

Friends of PRESIDENT

JAN 1986 NEWSLETTER

No 3

January 1986 sees the start of the second year of "Friends of President". Last year's programme ended with the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 5th December at the Malthouse Stables, Tipton. Those of you who were unable to attend the Annual General Meeting will see a report on that meeting elsewhere in this newsletter.

1985 was a fairly good year for the Society. Membership had risen to 71 (plus 7 Corporate) by the end of the year. There were many new faces as well as all the old familiar ones to be seen at events attended by "President".

Obviously with such a large membership there was a healthy look to our bank balance at the end of the year, we now have more than £300.00 in our account. That does not mean we can afford to rest on our laurels though. With the demise of the West Midlands County Council at the end of March, we may have to fund some of our own training cruises unless suitable sponsorship can be obtained.

There is, however, one area which gives cause for concern; the number of people volunteering to man the boat. It would appear that the same few people are crewing time after time, whilst others have complained of not having a turn! Where does the answer lie?

- 1) Send me the dates that you are available as soon as the list of events is published.
- 2) Don't think that you are fully trained if you have spent an hour or two on the boat.
- 3) Don't be afraid of volunteering for several events, the more volunteers we have, the better the rota will work.

We are anticipating a cruise to the National Rally at Brentford later this year. Sponsorship has been promised, and once the future of the boat has been decided we will then be able to make the necessary arrangements. I'm sure there are many of you who would like to take part in this event, but you must have taken part in other training cruises first.

I would also like to point out that in order to gain free entry into the Black Country Museum, you must produce a current membership card and sign the volunteers book. You must also give prior notice to me (Cradley Heath 636878) or to David MacDougall at the BCM (tel: 021-557 9643). Any one turning up "on the off chance" will be charged the normal museum entry fee.

I would like to finish by wishing you all a very happy and prosperous 1986.

IAN MYERS
Hon Secretary

STEAM NARROW BOAT PRESIDENT MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS WINTER 1985

In line with requests from West Midlands County Council 'President' has been dry docked for a condition survey on the hull to ascertain short and long term maintenance requirements.

The following urgent work has been undertaken whilst on the dock:-

1. Removal and replacement of 1 rotted taper bottom with $2\frac{5}{8}$ inch elm board including fitting new bolts and caulking, spiked and roved to keelson.
2. Boiler room forward bulkhead angle - bolts and plugs removed, 7 no. $\frac{5}{8}$ inch x 8 inch coachbolts fitted from below to plug holes.
3. Shoe plating renewed both sides as allowed by fixed docking baulks, further attention required to inaccessible sections left unprotected.
4. Partial plating carried out on old stern end bottoms where 'Bolinder' bed bolts removed. This is only a temporary remedy.
5. Boiler Blowdown valve fitting bolts removed and replaced, now countersunk into hull plating as advised. $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch x $\frac{3}{8}$ inch CSK screws fitted.
6. New split pin fitted in propeller securing nut.
7. One badly weeping bottom seam scraped out and recaulked.

On re-filling dock several small leaks were evident in the bottoms.

A further docking is recommended during the summer months for scraping and re-blackening hull, hardening up all bottom seams and further attention to shoe plating. Effective re-blackening can only be carried out during dry weather.

The worn stern end bottoms cannot be expected to last above 3 - 5 years dependant on useage. They are almost certainly above 40 years old. Replacement would entail removal of part of the steam plant, the boiler feedwater filtration tank and parts of the cabin internal woodwork.

In addition to the above work indicated by the survey on the hull the following require attention:-

1. Topsides

1. Elm sidecloth battens rotted in various places require removal, treatment and replacement.
2. Attention to oak gunwhales. Several problem spots are under boiler room cabin top. Leak at lock strap anchor plate to be investigated and cured.

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3. Midships stand beam and back end beams - 2 are split/rotting and all appear to be incorrect lengths. Replacement required. Cratch cross planking too thin requires renewal.
 4. Top cloths stitching failing due to wear and rot. Cloths worn thin corresponding with position of top strings replacement with treated flax top cloths suggested.

2. Cabin Works

External

- .1 Signwriting and decoration to be recorded and traced.
- .2 Strip and replace boatmans cabin sheering planking top and sides, best quality materials only to be used.
- .2 Replace moulded framing in best quality material seal all round to prevent water damage.
- .3 Stop, prime, undercoat, top coat colours and signwrite.

Internal

- .4 Remove stove, and collapsed middle pipe. Alter stove feet. Strip tin heat deflector, burnt moulding and replace with more appropriate material/design. Refit stove with new rivetted pipe.

3. Steam Plant

- .1 Open up boiler, descale and flush. To be inspected before recommissioning.
- .2 Check all stop valve internals, replace worn washers as required.
- .3 Drain down mud box, desludge, clean filters etc.
- .4 Modify feed piping to mud box.
- .5 Remove engine for mechanical attention to worn valve linkages, valve chest bolts, sheared packing stud, big and little ends, main bearings, lubricators etc.
- .6 Find replacement whistle springs, re-cut seats and turn valves as required.
- .7 For steam test strip and clean boiler sight glasses for satisfaction of boiler inspector.
- .8 Re-seal boiler and steam test for inspector.

Extracts from the cruising log

June 2nd

Take Old Main Line to Birmingham. No pub close by route before closing time-crew member dispatched to 'Boat' for essential bottled supplies at Dudley Road Bridge, Tividale. Pull up in Tividale Stop, clear blade - long wait for supplies. Safety valve lifting, boiler and crew impatient supplies arrive after hold up waiting for sandwiches. Spon Lane bridge - stop for oil supplies. Listers Spon Lane 25 litre drum Valvata Steam Oil pushed through hole in wall onto towpath. Spon Lane/Smethwick section very slow. Descend Farmers Bridge Locks to Canning Wharf forwards.

Clean up boat - await party Fish and Chip supper provided, beer and wine everywhere-cabin top awash. 9.00 p.m. spare wine bottles handed round crew. Ascend locks, clean cabin top, shut down outside Longboat - retire inside.

June 19th

Evening - same good time had by all.

June 22nd

BIRMINGHAM BOATING FESTIVAL-in steam, Trainee Crew.

June 23rd

Tackle Icknield Port Loop to test depth and bridge height. 1/4 inch headroom only on footbridge by Waterways Depot-proceed dead slow.

July 23rd/28th

Warwick Canal Festival trip not undertaken - Sponsorship difficulties.

AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY

24th/25th

TRAINING CRUISES CANCELLED - 1 APPLICANT ONLY FOR SUNDAY

26th

7 on training session run out to Brades Junction-Old Main Line. 100 p.s.i. on clock at Kiers Bridge, Tividale. Full steam ahead on deep channel over Tunnel Branch Aqueduct. Sneak up silently and quickly on engrossed, partially clothed courting couple on towpath verge. Friendly toot-toot on whistle destroys moment of pleasure but solicits friendly wave. Camera not to hand - but Kodak won't print such views!

Crew tries to warn passing jogger heading for closer view. Courting couple gone on return trip.

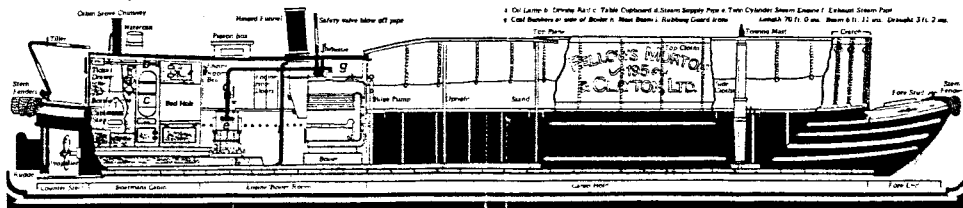
September 21st

Old Main Line Spon Lane/Smethwick still slow but improving - arrive in time for school party visit at Pumphouse.

September 22nd

Very quiet, several boats pass on New Line - decide to return on New Line. Stuck in Brasshouse Lane Bridgehole Channel-very narrow. Take tray and glasses into Navigation while waiting for bottom lock Smethwick to empty. Leave lock without sticking in Bridgehole. Moor in Channel back at Pumphouse as shallow at side. Tar Boat 'Stour' arrived from Museum looking for Rally -moored on Old Line. Slow trip back-Stour arrives first, President had bladeful most of way.

- September 28/29t Boaters Gathering - Unable to leave museum arm.
- October 16th Stourbridge Trip - Cruise down Staffs and Worcester thwarted by unscheduled stoppage on Main Line at Millfields. Oil booms across canal. President crew turns round at Deepfields and returns to Museum. No alternative but brave Netherton Tunnel, Dudley Canal and Stourbridge 16 Locks. Overnight at Parkhead.
- October 17th 1¹/₂ Hour lunch at Delph. Well there's no hurry!
- October 18th Arrive in good time at Stourbridge but facing wrong way for harbourmaster. Satisfied after winding again.
- October 20th Pound dropped off over weekend unable to wind. Proceed stern first all way to Wordsley Junction (see Staffs and Worcester Bulletin) - stuck hard in bridge - full of copings. Unscheduled stoppage expected to be cleared. Reach Greensforge on Staffs and Worcester.
- October 21st Reach Dimmingsdale - report stoppage not lifted. Urgent arrival at Museum vital - impending visit by Duke of Gloucester on 24th. Wind and return to Greensforge. 'Navigation' Inn again!
- October 22nd Uneventful trip to top of Delph Locks. Lost crew member spends all morning searching Staffs and Worcester Canal.
- October 23rd Back to Museum in good time - touched obstruction in Netherton Tunnel. Stoppage lifted!
- October 24th Duke of Gloucester arrival at Museum delayed by fog. Doesn't have time to look at 'President'!
- November 18/19th Cloths removed, coal unloaded, hold cleared and shutts lifted in readiness for docking for survey.
- November 20th Towed to Caggy's Dry Dock Tipton by N. Jackson with 'Harold'. Water pumped out of dock. 'President' resembles beached Whale. Cursory examination reveals certain small problems.
- November 22nd Hull survey undertaken results to follow. Ultrasonic thickness test on hall ironwork. Less scientific probing of timber bottoms with sharp implement.



FRIENDS OF PRESIDENT

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Malthouse Stables
Hurst Lane, Tipton on Thursday 5th December 1985

Meeting opened at 7-50pm.

25 Members present

- 1) APOLOGIES:- Michelle Ellison, David Sparks, Alan Pease,
Philip Weaver, Edward Woodfield, Pete Woodfield

2) MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 6TH DECEMBER 1984

The Minutes of the last General Meeting, having been circulated to members, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3) MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a) This meeting marks the end of the First year of "Friends", the Society being launched in October 1984. Our objectives were to promote the use of "President" and to use the boat to promote the inland waterways, the Black Country Museum and the work of the West Midlands County Council.
- b) Our first task was to recruit members, and this has been achieved insofar as we now have a membership of more than 70.
- c) The second task was to train members to operate the boat. This has proved to be more of a problem. On at least two occasions no volunteers came forward, and most of the time the same few faces were seen. However, we now have several members who are proving to be competent.
- d) "President" has attended several events during 1985, the climax being a week-long trip to Stourbridge. The boat is now in dry dock for examination.
- e) As you will know, WMCC will be abolished at the end of March 1986, and as yet the future of the boat has not been decided. It is hoped that the County Council's share of the boat will be taken over by Dudley Borough Council. Before its demise, the County Council may be persuaded to part with some money for repairs to the boat.
- f) The Committee has met 8 times during the course of the year. A serious road accident put Michelle Ellison out of action for some time, however she is making a good recovery and should be fully fit in the near future.
- g) The future of "Friends" depends on maintaining present membership levels and also on obtaining some form of sponsorship. It is hoped to appoint a sponsorship officer to that end.
- h) Finally my thanks, to all Committee members for their efforts, to the Matthias family for support in crewing the boat, to David MacDougall for his dedication to "President" and to Alan Green for producing the newsletter. Last but by no means least, thanks to Ian Myers, who has managed to combine the role of both Secretary and Treasurer for most of the year.

5) TREASURER'S REPORT

Income	cash	£63.00
	cheques	£527.30

Expenditure		£266.45
Excess income over expenditure		<u>£323.85</u>
Comprising cash in hand		£9.29
	cash in bank	£314.85

- a) The above figures were given on a balance sheet audited by Mr J G Ellison. A vote of thanks to him.
- b) The possibility of charitable status was raised and discussed at length, but as the Society is rather small there would be no benefit at present.
- c) It was also noted that more finance would be required for the future and that suitable sponsorship should be sought.
- d) The accounts were then accepted by the Meeting.
Proposed: David Goodman. Seconded: Les Langworthy.
All in favour.

6) RESOLUTION

To amend the Constitution, Section 4 - Office Bearers.

Delete "Two" and insert "Five"

Proposed: Ian Myers. Seconded: Peter Anthony.

All in favour.

7) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman:	Peter Anthony	Proposed: S. Haywood-Smith
		Seconded: Jim Matthias
Secretary:	Ian Myers	Proposed: Peter Anthony
		Seconded: John Selway
Treasurer:	Jim Matthias	Proposed: Marilyn MacDougall
		Seconded: Les Langworthy
Committee Members	Michelle Ellison	
	Alan Green	
	Dave Stott	
	George Naldrett	
	Les Langworthy	

All in favour.

8) HONORARY AUDITOR

Mr J G Ellison has audited the accounts up to 30-11-85, and would be quite willing to continue to do so.

It was proposed to invite Mr Ellison to act as Honorary Auditor and to offer him an honorary membership.

Proposed: Peter Anthony. Seconded: David Goodman.
All in favour.

9) 1986 SUBSCRIPTION FEES

The Committee recommended that all fees remain at 1985 levels with the exception of the Corporate fee.

It was suggested that more interest would be generated by having free Corporate membership and this would result in larger donations. The Meeting disagreed with this and it was proposed to reduce the fee to £10.00.

"That the fee for Corporate membership should be £10.00".
Proposed: David Goodman. Seconded: Staffs & Worcs C S.
23 for. 1 against. 1 abstention.

All in favour of the other fees remaining unchanged.

10) FORMAL MOTIONS

The formal motion was withdrawn.

11) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) The crewing rota was raised by John Selway and was discussed at length. The Secretary reported that a list would be made available in a future newsletter.
- b) Jim Matthias suggested that "Friends" could do more to help the BCM while John Selway proposed giving the BCM more publicity on cruises. It was also suggested that "Friends of President" and the "Friends of the Black Country Museum" should co-operate in recruiting new members.
- c) The Society has been unable to fill the post of Sales Officer and it is not possible to operate a sales stand unless members are prepared to undertake this task. Day Star Theatre Company will continue to sell on our behalf on their stand.
- d) David Goodman felt that there should be greater co-operation between members attending cruises etc., and suggested that sharing cars would cut down on travelling expenses. This would be taken into consideration for future events.
- e) TERRY JONES, WMCC Representative reported on the future of "President". At present the boat is jointly owned by WMCC and the BCM (each having a half share). It is hoped that a new owner can be found for the County Council share before control is given to the Residuary body who will be winding up WMCC affairs. The first choice of ownership would be Dudley Council, enabling the boat to remain at the BCM, or a consortium of local councils. There is a problem over the valuation of "President", however negotiations are taking place.

Meeting Closed at 9-45pm.

There followed a short slide show by David MacDougall.

