

Friends of PRESIDENT

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 1986

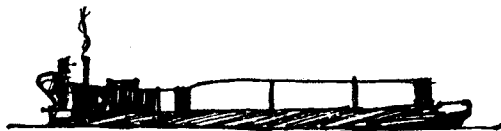


NO 4

ALL CHANGE !

With the closing down of the West Midlands County Council this year a great deal of support for President was lost. Councillors David Sparks and Michelle Ellison, found themselves out of office, and hard working Committee member Terry Jones was looking for another job. Happily, all three have found new 'employment', David and Michelle having been elected to Dudley Council and Terry having been snapped up by Sandwell. However, cash support was removed and the committee have been considering ways of financing President for the foreseeable future.

Wait! Good news!, Dudley Council have taken over the WMCC's role and now the boat is part owned by Dudley and part by the Black Country Museum. Ian Myers and Alan Green visited Peter Barnes who is Dudley's Chief Leisure Officer for a fruitful meeting about President's future and gained the impression that, once Dudley has appraised the potential for President considerable use would be found for her. The first major use will be this year when President will journey to the National Garden Festival at Stoke on Trent, starting probably on 9th September and returning after representing the Borough the following weekend. Next year's programme will be heavily influenced by the promotional aspects of Dudley's increasing drive towards developing tourism, and of course it is anticipated finance will be made available accordingly.



PRESIDENT TO ATTEND IWA RALLY AT BRENTFORD

The major cruise for the President this year is the run to Brentford during August for the IWA National Rally. The boat will be away from base for 24 days undertaking this 280 mile journey and will remain at the rally site for 3 full days. On the journey down, President will pick up its old F M C partner, the butty NORTHWICH, at Stoke Bruerne and of course, will tow it back on the return journey. Whilst picking up Northwich, President will remain at Stoke for most of the day and one night (Sunday 17th August) where it is hoped Friends will gather to socialise and natter on about boats 'n'things.

The provisional route and timings are as scheduled below and Ian Myers once again becomes the focal point for the organisation of crews. What Ian wants, no, NEEDS, is 4 changes of crew to work the 4 legs; Birmingham - Stoke Bruerne, Stoke Bruerne - Brentford, Brentford - Stoke Bruerne, and finally Stoke Bruerne to the Black Country Museum. These crews must be identified by mid July. Several Friends have already volunteered, including some who are prepared to use their summer holidays, but many more are now needed to make up the 4 crews. It may be that crews will have to be made up for shorter legs so if you only have a day or two, Ian points out that you can be accommodated.

STEAM NARROWBOAT PRESIDENT

CRUISING SCHEDULE IWA RALLY, BRENTFORD

12th August - 4th September 1986

Date	From	To	Miles	Locks
12th	Black Country Museum	Birmingham Gas Street	8	3
	Steam from cold depart BCM 1300 hrs			
13th	Birmingham Gas Street	Lapworth (via N Stratford)	18	19
14th	Lapworth	Cape of Good Hope? (Leamington)	10(14)	21
15th	Cape of Good Hope? (Leamington)	Braunston	20(16)	25
16th	Braunston	Blisworth	17	13
17th	Blisworth	Stoke Bruerne Waterways Museum	3 plus Blisworth tunnel	

Remainder of day on Exhibition at Museum
Prepare Northwich. Change crews. Towing Northwich.

18th	Stoke Bruerne	Soulbury Locks		
		top -	21	13
		bottom -	21	10
19th	Soulbury Locks	Cowroast	16	20/23
20th	Cowroast	Hunton Bridge	11	26
21st	Hunton Bridge	Cowley Lock Uxbridge	14	17
22nd	Cowley Lock Uxbridge	Brentford Rally	10	11

Expected arrival about 1300 hrs at Rally

23rd

24th On display at IWA National Rally

25th

26th	Leave Brentford 11 am	Rickmansworth (lock 81)	16	19
27th	Rickmansworth	Berkhamsted	13	27
28th	Berkhamsted	Slapton	11	24
29th	Slapton	Cosgrove	23	9
30th	Cosgrove	Stoke Bruerne	7	7

Prolonged lunch stopover to offload Northwich and change crews

	Stoke Bruerne	Blisworth	3 plus Blisworth tunnel	
31st	Blisworth	Braunston	17	13
1st	Braunston	Cape of Good Hope	20	25
2nd	Cape of Good Hope	Catherine de Barnes	20	25
3rd	Catherine de Barnes	Farmers Bridge Birmingham	10	30
4th	Farmers Bridge	Black Country Museum	8	3

For a run like this, where expenses are high, sponsorship is obviously welcome. We are fortunate indeed to have secured the help of HELDITE LTD, makers of sealing compounds, who will be substantially financing the journey down. Negotiations are in hand for a promising sponsor for the return journey with a well known Birmingham firm with canal side premises adjacent to the Farmers Bridge flight of the Birmingham Fazeley canal. Sponsorship is vital since it costs about £40 per day for coal and more for the running about and ferrying of crews to and from starting points, let alone the vital sustenance required by a hot and sweaty crew. In addition of course, the preparation of the boat costs money, although this year, thanks to Les Langworthy, who has worked very hard on the engine over the winter, things are not too bad.

..... MAINTENANCE LOG

Boiler stripdown

Firebars removed from boiler in sequence, laid out on bank then relaid in hold. Straws drawn for unpleasant task of sweeping out firebox. Maurice Parker pulls shortest piece (actually volunteers!). Protective clothing donned, towel wrapped around neck, wooly hat, goggles, rubber respirator and gloves. Maurice climbs in through firedoor head first. Torch, wire brush, scraper and handbrush passed in. Many muffled curses, sounds of scraping, brushing and clouds of soot and rust. Brave volunteer emerges for air suitably blackened. Reports progress, cup of tea, re-dones equipment climbs back in through firedoor. More muffled cursing, sounds of scraping, etc. Time runs out - brave hot volunteer re-emerges with considerable difficulty.

21st March Tube brush found in bilge - rust causes bristles to break off when used. Replacement needed. Numerous sources tried - no stock correct diameter. Manufacturers visited - no stock correct diameter. Manager disappears into workshop with oversize brush returns with correct size having clipped bristles. Perfect fit - made to measure, tubes come out whistle clean. Not quite so brave museum employee completes sweeping out firebox - emerges black with panda eyes after session of muffled cursing.

24th March Inspection Day - Assembled crowd (Dave Stott, Maurice Parker, Les Langworthy, Dave McDougall), watch 6 foot tall Boiler Inspector clad in hooded boiler suit climb inside firedoor. Camera to hand - photo's available later of feet. Boiler inspector satisfied with internals, checks suspected thin spots with ultrasonic meter. Boiler not as thin as hull plating! Gauge fittings removed whilst inspector in boiler, use of hammer on spanner kept to minimum to avoid loss of hearing. Inspector examines mudhole joints, gauge extension tube bores for scale, tubes for corrosion, boiler internals and pushes mirror inside mudholes. Inspector pronounces boiler fit for further service but in need of lick of paint. Crew celebrate.

Engineroom floorplate lifted and mudbox access plate removed. Filter washed, silt scooped out and flushed. Dave Stott silted up to his armpits. Maurice wirebrushing and painting mudhole doors.

8th April Mudholes re-assembled, manhole lid refitted with difficulty, blowdown and filler valves dismantled and checked, boiler and smokebox painted.

9th April Fight off hireboat for use of hosepipe at rear of Bottle and Glass to re-fill boiler, refit gauges whilst boiler filling.

10th April

Boiler Steam Test date - Training on fitting gauge glass
O-ring seals - new stock finally obtained only 12 months
after ordering! Fire lit - main steam valve re-
assembled with new gasket. Mudholes tweaked tight when
hot. Drip on gauge glass blowdown valve spotted 20 psi.
Shut down for attention. Fitting cracked at root of
thread - due to past overtightening or casting defect.
Boiler tested with only one gauge in commission. Passed
by inspector but safety valve lifting early at 85 psi.
Crew celebrate again. Pumps, injector etc. checked and
all working o.k. Can't go anywhere because most of
engine in Les Langworthy's garage in Wirksworth. Total
waste of 100 psi. Can't even blow whistle as in above
garage for attention. Loose pressure by pumping into
bilge and out through bilge ejector.

11th April

Main engine castings reassembled on engine - big ends
and main bearings fitted - little ends found to be too
little. Renewal recommended by chief engineer - more
parts disappear to garage in Wirksworth. Rumours of
rival project on Cromford Canal needing engine spares!

18th April

Rogue safety valve dismantled for diagnosis - worn seat
discovered - fine grinding paste prescribed as remedy -
Ike Morgan surgeon. Further tests required to check
operation under steam. Engine reassembly proceeding -
missing engine parts re-appear looking more fit for
service.

25th April

Steam inlet and exhaust re-united with engine. Ike and
Less struggle with studs in valve chest casting. Valve
chest plate found to be poor quality copy of original -
so that's why the makers plate is missing! New gauge
blowdown cock discovered on forgotten shelf of steam
specialists in Hanley (Stoke-on-Trent) - minor
modifications only required. More engine comes back
from Wirksworth and goes back at end of day.

Will the brave team of volunteers get it all working
before the Science Museum Steam Rally? Sign up now for
bowhauling whilst Les tries to remember how the valve
gear goes back together.

But seriously, many thanks to all who have helped with
this seasons extensive re-furbishment - that's you Les,
Dave, Maurice, Nigel, Ike and our friendly boiler
inspector.

Ian Myers has a request. When people volunteer for crewing or helping in
any other way and they do so in writing, PLEASE give a telephone number
so that he can get back to you quickly. Ian recalls one occasion when the
route had to be changed by act of God and BWB, and he was unable to contact
a hopeful crewman who consequently spent the best part of a day riding up
and down the towpath on his bike. Don't let this happen to you!

ENGINE REPAIRS

One of the functions of Friends is to provide assistance where needed, with individuals lending their own skills as appropriate. In this way many have assisted, but a most notable contribution has been made this winter by Les Langworthy who has rebuilt President's engines to eliminate the accumulated wear which by the end of last season was producing a poor performance.

The work Les has carried out includes the following:-

- New pivot pins in freshly reamed holes in the valve gear.
- New sliding quadrant gear locks made from phosphor bronze to replace worn ones, and the slots trued up.
- Steam chest cover bolts replaced with machine studs to prevent damage in future cover removals.
- Slide valves refaced and new nuts fabricated.
- Big ends taken up, and scraped to crankshaft, after checking (with mains) for ovality.
- New phosphor bronze little ends made up with modifications to provide improved lubrication; further modifications designed to enable better securement of little ends to piston rod.
- Studs fitted in place of bolts in cylinder caps in view of wear during adjustment.

As a result the engine runs as a steam engine should - smoothly, quietly and with beautiful torque from standstill. Many thanks Les.

Membership

Membership levels have remained fairly constant and are almost identical to the corresponding period last year. The figures are as follows:-

Family	20	(20)
Individual	27	(30)
Unwaged	7	(5)
Corporate	6	(6)

These membership figures are quite encouraging, but unfortunately we do not seem to meet too many new faces at the training sessions. Please do not be afraid to put your name forward for crewing or cleaning duties.

COMMITTEE

Well 'Friends', the time has come to produce another newsletter. It has not been possible to publish any earlier until we had met representatives from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (the new co-owners of the boat). This meeting has now taken place and is reported elsewhere.

This does not mean that your Committee has been idle, however. On the contrary, we have been busy behind the scenes. George Naldrett has been working very hard trying to obtain sponsorship for us, and there is a possibility that we may be able to attract some funds from the Halifax Building Society.

Since the Annual General Meeting, Peter Anthony has been forced to stand down as Chairman due to pressure of work and Alan Green has taken over the mantle. Peter has relinquished his position on the Committee but is staying on as a member and will be able to offer us the benefit of his considerable knowledge.

SOCIAL GATHERING

As yet, there are no social meetings arranged but we are hoping to organise one for October 5th. This may coincide with the Steam Rally at the Black Country Museum. If this is the case, then the meeting will be held at the Museum, otherwise we will try to arrange a visit to the Cromford Canal. If you have any thoughts for future social events please share them with your Committee.

President attended the Birmingham Science Museum Steam Rally again on 11th May and this time towed BIRCHILLS, the newly restored BCN day boat from the Black Country Museum. Whilst at the Rally she became the focal point of an afternoon's filming commissioned by BWB and directed by Eliza Dalleigh, BWB's local environmental officer. The aim is to produce a video to introduce young people to the value of canals in the BCN area. President was filmed in connection with aspects of conservation and a sequence concerning the use of locks. When issued, the video will be available to Friends for appropriate uses.

NOT TO BE MISSED

Day Star Theatre Company (Jane and Peter Marshall) are touring with their new show "All Steamed Up". This production is all about President and has many references to 'Friends'.

TRAINING

The next training run is on 29th June when President will cruise to Caggy Steven's dock at Tipton, via the Factory Three, Netherton tunnel, lunch at the Dry Dock and back through the Netherton tunnel.

President is visiting Caggy's dry dock for further repairs but principally for the replacement of a bottom board which could not be replaced last December when the boat was docked. Additional work which will be undertaken whilst docked, includes scraping the outside of the hull and blacking it, recaulking the bottom boards, and cleaning and red oxidizing the hold. Now although the Black Country Museum will contribute towards materials, it is essential that we have some volunteers to assist for a few hours at a time with some of the more labour intensive jobs. We need to know in advance who will be coming so please can you ring Ian Myers to let him know on which of the days, Monday 30th June to Saturday 5th July, you can lend a hand. All contributions gratefully received as the saying goes. *

Caggy's dock can be found next to the level crossing by Tipton station. One word of warning - this work will be rather messy so a good pair of overalls is a must!

When this work has been completed President will be towed to Les Allen's boatyard in Oldbury for essential repairs to the cabin. This work will be undertaken by Jim Matthias (a member of 'Friends') who has recently started his own business as a boat fitter trading as J & D BOAT FITTING with David his son.

This work involves stripping the timber exterior of the cabin to replace the rotten woodwork. All the paintwork will be removed and the boat will be repainted and have new lettering in time to start the journey to Brentford. (WE HOPE!)

The owners of the boat have also agreed to purchase a new set of cloths and tippet to complete the refurbishment. These will be made of flax instead of the plastic sheets at present on the boat.

However, these new cloths will require blacking before use and once again we need YOU!

This work will most likely be done at the Black Country Museum, but as yet no dates have been set. If you are interested then please contact Ian Myers.

14 Talbot Street
Colley Gate
Halesowen

West Midlands B63 2TD

Tel: Cradley Heath 636878

*BY DAVID MACDOUGALL on 021-557 9643 (B.C.M.)