

REPORT

BMS
BOAT MUSEUM SOCIETY



No 219 ♦ December 2017

THE BOAT MUSEUM SOCIETY

President: Di Skilbeck MBE
Vice Presidents: Tony Hales CBE, Harry Arnold MBE, Alan Jones, Tony Lewery

DIRECTORS

Chairman Jeff Fairweather
Vice Chairmen Barry Green, Chris Kay, Will Manning
Treasurer Barbara Kay
Secretary Lynn Potts
Other directors Di Skilbeck MBE, Nigel Carpenter, Dave Ditchfield, Bob Thomas, Cath Turpin, Mike Turpin

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES

Dave Ditchfield & Ailsa Rutherford

CONTACTS TO WHOM CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE SENT

RE:PORT Editor Ailsa Rutherford 01352 756164
14 Tai Maes, Mold
ailsarutherford@aol.com
Website Steve Sunley

EMAIL CONTACTS

Pending changes to email addresses, please send all communication via the Chairman:
jeff4bms1@gmail.com

Those not on email can contact:
Boat Museum Society, c/o National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port CH65 4FW
Telephone 0151 355 5017

The Boat Museum Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 1028599. Registered Charity Number 501593

Visit our website

www.boatmuseumsociety.org.uk

Contributions for RE:PORT which is published four times a year are always welcome.

Copy date for RE:PORT 220 – Sunday 18th February 2018

All views expressed in RE:PORT are those of the contributors concerned and should not be taken as being the policy of The Boat Museum Society, The National Waterways Museum or The Canal and River Trust.

cover: **Scorpio takes flight: read about it on page 8**

Dates for your Diary

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ December ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

...continuing until Sunday 14th January

NWM

Dining out on George – Discover the stories and memories of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal from our outreach boat *George* this summer through the medium of photography and audio.

9th, 10th, 16th, 17th, 22nd, 23rd and 24th

NWM

Christmas Cruises – As Christmas approaches, Father Christmas will be taking to the water on Centaur and then onto his grotto where there will be storytelling and a present for the children. Refreshments will be served. Early booking recommended. Prices £10 for adults and children.

Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th

NWM

Christmas at Porters Row – This year Christmas is coming to Porters Row with the cottages traditionally decorated. You will be able to experience the sights, sounds and smells from our special Victorian cooking demonstrations and Mr Charles Dickens (in the guise of his most famous old miser, Ebenezer Scrooge) will attempt to tell his tale of Christmas Bah Humbug. Mr. Dickens will perform at 11 am, 12 midday, 2pm and 3pm. There will also be live music from Wirral Grammar School from 12 midday to 1pm.

Saturday 9th

NWM

Christmas Concert – Wirral Singers and Ringers will be performing their annual concert. Tickets £7. Early booking recommended.

Tuesday 12th

IWA

Sir Robert Atkins, formerly an MP and Waterways Minister and who has now joined the IWA Trustees as North West Region Chairman. He will talk about his views on the current waterways situation and his hopes for the future. Christmas event with mince pies and refreshments, the sales stand, and bumper raffle.

Friday 15th

BMS

Interpreting Old Maps – Jonathan Pepler, the former archivist at the County Record Office, Chester. Followed by our Christmas Social meeting.

Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th

NWM

Edith in the Dark – A Chalice Productions presentation returning after a successful Halloween run. An exploration of the darker tales and also the darker side of celebrated children's author Edith Nesbit (*The Railway Children*, *Five Children and It*) as she retreats to the attic of the home she shares with her somewhat estranged husband. Not suitable for anyone under 14 years old. Tickets £8.

Monday 18th – Sunday 24th

NWM

The Nativity is Cancelled – A Chalice Productions presentation. Government penny-pinching, excessive time-tabling and the mounting pressures placed on the overworked and underpaid staff have left the pupils of Canalside Primary sad and disappointed. But, all is not lost... Early booking recommended. School performances 18th-21st and public per-

performances 22nd-24th. Tickets £10 for adults, £7 for children and £34 for a family ticket (2 adults and up to three children).

Tuesday 19th

EPL&FHS

Memories of Rivacre – John Hickey will be talking about Rivacre Swimming Pool. So many people remember Rivacre with affection that it's an ideal topic of the Christmas meeting. Wine and nibbles will be provided.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ January ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Friday 12th until Sunday 15th July

NWM

Photographs by Clifford Morris – Recently acquired photographs by the archive to be staged.

Tuesday 9th

IWA

Gillian Renshaw & Ani Sutton from the Canal & River Trust, Manchester, Pennine & Potteries Waterways – They will give a presentation on the community engagement programmes and projects taking place across the two waterways, from the health benefits that the canals bring to the youth engagement opportunities, volunteering, and how the Trust is putting this into practice to show the wider benefit of the canals to all.

Tuesday 16th

EPL&FHS

Annual Members' Evening – This is an opportunity for people to talk about their own research which could be about their family or some local topic. It's one of the best evenings of the year as Members have many a story to tell!

Friday 19th

BMS

The story behind the superb film *Inland Waterways* made for British Waterways in 1950. This will include a showing of the film and photographs taken during filming.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ February ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Tuesday 13th

IWA

Standedge Tunnel – Ian Hawley, Canal Boat Adventure Project, Runcorn will be talking about the history and restoration of the Standedge Tunnel. He has a wealth of personal experience on this topic and it should be a very interesting evening.

Friday 16th

BMS

AGM followed by an update on the ACE project by Barry Green.

Tuesday 20th

EPL&FHS

Naylor and Stanley Families – David Allan from the Eastham History Society will be talking about these families. As Ellesmere Port was part of the Parish of Eastham at one time, the history tied up with this area is very relevant.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ March ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th

NWM

Spring Model Boat Show – The weekend is a fun packed event for enthusiasts and begin-

ners alike as boats occupy a section of the canal. Model boat clubs from across the North West will be displaying boats built by their clubs in the past year. There will also be multiple model boat traders selling parts and full kits as well as being available to offer advice on how to construct your own models. Subject to interest.

Tuesday 13th

IWA

AGM and NBs Lindsay and Keppel – Following the AGM, Andrew Watts of the Etruria Boat Group will be talking about NBs *Lindsay and Keppel*. They were the last pair of narrow-boats built by the then British Waterways Board for carrying on narrow canals. The talk will cover their restoration and current active lives.

Friday 16th until Sunday 10th June

NWM

No Sign of Canals on Mars – An exhibition of the illustrated travel diaries of Eileen Burke.

Friday 16th

BMS

The Mersey Training Ships – an illustrated talk by Geoff Topp, a former Mersey Pilot.

Tuesday 20th

EPL&FHS

AGM followed by *Early Maps* – Jonathan Peplar, former County Archivist will be talking about the early maps of the area. This should be a fascinating talk by an expert on the subject.

Friday 23rd until Sunday 4th November

NWM

Safeguarding Our Collection – An exhibition looking at the success of the Arts Council England Resilience Project.

Friday 30th to Monday 2nd April

NWM

Easter Boat Gathering – Dozens of boats from around the country will be heading to the museum in a flotilla for the annual Easter Boat Gathering. Colourful narrowboats and barges will take centre stage while the museum comes alive with music, theatre and activities for the whole family.

Friday 30th (Good Friday)

BMS

Modern freight carrying by water – David Lowe, Chairman of the Commercial Boat Operators Association (CBOA).

■ ■ ■ ■ Meeting information ■ ■ ■ ■

BMS meetings are held in the Rolt Centre at the National Waterways Museum, starting at 7.30pm. There is a bar and we have a raffle. Everyone is welcome.

EPL&FHS – Ellesmere Port Local & Family History Society meetings are also held in the Rolt Centre, starting at 7.30pm. Annual membership is £12 and visitors are welcome at £4 a meeting

NWM More information about Museum events can be found at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

IWA – Inland Waterways Association meetings are held in the Mercer Suite at the Holiday Inn, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, CH65 2AL, starting at 7.45pm.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In March this year (RE:PORT 216), I informed you that we were putting into motion a full and comprehensive review of our aims and objectives for the future. Since then we have had three committee meetings devoted almost entirely to the review. We are now at the point where the review has been completed with recommendations of where we go and how we proceed from here on.

A small sub-group, involving Chris Kay, Barry Green and myself, has been set up to look at the recommendations and report back to the committee as soon as possible, with the hope of presenting some of the recommendations to members at the AGM in February. To proceed with some of the recommendations we will need to have discussions with The Charities Commission and Companies House, and this could set the pace of our progress. Rest assured that we will keep you, the membership, updated all the way through this process via RE:PORT, the AGM or an EGM if necessary.

As members of BMS, and museum volunteers, we are able to contribute to the museum by working with the staff and other volunteers in a number of ways, including, care of the working boats and exhibits, manning the museum for special event days, ongoing research into waterways history, maintenance of buildings and grounds, being a guide or helping to staff the shop and restaurant, and generally supporting the staff in the day to day running of the museum.

Like all charitable societies we need people to provide volunteer effort, as well as help raise funds, in order to continue our activities primarily supporting the museum through a paid-up membership scheme. BMS is entirely self-financing, with the main sources of income coming from membership subscriptions, fund raising activities, and individual public and private donations. The society recognises that its most valuable asset is its members and the funding this provides, therefore anybody joining the society is directly contributing to the invaluable task of supporting Graham Boxer and his team in maintaining, preserving and developing the museums historic boats, objects, artefacts and waterways heritage.

Our members are generally boating and waterway heritage enthusiasts with a wide range of ages and interests coming from all walks of life, which include retired teachers, ex-scientists, engineers, craftsmen, retired business executives, and specialists. The other thing we have in memory, whether it be about the history of the museum, or the reasons why in the past things went wrong. Our memory is our strength, we can help avoid the pitfalls of the past. After all we have been working at it for over 40 years now and understand the need to be cost effective, provide value for money, work with like minded organisations, build relationships with supporters and funders locally and nationally.

In my mind, BMS, CRT, and the museum are all equal. I like all three, want them all to succeed, and will work equally for all three. I would not support any one of them doing any harm to another and think together we can be a really successful team. At the core of our relationship with the museum is the need to share the same vision and values, and this sometimes requires all parties to moderate their own views for the common good. BMS does have a national presence, can be (and is) a very positive advocate for the museum and CRT. I suppose what I am saying is that the relationship can be as good or as difficult as we want.

As I have mentioned several times before, we have got to work smarter to tell and sell the positives about BMS, play down our criticism, come up with solutions as well as problems, and also not be afraid to say when we don't like something if the loser is any of the three parties. I'm sorry to say that just wanting to support BMS is not, in my view, likely to produce anything positive. We are no longer masters of our own destiny; the future lies in cooperation not isolation. That doesn't mean there might not be different views and occasional disagreements, but providing we all share a common vision i.e. to make all the organisations a success (not just one of them) then we will succeed.

Looking ahead to our AGM on Friday 16th February 2018, I would ask as many of you as possible to come along. Not only is it a time to report on the past year, but also to contribute to any discussions concerning the review and after the formalities discuss any other issues that you feel the new committee should consider.

Thanks to everyone who has supported BMS, NWM and CRT in 2017. I would like to wish all members, staff, volunteers and their families a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year for 2018.

Jeff Fairweather

The General Data Protection Regulations – important information for members

In May 2018, the new General Data Protection Regulations come into force. These regulations apply to all organisations, including charities such as ourselves, and place specific legal responsibilities on them for maintaining records of personal data and processing activities.

The Society's data protection policy will be published in the next edition of RE:PORT, together with information regarding what we need you to do to enable us to comply with the regulations.

Please do read this carefully when it is published and take the action requested of you.

Arts Council England Resilience Project nears completion

The project management of this grant award was a joint venture between BMS (Barry Green) and Canal River Trust (Iain Weston) and has shown how effectively the expertise of both parties can be used to execute a £360,000 project on budget & on time.

The original scope was to first find a new offsite storage facility for the boats, and other large objects which the National Waterways Museum needs to conserve the boats to prevent further deterioration, as many had sunk. In total we required an area of around 60,000 square feet but the main challenge was to be able to manoeuvre several 70 foot craft into the area. Over 100 premises were viewed but one by one they were discounted due to various reasons including asbestos, cost, access to the site or the building, lack of head room, security and so the list goes on. In addition, we had a tight timescale to find the premises as we had to spend 40% of the grant by the end of the financial year, which was only five months away, or we could lose the money. Just as we were thinking how else we could achieve the spend, we visited a warehouse in Rossfield Road and it met all the criteria. The Trust's Property Division were then able to secure the lease for the next 5 years.

We could now start the second objective which was to lift the four boats – *Northwich*, *Wye*, *Oak* and the concrete narrowboat from the water at Gloucester Museum. *Northwich* would be put on display at the side of the museum after we moved the rail wagons to Berkley Rail Company, where they are now on loan. The other three boats were brought up to Rossfield store where conservation work was started. All this work was completed on time and under budget.



The Top Basin prior to the boats being lifted...

The third objective of the Arts Council England funding was to recommission the Victoria Arm Dry Dock at Ellesmere Port, which required the designing and manufacture of a new caisson. Calling on the expertise within the Trust the design was finalised, meeting all the current safety rules and an order placed for manufacture. In July the new caisson was delivered to the dock, so we could now begin floating it into position and pumping out the water. However, as we needed to concentrate our efforts on lifting the sunken boats in the top basin at Ellesmere Port, this work was put on hold.

It was decided to carry out this work in three phases – phase 1 was to prove we could float all the boats, and then let them sink again to reduce stress on the craft plus minimise pumping costs; phase 2 was to refloat them to clean out the silt and other rubbish plus carry out remedial work to make the final float; and phase 3, when we would lift them out.

This work proved not quite as straightforward as we had hoped, plus we decided to include *Gwendoline* in the project which had been excluded previously because of her condition. With the help of CRT personnel, volunteers and specialist helpers – Mike Carter, Ade Polglaze and Malcolm Webster – we did get all the boats to float but *Scorpio*, *Gwendoline* and *Aries* did give us the biggest challenges. We were now ready to achieve our October deadline for lifting the boats.

Before this deadline, we needed to ready *Mossdale* for her move to the new home in the boatyard which was originally planned to be achieved by using a series of three lifts, one of which was over the workshops. To reduce the risks of this move, to both *Mossdale* and ourselves, it was agreed to strengthen her frame and reduce the lifts and keep them at low level. This was to be achieved by only lifting her high enough to load her onto a lorry. This would manoeuvre her into her final position at the end of the boatyard where visitors



... and after the job was complete



Mossdale loaded on the lorry, ready to be manoeuvred into position

would see *Mossdale* as they come out of reception. Here we would raise her off the trailer, drive the lorry out and lower her down. As *Mossdale* needed to sit on a flat surface, we decided to resurface the boatyard, which was outside our original scope, and this was completed for the area around *Mossdale* and the rest has been resurfaced after the move.

Everything was now in place for week commencing October 9th, but we were sure we had saved more money by refining the whole lifting moving process, so we should be able to move *Perseverance*, her crane and jibs, plus the hydraulic crane, to Rossfield, so, a lift plan and costs were agreed to complete this work.

At 7am on the 9th a 350 tonne crane drove into the yard and positioned next to *Mossdale*, plus a team from Commercial Boat Services who would manage the boat movements, museum volunteers and CRT staff who would float the boats. The first lift was *Mossdale*, which was loaded onto the lorry and she was then backed into the boatyard where it had to turn through 90 degrees, which we knew would be a difficult manoeuvre, but we did not expect it to take two and a half hours. When the move plus the final lift was complete not a single piece of timber had fallen off *Mossdale*.

At the same time *Gwendoline* was floated so she could be lifted out ready for the trip to Rossfield store the next morning and we were delighted when this was achieved without any further deterioration in her condition.

Day 2 went to plan with *Scorpio* and *Speedwell* being successfully floated and lifted, and all three wide barges were offloaded at Rossfield. Another team made sure they were carefully chocked so they hold their shape. We also got the Chalk Barge into the slings ready to lift her on the next day.

Day 3 arrived and what we had been dreading happened – the wind started blowing which means the crane shuts down and work stops. At 5pm we got a window in the weather and the barge was lifted out.

Day 4 was our last day if we were to stay in budget and on programme, but we had seven boats to remove from the top basin, plus we had a visit from Richard Parry from CRT. The team excelled, even when *Aries* refused to go into the slings and we had to turn her round with all the pumps running to keep her afloat. At 6.30pm our last boat, *Aleida*, was ready to be lifted and taken to Rossfield. A very tired but happy group of workers packed up & went home – a job well done.

That left two tasks to be completed – move *Perseverance* and recommission the Victoria Arm. The dry dock is still work in progress, but *Perseverance* and the crane have been moved to Rossfield, although they did give us one last challenge. Due to the limited space by the Lime Shed, we got a 50 tonne crane to move her, but at 11am we realised that she weighed 50% more than we had estimated, so we needed a 100 tonne crane. Luck was on our side and there was one at the depot, but it was late afternoon before it arrived, and the lift was finally completed at 8pm.

The backing and help of CRT staff, and the total enthusiasm and commitment of the team of volunteers, have transformed the museums and we have a store facility where we can start to conserve and record our collection.

Barry Green

The Boat Museum Society

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Boat Museum Society will be held in the Rolt Centre at the National Waterways Museum, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port on Friday 16th February 2018 at 7.30pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Resolution 1: To accept the Minutes of the AGM held on 17th February 2017.
3. The Chairman's Report.
4. Resolution 2: To receive the Annual Report of the Board of Directors' for 2016–2017.
5. Resolution 3: To consider and receive the Treasurer's Report with the Balance sheet and Profit and Loss account for the year ended 30th September 2017.
6. The Report of the Membership Secretary.
7. Election of the Board of Directors.
8. Election of the Treasurer.

Any full member of the Boat Museum Society may be nominated and seconded to be a Director. In the event of there being more than 12 candidates in addition to the Treasurer a ballot will be held. All nominations should be received by the Secretary in writing by Friday 9th February 2018.

An apology from the Editor

In the last edition of RE:PORT, we published an obituary for Dave Crosby and I omitted to include the following poem that was read at his funeral by Bill Darch. As you will recall, Dave had been a chief engineer in the Merchant Navy, and the poem is called “Tribute to the Forgotten Man”. The author of the poem is unknown, but it is said that a copy graced the control room bulkhead of the last Atlantic liner, *Queen Elizabeth*.

The siren shrieks its farewell note, and proudly on her way
 The brand-new giant liner moves in grandeur down the Bay.
 A marvellous creation, her builders’ joy and pride,
 The great hope of her owners as she floats upon the tide.
 The passengers in festive mood, ‘mid laughter, jest and quip,
 With keen delight enjoy the great ship’s maiden trip.
 She’s sure to break the record, she’ll do thirty knots or more,
 Is the hope of all on board as she leaves her native shore.

Upon the bridge the Captain, a skipper proud and bold,
 Bedecked in glorious raiments, navy blue and gold.
 All eyes are fixed upon him, and it’s going to his head,
 He stops to drop the pilot, then rings ‘full speed ahead’.
 And ‘down below’ the battle starts for the trophy of the seas,
 By engineers – not clad in gold – but greasy dungarees.

On deck the scene is bly and gay – fair ladies, song and wine,
 But hell is popping down below, beneath the Plimsol Line.
 The Chief raps out his orders to the men on watch below.
 His men obey his mandates, about their tasks they go.
 Steam pressure must not fluctuate, the bearings not run hot,
 Revs must not be allowed to drop to make the thirty knots.
 At dinner on the first night out the Captain proudly boasts:
 ‘We’ll surely break the record’, as the gallant ship he toasts.
 But breaking records puts no grey hairs upon his head,
 His contribution ended when he ordered ‘full speed ahead’.

Through weary days and sleepless nights to consummate his dream
 The engineers slave ceaselessly till Ambrose Light’s abeam.
 The record has been broken with thirty-one point four,
 The Captain wears another stripe, he’s now a ‘Commodore’.
 And thus he gets the credit for what other men have done
 He boasts to press and radio the victory he has won.
 Neglecting e’en to mention as he swings his ballyhoo
 The men of brain and brawn and guts, who shoved the great ship through.

The moral of this poem then is quite conclusively,
 The glory seldom goes to those who win the victory.

To keep this simple thought in mind about a record trip,
The man behind the throttle is the man who drives the ship.

And parting words from Bill, "Main engines Chief, Rest in Peace".

Membership Matters

We would like to welcome new members **Julia Stolzenburg** and **Mrs G Pugh**

A reminder regarding Membership renewal

Subscriptions for 2017/18 were due in October so a gentle reminder that, if you wish to renew your membership and haven't set up a standing order, we would be pleased to receive your cheque in payment. Please make your cheque payable to "The Boat Museum Society", and send it to The National Waterways Museum, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 4FW. The subscriptions for 2017/18 are as follows:

Category of Membership	Annual Subscription
Full Membership	£16
Family Membership	£25
Students/Juniors (age 12-18) no voting rights	£10
Senior Citizens and Unwaged	£10
Single Life Membership	£350
Family Life Membership	£550

Your new membership card is enclosed with this copy of RE:PORT. The new password to access the Members' Area of the BMS website is printed on the front.

A fond farewell

Wendy Capelle, Waterway Manager for North Wales & Borders, will be retiring from the Trust at the end of December after over 18 years in the organisation. In that time, Wendy has made a huge positive impact on the waterways, and the people who care for and use them. Wendy also temporarily supported us at the Museum and we appreciate that and her continued support.

Brenda Harvey is also stepping down as Chair of the Partnership, but is trying to ensure continued planning to improve our local waterway stretch as a very important component of our shared vision for the Museum and Ellesmere Port.

From 1 January, David Baldacchino, Waterway Manager for Manchester, Pennine & Potteries, has agreed to cover the North Wales & Borders Waterway Manager role as well, pending a longer term appointment, with all of Wendy's current team reporting to David from that date. David and Wendy have already started the process of handover.

We wish Wendy well in the future and hope we continue to see her on occasions. We've had good contact with David in the past and look forward to extending that in 2018.

The Boat Museum Trust 1980-2017: an appreciation

The inspiring story of the pioneering group of enthusiasts who first established the Museum has been well recorded in previous issues of RE:PORT. From its opening to the public in 1976 the Museum was run entirely by the volunteer society: the North Western Museum of Inland Navigation (later, thankfully, renamed the Boat Museum Society). Their efforts were recognised by the visit of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh in 1979.

It was clear that the project was fast becoming beyond the scope of volunteers, and the local authority who had made available the Museum's magnificent site understandably wanted to formalise the lease with a proper corporate body. So the Boat Museum Trust was formed as a charitable company, and held its first meeting in 1980.

The Trustees were nominated by Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council, by Cheshire County Council, and by the Boat Museum Society. In addition the BMT trustees could choose to nominate further individuals. All of the local authority nominees were elected local councillors. One of BMT's first actions was to appoint a professional Museum Director, and a small team of paid staff was established. Real progress could now be made.

Key among BMT's trustees were renowned experts in the history of the canals. This source of knowledge was a valuable asset to the Museum's various management teams in the future, although not always recognised as such.

The establishment of BMT enabled NWMIN to pass the ownership of its collections of boats, artefacts and archives to the Trust, and BMT continued to expand the collections. The policy of rescuing different examples of historic boats, without actually having the funds to restore them, was later to be much criticised by museum professionals. Yes it did lead to the Museum having a number of "unsightly wrecks", but it would have been no good procrastinating over their original acquisition – they would have been gone, and the collections would have been much the poorer and less representative.



Easter at Ellesmere Port 1979: *Lamprey*, *Monarch* and *Puppis*.

European Museum of the Year

By the mid 1980s the expanding collections and the sensitively restored historic site were combining to give the Museum national and even international recognition. At a ceremony in Strasbourg the Council of Europe awarded the Boat Museum the accolade of “European Museum of the Year 1984”. This was an impressive achievement for an independent museum run by a small charitable trust.

Money, or the lack of it, was a major issue throughout the 80s and 90s. There was little opportunity to improve the Museum’s facilities, to restore the boats, or to attract new visitors in spite of initiatives such as youth employment schemes and the like. The deteriorating situation led to much despair and frustration by BMT trustees. The local authorities felt frustration too, and the joint representation at BMT’s trustees’ meetings helped to calm the waters and to keep the councils on side.

By the late 1990s the financial situation was dire, and unknown by most people at the time, BMT was on the brink of issuing the redundancy notices, closing the Museum, and dissolving the Trust. Then suddenly – the cavalry appeared over the hill in the form of The Waterways Trust. This newly formed off-shoot of British Waterways brought new funding as well as improved pay and conditions for the staff. The agreement was made that BMT would retain ownership of most of the collections, and TWT would take responsibility for maintaining the collections and operating the Museum. Many frustrations lay ahead, but don’t forget that TWT saved the Museum.

Project 25

With the original Director’s retirement, an eclectic series of new managers came and went over the next few years. BMT’s hopes that money would now be found for restoring the boat collection were dashed, although it must be said that at that time grant aid was much easier to obtain for permanent buildings rather than boats which were seen to be too ephemeral to justify public investment. Thus TWT obtained Heritage Lottery funding for “Project 25” centred on the island warehouse exhibitions, but not the boats. BMT Trustees’ constant pleas to TWT to make efforts to stem the relentless deterioration of the boats simply led to exasperation on both sides. TWT’s own Board of Trustees were pursuing more ‘glamorous’ projects elsewhere, and also for a while were fixated on the idea of relocating the Museum to Birmingham.

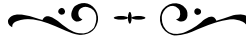
Subsequently this situation improved. The potential role of volunteers, who had been effectively banned from working on the boats or in the archive, began to be appreciated once again. The “Heritage Boatyard” was created with BMS collaboration, but sadly this promising initiative could not be sustained. BMT was represented on TWT’s Museums Management Board. A Curatorial Committee was formed with TWT, BMT and BMS expertise, and put much effort into the systematic analysis and prioritisation of the boat collection. This was preparation for a major Heritage Lottery bid under the guidance and encouragement of HLF, until they suddenly changed direction and dropped their support. However the groundwork paved the way for the later successful “Window on the World” lottery bid.

The Canal & River Trust

In 2012, a really positive development: the government created the Canal and River Trust which absorbed both British Waterways and TWT into a new charitable trust, and as a result took over the management of the Museum. A new level of professionalism was injected into the Museum operation. After only five years of working with CRT, the BMT trustees felt they now had sufficient confidence in the future to realise their long-term ambition to relinquish their ownership of their collections, and to pass them to the Canal and River Trust for posterity.

This happened earlier this year and the Boat Museum Trust has been dissolved. We must now acknowledge with gratitude all those past members of the Boat Museum Trust – none of whom has been mentioned by name in this summary – whose commitment and perseverance achieved the long-term security of the National Waterways Museum and its irreplaceable collections.

Ken Catford



From Planet Archive...

I recently spent a very funny (that's ha-ha, rather than peculiar) afternoon in Burnage in South Manchester at the home of Ken Williams (no, not that one). Ken's close friend Roy Peacock had recently been watching the local television news which was carrying the feature about the boats being lifted out of the water. As Roy was watching, he suddenly noticed over Graham Boxer's shoulder (who was being interviewed at the time), *Scorpio* swinging through the air. Suddenly the years fell away and Roy shouted, 'That's Ken's boat!' And so it was. Roy made contact and had a couple of 'phone conversations with Margaret, who pointed him in my direction, with a view to recording what Ken and Roy had to say.

And so one Friday afternoon I pointed myself in the direction of my adopted home city clutching a sound recorder. It was quite an experience. I'd been expecting a few cogent facts about Ken's ownership of *Scorpio* and that would be it. What I hadn't expected was

to be regaled with songs from The Goons, anecdotes about singing on pavements with Spike Milligan, and stories of medical ruptures, amongst much, much else.

At Ken's house, along with Roy, I met too Jeff Malamed and Eric Flowers. They have all been close friends for many years and for a long time recorded their own version of the Goons on a Friday night in the same room in which we were sitting, some of which



Scorpio at the start of her lift, as seen on television

footage appeared on BBC Radio Manchester. Roy is a singer, and has appeared on stage with Ken Dodd!

The other Ken, who sadly has been in poor health in recent years, grew up with a love of the canals, having lived as a boy by the Ashton Canal. Ken is a talented artist and in fact at one stage was a pavement artist on the streets of London. His other achievements include painting a tram, now resident at the Greater Manchester Museum of Transport.

There was, it's fair to say, a little confusion about which year it actually was, but they advised that at some point in the 1970s, (I've since learned it was 1971) Ken was in Wigan one day and chanced upon the Leeds Liverpool long boat *Scorpio* and fell in love with it. Sadly, it was to be a brief relationship. Ken (incorrectly called Keith in the original Boat Museum guide published in the 1970s) decided that he was going to restore her and live on board. '25 bob' as Ken describes it, changed hands and the boat was his. But how to get it to Manchester?

There was a 'phone call to Roy and they decided that the obvious course was to bow haul (I really hope you're appreciating my extensive boating vocabulary here) *Scorpio* all the way there. So off they went, via the branches of the Leeds and Liverpool and Bridgewater canals that meet at Leigh. They would haul it so far, then walk back to the car where they'd left it and then drive to where the boat was and repeated this until they got to Manchester. The journey was not without incident. Roy attempted to straddle bank and boat when the gap between the two was too wide and suffered a rupture, this incident causing Ken to erupt into a fit of giggles so significant he almost fell into the water.

And, like so many journeys, it was the travelling rather than the destination that was to be the thing. Ken and Roy arrived in Castlefield Basin in Manchester, only to suddenly realise that due to the boat's size, they could go no further. And so, they had no choice but to abandon *Scorpio* where she was. The journey was over and sadly so too was the dream.

There followed the inevitable flotilla of threatening letters from the MSC's Bridgewater Department, demanding that the boat be removed or that they would break her up, the charge for which would be £300, a considerable sum of money at the time. Fortunately enter stage left one Dr David Owen, at that point Director of the Manchester Museum. David offered to take *Scorpio* away as part of the nascent North Western Museum of Inland Navigation.

And the rest, as they say, is history. The recording's going to take a bit of editing, as I had to keep turning the recorder off to facilitate consumption of coffee and biscuits. Text book oral history interview it isn't: I've been going round for years telling oral history gatherers not to interview more than two people at once and this was four people, all of whom interrupted each other and periodically burst into song. It reminded me that the purpose of oral history is not solely to preserve people's memories, though that's an important part of it, but also that it's an opportunity for people to be listened to and to retreat into the past. When I left Ken's house, and the world of *Scorpio* in the early 1970s, and headed back towards Chester (where I now live) I felt better than when I had arrived two hours earlier, and I flatter myself that the experience may have given Ken, Roy, Jeff and Eric a lift too.

John Benson, Archivist

Gifford – her journey to Alvecote 2017

The journeys that *Gifford* made in her working life were from Ellesmere Port to Langley Green in the Midlands and this would take about 9 days.

You may well ask why the trip took from Ellesmere Port to Alvecote, near Tamworth took over a month! The answer is, that in the absence of a horse, we gratefully accepted a tow from *Spey*, and a magnificent pair they made. The crew of *Spey* kindly offered to come and collect *Gifford* from Ellesmere Port. *Spey* had reached her 80th birthday so we organised a party for her, complete with cake and bubbly.

David Williams was the first stage crew member and he went up to Bollington to attend a rally. *Gifford* then spent a few days at Bollington before returning via Middlewich to the Shroppie. Cath and Mike Turpin crewed her from Bollington to Market Drayton where Josh and I joined the boat. Our job was to crew the boat to the Black Country Museum where she starred at the Boat Gathering on September 23rd and 24th. She stayed at the museum for a week while the crew of *Spey* went off to fulfil musical engagements and I came home.

When the crew of *Spey* returned, and I got back to the boat, we continued our journey through Birmingham. Graham Boxer joined us at Gas Street and helped through the heavily locked section of Farmer's Bridge. We travelled along the Birmingham and Fazeley canal and arrived at Alvecote on October 5th. *Gifford* is now at Ade's boatyard where her repairs will be done and her repaint completed, so when she returns for Easter she should look magnificent.



Gifford – tiller time and spooky stuff

It was a great privilege to be part of the team that helped move *Gifford* to Alvecote in September for her repairs. I was the lone BMS person on *Gifford* for the first part of the trip (from Ellesmere Port to Bollington) with *Gifford* being towed by *Spey*. *Spey's* skipper for this part of the trip was Ian McCarthy ('Mac') a long standing BMS member, and over the 5 days, he was joined on a day-to-day basis by a small army of helpers from the *Spey* team, who all worked very hard (one of them, a chap by the name of Chris Kelly, bow-hauled *Gifford* the whole way through the Cheshire locks!) – often for little reward other than a pint at the end of the day!

It was a real privilege to be involved and to have spent so much time at the tiller of *Gifford* and being able to sleep aboard. I have some great memories and I learned a lot but the tiller time and a spooky experience stand out!

Tiller time. We left NWM at about 4pm on Sunday 3rd September in heavy rain. Mac's original plan was to make it only as far as Stoak – a short stint just to get us all accustomed to towing and using cross straps, but having reached Stoak very smoothly in fairly quick time it was decided to carry on to Chester. Mac specifically wanted me to remain at the tiller on *Gifford*, although while on cross straps there is mostly very

little to do on lock-free pounds except when it's necessary to give a little assistance to the motor when negotiating sharp bends. That was the pattern for the trip – although I made it clear several times that I was happy to operate locks, Mac wanted me at the tiller on *Gifford*, so there I stayed – for a total of about 50 hours over 5½ days. When her hold is empty, *Gifford* is a little bit like a cork on water – the slightest breeze will take her! So, despite saying there is little to do when on cross straps, it is still necessary to concentrate at all times – especially when long-lining or being bow-hauled. Even so, there were many occasions when I was able to have conversations with people on the towing path who were very interested in seeing two old boats working together, and I was often able to admire the scenery as we cruised along.

A spooky experience. I did have one quite unexpected, unusual, and inexplicable experience while on *Gifford*. Every night (all 5 nights) I woke up at exactly 3am – I don't know why. On the Monday night I had woken up at 3am as usual but was struggling to get back to sleep. I was lying on my side facing back into the cabin towards the cabin steps when I felt a movement on the mattress – first near my feet as if a hand or foot had been placed alongside my feet and then behind me as if someone had climbed over me and had lain down behind me. That was it – nothing else happened, and there was no recurrence



Gifford and *Spey* in the lock at Bunbury

on subsequent nights. Now, I have a scientific background (bioscience degree at university followed by almost 40 years in the pharmaceutical industry presenting scientific data and relying on solid scientific evidence from properly established clinical trials) so I'm not prone to flights of fancy concerning 'the unknown' – but I will say that (despite what some scientist would have us believe) we don't know everything, and the 'unknown' is unknown – but I do know that I felt the mattress move as if someone was climbing onto the bed behind me, and I have no explanation.

Other memorable experiences? Boating in the dark after our plans went awry due to *Spey* being stuck for an hour on an island of weed that was about half the size of Madagascar – I was at the

tiller of *Gifford* so I was far enough away from *Spey's* Bolinder to be able to hear the owls and to see the bats as we cruised in the dark. Learning how to use a rope to close the top gate of a lock while exiting single handed without losing the boat! A perfect turn whilst paired up from Chester Basin (underneath Telford's warehouse) around the tight bend and into the bottom lock of Northgate (a shame there was no camera to capture it). The interest that is generated by two old working boats! All-in-all a privilege and a great experience.

David Williams.

We delivered our kit to *Gifford* at Bollington the weekend before we were due to leave with the boats for Market Drayton. On Monday morning, the *Spey* crew arrived as arranged, led by Tom Kitching; *Spey* fuelled up at Bollington Wharf and we were off. A fine sight – a pair of Clayton's tar boats is rarely seen.

An uneventful day to Congleton from where a crew member needed to catch a train home. A good mooring just down the steps from the pub.

A late 9.30 start next morning whilst Tim Noakes did work on the engine that he had wanted to tackle for a while. It was a long day to Wheelock – memorable for heavens opening as it got dark and we were still about an hour away. There had been an extremely tight turn at Hardings Wood as we joined the Trent and Mersey, followed by a very low bridge that we needed to put the brakes on to get the mast on *Gifford* lowered. Tom's girlfriend Bridget joined us at Red Bull and her parents helped lock wheeling for the next few locks of the Cheshire flight. Their first experience of canal boating.

Modern technology came into its own as we descended the locks, as Tom booked us a table at the Italian restaurant at Wheelock Wharf and it was a very wet and bedraggled group that arrived for a good welcome meal in the warmth.

Another early start in the mist next morning and a relatively uneventful day's boating to Audlem. There was the usual traffic jam at Middlewich, with boats approaching from all directions. A perfect turn onto the Shroppie at Barbridge, followed by a beer stop set us up for the last stretch of the day as we stopped for the night in the dark at the bottom of Audlem.

Next morning we met Roger Wickson on our smooth progress up the locks and nodded to Ike Argent's memorial seat at Adderley. No time to 'rest awhile' as it says on the plaque! Perfect timing to Market Drayton where we handed *Gifford's* tiller to Di for the rest of the journey to the Black Country Museum and Alvecoke.

It was a great pleasure to work again with *Spey* and its enthusiastic crew – a good mix of ages and experience.

Cath Turpin

I took over *Gifford's* tiller at Market Drayton. We soon got to Tyrley locks and bow hauled *Gifford* through the 5 locks. At the top we linked up with *Spey* and progressed along the very narrow Woodseaves cutting, fortunately we did not meet another boat! It became dusky as we travelled along Shebdon embankment, and we moored in the dark at the Anchor. We visited the pub and finally got to bed – on *Gifford* this was a dark job, moving

around with a torch under your arm! Next morning I attempted to heat water but the gas canisters were in the fore cabin – a cold water wash sufficed!

The journey progressed through Grub Street cutting, Norbury Junction and Gnosall. We got to Wheaton Aston with its one lock and became part of a queue. The weather turned nasty, cold and wet but we batted on through Brewood towards the goal which was the top of the Wolverhampton flight. At Autherley Junction, we were met by a team of helpers and *Gifford* was bow hauled up the 21 locks. In the dusk we moored at the top of the locks by the old Fellows, Morton and Clayton warehouse. A visit to Wetherspoons for fish and chips rounded off the evening.

Next day we had a period of leisure while Tim fiddled with the Bolinder: this was to be a short day which would see us arriving at the Black Country Living Museum. We arrived there about 5pm having had trouble with shallow water and rubbish in the canal. We were warmly greeted by many people over the weekend as they were thrilled to see *Gifford*. As *Spey's* crew had gigs to go to during the next week we left the boats at the BCLM and all headed home.

A week later the journey re-commenced and we headed for Gas Street Basin via the three Smethwick locks. We arrived in the dark, during a howling gale, and moored up with difficulty. I did not sleep well as the cabin doors kept blowing open!

The next day we were joined by Graham Boxer so we had a full crew to tackle the Farmers Bridge flight of 13, actually 26 because of the two boats.

Boating in Birmingham – all in a day's work?

When Di Skilbeck was looking for some volunteers to help move the butty *Gifford* through Birmingham, as most of the Museum volunteers were busy with the 'big boat lift' taking place a week later, I offered to help. I met Di at Gas Street Basin at 8.30am (which meant leaving home at 6.00am!) and boarded *Gifford* just as she was leaving under tow by *Spey* with Mac and his team. We made our way down the Farmers Bridge locks, through the Digbeth branch, on to the Grand Union and down the Garrison Locks, before taking a sharp right turn at Salford Junction. After this it was relatively plain sailing until I had to jump off at Minworth Green at about 5.30pm.

So, what was it like? Hard work! Between six of us we moved two boats – one *Gifford*, the butty, had to be towed in person, through each lock (twenty-six locks, fifty-two operations altogether!). I learnt a lot in a short time – from technical terms ("setting the locks") to how to pull a butty with a rope ("just lean forward and she will start to move"). I had excellent mentors in Mac and the *Spey* team, and Di kept me well fed and watered. At the end of the day, I even got a lift back to Birmingham centre by Dave, a volunteer from the Black Country Museum.

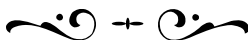
For a non-boater – now looking after a boating museum - it was a valuable experience and I particularly appreciated the warmth and friendliness of the *Spey* team and the strong team work ethic, especially when *Gifford's* tiller came out of the bottom socket in one of the locks! At the end of the day I was tired but satisfied with a job well done, but quietly, was a bit relieved to be going back to meetings the next day!

Graham Boxer

The journey down Farmer's Bridge locks, Digbeth branch with the Ashted locks, Garrison locks, and Minworth locks, meant it had been a very heavy day so we moored above Curdworth locks and visited the White Horse for liquid refreshment. Next day we got to Fazeley Junction and then on to the Coventry Canal, up two locks at Glascote and arrived at Ade's yard about 5pm *Spey's* crew departed and I stayed on *Gifford* and packed up next day.

Very many thanks to those who crewed the boat, David Williams, Cath and Mike Turpin, Graham Boxer, and Josh who helped me. The *Spey* crew were fantastic, and we are very grateful to them for undertaking the tow. The experience with them was efficient, fun and great teamwork. They knew every pub on the route and we visited most of them.

Di Skilbeck



Nationalisation's 70th anniversary

2017 has been a year of anniversaries, although they may not have been marked: 100 years since effective government control of inland waterways was introduced, 70 years since the nationalisation of many waterways, and 50 years since the crucial decisions to retain much of the system were finally secured. The key to that success – such as it was – of 1967 was, I suggest, the transfer to public ownership that took place, formally, on 1 January 1948. This was an essential pre-condition for the kind of system that we now have under the Canal & River Trust.

The fate of peripheral waterways left in private hands suggests this – the Neath, North Walsham & Dilham, Basingstoke, Rochdale and Stroudwater were all largely un-navigable by the end of the 1950s. Had more viable nationalised waterways been left in private hands, it is possible that some might have been developed. The Bridgewater provides a partial example, but one on which traffics were focused on limited sections after 1948. The owners of the best-known canal, the Grand Union Canal Company, were greatly opposed to public ownership, but may well not have financed the kinds of road-oriented development that they had envisaged in wartime. Most canal owners would simply have run out of money, with share values dropping. Any surviving profitability would have derived from water sales and property rather than tolls or carrying activities; and most certainly not the limited profits from leisure use.

The main exceptions were river navigations, notably the Weaver, in reality in County Council ownership, which planned to extend its line upstream and to develop it for shipping. Other examples were the Aire & Calder, the Trent and Severn, and the lower

part of the Lee and Grand Union. These were the lines that the nationalised authority would single out for investment.

The form that nationalisation took, whatever its general merits, meant that co-ordination and the elimination of wasteful competition – what was seen as the over-provision of parallel or duplicate under-utilised facilities – took second place to the development of functional units, that in practice tended to compete. The inland waterways presented a small contribution to national transport, but were managed, first of all with docks with which there were limited synergies, and then on their own. Ironically, this led to a somewhat inward-looking focus, rather than the kind of aggressive rationalisation that might well have been brought by integration with railway management.

What was unquestionable was that the aim of nationalisation was to secure a satisfactory national transport system for freight and passengers, and this might have been accomplished by much more rapid rundown and closures than actually took place. Although public ownership provided a base for the retention of waterways for pleasure use and amenity, this was an almost entirely inadvertent consequence of nationalisation. The financial losses that canal owners faced would be partly hidden within the large-scale accounts of the British Transport Commission, and effectively cross-subsidised, until the point in the mid-1960s that government subsidy for amenity, and the limited additional costs that this involved, could become explicit.

Had the Transport Act 1968 provisions for waterways failed to apply – perhaps with no settlement at all – it is almost certain that the canal at Ellesmere Port would have been lost to the development of the M531. And, with the Treasury keen to save public money, it is probable that the canals would have been starved of investment, with mass closures that would have left only a small number of sections for pleasure and commercial use.

The 1968 Act approached “the nearest-run thing you ever saw in your life”, in a phrase coined by Wellington in 1815, at Waterloo. Wellington later became Prime Minister, as did another supporter of canal and railway nationalisation, who proposed that the wartime controls that began in 1917 (for the independent canals) should continue into full public ownership under a new Ministry of Ways and Means. In a speech in December 1918, Winston Churchill stated that: “So long as the railways are in private hands they may be used for immediate profit. In the hands of the State, however, it may be wise or expedient to run them at a loss if they develop industry, place the trader in close contact with his market, and stimulate development.” Had transport nationalisation followed then, rather than later, this principle would have applied to a small range of canals.

Joseph Boughey

A great start to the 2017/18 BMS meeting programme

In Volume 18 of *Waterways Journal*, David Long wrote an article on the British Ambulance Flotillas of the Great War. He returned to this subject when he spoke at the first meeting of the 2017/2018 season of BMS meetings.

Starting with his introduction to this little known subject, David described the establishment and work of the hospital barges operated by the Inland Water Transport section of the Royal Engineers in northern France. Working with the Royal Army Medical Corps and the Queen Alexandra Imperial Nursing Service and other organisations, many hundreds of seriously injured soldiers were taken by barge from the battle areas to safety. He used many graphic photographs to illustrate this work.

Since David carried out his original research, many more contemporary accounts of the work of the ambulance flotillas have become accessible through the digitisation of



[top left] A sister and nurse of the Queen Alexandra Imperial Nursing Service tend to a patient on board hospital barge A109. Wellcome Library, London

[above] The casualty's progress from trench to barge, as portrayed in a postcard by Sgt David McCutcheon Brown RE, who served on the hospital barges 1915-1918. From his grandson, David Gibson

[bottom left] Casualties relaxing with music en route to Rouen. Army Medical Services Museum, Aldershot

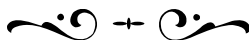
[below] Staff await patients inside hospital barge A109. Wellcome Library, London



newspapers, available on-line through the British Newspaper Archive. He described some of the new information he has been able to access, illustrating that as is always the case, research is never complete! A fascinating evening.

Waterways Journal, Volume 18 is available at BMS meetings, in the shop at the Museum and by mail order via the BMS website.

This year's *Waterways Journal* was reviewed by Harry Arnold in *Waterways World*, who summed up by saying ".....this year's journal contains a wealth of illustrations, including previously unpublished photographs, many more in colour this time. As always, a fascinating view of canal and river history."



Report on members' evening October 20th 2017

At this BMS meeting we were treated to 5 fascinating talks by our own members who turned out to be investigative journalists.

Timothy Peters spoke on the Bridgewater Canal and focussed on the use of horses, their care and health problems. The Bridgewater Canal avoided the use of tugs because it was felt that the canal would need deepening, tugs would cause erosion, pollution and noise. There were some experiments with steam tugs between 1872 and 1885 when the Bridgewater merged with the Mersey and Irwell navigations.

In 1874 horse disease became prevalent, with animals suffering from Glandes, strangles, common cold and nasal complaints. Attempts to replace horses with mules and donkeys proved pointless as their suffering was worse than the horses. In response to this situation the Bridgewater Canal Company made several changes: they appointed a vet, established a horse hospital in Manchester and a convalescent home in Lymm. Also, horses were given a better diet including Thornleys Food, horses were hired from elsewhere and there was more use of tugs, similar to *Manchester* and costing about £850. Using a tug was half the cost of a horse and so the use of horse declined, 1873: 232 horses, 1921: 45 horses. Tugs such as *Bantam* then began to be employed and the use of horses came to an end.

Brian Spencer gave a forward looking talk about the slipway. It used to be full of boats, boat parts and general junk. When this was cleared and the various buildings repaired, the slipway looked very empty, so Brian and a group thought of a plan to bring the slipway back to life. Hannah Holmes had done a lot of research and had an article on the slipway published in *Waterways Journal Volume 19*. This helped to develop an idea which was to make part of a cradle with wheels that would sit on the rails. We have got some rails and these were straightened by the blacksmith but we still need to get some wheels made. The slipway is 'Mortons Patent slip', and others exist in Bristol and Balloch on Loch Lomond.

Brian visited Balloch, where the slipway is used to get the *Maid of the Loch* out of the water for surveys. Brian showed us a fascinating film showing the *Maid of the Loch*

being hauled up the slipway and out of the water. Our slipway lost its lower part when the Ship Canal was built and lost more when the road was constructed. Work on the cradle is expected to start in April or May 2018

Joseph Boughey made us aware that 2017 was a year of anniversaries.

100 years ago the Government controlled the inland waterways; 70 years ago most of the waterways were nationalised, and 50 years ago decisions were made to maintain many waterways. In the 1950s, several waterways were opposed to Government ownership and so their share value dropped, but the Government kept them going. Rivers, such as the Aire and Calder, and the Weaver, were singled out for investment.

The inland waterways made a small contribution to commercial transport and were not integrated with the railways. Nationalisation kept the waterways open, and many began to be used for leisure; this was not the Government's intention! The 1968 Transport Act provided no money for the waterways, so leisure use was limited.

Two interesting facts – the Duke of Wellington supported canals, and Winston Churchill stated that railways could be run at a loss because they connected industries, so presumably the case for subsidising canals could be made if they connected industries.

Norman Stainthorp has investigated the role of the Shropshire Union in the history of the Glyn Valley tramway.

Most of the tramway track has disappeared but Norman had found a lot of archive material. The tramway connected the slate mines to the canal at Pontcysyllte where the slates were loaded on to fly boat type boats. Horses pulled the slate up from the mines but, on a downhill section, the horses rode in a waggon to get some rest. There was a plan to take the slate to the Great Western Railway, but this was opposed by the Shropshire Union Canal Company who bought up the tramway and the wharf by the Poachers Pocket. The tramway was extended as a road tramway to Calverley, where the slate was loaded on to the London and North Western Railway.

In 1926 the tramway was steam powered with a 'skirt' around the moving parts so it would not frighten horses. The slate trade on the canal fell to nothing but, instead, granite was moved by canal from Chirk. Passenger traffic on the tramway ceased in 1933 and the tramway closed in 1935. Its job was taken over by buses and road haulage.

Ken Catford shared fascinating memories of Albert Dock 40 years ago.

In 1972, the South Docks were abandoned and the buildings were vandalised. When the docks were abandoned, the dock gates were left open so the daily tides deposited masses of silt. It took 3 years of suction dredging to get rid of the silt. It was piped under the Mersey and used to fill in Bromborough Dock.

Ken explained the construction of the Albert Dock warehouses. They were built on beech piles and the floors were supported by cast iron columns with supporting rods which slotted into the columns. These cast iron ties were a perfect fit and added strength to the building. The roof was clad in wrought iron sheets but, unfortunately, these reacted to heat and cold so the roof arched up and came away from the sides, causing some columns to fall over.

Heseltine visited, did not notice the fallen columns, and announced that Albert Dock was to house Tate North and, in 1981, the funding agency, the Merseyside Development Authority was established. The impact of the Toxteth riots resulted in money being provided for the Maritime Museum and for works in the Lower basin at Ellesmere Port. Experiments to find a paint which would keep iron fire-proof were conducted at Ellesmere Port.



Name the Horse Competition

There were 375 suggestions put forward for the “Name the Horse” competition. The winner of the competition is Isla, who suggested that the horse should be called “Rainbow”. Jen de Leie has now embroidered the name “Rainbow” onto the noseband of the halter. Isla and her family came to the Museum on Tuesday this week to see the horse again, and to collect her prize of a Santa Cruise for the family.

Inland Waterways Heritage Network (IWHN)

Margaret Harrison, our Collection Manager, has been taking steps to re-instate the Inland Waterways Heritage Network. This useful network, which the Society has always supported and participated in has, in recent years, an up and down history. But both we and the Museum are working with some of other core partners around the country to re-establish this as a useful vehicle for working together.

Margaret convened a recent meeting at the Black Country Living Museum. After a general update from all the attendees, we discussed what had been useful about IWHN in the past and what we might find useful in future. We agreed the following:

- ◆ We would meet twice per year
- ◆ The main benefits of the group were networking and sharing experiences in common areas
- ◆ Meetings would have a theme where we would invite specialists and share our own expertise
- ◆ National Waterways Museum would be the co-ordinator
- ◆ Possible themes for meetings include – boat care / maintenance / conservation, volunteering, marketing and promotion, sharing temporary exhibitions, education
- ◆ The next meeting will be in March with Education as the theme.

The Society welcomes this and continues to support working together in partnerships such as this

Digital additions at the Museum

During 2017 the museum has seen two new additions to enhance its interpretation and displays. The first was the introduction of an audio guide in April using Guide ID's podcatchers. These are small interactive handsets which are pointed at a trigger point to activate the information. The audio then automatically starts playing. In total, there are 20 trigger points on the audio guide tour covering the history of the site and its buildings, the displays in the Island Warehouse and the boat collection. The content for the audio guide took a great deal of research and a lot of editing! Trying to pack concise, informative and interesting information into a minute so that visitors are kept engaged was trickier than anticipated and for that we had the help of a script writer, Deborah Mulhearn.

The audio guide is free for museum visitors and can be collected at the Reception Desk before starting their visit.

In July 2017, we completed our Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund project when *Boats of Every Description: An Interactive Journey* opened. *Boats of Every Description* is a digital touch wall and we worked with Jam Creative, the company behind our *Window on the World* application, to design and install the wall on the first floor of the Island Warehouse.

The idea behind *Boats of Every Description* was to increase access to six boats which are not currently accessible to the public and have been either moved into store for future preservation or identified for documented deconstruction as a result of the options appraisal and feasibility study carried out on the boat collection in year one of the project.

The touch wall trials new digital technologies using interactive projection and incorporates 3D modelling and scans, a virtual icebreaker using a depth sensing camera, and interactive archival photographs. The narrative of the wall charts the industrial use of the waterways up until their early leisure use and the interactive elements demonstrate how each of the boats worked as well as exploring the lives of those who lived and worked on them. The touch wall has enhanced the visitor experience, and has opened up information about the boat collection from the archive which was not previously accessible.

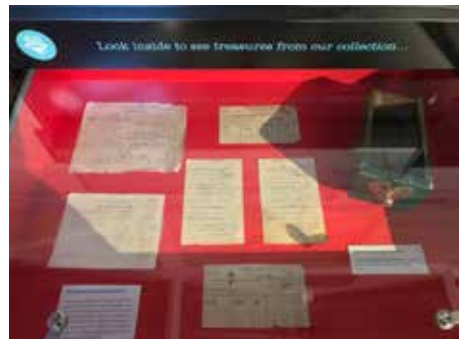


A Podcatcher



[above] Digital touch wall

[below] Objects associated with the themes and boats on the touch wall

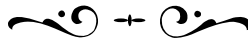


A great deal of research went into the content of the wall from both staff and volunteers, using the boat files along with archive records and footage. We also had conversations and input from the Clarke family who converted Ferret into a leisure boat in the 1960s.

To go alongside the touch wall, we have displayed objects and ephemera associated with the themes and boats explored. These include brochures for holidays on the *Water Miss* class boats in the 1960s and *Ferret's* toll permits along with her ticket drawer and cabin doors from *Merak*.

A wall displaying the content for the motorboat *Oak* has been also installed at the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester.

Zofia Kufeldt
Collections Assistant



Upcoming in 2018

We have a busy and varied exhibition programme confirmed for 2018 which includes an exhibition of Clifford Morris' photography recently acquired by the archive to be staged in January.

In March, Eileen Burke's travel diaries are explored by Tim Daly from the University of Chester in *No Sign of Canals on Mars*. and an exhibition looking at the success of the Arts Council England Resilience project will occupy the Volunteer Hub.

In June, the Coffee and Crochet Group and Boat Museum Society Craft Group are joining forces for an exhibition about traditional waterways crafts, whilst in July, the Guild of Waterway Artists will open a group show at the museum.

The year is rounded off with an exhibition from local artist Jan Sear and her work capturing Liverpool's locks and docks and Cammell Laird.

Zofia Kufeldt
Collections Assistant



Ellen Burke [left] next to her companion Flo Boyde on a visit to John O'Groats. Her diaries feature in an exhibition starting in March.



Have you joined the Boat Museum Society 200 Club yet?

Members of the club ensure a significant and steady income for boat restoration projects. Each month 50% of total money subscribed is paid out in prize money and 50% goes into boat restoration. By joining the **200 Club**, members who live too far away from the Museum to be able to come and help, or those who have other commitments, have the opportunity to make a regular contribution to the Society.

You can buy as many numbers as you like at £1 each, the only proviso being that you are a member of the Society. The more numbers that go into the draw each month, the bigger the prizes.

The **200 Club** draw is usually made at the monthly Society meetings. You can join at a meeting, or by completing the form below and sending it with your membership fee to Lynn Potts, whose address is below.

Winners

- June** John Noton (55), Margaret Smerdon (41), Daphne Luff (38)
- July** David Osborn (85), Lynn Potts (13), Peter Steward (1)
- August** Michael Crompton (20), Barbara Catford (2), Michael Crompton (96)
- September** Ruth Brown(63), Nick Dilley(69), Lewis Phillips(59)
- October** Lewis Phillips(60), Ruth Brown(63), Mike Turpin(26)

**Many thanks to those who have so generously donated their winnings
back to the Society, this is much appreciated.**

Application form - The Boat Museum Society 200 Club

Name: **Address:**

..... **Post Code:**

Telephone:

I apply for membership of the Boat Museum Society 200 Club and agree to pay the sum of £1.00 per month per number. Subscriptions are payable in advance for the months up to and including June or December. I am over 18 years of age and a paid-up member of the Boat Museum Society.

Signed:..... **Date:**.....

**Please send the completed form with your payment to:
Lynn Potts, 58 Frankby Road, West Kirby, Wirral. CH48 6EF
Cheques should be made payable to the 'Boat Museum Society'.**

National Waterways Museum

- Christmas Cruises
9, 10, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24 December
11am, 12.45pm, 2.30pm
£10.00 per person
Booking essential
- Christmas Carol Concert by Wirral
Singers and Ringers
Saturday 9 December
7.30pm. Tickets £7
- Christmas at Porters Row
See website for more details
Saturday 9 and Sunday 10
December
- The Nativity is Cancelled
Friday 22 - Sunday 24 December
£10 adult, £7 child, £34 family
ticket
- National Waterways Museum
Ellesmere Port.
South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port,
Cheshire. CH65 4FW
For more information and to book
telephone 0151 355 5017



Show your support

Like us on 

facebook.com/
canalrivertrust

Become a Friend

Find out more at canalrivertrust.org.uk/nwm

T To book and for more information 0151 355 5017

E nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Charity number 1146792.



Canal &
River Trust

