

Friends of PRESIDENT



195

November 2015

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

(Registered Charity No: 504481)

Committee 2015/6

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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.easysearch.org.uk/>
Current total : £69.41p from 7,786 searches

By shopping online via <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fop>
Current total : £462.33p from 30 registered supporters

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

Editorial

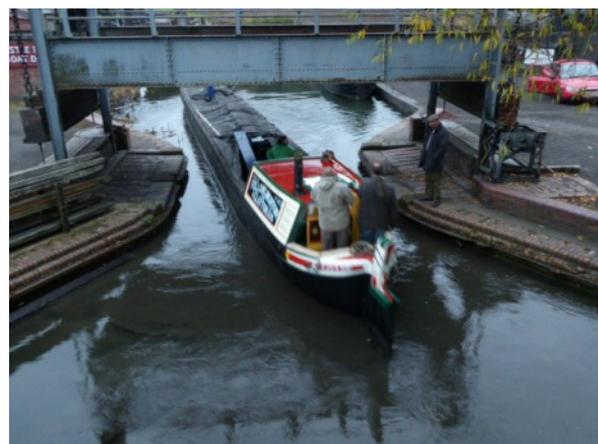
Welcome to the latest edition. Those that attended the AGM will have noticed that *Kildare* didn't make it back from Dadford's, but as you will have noticed by the front page, she has now arrived, on the 16th. The arrival could have been a bit earlier than this but the museum didn't want it to possibly disrupt some filming for the third series of 'Peaky Blinders'.

The other thing that you might have noticed on the second page is the change to some of the positions on the committee. We say cheerio to Malcolm Dunlop as membership and crewing secretary, it takes two people to replace him, namely Chris Walker as crewing and myself for membership. We would also like to welcome Janet Ramsay as Secretary.

If you have seen the trailers for the new series of Great Canal Journeys on Channel 4, you will have seen a brief glimpse and sound of *President*. More details in the Media Mentions later.

Chris Walker was disappointed to only receive one response to his 'Future of *President*' piece last month. It isn't too late to have your say, you can either contact him direct, or if you want others to know your views send them to me and I will put them in the next 195. I could always do with a bit more audience participation.

Kildare News



One of my spies, John Glock, just happened to be moored outside the museum when *Kildare* arrived. The above photos are his, along with the one on the front page.



The above four photos are by Nick Haynes taken a week or so ago.

The first work party on the boat at the museum took place on the 24th, when the planned work was going to be to unload *Kildare*, stacking all the kit on the bank at the side of *Bessie*, and then covered. It was then hoped that Steve and Jim will complete the floor work. There was also one yesterday.

I haven't been sent any reports on either of these work parties so am unable to report on progress in words or pictures. Could someone please put fingers to keyboard and send me something for the next issue.

AGM Report

The most notable feature of the first four items on the agenda, ie. apologies, 2014 minutes, matters arising in those minutes and other formal motions received, was that there were more apologies for absence than members present.

Chairman's Report - First I must apologise for the date of this AGM, we normally try and hold at the beginning of the boating season but because of our lack of *Kildare* the boating season never really started. But most of that is next year's story.

During 2014 we had a very busy boating programme with journeys to Crick and back in May, then a quick turnaround at the Museum and up to Chester. We had been invited to attend a local IWA Campaign Festival at Chester and with the demise of the IWA National it was an ideal opportunity to show the boats off in the North West. A local campaign is organised to bring to the public's attention to a local initiative, in this case the opening up of the River Dee. After the well attended festival it was off to the National Canal Museum in Ellesmere Port where we kept the boats for a couple of weeks. With our local driver, Malcolm steaming for a couple of the

weekends. Both boats returned to the Museum in July for a couple of weeks rest. This was all with the very smokey Russian steam coal, so we plan to go back to the Welsh during 2015.

Also this year we had been invited to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the Old Grand Union Canal link between Foxton and Norton Junction. So another trip south was scheduled, to be at Crick for the official celebration opening on 9th August. As the only historic boat there our attendance was appreciated.

On the return trip we were joined by Nuneaton Film Makers, who had previously filmed the boats in 2012, including the Pageant and their visit to the Steam Boat gathering in Coventry in the same year. The main part of their filming was through the Braunston Tunnel and included in their video.

Our final trip was to Parkhead for our bi-annual visit. We did have one further steaming when the Museum were hosting a Gas Conference.

Also during the year there was a lot of work both by the Museum and ourselves to go through a tendering process for the stern plating on *Kildare* and replacement of the metal cabin to its original wood construction. We finally settled on Ian Kemp, not only on the price but also the detail he provided on how he would keep as near as possible to the original construction materials. Ian took delivery of *Kildare* in October and she is currently nearing completion and returning to the Museum.

In June we also had the sad news that Roger Prior had lost his battle with cancer. A number of FoP members attended his funeral and with the agreement of the Museum his ashes were distributed in *President's* wash during the Gas Conference weekend. We also agreed to call that area of the dock "Roger's Corner" and a brass plaque has been purchased and fixed inside the upturned boat.

Finally a big thanks you to all our members who have given their time both here at the Museum and away with the boats promoting the Museum and our boating heritage. I'm sure there will be plenty more with our own work on *Kildare* following the work scheduled at Dadford's from our hardcore working party volunteers.

Also in 2016 we are planning to have the boats for about 8 weeks boating and well as completing the hold refit once *Kildare* is returned to the Museum.

It was difficult not to talk about our activities during 2015 but I'm sure Dave will mention some of them in his Engineering Report, so now over to him.

Engineering Report - Since our last AGM it has been relatively quiet in the engine room. This year the museum appointed a new boiler surveyor. Mr John Glaze is a highly experienced engineer. His initial inspection found two areas of concern – the first was the top manhole lid which was as the manufacturers had made it, but did not meet the BS regulation in as much that the upstand was too small, which allowed too much side play. This was corrected by building it up with weld and then grinding it back to the correct profile, it subsequently passed muster. The other area of concern was the fusible plug socket which had become badly scaled. This was corrected and was signed off.

The run to Braunston was a success and all the plant performed well. The main focus of attention this year was *Kildare*. The refurbishment/replacement of the rear plates and the cabin has now been completed and *Kildare* is due back at the museum. This was only part of the project. When the old floor was lifted to enable the work to start it revealed a lot of damp and corrosion. So it

was decided to replace the entire floor. This huge task was taken on by Steve Kirk and Jim Garrett, assisted by very willing “Friends”. In the last few months some 500 manhours of work have been given by a small band of “Friends”. I/we are very grateful to all of them many travelling long distances to help us.

Once *Kildare* is back at the BCLM the work of refitting will begin. Please look out for emails giving details of the work parties.

Our congratulations go to Will Derbyshire who this year became a qualified driver and now joins our small team of drivers.

Malcolm Dunlop asked if there could be any accommodation at the museum for work party weekends so that daily travel wouldn't be needed, but DS reported that this wouldn't be possible until *Kildare* was finished. Steve Kirk proposed a vote of thanks for Dave Stott.

Membership Report - 2014 only resulted in five new members. We also had 3 resignations and one death in the same period (Roger Prior). Roger will be greatly missed as he crewed with us regularly. Anyone who knew him will remember his friendly nature and continual humming.

In addition 19 memberships lapsed in the year due to non payment of their annual membership. This latter poses a major threat to FoP's finances and ability to crew the boats as membership payment is essential, but many members do not pay in January. Members wishing to participate in crewing should be aware that they may not be able to do so if their membership has not been renewed.

In early 2015 I sent a copy of a questionnaire to all members to try and ascertain if they perceived problems with crewing the boats. As expected quite a few of the replies were from non active members who felt they were either too old or not in sufficiently good health to crew. Members who had been active in the last few years but had stopped, generally had personal or family reasons but were hoping to restart crewing in the future. A simple example was a new baby in the household. Others, however had stopped due to ill health and felt unable to continue their previous crewing commitments.

Some respondents felt that we followed the same trips too often and suggested that visiting different places would be more likely to help attract crews. I suspect that this is borne out by the fact that it is much easier to crew the boats when the trip is different to the norm.

Unfortunately there were some criticisms of personalities and these need to be addressed. The good news was that the active members by and large intend to continue to do so.

Crewing 2014 - Crewing in 2014 proved to be a very difficult year. With the exception of the trip to Chester and back which proved the easiest trip to crew of the year. Quite a few of the trips relied on a core group. Quite a few trips still had vacancies almost up to the week of departure. However we did have a successful show at Crick. We attended the IWA rally in Chester followed by a month on show at the National Boat Museum in Ellesmere Port. We attended the 200th anniversary celebrations of the Leicester arm of the Grand Union Canal in August and the Parkhead Rally in September.

I thought that I might add crewing 2015 to this report. As members may be aware *Kildare* was not returned by April and this threw the entire crewing schedule out. As the season progressed it was clear that we would have to abandon virtually the entire crewing activity as we had no crew boat. The only exception was the trip to Braunston when Richard Prince very kindly offered to let us use his boat for the crew.

We have not been able to have a training weekend as we no longer have accommodation available at the museum and this was exacerbated by the fact that *Kildare* was unavailable. This also affected steaming weekends at the museum.

Nick thanked Malcolm for his time on membership and crewing.

BCLM Report from Andrew Lovett - Andrew started by saying that getting active members across all groups at the museum was a problem, and that it would be a shame if it got to the state of *President* not being able to go anywhere. The work done by FoP was appreciated by him and the museum. It had been a good year and attendance and revenue were strong, something that wasn't universal across heritage sites. The site was going to be split in two so that more could be done with regard to modern manufacturing in the Black Country. More development in the area of the boat dock. Some Arts Council funding. The BCLM has a National Leadership scheme for aspiring museum directors. The new Chairman of the Museum Trustees is the Principal of Dudley College. More volunteers are needed to populate the museum with costumed characters.

The AGM was followed by a showing of the film by Nuneaton Film Makers about a year in the life of *President*, filmed over three years.

Fundraising

Only £2.91p raised this month, hopefully this is the lull before Christmas shopping really gets under way. Please remember to check whether the company that you are buying from is one of those that supports the easyfundraising scheme. There is the chance of raising considerable funds without it costing you anything.

We have gained one new supporter during the last month, we now have 30. If you haven't registered yet please do so.

Media mentions

The third series of Great Canal Journeys started on Channel 4 last Sunday at 8pm. The first episode dealt with London's lost route to the sea. More of interest to FoP is the Birmingham to Braunston episode being shown tonight with Tim and Pru being filmed on *President* at the Braunston Boat Show earlier this year. The third episode next week deals with Ireland (we aren't in this one).

Museum News

On the 1st November there is a birthday party at the museum for *Peacock* which is 100 year's old.

Tony Tibbins' Question - reply by Tony

Just read your October 195 and the reply from Alan and Pauline Pease, (thanks to them for their contribution). But yes I would agree with you the Stratford is one canal only split by the fact that it branches off to Kingswood Junction to join the Grand Union. But another three canal junction has now come to light. The Ashton Canal, The Lower Peak Forest Canal and the now re-opened Huddersfield Narrow Canal come together at Dukinfield Junction at Ashton-under-Lyne. But according to Google Maps the Huddersfield doesn't start until after the Asda Tunnel, but that's only about 50yds away from the Junction, but I'll give it that.

That's all for this month, please don't forget the warning that I gave last month - **Neil**