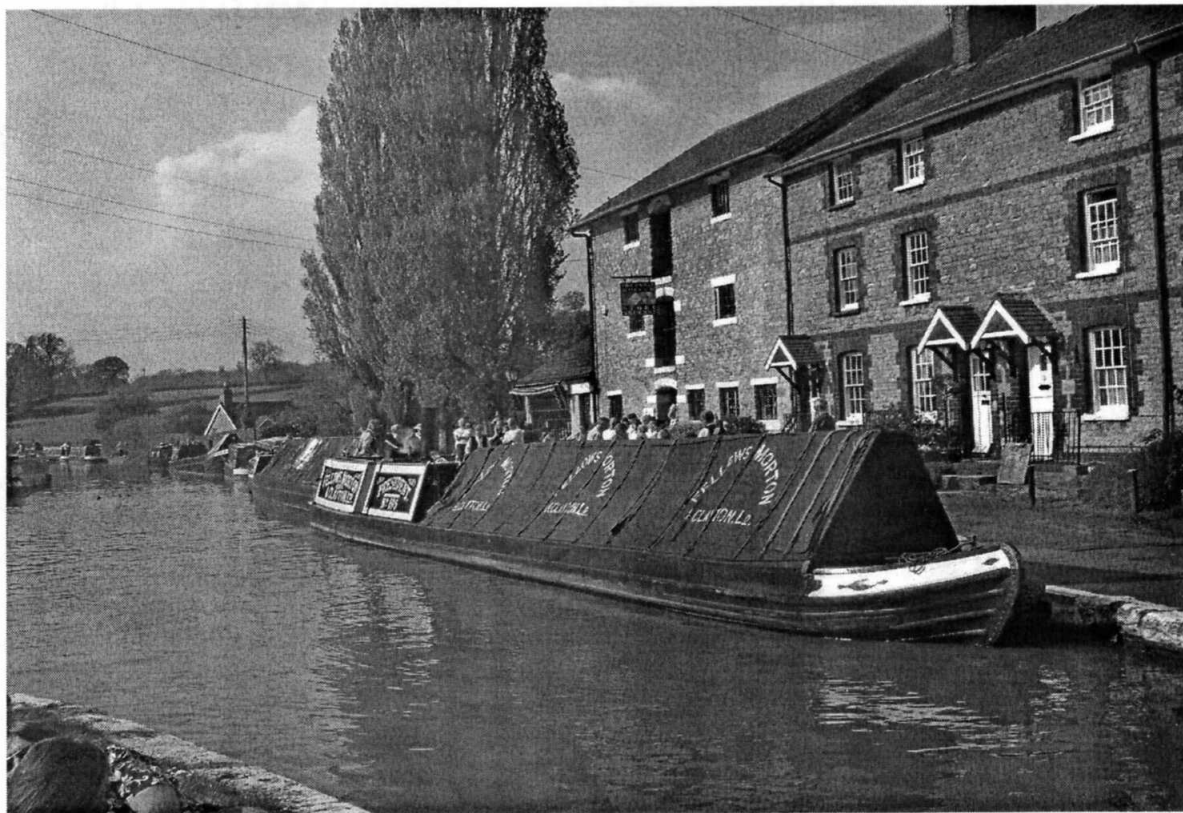


Friends of PRESIDENT

*“Steaming Up” – Issue 10
Spring 2004*



President plays to the crowd at Stoke Bruerne, en route to London, 25 April 2004 - Louise Clarke

Words from our Chairman

As I sit here writing these notes 'President' and Kildare are outside the London Canal Museum in Battlebridge Basin. We have had a very successful trip down to London over the past couple of weeks and I would like to congratulate the crews for their hard work and dedication. When you read this the boats will be on the way back to Dudley and we will have gone up the tideway from Limehouse to Brentford following the very successful Canalway Cavacade. There was a time when we thought we would have to cancel owing to the lack of crew volunteers.

Where are you all?

When I talk to visitors to the boat they are always amazed that we are not overrun with people who want to crew the boats. I know that it is hard work but the more volunteers we have the easier it becomes. The trip to London was scheduled to take 12 days, we had to reschedule it and the trip was done in 8 some of that time with only 4 on the crew, this is why it gets hard. What can we do about it? Well as members we can volunteer for a bit of boating, we can also recruit new members to FoP and encourage them to take part. The future of 'President' is in our hands – we need to ensure that we look after it and operate it, as it deserves.

Best wishes to you all and thankyou for supporting FoP.

David Powell
Chairman

Our first trip on the only coal fired steam Narrow Boat working the canals. Trip report by Keith Dawes.

BCLM – Hatton, 16 – 18th April 2004

"Ah, Keith, I'm a bit short of crew members, fancy a weekend on a narrow boat" asked Nick Haynes, my boss. Sounds great thought Dawes...a weekend on the canal, sun bathing on the upper deck, lots of good pubs, fabulous food and nice comfy cabin. "Yes we'll be there, what time shall we pitch up?" "Early evening on the Friday" say's Nick, "We have to load 3 tonnes of coal".

"Er, sorry, what was that....."

"The coal..... we have to put it on the boat.....then you have to load some of it into a hopper & push it back so that the driver can shovel it into the fire box, which heats the water and makes the steam.... Oh, and you have to dress up in traditional clothing".

So, somewhat apprehensive we decided to "crew" for President, a 1909 Fellows, Morton & Clayton steam powered narrow boat, along with the butty, Kildare, built in 1913. Arriving at the Black Country Museum around half seven on the Friday evening we had a pleasant surprise, not only had the coal been loaded but both boats had been taken out of the museum & on to the canal, which would save us valuable time on the Saturday. This was to be the first leg of a trip that the boats were undertaking to London's Little Venice. We were taking the boats from the Black Country Museum to Hatton Workshops, which would take two full days.



President at Hatton workshops

So that Friday evening our gear was loaded, and myself, Jo Playford my partner, Nick Haynes, the Captain & our Driver, Simon Nuttall, set about getting a vintage narrow boat ready for business. Simon's first job was to set about getting the fire lit, as it would take some time to generate enough pressure in the boiler to allow us to get under way. I quickly learnt how to load bags of coal into the hopper & push it back into the engine room, seven bags in all.

The next morning we were up by about seven, but poor Simon had been up since five tending to his beloved fire & boiler. We were then joined by additional crew members, Pat and Brian Empsall, Dave Cleverly and Dave Parry & later in the morning another Keith Rogers. We set off just after eight.

