

Friends of PRESIDENT



195

June 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.

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various authors in this newsletter do not reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the committee, Friends of President or the Black Country Living Museum unless specifically stated.

Help raise funds for Friends of President

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

Current total : £18.05p from 3,578 searches

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

Current total : £186.64p from 22 registered supporters

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

Editorial

You probably all noticed the deliberate mistake on the front page of the last 195, but thankfully you didn't all email me to point it out.

This month we have the last of the trip reports from last year - to Park Head. The trips have also started for this year, so if you are involved on any of them, please do not forget that I would like to hear about them. Usually one person is nominated to do a trip report, but I would like to hear more versions of the same trip, so get typing.

If you've taken any pictures on the trips, I would also like to see them and so would the members. On the subject of pictures I've received another request from our Chairman, Nick, for any pictures that you have, that aren't already on the website. If you can remember the location, date and the names of anybody in them so much the better. If you do not have the facility to scan them and send them electronically, send him the photos, he assures me that he will return them once they are scanned.

More volunteers needed

At the moment it would appear that I am doing the Pelsall (June 15/16) and Foxtan (June 29/30) shows on my own, so I desperately need some more help, I can't keep my legs crossed all day. If you can spare the odd few hours for either of these events please let Malcolm or myself know, we need to make the most of the prize donated by ABC Boat Hire.

Looking further ahead for the sales stand, we still need more people for the IWA National at Watford (July 19/21), the Outdoor Leisure Show on the River Lea over the August Bank Holiday (Aug 24/26), and the event at Huddlesford in September (21/22), yes it is going to be a two day event this year for the first time.

The boats look to be OK until they get back to the Museum, then looking at the current list in the Member's Area of our website, there are still too many red vacancies showing for July and August. We are now hoping to class these weekends as Skills Weekends where we can all hone our skills of breasting up, winding and singling out on the move, locking techniques etc, and even reversing.



So please, for all of the above, check your diaries and let Malcolm know your availability, I'm sure he would love to hear from you. He would really like to have too many names for a particular event/weekend, then he could use the hat that Richard passed on to him to draw names from. It hasn't been used for quite a while now.

Park Head Festival - 29/30th September 2012

The trip from the museum to Parkhead should be very straight forward: turn left, go 3154 yards through Dudley Tunnel and moor up at Parkhead. Job done. Unfortunately, due to poor ventilation Dudley Tunnel is open only to electric powered craft (or unpowered if you want to leg it) and has very limited headroom, so on the Friday before the festival we headed through Factory Locks for the Netherton Tunnel turn off, where I took over the steering from Nick Haynes, our captain for the weekend. Netherton is a dead straight 3027 yards with a pinprick of light at each end that doesn't seem to change in size for minutes at a time when you're in the middle of it. However, there's plenty of room and the few boats we met presented no problems. The star of the tunnel was our driver Malcolm, who had the steam within a gnat's bits of 150 psi just as we approached the entrance, ensuring we made it through "condensing", or "rigged for silent running" as I tend to think of it.

Just over two miles (including one grounding when I veered slightly out of the channel) on the Dudley No 2 Canal brought us to Parkhead Junction and the three locks that rise 20' to the festival site by the Glazebrook Arm. We were expected by the harbour master who welcomed us, and there then started what would become a theme of the weekend, the continuing debate about the order in which boats were to go up and down the flight and in and out of the small basin at the top, which was crowded with a good selection of historic boats and tugs.

The entrance to the basin is a 180 degree left turn from the exit of the top lock and there is only about 20' separating the two. There was a large contingent of what looked like experienced working boaters ensconced with pints of beer and appraising eyes on the bridge just below the top lock, so as steerer I was feeling some mild (by which I mean immense) pressure not to mess up. We could have taken the easy route and reversed into the arm, but our captain Nick had spied the strapping post between the lock and the arm and instructed us to strap President round so we could have an easier manoeuvre back into the lock when departing after the festival.

Those of you with an arithmetical bent will have noted already that the 20' distance between the lock and the arm meant President (71' 6") had an extra 50' or so that had to go somewhere else. We tied a long line onto the fore stud, the plan being to pay this out until President was out of the lock and had room to turn, when the line would be made fast creating a pivot point at the front of the boat for President to turn on. I didn't quite get it right on our first attempt and so we took President back into the lock, all the time trying to appear as if this was all part of a cunning plan, before having another go. The distance between the boats on one side and the bank on the other did not leave much room and the time delay between ringing the bell and something happening seems very long when another boat is only a few feet away. Drivers reckon to be able to gauge the degree of anxiety a steerer is experiencing by observing their feet (the more vigorous the movements, the higher the level of panic). Fortunately Malcolm was able to predict what I needed and so disaster was avoided and Rod Fox reeled President's fore end into the mouth of the arm in a very professional manner. There wasn't any cheering from the contingent on the bridge, but neither did I hear any derision. Result!

We had been allocated pride of place in the narrow entrance to the basin where President and Kildare could breast up and be accessed by the public from both sides, thus doubling the opportunity for Tony Tibbins to deploy his remarkable skill at parting visitors from their money without them feeling any pain whatsoever. Although on Saturday afternoon Tony was somewhat outdone by Malcolm, who received several repeat donations of a quid a time from a very kind gentleman who felt the urge to shell out whenever he walked past the engine 'ole.

Saturday was a beautiful day with warm sunshine, families in abundance and lots of people interested in the boats. We had to move President and Kildare a few times in order to allow other boats in and out of the basin and these movements presented a much more interesting spectacle for the crowds than the static tableau it could have been.

A beautifully turned out BCN joey boat was pulled up and down the flight by a horse from the Horse Boating Society, ably assisted by our lady crew member Sue Day, for whom a horse has the same irresistible attraction as a steam engine does for Dave Stott. The historical inaccuracy of a makeshift mast on the joey didn't seem to worry anyone, but we did wonder why they hadn't asked to use Kildare.

Saturday evening was memorable for the quality of the music in the beer tent (Dr 'somebody whose name escapes me' on piano accordion). We now know in full erotic detail how the Dubliner's "Seven Drunken Nights" ends! The other feature of the evening was what seemed to be a competition amongst the owners of the many stand alone Lister generator sets to see who could keep his running furthest into the night.

Sunday was equally well attended and the rain held off almost completely. The highlight of the day was the duck race, when hundreds of plastic ducks were unleashed by the local mayor to race at no very great pace from the top lock to the middle lock. Somebody must have won, although there were about twenty abreast at the finishing line, so it will have been a difficult call.

The bad news on Sunday was that the beer tent was closing down in the late afternoon, but on the plus side this meant free beer to those who helped shift the barrels about and lead to many a bleary boating discussion along the way. I must have enjoyed myself as Rod had to come and fetch me back to Kildare for my supper. A bit like being a kid again, which for me is a lot of what being an FoP is all about.

Colin Wilks

Alvechurch 'On The Water' - 27th/28th April 2013

This was quite a hastily arranged trip following a conversation between our treasurer Simon and the manager of the Alvechurch base. A few emails between the committee and it was decided that, as long as the boats could be got ready in time, we would go. It was a way of saying 'thank you' for the huge prize that had been donated to our prize draw.



A work party on the day of the AGM, and a few visits by Nick Haynes and Dave Stott, meant that there were only a few jobs left to do before we could set off. Nick, Tony Tibbins and myself arrived on the Thursday morning and started working through the list, sorting and fitting both sets of cratch strings, fitting the fenders, making sure all poles and lines were there, filling the water tanks etc. The cratch strings on Kildare didn't look too good because they weren't lying the same as when they

were taken off, and on the first scrubbing lots of bits were left on the covers. Perhaps a new set should be fitted for the centenary year.

Nick left as he had a meeting to go to that evening, and Dave Stott arrived later to get some heat into the boiler. The following morning Nick was back with Steve Barnes, our webmaster, and we were away at 8am, but before we got to the bridge we knew we had a bladeful of something. We stopped in the narrows before joining the main line and removed all of the usual stuff, but not all. After picking up John Goldrick at the top of Factory, we descended the locks and then stopped again in the next narrows. Both Nick and I had spells down the weedhatch, mine coincided with a hail storm.

We found quite a few lumps on the canal bed on the journey and finally arrived at Alvechurch at 1850. Waiting for our arrival was David Goode and Karen who now look after our sales stand. President was bankside by the crane, and Kildare was reversed into the first arm, with our stand erected on the grass by the crane. Probably one of the best layouts that we have ever had at an event.



Picture of concentration - Rod Fox steering on the return journey from Alvechurch.

Simon Nuttall took over the driver's duties on Saturday and Sunday because Dave Stott had other commitments, but they swapped over again for the return trip. The weather over the weekend was a mixture of sunshine, rain and hail. Saturday was the busiest day for visitors but neither days were what you would call busy. Just over £200 was raised over the weekend. Simon and John went home on Sunday and Rod Fox joined for the return trip to the museum.

We were ready for setting off on the Monday morning at 9am, but we then found that we couldn't get Kildare out of the arm and turn left. There wasn't enough room even after moving boats off the 'No Mooring' length opposite. It took a further 40 mins to take Kildare further down the moorings and turn. No major hold ups on the trip, we even kept going through the two railway bridges after Kings Norton Junction. We moored on the straight section before Gas Street at 1445.

On Tuesday we were ready to set off at 9am, but decided to check the prop again. Another visit to the weedhatch by me and Rod this time. Remains of a sari this time amongst the stuff. Finally away at 1015, took the Old Main Line route this time and arrived back at the museum at 1435.

Two of the three nights at Alvechurch, we ate in The Weighbridge, the pub in the marina, and very good it was too. I did something there that I had never done before, and took a photo in the gent's toilet.



As you can see, there was nothing untoward about the picture, just a design of wash hand basin that I hadn't seen before.

Neil Ratcliffe

Fundraising

Another £8.27p raised this month, £7.04p through a percentage of people's online purchases, and £1.23p from searches. One more person has registered with our cause, making the total 22.

If you are receiving the printed version of this newsletter, you should also have found a couple of books of prize draw tickets, either for your own consumption or to sell to others. Email recipients should also be receiving a couple of books in the post as well. If you sell both books and would like some more please let me know how many more books you would like and I will send them to you.

Museum News

Black Country Living Museum – Learning Programme Outline

You've probably all heard some rumours about the major changes at the Museum and the 'removal of demonstrators'. I can now give you an update on what these changes are and how they might affect the way we interact with visitors to the Museum.

First the demonstrators: they will not be disappearing; exhibits will still be open and demonstrators there to talk to the public. A number of the people who were performing demonstration duties are being retrained to become 'Learning Assistants' and will be available to assist schools parties.

How might this affect us; as part of the restructure, pupils on Key Stage 2 will no longer be hosted around the site but will be provided with materials to enable them to perform 'history detective' work around the site and discover. This means they will be working their way around the site finding out information, including talking to the demonstrators, that at times is of course us.

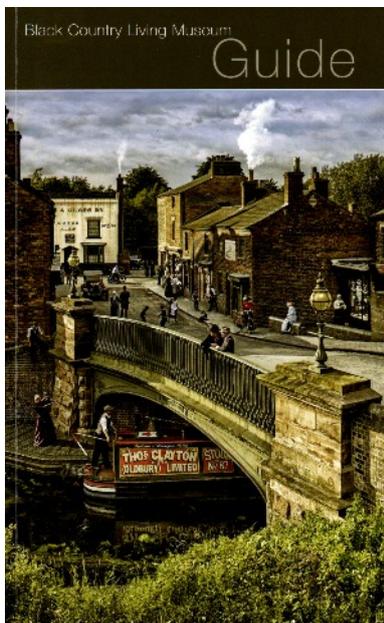
KS2 History Detectives schools' briefing notes provide an 'Overview', 'Key Learning Objectives' and guidance for: planning the visit; pre-visit materials provided; the visit itself; support provided during the day and post visit sources to help further investigation.

The initial scope is focused on 'the lives of real children who lived in the Black Country' and further packs will be produced to cover other areas covered by the Museum, 'Transport' being one of these. Our current talk we give in the back cabin of the boats about how a family lived, may not be specific to their investigations but will certainly give pupils an insight as to how the 'canal people' lived.

This is just a brief outline and I've loaded further materials being produced by the Museum onto our website.

Nick Haynes

New Publications



The Black Country Living Museum published a new guide to the museum a few months ago, and very good it is too.

Measuring 18.5cms x 29.8cms (about 2.5 cms narrower than A4), it has 72 pages describing nearly every aspect of the museum.

There is a site plan at the back of the book with buildings and areas numbered corresponding to their descriptions in the book.

The Boat Dock & Boat Collection have their own 2-page spread and of course President is featured.

Priced at £4.95p, this full colour guide is a very worthwhile addition to getting the most out of your visit to the museum.

ISBN : 978-0-9562031-2-0

Media Mentions

The June issue of Towpath Talk have been very good to us this month with three mentions and/or photographs. Firstly, in an article on the 'On The Water' event organised by British Marine Federation member companies, President & Kildare are mentioned as attending the do at Alvechurch Marina, along with a photo of President completing its manoeuvre to turn round so that the cabin wasn't obscured by the crane.

Secondly, in the 'What's on in August (sic)' section, there is a photo of the boats at the opening ceremony of a previous Braunston event.

Finally, in 'The Wet Web' page there is the Prize Draw publicity photo of Nick Haynes and Pat & Brian Empsall on the stern of Kildare, and mention is made in the article about the repairs needed, the horse drawn trip to Stoke Bruerne and details of the Prize Draw.

Diary Dates for June

1st/2nd - Etruria Canal Festival, the historic fly-boat Saturn should be attending this event.

15th/16th - Stoke Bruerne Gala weekend. Kildare is being horse drawn to this event.

- Pelsall Canal Festival, our sales stand in attendance.

23rd - Lymm Historic Transport Day, historic boats should be in attendance at this event.

29th/30th - Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally. It's an FMC year again this year so President & Kildare will be there. Will there be a record number of boats attending this year, like the last FMC year.

Finally

A competition with no prize - **Guess Who**



Please remember - if you want these monthly newsletters to continue, I will need plenty of contributions, trip reports, photos, other historic boats, other steam events, all welcome.

My thanks to those that have contributed and if yours hasn't appeared yet - it will.