

Friends of PRESIDENT



195

July 2016

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

(Registered Charity No: 504481)

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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 : £78.95p from 8,619 searches

By shopping online via <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fop>
Current total : £547.97p from 31 registered supporters

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

Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition. Despite my pleas in the last issue, I am still waiting for reports of the trips to and from Liverpool. I have received one for the trip from the museum to Braunston, but I like to publish them in the order that trips took place. So please let me have something for the next issue. Also needed will be reports on the Braunston show and the trip back to the museum.

There are a couple of photos of the Braunston event from Janet Richardson, editor of Towpath Talk. Many thanks Janet.

Going back a few years, Martin Burke has sent me his report on part of the 'Below The Sea' tour from 2009, and going back even further to the BK years (before *Kildare*) there are some photos from John Goldrick.

Chairman's Request



Nick has asked me to include this request.

If anyone would like to register an interest in getting one of the waterproof jackets being demonstrated by him in the photo, would they please let him know, he will then be in touch with you to find out the size required and to let you know the price once he's found that out.

Old Trip Report

President: Hail and Farewell!

(The tone of parts of this may be a little overdone: I was feeling a little elegiac thinking of graveyards! This was part of a trip on the Great Ouse, from Hartford Marina, Huntingdon to Ely. Thursday 17th to 18th July 2009.)

Procrastination is the prerogative of princes. Not Presidents. An "Under the sea tour" of eastern waterways and fens had been planned for *President*, to coincide with the 2008 IWA National Festival at Bedford. Unfortunately river levels fouled up the schedule. It was decided, however, that as promises had been made to visit places, this trip would be undertaken in 2009. The numerous festivities originally planned were replaced by smaller, fewer events or became simple visits. On the other hand, some people will say that the cruise to Ely was one big party. It would be more accurate to say that it was several big parties.

The first such party was a crowd forming on a road bridge as *President* and the butty *Kildare* approached it. The possibility of a gang of youths willing to throw stones is unfortunately a frequent worry but in this case a coach could soon be seen parked close to the bridge: an organised party. Perhaps a school "nature" trip? The "gang", however, turned out to be much older, well-armed with cameras and greetings. A man, having the combined age of a gang of three or four youths, began running and may have vaulted a fence or two to get ahead of the boats to take photos.

With much whistling and waving from *President* the boats passed on. It appeared that the group were visiting the museum of the Stretham Fen pump engine immediately after bridge. This is the sole surviving steam-powered drainage engine, now looked after by the Stretham Engine Preservation Trust.

Much less than an hour later, approaching Pope's Corner and the confluence with the River Cam, another crowd of people was encountered. Many of the men were wearing collar and tie, suggesting some formal occasion. Whatever it was, people waved to the boats, so the crew waved and whistled back. The crew did not know that this was less of a "Hail!" and more of a "Farewell!" The boats passed on, to a mooring with Ely Cathedral less than 500 yards away. A similar distance away on the other side of the river, and parallel to it, the railway embankment was clearly visible. *President* was to be in steam at this mooring on both Saturday and Sunday.

The visitors and passers-by on Saturday morning included a number with an interest in industrial archaeology: they were on a tour of a few days. They were also the people on the bridge at the Stretham Fen Pump Museum. One passer-by informed the crew of *President* that a steam locomotive would be visiting Ely that day. There were suspicions that local people might have heard about a steam boat and had just become confused.

Meanwhile someone else that *President* had 'passed by' the previous day had spotted the boats in Ely and made a phone call. Thus it was that a lady visited *President* to tell the crew that her brother used to live - and had just died - on his narrow-boat. And that being whistled on his way to the Pearly Lock Gates by *President* would have been much appreciated by him. She had come to Ely especially to express her gratitude to *President* and crew for the salutations to someone who had 'passed on' as they passed by and left him in their - and his own - wake.

The next party to appear was of a few passengers travelling in a train hauled by the locomotive *Kinlet Hall*, a GWR Hall class locomotive from the Tyseley Railway Museum, Birmingham. She steamed into Ely Station and the enthusiasts steamed out to "do" Ely. They were not slow to discover the presence of *President* and one of the train stewards handed over the phone number of the "train manager". *Kinlet Hall* set off to the accompaniment of a vigorous whistling competition between the two beasts of burden and steam, while train passengers and boat crew did a spirited re-enactment of final scene of *The Railway Children*. Quite daft, even absurd, but a little bit of fun. And from some angles it made quite a good picture...

All things pass on: steam-powered narrowboats worked for only a fraction of the time that steam railway locomotives did, passing swiftly into history. Fortunately there are many people who are committed to ensuring that that history is not simply unloaded from memory and forgotten. *President's* whistle was originally meant to be used to signal manoeuvring intentions but now is more frequently "Hail and farewell".

She hailed a crowd of industrial archaeologists and a crowd of steam train/railway enthusiasts. She bid *fare ye well* to someone not seen, someone who had reached the "end of navigation". Members of *Friends of President* - and supporters of coal-powered trains and railway museums

- steam through life, doing their little bit to help humanity know where it has come from and how it has achieved that progress. Knowing where we are going is a different matter. There comes a time when we will all lock up - or down? - permanently, having reached the end of our own navigation. Somewhat ironically, *President - Saturn, Raymond* et al - should get closer to immortality than any of us. *President* will continue her navigation on the canals: a "cut" into the future that outlasts us all.

For we mere mortals it will, one day, be RIP - *President* should never rust in peace.

Martin Burke

Braunston Show



Two photos from the show from Janet Richardson, editor of Towpath Talk. Hopefully there will be more when the report arrives. How did we fit in when it wasn't an FMC year?

Photos From 1991



Three photos from John Goldrick from 1991. Top left is negotiating Kings Norton stop lock, and above is *President* passing the support/crew boat *Sir William Stanier*, owned by Mike Wilkinson.

Left is John enjoying the comforts of the support boat, doesn't he look clean!

Fundraising

£13.41p was added to our funds during June, £9.39 from easyfundraising, and £4.02 from easysearch. Our supporters have now increased to 31, so thank you whoever you are who increased this number by 1.

Membership Matters

Two new members this month. Welcome to you both, hope you enjoy your time as members.

615 - George Marshall, Audlem

616 - Peter Wadsworth, Leamington Spa.

Internet Items Of Interest

Also, courtesy of Towpath Talk there is this short video of the boats at Braunston

<http://www.towpathtalk.co.uk/braunston-historic-boat-rally/>