

Friends of PRESIDENT



195

September 2016

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

(Registered Charity No: 504481)

Committee 2016/7

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

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Current total : £82.12p from 8,851 searches

By shopping online via <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fop>
Current total : £556.53p from 31 registered supporters

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

Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition, three members have broken the silence so 195 has appeared. There are still a lot of gaps in the list that appeared last month. One is appearing this month (thanks Eddie), the other two are for later trips, so I will wait for others (hopefully) to fill the gap. It will give the committee something to talk about on the 14th.

Mentioning the committee meeting, if any one has anything that they would like raised at the meeting please let one of the committee know.

An old photo of *President* has made it into my keeping, so there are some questions for the more long standing members to try and answer.

Trip Report - Tipton – Liverpool, 2016.

26/04. Off we go from BLCM, round Factory and on to ‘ampton. Down the 21, Engine ahead, butty bow hauled. Interesting bit just below Stafford Road, where the bacon ‘n egg sandwich shop used to be (nuts, it’s now a working means’ club) – towing path fenced off for repair! Eddie, wheeling, finds the gate and manages to open it (not used much!) only to see that butty crew have got around the fence without falling in. Down we go to Aldersley Jct. Dave Stott, driving, then wanted to wake the fire up for the run round Atherley Jct. and up the Shroppie. Ah, blower ineffective. Hurried investigation revealed that the blower ring, which directs steam up the funnel to draw the fire, had broken off and fallen down by the blast pipe in the top of the smokebox. Sterling efforts involving Will reaching down for it (he has long arms) were to no avail, there was no way to re-fix it. A rather trying run followed, with Dave driving while Eddie fired as water level was balanced against steam pressure, to get round Atherley where we were able to stop comfortably while the boiler recovered. On then to Brewood for the planned stop. The time lost resulted in the intended meal venue having stopped serving, but a walk into the centre luckily found an alternative.

27/04. On along the main line to Cheswardine.

28/04. On again to Audlem, where the Bridge Inn was patronized and some beer consumed after coping with the vicious by-washes on the flight.

29/04. The next target was to be Barbridge, the junction with the Middlewich Branch. However, as we had time in hand, it was decided to continue to Middlewich to “get ‘em ahead”. The deep locks on the branch have some awkward scours and barriers at the tail, making it tricky to pick up the butty. It was, though, good to see that the lock cottages, which had been falling into disrepair, are now occupied and in trim, with occupiers coming out to see the boats. Secured before Wardle Lock, and Eddie set off in his “big mac” to find a meal venue. Arriving at the Narrowboat Inn, he found the nice Latvian lady was just taking a ‘phone enquiry for seven people; oh dear she said, no more room, then it became clear the call was from Steve on the boats! Phew.

30/04. Next target is the Lion Salt Works at Marston to attend their first steam event. Righto, down Wardle Lock and a ninety degree left onto the T and M: wide turning bay here, should go round on one strap, but..... no warning of the tree stump which had slid down into the canal. Needless to say, *President* found it. Best part of an hour and a half to get off, despite a snatch from a helpful motor. Long flushes from both Wardle and Kings Locks needed. We later learnt that the boatyard further on was filling their dry dock. By this time the Captain, who was ashore, was pointing out that he did want to reach Marston that day, and we still needed to water and ash out at Middlewich Wharf. So, down the last narrow locks, call at the wharf, and into

Middlewich Big Lock; try not to kipper the pub balcony while making up the fire, then on over Croxton Aqueduct, around the exciting bends by Whatcroft Hall, past Broken Cross and through the chemical works. Lots of notices about “leaving the area rapidly” if a klaxon sounded! Darn it, its animal feed they make, isn’t it? Anyhow, here we are at the Salt Works. Once the boats on our reserved mooring were shifted, we had a grand spot with both boats alongside beside the open grounds at the Works. Phil there was very welcoming and helpful, organising a shore lead and access to the toilet facilities despite having lost his voice. The pub in Marston turned out to be first class and a popular venue.

01/05. Greek Easter, so Eddie was able to ring his god daughter in Corinth as it was Will’s turn in the ‘ole. On the ball as ever, Will spotted a leak in the body of the boiler feed pump. A screwed plug retaining the liner of the pump chamber had come out. Luckily noticed before anything more broke; however, no amount of searching in the bilge could find it, so Dave and Will removed the whole pump to the canalside for attention. Out of the blue, Dave encountered a very kind gent who tried to produce a plug from his workshop, but to no avail. One of the museum staff then drove Dave into Northwich, but still no luck, so the pump had to be stowed in the hold and we’d use only the injector. The pump had its revenge later, when it decided to bounce off Eddie’s head while being unloaded at the BLCM – no damage to either! Eddie’s friend Marj from Wirral joined us for the evening, and gave good account sewing buttons back on Mr. Tibbins’ coat and Mr. Wilkinson’s trousers.

02/05. Away towards the end of the afternoon, after a successful stay at the Lion Works, where we were looked after very well. They seemed keen to have us back another time. The museum is very interesting and gives a good understanding of salt working and extraction, and why so much of the surrounding land has subsided. On, then, past the Anderton Lift and through Barnton and Saltersford tunnels. This night we stopped just before Dutton and ate aboard.

03/05. Now it’s through Preston Brook tunnel and onto the Bridgewater, Will on the shovel, Tony steering *President*. A wide and deep canal, so they duly got on with it! We startled the trams running alongside near Altrincham, and caused chaos in several school playgrounds in Sale! Toot the whistle and there at the fence are the children, all cheering and waving, while Teacher comes running down behind them dragging her coat on – great fun. Then its Waters Meeting, and sharp left onto the Bridgewater Canal Leigh Branch. New territory for *President* and *Kildare*, at least with FOP. So, over the Barton Swing Aqueduct across the Manchester Ship Canal; spectacular views, with the road swing bridge below to the left, and on through Patricroft heading for Worsley. There should be a water point, sayeth the Captain, so Eddie goes ashore to walk ahead and find it. He waves the boats in opposite the famous boathouse, just before the Packet Boat steps at the Delph, where the Duke’s mines started it all. Fine, says the Captain, but where’s the water point? Oh, there it is, the newly cream painted bit on the end of the public loo block with the little green and white name board! Very good, in fact, with double security gate, water tap inside, Elsan disposal and two WC cubicles with hand basins and soap. After the essential activities there, it’s a right angle turn into a bridge ‘ole, where the Engine promptly stems up. Hey, ho, shouldn’t have joined if we can’t take a joke – usual backing and heaving and she’s through. Where to stop for the night? Best to get clear of the noisy motorway, so on to a promising looking one of those chain eatery-pubs by Bootshall Bridge. Unhappily, not one of our better choices, but at least we know now, and could moor outside.

04/05. Onward, then, through rather desolate countryside which is slowly recovering from the extensive colliery working, to Leigh. At Leigh Bridge the canal changes from Peel Ports’ Bridgewater to CRT’s Leeds and Liverpool Leigh Branch, and a big new sign tells us so. Also, there are a few L & L wide boats moored along the way. The immediate target, just past the

remains of Bickershaw Colliery, is Plank Lane Swing Bridge. Use of this is time regulated as the road is very busy, so we need to arrive as soon as it can be used. Dave walks ahead, and finds that the bridge is not now manned, but fully automated. Great, but the operating instructions come up on a display screen which is in bright sunlight. Somehow, Dave manages to decipher them, and through we go, the traffic queue even at an off peak time being considerable. After that, it's on to the two Poolstock Locks up into Wigan. Sharp left, and down through the town past the CRT yard and dock, until Pottery Changeling Bridge. Now this is rather evil: underneath a newer bridge is the older, tighter one, immediately after which is a right angle turn to go past the Pier and Trencherfield Mill. Now the canal falls through several wide locks, originally paired in separate cuts but now with only one in use. At one of these, there is pleasant distraction from the rain chatting to a lady working up single handed. Just to liven things up, the L & L swing bridges begin to appear. These are basically of three types: fully automated with lights, chimes and barriers, semi-automated where the key allows you to push the barriers across the road and then set off the bridge mechanism, and those entirely manual. A few on farm tracks are disused, and a considered judgment call is required to avoid putting anyone ashore needlessly. Otherwise, a system of slowing, man ashore, set bridge, pass, close bridge and recover operator soon develops. Will is handy for some of this, as he seems to be able to chase after the boats faster than others! And so to Parbold for the night, and another good eatery.

05/05. Today's run takes us on with the River Douglas alongside for a while past Burscough and the junction with the Rufford Branch, through ever more swing bridges to Maghull for the overnight stop.

06/05. Well, this is the day of the run into Liverpool. Timing is critical as the swing bridges at Handcocks Lane and Netherton Lane are worked by travelling bridge keepers and appointed time must be met. The length between runs around Aintree Racecourse. At the first bridge we are there just before the keepers – very friendly lads, whose accents clearly confirm we are entering Wackerland. A good run through Old Roan, but then a long wait at Netherton, much to the indignation of the cob of a pair of nesting swans, as the keepers were held up in traffic. Now on a surprisingly clean canal through Litherland and into Bootle, seriously startling a single motor coming the other way, to our next appointment at the top of the Stanley Dock flight. There is one boat here before us, a charming couple who kindly tell us to go down ahead as we have a pair. An interesting chat, as their boat is painted as based on the Royal Military Canal, which runs between Pett Level in Sussex and Hythe in Kent, sadly not connected to the network.

While waiting for the lock keepers, one of the hazards of urban canals is highlighted when a cyclist travelling at speed round a narrow blind corner finds himself among our crew on the towpath. With the lock keepers' arrival, it's away down the flight under a tight bridge into the Stanley Dock and past the famous Tobacco Warehouse on the left. Then under the bascule bridge carrying Regent Road out into the wide expanse of Collingwood Dock then Trafalgar Dock, with a sharp turn to port (two short blasts on the whistle) to head into the narrow cut re-excavated through the infilled Regent Dock with massive mooring bollards speaking of the past and the Kingsway Tunnel to Wallasey somewhere below. From this narrow cut we are abruptly out into West Waterloo Dock and the Princes Dock, following a rather eccentrically buoyed channel not marked with the usual IALA system. At the end of the Princes Dock is the first lock of the Liverpool Link, approached through a pedestrian bridge with a low Perspex shield along half its width – careful! – and Dave is. Into the lock, to find Harry Arnold armed with a camera; you'll have seen the picture by now. The lock drops us down and through three tunnels (the first and longest sports a bend) and intervening short open pounds which take us underneath St. Nicholas Place, behind the Pier 'ead, past the Three Graces and above the Birkenhead Tunnel to the final lock. This lock can raise or lower boats according to the depth in the Canning Dock beyond.

This time it's down. There we are – traffic flying along Strand Street, the Cunard Building in the background, and a right angle turn to starboard (one short blast) out of the lock, across the Canning Dock, right angle again (another short blast) into the Canning Half-Tide Dock – more sea-going traffic here and hordes of spectators, tall ships and *Daniel Adamson* in steam. On towards the statue of Billy Fury, then a right angle to port (two short blasts) tight around the stern of the *Danny* under an unopened and low swing bridge (funnel down!) and into the Albert Dock. Across the Albert and under a fixed bridge to port into the Salthouse Dock where we are to berth on the marina pontoons. Two more short blasts, and round to the berth, a tricky approach behind a floating bandstand, near where the DUKW *Wacker Quacker* sank so ignominiously and publicly. Safely secured, the organisers of the event arrive for a chat - where do we put the ashes? Oops, they hadn't thought of that, however problem overcome. Involved preparations for a cavalcade the next day, with drummers on *President*. Ear defenders provided for *President's* crew. Eddie quietly amused as he has arranged a day off to make use of Marjorie's washing machine over in Wirral, but not before he manages a ride as second man in the eight wheel sentinel steam lorry that has delivered the coal!

Eddie Oadeas

Fundraising

A further £6.90p added to the bank account during August, £4.61p from easyfundraising, and £2.29p from easysearch. Many thanks to our 31 supporters.

Membership Matters

Another three new members this month, welcome to you all:-

618 - Tracey Forrest, Brierley Hill

619 - Jeffrey Carter, Birmingham

620 - Melvin Coleman, Todmorden

Media mentions

Two photos in the September issue of Waterways World, the first is one of *President* heading away from the camera without *Kildare* in tow, at the Braunston Historic Boat Show.

The second is a £50 winner in the Favourite View piece. It is a photo by Terry Eyres of *President & Kildare* in the countryside at Daresbury, near Warrington.

September Towpath Talk has two photos taken at Audlem, in the first larger one you can see *President & Kildare* in the distance, and the second smaller one shows the stern of *Kildare*. Both boats get a mention in the write up as being first time attendees at the event.

Internet Items Of Interest

Thanks to Will Derbyshire for this link to another YouTube video of the Braunston Show.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=SjrnCyo5pqs>



Does anybody have any information about this photo. Where? When? What is the significance of the number 18?

Well that's all for another month, please don't forget the missing trip reports.

Neil