within a day and with the channel tunnel trains running to Lille in France close by, it is very nearly within a day out of London.

A leaflet is available to view at the Museum or direct from Hainault - Tourisme, 31 Rue des Clercs, 7000 Mons, if you want your own.

~*~*~*~*

City of Birmingham Electricity Supply Department/Central Electricity Generating Board and the Birmingham Canal Navigation.

A Contribution from 'Friend' John Foley.

A significant date in Birmingham's history was the 6th. November 1769 when the first recorded delivery of coal to the town was made via the Birmingham Canal. The Birmingham Canal Co. changed its name to the now familiar Birmingham Canal Navigations in 1794 during one of its regular expansions, and through a series of amalgamations and further expansions had by the mid 19th. Century provided an intricate network of canals throughout most of the South Staffordshire coalfields and virtually all of the Black Country iron working area.

The 1st. January 1900 was another notable date in Birmingham's history when The City of Birmingham Electricity Supply Department took over the assets of the private Birmingham Electricity Supply Company for the inflated sum of £420,000.

For the next 63 years the CBESD and the BCN and their nationalised successors combined in several ways to provide an efficient, cheap and reliable electric power supply for the industrial, domestic and commercial requirements of Birmingham and the surrounding areas.

The Birmingham Electricity Supply Co. had established a small power station in Dale End, which opened in April 1891. Coal for the 6 hand-fired Lancashire boilers could have been supplied via the 'Hospital' pound at the top of the Aston flight on the Birmingham and Fazely Canal or from the Digbeth Branch or from Curzon Street goods yard (the site of the original London & Birmingham Railway terminus). The daily coal requirements of 30-35 tons would therefore have required some half to three-quarters of a mile of road cartage.

The Dale End station was later extended by the addition of 4 Babcock and Wilcox hand-fired water tube boilers, the total generating capacity being 1.74 MW at 110 volts D.C. The engines were non-condensing.

The Dale End site had several drawbacks, including lack of space for expansion, and to overcome these problems and also to serve the affluent jewellery manufacturing area, a second power station was opened in 1894 located in Water Street or more accurately defined for the readers of this Newsletter, on the North West side of the Birmingham & Fazely Canal between the 2nd. and 4th. locks from the bottom of the Farmer's Bridge flight. The choice of this location was recorded in the Company's minutes book.. "having regard to the proximity of the canal, condensing water can be advantageously employed, coal delivered and ashes removed." The original boiler installation comprised 4 hand-fired Lancashire boilers, but after the take-over by Birmingham Corporation, a further 3 boilers were installed and altogether they provided steam for the final total installation consisting of 7 Bellis & Morecom engines, the total nett output being 3.5 MW. The daily coal consumption would have been in the order of 65 tons, thus requiring 3 boatloads of coal on most working days from the Black Country coalfield, probably being loaded from collieries alongside the Wednesbury Old Canal. At Water Street, the coal would have had to be 'barrowed' across the towpath to the boiler house in a similar manner to hundreds of other Black Country industrial installations.

These deliveries, plus the removal of 2 boatloads of ash and clinker per week must have caused a certain amount of disruption to the already congested traffic through the Farmer's Bridge locks, especially as only short pounds existed between the locks.

The boiler manufacturer, Edwin Danks of Oldbury, had premises alongside the BCN 'Old Main Line', whilst the engine manufacturer's works were -indeed still are - adjacent to the junction of the 'New Main Line' and the Eastern end of the Rotten Park Loop of the 'Old Main Line' in Birmingham. It is therefore quite conceivable that the main plant items were delivered by water.

The cooling water for the steam engine condensers was supplied directly from the canal, and even allowing for the very frequent use of the Farmer's Bridge locks, some recirculation would have been necessary since the very short pounds between the locks adjacent to the power station would have been incapable of providing 'surface cooling' for the steam flow of just over 1 ton per minute when the station was on full load. It has been suggested that the cooling water was recirculated back up to Whitmores Arm which served several industrial premises in the Newhall area and which connected with the main canal between Locks 7 and 8. The return cooling water temperature could have been 80°F, and those of you who have explored the Farmer's Bridge locks at the present time can possibly appreciate the 'atmosphere' that existed there at the turn of the century. It is a significant fact that during the latter part of its existence, the BCN derived a substantial part of its income from the sale of cooling water to industry.

Water Street Power Station was originally scheduled to be replaced by the first CBESD designed station at Summer Lane (further down the Fazely Canal), but due to the phenomenal increase in demand for electric power caused by vigorous municipal developments, which included the establishment of an extensive electric tramway system, followed by a further increase in demand for power for the manufacture of munitions during the horror of the years 1914-1918, power generation continued to meet peak demands until 1924 when the last coal deliveries were recorded at 492 tons.

The story of the continuing development of the CBESD and its strong association with the BCN will be continued in a later issue of Llanthony Log.

.*.*.*.*.*

Help your friends become FRIENDS!

If you are looking for a Christmas present with a difference, how about giving a year's subscription to the Friends.

Just send the name and address with a cheque for £14 (Family) or £8 (Individual) to the Membership Secretary. She will then send all the relevant papers, including a Membership Card, and a Greetings Card saying that the subscription is from you, to support your friend/s.

Send to: Friends Membership Secretary,
National Waterways Museum,
Llanthony Warehouse,
The Docks,
Gloucester, GL1 2 EH.

The following article was written by a member of the Friends - Mr. Edward W. Paget-Tomlinson - for the Docks & Shipping Group of the Railway and Canal Historical Society whose Registered Office address is: Fron Fawnog, Hafod Road, Gwernymynydd, Mold, Clwyd, CH7 5JS. The Editor wishes to thank both the Author and the Society for giving their permission to reproduce it here.

PUFFERS - A SHORT HISTORY.

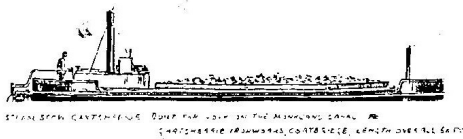
No vessel has created so much nostalgic affection in Scotland than the single hatch, engines aft, steam lighter, or Puffer; her only rival being the Clyde paddler. The puffer was also part of the Clyde scene and, in most people's minds, puffers were Clyde puffers. In truth they were wider ranging, the West Highlands obviously, but also Antrim and Donegal, the Forth, even up to the Moray Firth and down to the Tees.

Although the puffer grew into a substantial coaster, her origins were inland. The story has been often told of how an iron mineral scow, the Forth & Clyde word for a canal boat, was in 1856 fitted with a small steam engine, twin cylinder, simple expansion. This was the 'Thomas' and her conversion was a success to the extent that within four years there were 25 steam scows on the Forth and Clyde and linking Monkland Canal, but not on the Union whose bridges were fixed and too low for the funnel. There were no such restrictions on the Forth & Clyde and the Monkland with their swing and lift bridges. The scows however could not leave the canals for the rivers as they had no anchor gear, although they did have hatchboards which enabled them to carry perishable cargo. They remained at work on the canals well into the twentieth century and some lasted up to the 1950's, not on the Forth & Clyde but as steam suppliers to grain elevators in Glasgow docks.

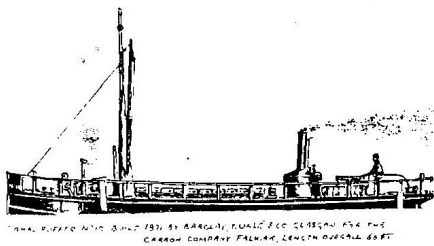
A steam mineral scow had a capacity of 80 tons on a draught of 6 or 7 feet, and she would generally tow a dumb craft. Her length would be up to 60 feet and her breadth 13'-6", within the locks of the Forth & Clyde and the Monkland. The term 'mineral scow' is deliberate, their cargoes being almost entirely coal, coke, ironstone, foundry sand, limestone, pig iron, castings and forgings, the raw materials and products of industrial Central Scotland. So many works were on the canalside or just off it but served by branches, the furnaces of Lanarkshire, the foundries of Stirlingshire. Other cargoes would be timber, notably pit props, and the hatches allowed grain and packaged goods.

Because the Forth & Clyde was a ship canal there was every encouragement to use vessels on it which could trade from inland to ports on the firths and further afield. So it was not long before a modified type of steam barge or lighter appeared, pioneer examples coming from Swan & Co., lessees of the Kelvin Dock at Maryhill. This would be in the 1860's. The new craft were given anchor gear and a mast and derrick, not only for handling cargo but for putting a man on the bank to work locks and bridges. A steam winch might or might not be fitted but these vessels did have more powerful engines than the scows, most often a single cylinder. They came to be called puffers because these engines exhausted to atmosphere with a simmering puff.

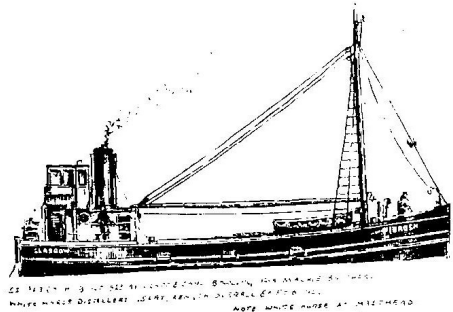
Because of the lack of bulwarks amidships these canal puffers were limited to the Clyde above Greenock and the Forth above Leith, but at least they could offer a greater range than the scows. The Currie Line of Leith had some with 'vee' arranged engines and tall, thin funnels to provide a good natural draught, and the Carron Company had some also, complete with the cannon ball at the masthead, the same as their ships.



Within a decade or so puffers were being built and modified to go seawards. They were given wheel steering, bulwarks amidships, a punt so that they could anchor offshore, sails to help the engines and save coal, and a raised quarterdeck which resulted in increased buoyancy and more bunker space. Two classes of vessel evolved, the 'shorthead' boats with a crew of three which stayed within the firths, and the 'outside' boats with four aboard which made short sea passages, for example to the Ulster coast. Dimensions were still within the limits of the Forth & Clyde Canal which could take a maximum of 66 feet in length, for many were built at Kirkintilloch and at Maryhill and at Hamilton in Glasgow.

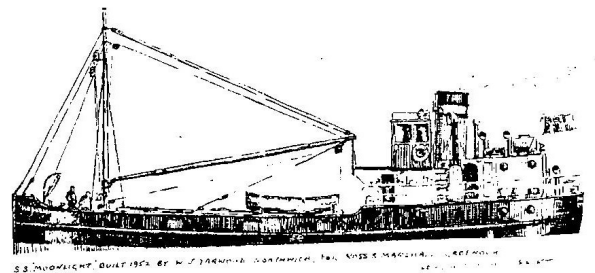


By the 1900's the steam puffer was of established design, from the 1880's with a tandem compound surface condensing engine, a steam winch, a foresail and a trysail, with the crew berthed in the fo'c'sle. This would be the appearance of the 'Vital Spark', Para Handy's puffer, still awaiting a bridge which came by about 1910 and a wheelhouse which did not come until the 1920's. Both bridge and wheelhouse were sited abaft the funnel and contained the engine throttle and reverse. Capacities climbed to 120 tons on a 9'-6" draught and twentieth century cargoes became diverse as readers of Para Handy will know, a farmer's flitting, curling stones, ironmongery, provisions, as well as the staples of coal, roadstone and timber. The isolated communities of the West Highlands and Islands depended upon the puffer which was sturdy enough to ground on a beach to discharge. Scenes of puffers surrounded by carts on some Hebridean beach are well known.



Eventually puffers, but with their condensers, no longer puffing, outgrew the Forth & Clyde Canal, although Hay's, the biggest owners, kept their dock at Kirkintilloch until 1961. Bigger vessels came from yards on the Clyde, the Greenock owners Ross and Marshall had their own dock, and a notable puffer builder was the Bowling firm of Scott & Sons, whilst 10 were built at Larne. Their size limitation were the 85 feet long locks of the Crinan Canal, that useful short ship canal which cuts across Kintyre and saves the passage round the Mull.

As early as 1913 an attempt was made to run a fleet of motor puffers, if one can be allowed such a term, with the building of the 'Innisagra' and her nine sisters for the Coasting Motor Shipping Company of Glasgow. They were not successful because their hot-bulb engines were unfamiliar and steam reigned supreme until 1953 when the motor vessel 'Glenshire' appeared. The 1950's saw the last steam puffers built, the coal burning 'Moonlight' of 1952 and 'Stormlight' of 1957, at Northwich for Ross & Marshall. Once however the motor puffer was established, steam was phased out by withdrawal and conversion and by 1967 the last steamer had gone. A decade or so later there were no puffers of traditional design at work, although two have been preserved and two more are in private hands offering cruises. These latter two are actually VIC boats (Victualling Inshore Craft), built in England for Admiralty work during the Second World War.



Many were sent abroad and gave fine service as tenders and work boats, a tribute to the competent design which had evolved to meet local conditions since the conversion of the 'Thomas' in 1856.

Much more could be said and interested readers should turn to Dan McDonald's book "The Clyde Puffer" published by David and Charles in 1977. In fact, Dan knew much more than he wrote but sadly he is no longer with us to expand his history. I gained much from conversation with him and I would like to pay this tribute to his knowledge and wisdom.

~*~*~*~*~

THE KENNET DIARY

Three of the four Basic Tug Driving Courses have now been completed successfully with the last one coming up on Saturday 30th, September. All the participants have enjoyed themselves and hopefully gone away with a little more knowledge and a better understanding of the workings of little ships and canals. Regarding the Advanced Courses, 2 of the 3 have also been well attended and enjoyed by all. The next and last course of the season is due on Saturday 21st, October.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Museum staff who have helped coordinate these courses and make them a success.

The Kennet charter scheme has, I think, found a niche in what is at the moment, a very difficult market in which to attract paying customers. What could be better than a nice day aboard a vintage Thames tug with a scrumptious picnic, a bottle of chilled white wine and good company? We have now completed 5 charters to date, ranging from a Golden Wedding Anniversary to a 21st, Birthday Party, during which I might add it poured with rain for most of the morning, but we still had lots of fun. By the way, we are still available for charter.

On the engineering front, there are a few very minor problems. The engine timing needs to be checked at the end of season along with one injector pump. At the time of writing, Kennet, I hope will be dry-docked together with Severn Progress early in September for a few days to investigate a small problem with the rudder and for a scrub down. An old rotary bilge pump will be fitted at the end of season and will run in conjunction with the large separate compressor. This will eliminate the need to run the main engine for pumping out the bilges.

I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of Alan Morgan and myself to welcome on board 4 new crew members viz. Hugh Conway-Jones, Dick Aldred, Ian Hutchings and Bob Ingram and hope that their time with us is as enjoyable for them as it is for Alan and myself.

'Chiefie'. (otherwise known as Eric Sturt).

~*~*~*~*~

NORTHWICH HAS A REFIT. - A note from David McDougall.

Northwich, now at Gailey Wharf on the Staffs. & Worcester Canal, is having the cabin rebuilt with authentic details to replace the tired and worn out interior seen and sat in by an estimated 1 million visitors over 17 years. Skilled work by J.& D. Boat Services will retain the cabin shell and provide new fullsize oak cabin frames, floor, beds and cupboards in solid quality timber as it would have had when new almost 100 years ago. The cabin will keep its authentic style bottle stove (new in 1990), but very little else can be reused as it was mostly of non-period plywood.

New gunwales (gunnels in the Black Country, but not in the navy), in best Cranham Woods (not far from Gloucester - Editor) English Oak have to be fitted before the new set of heavy duty cloths can go over the hold.

Prior to leaving Gloucester, Northwich visited Hempsted dry dock for examination of the hull, rust removal, replating of thin areas, gritblasting and repainting. Extensive work was required in inaccessible areas of the cabins where the iron sides were corroded. The skills of Sharpness Shipyard were brought in to effect the repairs.

Small leaks have a habit of only showing up after the boat has been used, so there was little surprise when dribbles appeared as Northwich neared Wolverhampton. A diversion was made up the Shropshire Union Canal to Brewood for a little extra welding. The docking provision there is an interesting combination of a cradle on wheels and a ramp with a tractor for haulage. Half in the water and half out of the water, Northwich looked decidedly odd.

Northwich is due to return to Gloucester in October.

~*~*~*~*~

FAREWELL CLAY HOOD. (Also written by David McDougall).

The second ex-British Rail China Clay Wagon departed from Gloucester by road on Wednesday 6th, September, to be preserved in the West Country. The space on the line on the Museum car park approach will then accommodate a new exhibit - a Gloucester built Salt Van produced at the Wagon Works in the Docks for ICI, Ltd. in 1942. This will be fully restored as a reminder of the important salt trade once carried on from the Docks. Salt for export was transhipped and stored in the warehouses by Hempsted Bridge and Victoria Basin, having come by river from Droitwich in trows ('Wich' barges) or longboats, later also arriving exclusively by rail into the Victoria Basin shed.

The 2 clay hoods arrived at the Docks in 1988, salvaged from amongst many others being cut up as scrap at Sharpness. Few were saved so it has always been considered important to find good permanent homes for them.

The Museum discovered that one was required for preservation in the National Collection at York Railway Museum. This first departure was last year (see *Llanthony Log March 1995*). The second should be in early September. The new home is to be at Torrington Station on the former china clay line now known as the Tarka Line through otter country to Bideford. Here it should be restored complete with the distinctive blue tent-shaped cover (the hood) to keep the china clay dry.

I have received the following note from The Waterway Recovery Group - Editor.

COME TO A PARTY.

DIG 95 WRGS 25th. BIRTHDAY PARTY.

Could you help us celebrate the waterway recovery group's 25th. anniversary?

We are holding a weekend dig on November 3rd. on the Thames and Severn Canal at Latton, and we need you to come and help. The work will include several miles of jungle bashing, towpathing and a small amount of construction work. If you don't want to or can't work on site, we will have hundreds of hungry navvies to feed and our cooks are always grateful for a hand in the kitchen.

You will need to book in before the weekend as the accommodation is at RAF, Kemble and you will need a security pass to get on to the site. We will send you this pass with your joining instructions.

If you have slightly more time to spare, we will need help to spring-clean the airbase before the weekend and to clear up afterwards. The accommodation will be available from the Wednesday before to the Wednesday afterwards. All help will be gratefully received, if you are local and can't get away for long, just a couple of hours will be of assistance.

The party will be on Saturday night and will include (in different rooms!), performances by Mikron, a disco and a ceilidh and no doubt the odd orange juice or two if required.

There will be limited caravan spaces available at £8.00 extra for the weekend, please indicate on the form if you require a space. If you require more forms you are welcome to photocopy them. If this isn't possible or you need more information please contact:

Helen Davcy,
42 Orchard Close,
Alresford,
HANTS, SO24 9PY.

or

The Cotswold Canal Trust,
Ken Bailey,
109 Willis Road,
Kingswood,
BRISTOL, BS15 4SE.

Telephone Nos:

01962 734909.

0117 9601710.

.*.*.*.*.*

N.W.M. TO THE RESCUE or WHAT IS THE COLLECTIVE NAME FOR FOXES ?

In case you wonder what Friends and Staff of the National Waterways Museum do, I'll tell you: anything that they are asked. On Tuesday August 29th., Mary Mills, our friendly Museum publicity girl, answered a desperate call from BBC Radio Gloucestershire. A quiz team had fallen out of the afternoon show and could we help? Rallying the other members of the Tuesday group of volunteers, Betty Conder said "of course", and led her team to victory in what turned out to be Round 1 against a Gloucestershire pub. What Auntie Beeb had not told us was that Rounds 2 and 3 would follow on the next two days, the format being the same each time: five identical questions to each team, 20 or 30 minutes to consider the answers and then the leader to tell any listeners what these answers were.

After the men of the Wednesday Gang had made the sides level, it was left to Betty to lead her team to a one point victory on Thursday. As winners we had to meet the previous week's winners. Then the blow fell! No volunteers, so the Museum Staff took over. Helped or hindered by 'phone calls from people listening to their radios at home, they drew with the opposition.

Oh yes, what is the collective name for foxes? That was the question that stumped us all.

Answers on a post card please, to the Editor, Llanthony Log, who will put all correct answers in a dredger bucket, where, as the buckets can now be turned, they may be lost in the mud. On the other hand, when he sees what I have written, he may not.

(The Writer is in fact Doris Toller, and if I get any postcards, I shall then have to decide on the best course of action! - Editor).

.*.*.*.*.*

THE NEED TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED ?

When returning after morning tea break recently to continue his work on the 'blue top' butty boat WYE, Wednesday Gang member Ron Williams was surprised on entering the cabin, to find the bunk bed lowered and the curtains drawn round it, which is not its normal state. Opening the curtains revealed two young ladies and a young man, probably in their 'teens, lying on the bunk and having a kiss and a cuddle - fortunately no more than that! They looked somewhat surprised and sheepish when discovered, but were not too pleased when Ron suggested that they return the bunk to its usual stowed position and leave him to get on with his work.

Perhaps an unexpected twist to voluntary work at the Museum?

.*.*.*.*.*

DONATIONS.

The Treasurer is pleased to acknowledge the following donations received between March and August 1995, but including some inadvertently omitted from the March 1995 Issue. (*with my apologies for this and for any other omissions this time - Editor*).

Aldred R.H.	Hookham M.G. & M.B.
Bagge B.P.	Howell C.F.
Bailey A.D.	Ingram R.W.
Bailey K. & S.	Jackson M.R. & J.A.
Baker K.R. & C.R.	Jones C.R.
Barton A. & A.	Jones K.A.G.
Beesley R.J.	Kingscote D.J. & S.E.
Boast D.J. & M.L.	London E.N. & A.D.
Bramley M.M.	Lowthian G.G.
Braund M.F.	Marsh B.D. & M.
Bristow J.	Miles R.J.
Brewis S. & B.	Mills J.
Butcher A.D.	Mitchell N.C. & P.
Conder A. & E.M.	Morgan L.A.
Cresswell D.J.	Neall D.B.
Conway-Jones A.H. & J.R.	Newman D. & L.R.
Dalton L.	Perkins C.
Danks S.G.	Prentice M.M.
Daw D.A. & P.A.	Radford D.E.
Day M.	Riddick K.J. & G.L.
Deighton F.	Rowley W.E. & R.
Dellbridge D.K.	Royffe A.G.
Dollin C.J. & J.	Shooter R.A. & J.
Dowling A.R. & B.G.	Simmons J.R. & S.
Drewery R.L.	Stock G.W.
Drewett A.M.	Swan R.S.
Drinkwater A.H.	Thomas D.G.A. & M.E.
Dunn K.H.	Threlfall P.M. & H.J.
Dyson R.H. & G.A.	Tomlinson K.M.
Garnett A.L.	Tovar P.B.
Godding D.	Trelfa R.J. & A.C.
Greene J. & B.M.	Vale T.L. & A.
Hammond J.E.	Whitcombe R. & T.A.
Harris W.P. & L.M.	Wilks R.D. & L.
Hall D.J. & J.	Williams P.V. & B.M.
Hatton I.	Wood J.M. & M.
Henderson G.P. & S.P.A.	Woolley S.E.C.
Hill T.R. & P.A.	

This information has been provided by Mary Mills,
Museum Publicity Officer.

Forthcoming Events at the Museum.

THE WHEEL.

"The Wheel" - an exhibition showing the importance and vital role that the wheel plays in our daily life - either getting from one place to another or as part of a machine to make work easier. "The Midland Challenge" - sponsored by Midland Bank, is to help encourage teams from local schools to bring displays showing evidence of research, design, planning, even inventions. Really how they perceive the wheel. The exhibition, which is very 'hands on' runs in the Schoolroom from October 21st. to December 3rd.

MODELLERS WEEKEND - September 30th./October 1st.

This is the time of the year when modellers start thinking of putting away their traction engines, merry-go-rounds and miniature engines. The Museum is lucky, for over this weekend they will be holding their last outing of the season. Gloucestershire Model Boat Club will be putting their vessels to the test in the Barge Arm encouraging people to watch and chat about the boats' performance. A weekend of model steam engines and boats, when exhibitors and visitors can think of being children again.

A reminder of the request made in the last Issue - June 1995. Please help if you can.

THINK CHRISTMAS 1995.

William Rowley will be delighted if you can help with a contribution for the above event on 19th. December.

The Members' Night held before Christmas 1994 was considered by many to be a success. We had two videos, two short slide presentations and a musical recital from Peter Wallace on a bass viol which he had made himself.

There have been suggestions that we do something similar in December 1995, (subject to the Committee's approval). If we do, now is the time to start thinking about a contribution. It might be an idea to finish that glorious piece of knitting you started last winter and tell us about it, or that model you started. Don't forget to take your camera on holiday, and use it. You might get some pictures you can share with us. It is an informal evening so there is no need to feel self-conscious about your contribution. It is a chance to show your hidden talents and share a passion.

So 'THINK CHRISTMAS' - it would be good to be inundated with contributions!