

Friends of PRESIDENT



195

January 2013

'Friends of President' is a support group working for the Black Country Living Museum, Tipton Road, Dudley, DY1 4SQ

(Registered Charity No: 504481)

Committee 2012/3

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All items for inclusion in the newsletter to be sent to the editor, contact details above.

Help raise funds for Friends of President

By searching the internet using <http://fop.easyssearch.org.uk/>

Current total : £13.38p from 2,672 searches

By shopping online via <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fop>

Current total : £156.55p from 17 registered supporters

Website : <http://nb-president.org.uk/>

Editorial (Jan 2013)

So far so good, still sticking to the plan of a monthly newsletter. I know it is only the second one but we have to start somewhere. I was hoping to have sent these 195s out as a pdf attachment to an email, but the combination of size of attachment and number of emails being sent wasn't allowed by my ISP.

So it has all been converted into an HTML email, and I'm hoping that everybody has their email client set up to receive them. If you are only receiving plain text emails then you won't receive this as it was meant to be and there won't be any pictures. If this is the case and you do not wish to change to receiving HTML emails then let me know and we'll see how big a problem it is.

Hopefully, once the website is back up and running properly I will be putting a pdf copy of these newsletters into the members area. Keep hold of the list of committee members from the last printed copy as I won't be including that in every email newsletter, but it will be in the pdf version on the website. I will keep you informed if there are any changes to that list.

Unfortunately there was a clerical error in collecting everything together for the last postal issue and the crewing list didn't get included. Malcolm was very quick off the mark and sent out a copy by email, but within 24 hours it was out of date. Tim Coghlan, from Braunston Marina, suggested we take the long way back from Crick to Braunston. After a quick email around the committee it was agreed, so now we will take ten days instead of one and travel via the Trent & Mersey. We will still be back in time to go horseboating to Stoke Bruerne.

Susie Empsall

Some very sad news to report - Susie died suddenly at home on Dec 15th. Seven members of FoP were amongst the 140 or so family and friends who gathered at Stafford Crematorium on Dec 28th for a Service of Thanksgiving.

Event report - Newcomen Engine Experience 10th November 2012

Two of our members volunteered to help with the firing of the boiler on the Saturday of the Newcomen Conference, Ron Jackson and Will Derbyshire. Something that may come as a shock to some members, but I'm also told that our Chairman had a go as well. I don't think that there is any truth in the rumour that he will be training as a driver this year though.

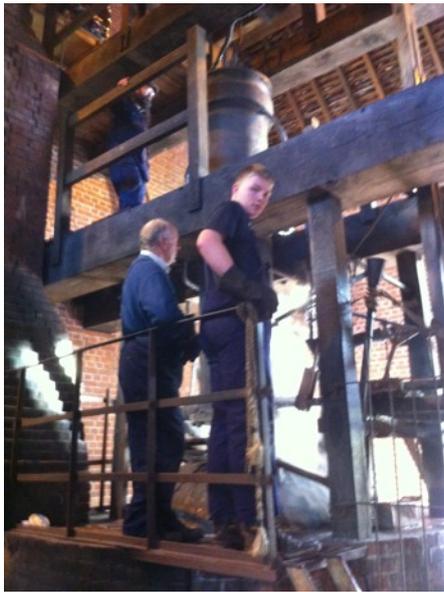
I'll now let Ron continue with his account.

I arrived at the museum at 08.50 and met Nick on the car park. After being introduced to Mike and Pete, Nick left to do some work on a boat. We got on with lighting the fire, turning the water on and the important job - making tea and coffee. The boiler did not take long to come up to temperature as the brickwork around the fire box and boiler were still warm from being in steam all week.

The machine is totally different to President's set up, with a low pressure boiler and vertical cylinder. At the top of the cylinder is the water feed. Water overflows from the cylinder to feed the boiler on each upward stroke, the flow being controlled by a simple tap in the feed on a beam alongside the cylinder. This can cause some amusement if the level is allowed to get too high - it pours over the top and, in Pete's words, every one gets their share as I was later to find out.

Will Derbyshire arrived at about midday and was soon familiarising himself with the fire box, or furnace as they seem to prefer to call it. The steam valve and water feed are controlled by a

series of rods, linkages and ropes that would have made Heath Robinson proud. All of the linkages operate from a secondary pump rod to supply cold water to a header tank.



During the afternoon some of the rods started to show signs of wear and the engine house would fall silent as two rods managed to cross, calling for a measure of remedial work with wedges and shims.

During a quiet spell I visited the chip shop for lunch, thoroughly enjoying fish & chips and missing the entertainment when the cylinder overflowed and gave the driver an impromptu shower. The day ended with Will and myself dropping the fire, and there is a lot of fire to drop. It would be much easier with a rocking grate but that would not fit in with the period.

All in all I found this to be a very enjoyable experience and hope to be able to be involved in future events.

Ron Jackson (*photo - Nick Haynes*)

If that account has tempted anyone else into having a go, the Museum is always looking for volunteers. Contact any of the committee and we'll add your name to the list (if there is one).

Fundraising

The totals at the bottom of the second page have increased, but not by a huge amount, unfortunately there are still only 17 people registered to raise money when they shop online. Some of you may already be supporting another good cause but I'm sure that doesn't apply to everyone, and of course you may have already done your Christmas shopping before your copy of 195 arrived.

For those that have registered there is another facility that you can download, called 'Find & Remind'. It is a small bar that sits at the top of your browser screen, and if you visit a site that supports easyfundraising you will get a prompt to remind you, so you shouldn't miss an opportunity to raise money for FoP.

Also when you search using easysearch or google you will get a reminder in the search results if any of the websites supports easyfundraising.

Committee meeting report (Dec 5th)

Those in attendance for this meeting were Nick Haynes, Carole Atkinson, Simon Nuttall, Neil Ratcliffe, Steve Kirk, David Goode and Jo Moody representing the Museum.

Two new members had joined using the website paying by PayPal.

Work is ongoing sorting out the tendering process for the rebuilding of the stern end of Kildare next winter. This would include new steel hull sides, new wooden cabin to replace the current steel one, and then fit out the back cabin.

Nick reported about the Newcomen event that took place, (Ed-full report of this elsewhere in 195). Jo said that the museum would be closed for the first two weeks in January and then closed every Mon & Tues through to March, with the exception of the half term period.

The sales stand has been booked in for Crick. A change from previous years in that we are having a stand inside the Kingfisher Marquee. There is the possibility of the return of the raffle for 2013, the main prize is not known yet but more should be known by the next meeting.

Provisional date of April 20th set for AGM but official notification will follow closer to the time. This is the nearest date to Kildare's Birmingham registration.

Date for next committee meeting - Feb 27th.

If any member would like anything raised at this meeting, then contact any member of the committee with your request.

Guillotine Lock, Kings Norton

The Canal & River Trust have been running a number of open days at various locations where they are allowing the public to view the work that they are carrying out. One of these was at the guillotine lock near Kings Norton Junction on the Stratford Canal on Dec 9th. We have been stuck there often enough so I thought I would go along and have a look.

The lock is a Grade II* listed structure and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. In 2011 it was placed on English Heritage's 'At Risk' register. The work being carried out is as a result of this. It has not been operational since nationalisation in 1948, and even after spending £200,000 on the work it will still be non-operational.

Before we could descend the steps to get down to canal bed level, we were all issued with a hard hat and a hi-viz jacket, (is it just me that thinks this is a bit OTT?). All of the gates and lifting mechanisms had been shrouded in plastic so we couldn't see them.



Fabric dams had been placed across the canal (above left - north side, right - south) at either end of the lock and you could see why we had run aground so often. Dredging on the approaches to the lock were not part of the planned work, but we were told that one of CRT's dredgers would be passing through here next year and it would be done then.



There was a walkway laid all along the canal bed under the bridge to the other end of the lock. The state of the brickwork was visible along both sides of the lock. It was apparently worse than expected and the stoppage was going to be extended until the 21st.



As can be seen in the photo, the brickwork on the towpath side is curved where the side meets the bottom, this is a strengthening measure, but it was missing on the other side of the lock. There was just a 90 degree angle. The reason given was that this canal was originally built as a wide canal as far as Hockley Heath, but there were then money problems and it was continued as a narrow canal. Once the locks had been built there was a danger of the Worcs & Birmingham Canal losing water to the Stratford Canal so a stop lock had to be built. This lock was built narrow under the bridge using one of the existing bridge supports, they only had to build the offside wall and that didn't need the extra support.

The walls were in quite a bad state in places and numerous bricks would need replacing. One of the reports I read in a paper said that it was 7000 bricks, but maybe that was an exaggeration, I don't know.

Quite a few years ago, the road bridge over the lock was rebuilt, and just after the old one was dismantled I went and took a photo of the lock without any bridge there and both guillotine mechanisms visible. Unfortunately, before I could get the film used up and developed, the camera was stolen. I don't think there will be another chance in my lifetime to get another picture like that.

Website News

Anyone who has tried to access the website in December may have seen a page saying that we would be back soon. The website was taken down following a hacking attack which left various unwanted entries and links in the text. Parts of it were reappearing before Christmas but no photos etc yet. More will appear soon.

Museum & Other News

On the 9th and 10th November there was a Newcomen Steam Conference held at the Museum celebrating 300 years of the Newcomen engine. Various presentations were given over the two days, with one on the Friday afternoon on the Steam Narrow Boat President by Richard Thomas and Dave Stott. Our chairman was also in attendance.

Dudley Canal Trust have submitted plans and a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding for a multi-million pound education, exhibition and heritage centre. If built, The Portal, as it will be known, will be built on the right hand side of the canal leading up to the tunnel. You can see an artist's impression and be able to donate towards it on the Trust's website

<http://www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk/>

Media Mentions

Friends of the Black Country Museum Contact Newsletter (Autumn/Winter 2012/12 issue). A picture and mention of President arriving at the Museum with the Olympic Torch bearer.

Canal Boat January 2013 - There is an article about various steam boats on the canals. President and FMC get a mention in a few brief paragraphs on the history of steam. There then follows photographs and details of five modern steam narrowboats, Hasty, Trevor, Tixall, Emily Anne and Whistle Down The Wind. All of these boats were involved in the Steam Boat Association gathering at Coventry last year.

Historic Narrow Boat Club winter magazine - President & Kildare get mentioned in the list of boats attending the Parkhead Canal Festival (a report on this event will appear in due course). Also in this issue is a request by Richard Thomas, our archivist, for any memories of Kildare for a future article as it is the centenary year.

Diary Dates

Depending on where you live or how far you are prepared to travel, those with an interest in working boats may like to know of a couple of talks taking place this month.

In the conference centre of the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port on Jan 8th at 7.45pm there is a talk on 'The Rewards and Pitfalls of Restoring Spey'. Spey is one of the ex Thomas Clayton tar boats, a sister boat to Stour, which is at the BCLM. A video of Spey breaking the ice on the Bridgewater Canal can be seen here:-

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qxwCucEC_A

In the school room at the rear of the Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne on Jan 17th at 8pm, there is a talk on 'The First Ten Years of the Braunston Historic Boat Rally'.

Internet items of interest

To get a feel for some horseboating you could spend nearly thirty minutes watching a film about a trip along the Leeds & Liverpool, with Elland being towed by Bilbo Baggins here:-

<http://vimeo.com/52294724>

If our trip comes about, let's hope that it is drier than the one featured.