

# Friends of PRESIDENT

Applied  
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## NEWSLETTER

No. 6

JAN · FEB 1987



Crowded canal: the working boats are now largely pleasure boats. ILLUSTRATION by PAUL COX



DUDLEY MEETS THE PRESIDENT

Members will by now be well aware that Dudley Council have taken over the 'half ownership' of President from the late West Midlands County Council. Many, perhaps, also know that following the transfer there was a period of apparent inactivity which left the Friends and others in a state of uncertainty. This did not arise from any lack of interest or enthusiasm on the part of Dudley but from a similar sense of uncertainty about what to do with half a boat and lack of knowledge about how operations were actually managed. Most of these uncertainties have now been resolved and the Council's Leisure Services Department was given the task of looking after their interests, and I in turn, have been nominated to represent the department.

The Council would like to see President used as much as possible to promote the area, the Black Country Museum, the Canals and, of course, the boat itself (herself? himself?), I expect to attend most Committee Meetings and contribute to drawing up a programme of trips in consultation with the Friends and our co-owners to avoid last minute panics. We hope to produce another 'Sandwich Board' to go along with the existing one and, unless a sponsor can be found, will consider reprinting the leaflet. I should also add that Dudley has already paid £2,000 for the repairs to the cabin. Already I have been impressed by the almost fanatical dedication and enthusiasm which President arouses amongst the Friends and, indeed, the public at large. Dudley Council has shown, over the years, a consistent level of support and enthusiasm for our Canals and I am sure that from now on this will include the President.

David Radmore *DR*

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Early Events in 1987

- April 17-20 Training sessions at B.C.M.
- May 3 Titford '150' Rally
- May 9/10 Birmingham Science Museum Traction Engine Rally
- May 14-17 B.W.B. Celebratory event in Birmingham

*Easter Run*  
*Run*  
*Donnause*  
*R birthday + Run*

Further details from the secretary (see back page for address)

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### All the President's Friends?

The photograph above shows steamer *President* and butty *Northwich* on their return trip from Brentford Rally to Dudley. They are seen jammed in Bridge 24 on the Grand Union Canal at Stockton. "Friends of President" the people helping to free her could be called this, also the shopkeeper on the Stockton locks who warned her crew not to attempt the bridge whilst breasted up! Nothing but hold ups all the way from Brentford, up to half an hour in some locks whilst gongoozlers had a field day, then this hour's hold up whilst they were freed from the bridge hole. Did they then let *Alcor* or the other waiting boats through? No chance. Then to cap it all, on arrival at Cambrian Wharf, we were told that *President* had gone part way down Farmers Bridge flight to drop her load of Dexion, but where had they left the butty? Right on the water point causing a long walk to empty the loo!

We thought the crew would be professionals but possibly they are similar to the American President, just old cowboys.

C. A. ELLISS,  
Sheffield

\* \* \*  
Having enjoyed 17 days of our annual cruise, here we are on our last day only to be brought up short by the sight of *President* pinching our lock and the crew dropping the paddle gear! Yes, they told us in answer to our query, we are a working boat with a load going to Birmingham. Would the load perhaps have been the coal needed for their steam, I asked myself, as they did seem to be riding high?

How are we expected to teach young people to respect the waterways and the people that use them if we are not set an example by *President* and the like, or are they only on their best behaviour when on show at rallies?

MRS L. C. STAPLETON,  
NB *Ora*,  
Crediton, Devon

story, it does appear that 'Friends' must be seen to be whiter than white. This criticism does reflect badly on the Black Country Museum and all possible care must be taken in the future to ensure that the society does not receive any more adverse publicity.

### Steering the Right Course

Since correspondents appeared in December Readers' Letters concerning the activities of steam narrowboat *President* and its crew we have received further criticism of their handling of the boat and of their attitude to other canal users. We have had no further support for the *Friends of President* nor indeed any constructive suggestion as to how organisations such as the Black Country Museum or the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum are to keep their exhibits "alive".

It has been pointed out that there are many privately owned ex-trading craft, and indeed ex-steamers, which have equal length and draft problems. The museums are faced with a different problem. Whilst a private boat owner has the opportunity to spend time practising handling his vessel and can become familiar with all its idiosyncrasies, museums must surely allow a cross section of their volunteers, especially those who assist with the dirty or mundane restoration jobs, the reward, if that it be, of handling the boat out on the cut. This inevitably results in a number of enthusiastic crew being available, none of whom has the opportunity to build up their skills to anything approaching the professional level of years gone by.

Whilst it is important to preserve the varied and complicated techniques used to handle large or unusual craft, there is great difficulty in imposing the discipline on a volunteer crew boating for fun in their spare time.

We, at *WW*, cannot see an immediate answer to the problem - and it appears that neither can the museums - but no doubt some of our readers will have constructive thoughts on the matter and will write in and tell us of their ideas.

The letters on the left were published in the December edition of 'Waterways World' and were supported by others which were not printed. The column above appears in the March edition. Whilst there are two sides to every

# FRIENDS OF PRESIDENT

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Longboat,  
Cambrian Wharf, Birmingham, on Thursday 11th December 1986

Meeting opened 7-35pm.

28 Members present

## 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

J Matthias (Treasurer), D Stott (Minute Secretary), R Thomas,  
Mr & Mrs Brenchley, P M Powell, A R Sawyer, C P Weaver, A Pease  
E & P Dades, K Rogers.

## 2: MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 5TH DECEMBER 1985.

The minutes were circulated prior to the meeting and it was agreed that they be signed as a true and accurate record.

## 3: MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

## 4: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- i) Alan Green reported that he had become Chairman during 1986 because of the resignation of Peter Anthony who left the committee in April. The Chairman went on to thank the retiring committee for their efforts during the year, especially those of the Secretary and Treasurer. He also thanked George Naldrett for his efforts in trying to find sponsorship, and Les Langworthy for his work on the boat's engine.
- ii) David MacDougall has once again been the Black Country Museum representative on the committee while Terry Jones performed a similar role for West Midlands County Council until the abolition in March.
- iii) Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council have acquired the WMCC share of the boat and have nominated David Radmore to be their representative on the committee.
- iv) Cllr David Sparks resigned his membership of 'Friends' on his election to Dudley Council to avoid any conflict of interest although he still supports the work of the society. Cllr Michelle Ellison, a committee member in 1985, has left the society due to pressure of work.
- v) 1986 has been a quiet year in terms of the number of cruises. This was caused by the change in ownership and also by the need to have 'President' on dock for essential repairs prior to the trip to Brentford for the I W A National Rally in August. It is anticipated that 1987 will be a much busier year.

## 5: TREASURER'S REPORT

- 1) An audited balance sheet for the period 1-12-85 to 30-11-86 was presented. This showed the following figures:-

INCOME	brought forward from 1985	£316.09
	during 1986	£745.47
	TOTAL	£1061.56
EXPENDITURE	1986	£580.60
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		£480.96
comprising	cash on deposit (Halifax B Soc)	£300.89
	cash in hand	£20.88
	NatWest current account	£159.19



Chairman: Alan Green  
Secretary: Mike Wilkinson  
Treasurer: Judith Matthias

proposed: F Anthony  
seconded: M Wilkinson  
proposed: I Myers  
seconded: W Fowler  
proposed: D MacDougall  
seconded: I Myers

Carried

Committee Members  
Les Langworthy  
David Stott  
Ian Myers  
George Naldrett  
Bill Fowler  
Jim Matthias

proposed: A Green  
seconded: D MacDougall  
proposed: A Green  
seconded: J Matthias  
proposed: F Anthony  
seconded: J Starkey  
proposed: M Parker  
seconded: I Myers  
proposed: L Langworthy  
seconded: V Langworthy  
proposed: J Matthias  
seconded: P Anthony

The Chairman suggested that to avoid a vote the first five nominations be accepted and that Jim Matthias be co-opted. The Meeting agreed.

#### 9: SUBSCRIPTION RATES 1987 & 1988

Proposition: That subscription levels remain unchanged for 1987 and each category be increased by £1.00 for 1988.

proposed: J Matthias                      seconded: I Pearson

Carried

Subscription levels will be as follows:-

	1987	1988
Individual	£4.00	£5.00
Family	£6.00	£7.00
Unwaged	£1.00	£2.00
Corporate	£10.00	£11.00

#### 10: FORMAL MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

None.

#### 11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i) Mike Wilkinson offered to sponsor all 'President's' cruises to local rallies in 1987 through his company (C P Carpets, Kidderminster). This offer was gratefully received by the meeting and will be discussed with the owners of the boat.
- ii) Ian Myers suggested making another donation to the Black Country Museum towards the upkeep of the boat. The general feeling of the meeting was against this suggestion. This matter to be left in the hands of the committee.
- iii) Joy Starkey, speaking on behalf of the B C N Society, asked about rally organisers being charged for 'President's' attendance. It was pointed out that if sponsorship was not available and the owners were not prepared to pay, this would be the only option.
- iv) There being no other business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed 9-00pm.

Day Star Theatre Company then gave a performance of 'All Steamed Up' a comedy about a record breaking fly run from Birmingham to Brentford by 'President'.

## COMMITTEE

Chairman:

Alan Green  
23 Douglas Road  
Hurst Green  
Halesowen  
West Midlands

021-559-1962

Secretary:

Michael Wilkinson  
Shelsley Grange  
Shelsley Beauchamp  
Worcester  
WR6 6RJ

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Treasurer:

Judith Matthias  
49 Albert Road  
Albrighton  
Wolverhampton  
WV7 3GN

Membership secretary:

Ian Myers  
14 Talbot Street  
Colley Gate  
Halesowen  
West Midlands  
B63 2TD

Newsletter editor:

Ian Myers  
Address as above

Sponsorship:

George Naldrett  
Scotchers Farm  
Horsell Common  
Woking  
Surrey

Minute Secretary:

David Stott

Committee members:

Bill Fowler

Les Langworthy

Jim Matthias

F.C.M. representative:

David MacDougall

Dudley representative:

David Radmore