

Friends of PRESIDENT



195

Winter 2009-10

Chairman's Report

Well as we come towards the end of 2009 I find myself looking back on what has been a fantastic celebration of President's centenary year. It seems a long time ago when so many of us got together at the museum for the AGM and party. It was very good to see some of the long term members (I was searching for a way not to say 'OLD') mixing with the newer people and I think we all had a great day.

The rest of the season we visited a lot of places and everywhere we went we were made most welcome. The highlights for me were The Historic Boat Gathering at Braunston – many thanks to Tim and his team and for the support that continues to come from them. The other big event that jumps out is the Thames Traditional Boat Rally at Henley. I attended for the weekend and I had reservations about going, on the Friday evening I received reports from the outgoing crew that the mooring was well away from the action (we been there before) and that access to the boat was very difficult. When I arrived I saw what they meant. Bernard Hale (Enterprise) had organised a good landing stage which with his help we put in place, crossing Enterprise's tug deck to get a good view of the Engine room. We did get plenty of visitors and the weekend turned out to be one the best despite the weather. The best part was winning the Ellen Brook Trophy for the best working boat, The Reade Propeller trophy for the best steam plant and The Fred and Shelia Bourne Trophy for the best boat at the show.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone who got the boats ready for the season and to the crews for getting them to all the events. Many

hours work on everyone's part, we must keep it up.

For the future 2010 is going to be a year of change. Firstly I will be standing down from the chair at the AGM; I have been in post for over 20 years, long enough for any organisation to put up with me. We also have a new Director at the museum, Ian Walden retired in the summer and Andrew Lovett has taken over at the helm. We also have a new curator David Eveleigh who is going to more involved with the boats. This will bring some changes but I sure they will all be positive. The committee has met with Andrew and David and we are happy that the museum values the boats and the contribution that Friends of President makes to the upkeep and operation of both President and Kildare. They have identified the canal experience as a weak link in the museum visitor experience and are looking for ways to improve this. President and FoP could play a big part in this and we will be investigating ways to do this over the coming months.

At the last AGM we launched a campaign to get 100 new members over the next year – so far this is excess of 50 (the highest for a long time). I would like to welcome all the new members. We will be holding a number of familiarisation days over the spring and summer for those who would like to help crew the boats. I would also encourage all members to come along to the regular working parties, there is no better way of getting to know the boats and fellow members, it also what we are all about. Some of you will have heard of an organisation called National Historic Ships, President has been on the register since the organisation was set up,

Kildare joining about five years ago. Until recently the register was split into three categories Core, Designated and Listed with President on the Designated register and Kildare as Listed. During 2009 the NHS has reviewed the listings and has reorganised and now has just two levels, President is now listed on the National Historic Fleet (along with the likes of Victory, HMS Belfast etc). The register list Kildare a craft of historical importance but does not have enough original features to be on the main list. Finally I would like to wish you all a healthy, happy boating 2010.

David Powell
Chairman

News from the 'ole

2009 was a busy year for the boat. The plant has behaved itself, but as with all steam plant it keeps you guessing. This year for the first time the injector failed, just as we were approaching Tixal wide. Bittel was at hand to give a tow whilst I stripped it down. there was nothing obvious, but, the steam valve had been changed and I suspect a sliver of tape was in the pipework and it lodged in the internals of the injector - they are very delicate and moody. but all worked well after a stiff talking to.

Fire bars hit the news again. a set failed and new ones have been fitted. It is now fairly clear what the problem was. Following my advice the drivers have made serious attempts to reduce smoke by allowing plenty of air to enter through the fire door, which is fine when ticking over or stationary, but when working hard the air has been starved through the grate causing the bars to overheat. Hopefully the combination of the new welsh coal and keeping the door closed when working hard should sort the problem.

As ever I would like to thank all the drivers for their skill and commitment over the last year.

A Steaming good year from the "ole"

Dave Stott
Chief Engineer



CHRISTMAS DINNER a'la cut!

Last winter the recipe was for the wonderful main course of the Christmas dinner, this time, it will be the cake that gets the baking on the back cabin stove, it's a nice and simple all in one fruit cake mix, ideal for baking on a coal fired stove.

*6oz of soft margarine
6oz of granulated sugar
2 eggs
2oz self raising flour
6oz plain flour
1 tsp mixed spice
½ tsp each of ginger & cinnamon
10oz mixed dried fruit 2oz glazed
cherries
1 tbsp milk
Pinch of salt*

Have the fire holding a steady heat with a good glow. Grease and line a 2lb loaf tin. Put all ingredients in a bowl and mix until thoroughly blended, spoon the mixture into the tin and bake for 1-1.1/2 hours.

*Leave the cake in the tin to cool.
You can then decorate the cake with
marzipan and icing.*

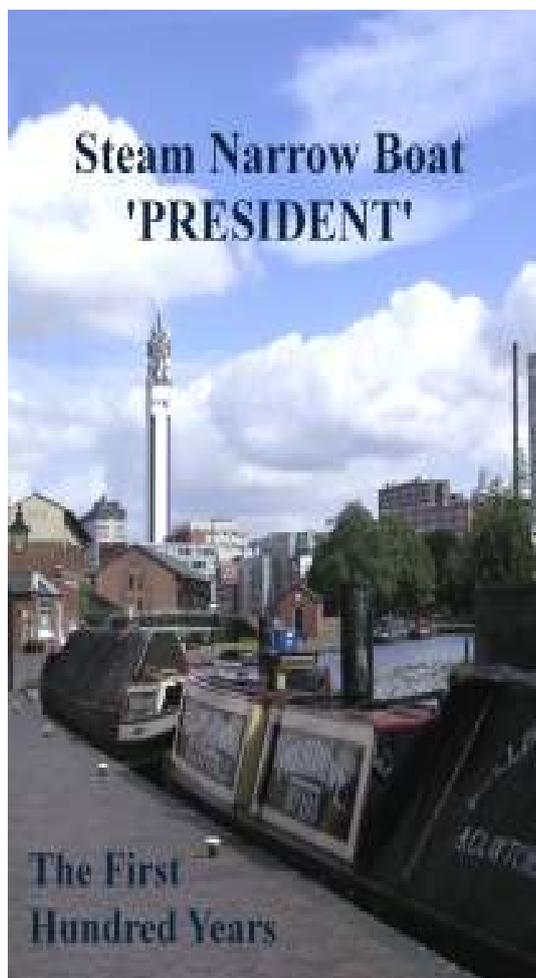
(To add a little festive spirit to the proceedings, soak all the dried fruit and cherries in a bowl charged with your favorite tippie, leave overnight to infuse, be careful not to waste the remainder of the said tippie, use wisely to infuse the cook!)

*CHEERS, HAVE A WONDERFUL
CHRISTMAS.....
SEASONS GREETINGS TO ONE AND ALL*

*DON'T LET THE FIRE GO OUT TO FIND
THE B****Y COAL!*

Annie.

News from the Shop



Steam Narrow Boat 'PRESIDENT'

This book covers the first hundred years, from the initial building in 1909 as a steamer, its subsequent conversion to diesel power in 1925, and following restoration in the 1970s, the return to steam power, up to the centenary year of 2009. The book has brought together the extensive research by our archivist, Richard Thomas, information from Malcolm Braine, without whom there wouldn't have been a boat, the detailed log books from the journeys since 1985 and the personal experiences of the compiler, Neil Ratcliffe.

The book contains 108 pages of text and photos, including 14 pages of colour photos, ('profusely illustrated' according to the review in *Waterways World*). It has a normal retail price of £6.99p, but is available to members at the special price of £5.00p. If you can't call in and collect a copy from Neil's boat in Lapworth, then there is a postage cost of £1.75p to add. Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of President'.

Neil's address is Briar Cottage, Old Warwick Road, Lapworth, Solihull, B94 6JU.

Call 01564 785845 or email neil@canalshop.co.uk if you want to arrange to call in.

An e mail sent to Malcolm from Jean Graham having come across our website. I thought it worthy of inclusion from both the interest angle and can anyone spread further light---?
(Ed)

Dear sir

Today I was delighted to come across your website of the president and it was thrilling to see that you have photos of My Grans Sister Hannah Webb (ne Smith) and her husband Thomas . My Nan was Sarah Smith who married into a well known Boating family Paytons . Her Nephew was George Henry Smith married to Sonia Rolte for a while . Her mum and dad were also Boating people Elizabeth Daniels and Thomas Smith . I only wish my gran was alive to see all of this . She brought me up and I still have a few habits passed on from this family .

I just wanted to say how lovely it is and how much appreciated it is that you do all of this invaluable work with the president to keep history Alive . Many Thanks and Kind regards Jean Grahame ne Payton ps ..A few photos included of Smith family on the Surrey and Walnut and of John William Payton Boatman . If you have any smith/Webb/Payton Photos handy I would be grateful . George Henry Smith .. Hannah(Smith) Webb's Brother and NannySarah (Smith) Payton . Their other Sister Mary Anne Smith was a no 1 in her own right and I am not sure if she didnt work on the president around that time too



Elizabeth Daniels



George Henry Smith



Grandad

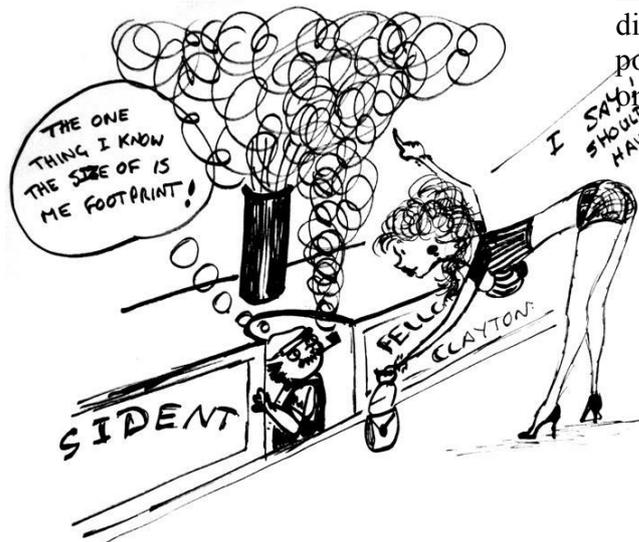


Perhaps Smith Family on Boat



Sarah Payton

Ar Ely



Nah then, last time we spoke, I wer lookin at a gret pile a coal which wer ont wrong side at boat, (that beein artside nor in yer see!) But neh mind abaht that for nar, I thawt ahd tell thee abaht this summers '100 year ' cruise. There we wer, sailing darnt River Thames as nice as owt, wit boats breasted up an nowt to do at 'locks cept hold rope rarnt bollards, mind you,,, gerrint rope rarnt bollards int first place wer a bit a fun a time a two. Anyhow, we gets to Abingdon weer th'old Wilts n Berks guz off, an yer know wen I wer a lad the wer folks abaht ood bin up th'Ippey Cut, anyhow, we needed some grub, so of we guz into town an guess what,,, it starts chuckin it darn. We raided Co.op an legs it a bit smart like back tut boats, damn pipe went art twice, an it can tek more lightin than that their steamer !

On we goes to Iffley Lock, an thes this lock keeper their, when 'e saw t' boats coming 'e dashed into th'ouse an come back out int th'old Thames Conservancy uniform jus like the used to weer wen I

was a lad, so, I thawt I'd better smarten me sen up a bit, (not too much mind, dint want to show t' lad up t'much) We posed for an odd photo or two then went on our way. Grand lad that!



Follerin morning int centre of Oxford, after a good night int pub, we wer mindin ar own bizniss gerrin up steam, wen along comes these legs attached to this lass, she wanted to know if boats wer ok mekin all this much smoke an warrit normal,,, is it dangerous? she sez , (not nearly as dangerous as them their legs) I thawt . Anyhow, off she totters, legs an all, mutterin summat abaht size o' me footprint. Me feet, is the one thing I do know the size of !!!

We sets off up th'Oxford canal thru t' town, not Dukes cut mind, Captain dint want to risk groundin t' boats ont wear cos o' th' wind, soft I calls it, in my day wi dint bother abart wind, we just gorrin wi it! 'e paid though,,, all t' way arter Oxford it wer mov a bit, get stuck, goo

int lock, get stuck, put Kildares rudder back on! come art at lock, get stuck, an it dint get better till above Dukes cut. Once we got gooin I settled darn wit pipe to watch countryside go by, but wer brought up sharp wi both boats tryin to gerrin to t' locks side be side,, but thats another tale.....

Ed – Names have been omitted to protect the innocent but they know who they are!

6 What is the bell signal to go astern in an emergency when on President?

7 What is a 'spur-lash' and when is it most likely to occur?

8 What is the furthest north President & Kildare could reach without a tidal passage?

9 Which are the oldest parts of President?

10 When was the last time boats traveled up to Pocklington in Yorkshire?

195 Quiz

Questions

- 1 Where in the BCLM would you find a concrete narrow boat?
- 2 What is the minimum depth of the Manchester Ship Canal?
 - a 15 ft
 - b 26 ft
 - c 35 ft
 - d 60 ft
- 3 What are 'Clacks'?
- 4 Why, when one boat is passing another, do they get drawn together?
- 5 What is this the name of this phenomenon?

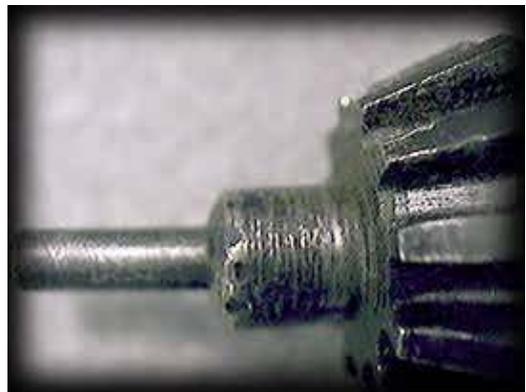
What's this then

Each edition will contain 3 or 4 pictures taken from an unusual angle – it's your job to determine what they are. Again answers at the AGM – be there

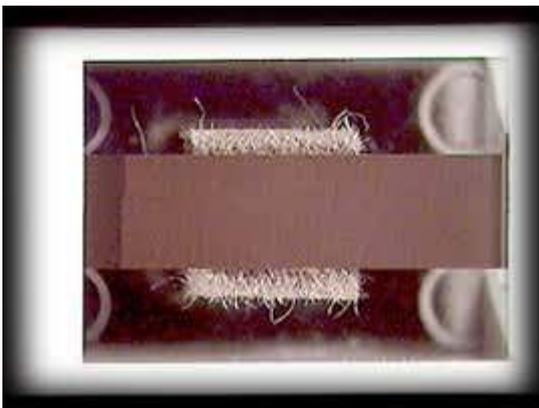
1



3



2



4



Gallery (send your pics for inclusion in the next issue of 195.)

All Photos by D. Speer



Cleeve Lock river Thames



195 meets 195 !



“Thames Conservancy” Lockkeeper



Napton Bottom Lock



In Deepest Oxfordshire



Admiral Nelson Braunston

Trip reports

BCLM to Huddlesford Junction (14th - 18th September 2009) by Neil Ratcliffe.

Crew - Neil Ratcliffe (captain), Eddie Oades (driver), Brian & Pat Empsall, Tony Tibbins and Alan Claridge.

After spending many months writing the President book over the winter and spring period, I was going to have a relatively quiet year as far as President was concerned. When the crewing list came out, I didn't volunteer for any of the trips. They all filled up nicely and there weren't any phone calls from Richard asking if I was available.

Then very late in the year the request came from the organisers of the Huddlesford Boat Gathering asking if President could attend. Within three days of Richard asking for volunteers the trip was full. I had decided to do the round trip from the Museum to Huddlesford and back.

The most direct route is via the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal, but this isn't a very President friendly canal so the route taken would be via Great Haywood, which meant the joys of the Wolverhampton 21 in each direction. All the usual planning went well and the overnight stops sorted out. This was then thrown into doubt with the problem of the melting firebars on the return from the National, the full story of this will hopefully be written about by someone involved with that trip.

With just over a week to go before the start of the trip, a new set of firebars was

ordered. A weekend visit to Birmingham was cancelled, so that the bars could be fitted. I had a call from Bob Crompton, who fitted the bars, to say all was well and ended by saying the boiler was empty. Our chairman also called me to say that he had ordered another ton and a half of coal, which would need loading before we left.

Tony, Alan and myself all arrived at the museum early in the afternoon, there was no sign of the coal on the dock. This was still in the compound by the main entrance, and couldn't be delivered to the dock until 8am the next day. This was the time that I was hoping to leave the museum. So we set about filling the boiler, this is achieved by removing the whistle and inserting a hose pipe into the resulting hole and should take about two and a half hours. It took five hours because one valve that should have been fully open, and one that should have been fully closed weren't, and this went unnoticed for a long time.

The following morning (Tuesday), we were ready at 8am with the cloths removed, ready to load the coal when it arrived. It was another 40 minutes before it arrived. The coal was loaded and the hold sheeted up, and we were away from the museum just after 10am.

I had been warned that there was a very large object in the canal just after Factory Junction, where a site had been cleared. We tried giving it a bit more room but still hit it. There were various places where we found the bottom before we arrived at the top of the Wolverhampton 21. The flight was completed in 3 hours 15 mins with Eddie, Brian & Pat with President, and Tony, Alan & I with Kildare. A quarter

past six saw us at the Fox & Anchor, Cross Green for the planned stop.

On Wednesday we continued to find the bottom of the canal all too regularly. In a few of the locks we needed a flush to get ourselves over the scour that builds up just downstream of the lock. As we were getting nearer to the planned stop at Radford Bridge, Tony said that the better moorings were on the far side of the bridge. The log of a previous trip that year said that the tirfor winch was needed to get President through the bridge hole. We arrived at 1845 and promptly ran aground on the far side of the bridge. Large fendering had been installed on the off side to prevent boats hitting the arch of the bridge, but this gives a lot less room to manoeuvre.

Various methods of getting unstuck were tried, but the tirfor was needed. If the obstruction isn't cleared quickly, the tirfor makes things worse by pulling the boat towards the side of the canal into the shallower water, and this is what happened here. In failing light I rang BW to report our problem. The duty supervisor said that he hadn't heard of President, but said he would send help first thing in the morning (7.30), health and safety issues stopped him sending workers in the dark. So President blocked the canal for the night and we retired to the pub.

We assembled at 7am the next morning to try again. The tirfor was used, but this time from a tree on the off side to pull the boat sideways into the channel. More pushing and pulling occurred and then a boat that had tried getting through the bridge at midnight offered to give us a pull. By all of the above methods we were clear of the bridge by 8.30, ten

minutes later two BW men appeared. I tried to book them for the following Tuesday when we were due to return through the bridge, but they both said they were on holiday.

We then proceeded to run aground in every bridge hole until the last one before Tixall lock. This delayed us quite considerably, three hours to travel three miles. We were met at Tixall lock by Nick Bostock, son and grandson. He had heard the whistles from his nearby home. They travelled with us on President as far as Great Haywood Junction. It was a joy to travel on the Trent & Mersey after the trials and tribulations of the Staffs & Worcs. The night's stopping place was reached at Handsacre at 1830.

Off again the following morning at 8am, there were no queues or hold-ups at Fradley and five hours later we wined the boats and tied up at Huddlesford. Then got them cleaned up ready for the public on the Saturday.

Huddlesford Boat Gathering & return to Museum(19th - 24th Sept)

Crew - Neil Ratcliffe (captain), Eddie Oades (driver - 19th), George Hopkins (driver 20th-24th), Brian & Pat Empsall, Tony Tibbins, Roy Hinchliff & Alan Claridge (who had decided to complete the round trip).

Saturday was spent showing the boats, talking to the public and trying to sell raffle tickets and the book. When time allowed we all had a chance to look around the site. This event seems to grow every year. All eight of us had booked the meal and evening entertainment that was being laid on by

the organisers, and very good it all was too.

Sunday's plan was to leave Huddlesford at Midday, to allow all the other boats that were leaving to get ahead of us. With all the problems we experienced along the Staffs & Worcs, it was discussed whether we should return via the Birmingham & Fazeley, but we decided to stick with the original plan. Eddie left us in the morning which left seven for the return journey. I had to talk two of the crew into sharing the back cabin of Kildare, but there no scandal to report as they are married. By 10am all boat movement seemed to have finished, so we moved on to plan B, and decided to leave at 1030. Within two minutes of untying the boats we were on to plan C, as Brian had tried testing the depth of the water without a pole.

Again we were lucky at Fradley Junction with no delays at the locks. Because of our earlier start we decided to travel passed the planned stop at Handsacre and continue on to Ash Tree Bridge. The following morning when George went to light the fire, he found that six of the firebars had dropped off the sloping surface that they rest on. After inspecting both ends of the fire box, Brian came up with the cure, and with the aid of a mooring pin suitably positioned, all the firebars were back in position. (This fix stayed in place all the way back to the museum).

The journey back along the Staffs & Worcs was looked on with some trepidation, but all the bridge holes that had caused problems on the outward trip were negotiated with no delays. We still found the bottom of the canal but were never stopped. Even with the later than

planned departure from Ash Tree bridge we still arrived at the overnight mooring at Radford Bridge earlier than expected, so we thought we would try getting through the bridge and tie up on the far side for the night. We did get stuck again, but with help from some local youths we were through 15 minutes later.

The next day's trip was to the Fox & Anchor at Cross Green, it turned into a fairly long day for one reason or another, including letting other boats go by that we had been holding up. The final day saw us getting stuck at Marsh Lane bridge at the south end of the narrows, which delayed us for quite a while. Between there and Aldersley Junction I received a phone call from our chairman, saying that we wouldn't be able to tie up at our usual position when we arrived back at the museum. Some dredging had taken place during our absence and one of the boats that were used for the spoil had sunk.

The Wolverhampton 21 again took three and a quarter hours, this time it was George, Tony and Alan with President, Brian, Pat, Roy and me with Kildare. Roy had his first experience of bow hauling Kildare, (I hope it hasn't put him off crewing again).

A nice surprise when we returned to the museum, the bridge was already raised because of other boat moving that had been going on.

A few weeks after the end of the trip, I received a stoppage notification email from British Waterways to say that the fendering at Radford Bridge was going to be removed, and replaced by piling, leaving a wider channel through the

bridge, and also that it was going to be dredged. Perhaps getting the stuck overnight and closing the canal had an effect.

As this report is being written many weeks after the trip, I can also add that I have since learned that the Waterway Manager had been held up at this bridge for a couple of hours when he was accompanying John Jackson on his loaded coal boat 'Roach'. Perhaps we should invite managers onto our trips through known problem areas.

Editors note

Thanks to all who sent in material
All contributions gratefully received
Let us know what you are doing with your boat/train/car/house etc
Send to:-
Dave Speer

30 Salteye Road Peel Green
Eccles Manchester M30 7PJ

nutdip@googlemail.com

and finally a note from you Secretary:

As David Powell said in his report he will be retiring at the AGM.

With David standing down this does mean a change is required in the three official post elected at the AGM:- Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. We also need to elect a further 6 members, who's various duties include, Chief Engineer, Crewing Secretary, Membership Secretary, Sales coordinator and 195 Editor. Whilst most of the roles have a potential name against them, we are definitely looking for a Secretary and Membership Secretary. So if you are an existing Committee members or looking to get more involved please get in touch with me.

nick_haynes@uk.ibm.com

The date for this Year's AGM has now been set as 17th April. A less grand affair this year, but Agenda and Financial statement to come in March.

Nick Haynes