

May 2012

Grantham Canal News Sheet

This latest issue of the Electronic News Sheet is for **anyone** who would like to be updated on GCS activities and progress. If this is the first issue you have received and you would like future monthly issues, please send an email to: Membership@granthamcanal.com stating your name, confirming your e-mail address and indicating that you wish to receive the News Sheet. Future copies will not be sent without your permission. You do not have to be a member but please consider joining. Details on "The Society" page on our website: www.granthamcanal.org

Very much a nautical theme this month. I hope you enjoy it. Ed

1. Lock 18 Top Gate Replacement

The week beginning 17th June is our new date for the gates to be replaced. Hopefully by then it will have stopped raining and be pleasantly warm. The Safety fencing is still in place but the grass has had a field day, if you will excuse the pun!

2. Mudlark

This is where things get really exciting. We now have our own ex BW dredger called Mudlark. She has been moored at Cotgrave for a long time and has not been used for years(?) She was in a recent BW auction of surplus craft and equipment where local Canal Groups were offered 1st refusal of equipment in their area. A price was agreed and now she has joined the GCS fleet. Obviously, having been idle for so long, Mudlark is in need of some TLC but everything mechanical seems to work as it should.



(Left) Mudlark at Cotgrave. She looks quite small in this picture but when scaled against the lorry that transported her to Woolsthorpe (bottom left) it's obvious she is not a "toy boat"

Photos below and on next page from Tony Pitman





Mudlark in her new home awaiting some attention.



Mudlark in earlier BW colours, outside the Dirty Duck, doing what she was designed to do.

3. IWA EVENTS

Notts and Derby Branch

June 15th 2012

Guided walk along the Cromford Canal. Meeting at 7pm at Cromford Wharf to walk to Leawood pump and back. Approximately 3 miles, leader Mike Kelley.

Further information about the walks can be obtained from Mavis White on 01636 671726.

4. DIANA

I have the pleasure of owning the launch Diana, which was built and engined by J.W.Brooke of Lowestoft in 1908/1909 for a Mr J Barrett of Cambridge. (*Originally placed on the Historic Ships register No. 1829, but now replaced by: National Small Boat Register No. 700.*)

The hull was built under contract by F.Miller & Co of Mutford Bridge, Lowestoft (builders for J.W.Brooke from (1907—1911) of Carvel teak on oak, it has mahogany seats and floors and pine decks and varnish finished. The engine; a J.W.Brooke type 4A, 4 hp single cylinder petrol engine with epicyclic reverse gearbox has the serial number L1357 and is currently established as Brooke's earliest recorded restored production engine. Some of the following details on the launches history are taken from a letter written by Mr. A E Barrett about Diana in 1976. She was ordered by Mr J Barrett in 1908 (Commodore of Cambridge Motor float Club) and delivered in early 1909, for use on the River Cam. She passed on to one of two sons in 1922, when the original engine, side seats and steering were changed. A marinised Austin 7 or Chummy by - Elephant Motors was fitted and maintained until 1973. The boat was then passed to the other son, Mr.A.E.Barrett. He had the boat overhauled by the Two Tees Boat Yard in Cambridge, before selling her to Mr D Mills in 1976. I acquired her from Mr Mills in the same year, minus the Austin engine, etc. Having stored 'Diana' for a number of years, I set about her serious restoration in the autumn of 1989. The engine and gearbox was found lying under a hedge of a small cottage, fitted exactly where it had been in 1908, together with its original wood and glass engine housing. It was possible to rebuild this using much of the original mahogany, despite it having languished in the garden for many years.

'Diana' was entered in 'The First British Classic - Motor Boat Regatta' held at the Steamboat Museum on Lake Windermere in August 1990, where she was awarded first prize for the 'Best Restoration'. However her engine was never easy to use or reliable, and this led me to exhibit her for nearly 10 years at the British Motorboat Museum in Basildon, Essex. In April 2000, 'Diana', although outside of the current parameters was accepted on the Historic Ships Register (no. 1829) because of her social and historic importance. (This register has now been superseded by the National Small Boat Register) In 2001 I set about making her completely reliable, which included an engine rebuild, new propeller and work on the hull. She has now been to a number of 'Brooke Boat' reunions, Thames Traditional Boat Regattas and other events, and revisited the Cam (motoring into the centre of Cambridge, visiting Two Tees yard on the way) where she spent her life with the Barretts. In 2004 'Diana' was awarded the Dean Marine Trophy for best engine – (installation and smooth running) at the 27th Thames Traditional Boat Rally. In June 2006 she was accepted on the National Small Boat Register (no 700) established by the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall



Richard & Jane Barthorpe with Diana on the Grantham Canal on Discovery Day in November 2011.

The engraving on the cup awarded to Diana and her owner in 1911.

'Diana' – Anecdotes

I have a letter from the son of the original owner, which was written in 1976.

He was about 5 at the time his father Mr Barrett bought 'Diana'. Mr Barrett was the owner of a shop(s) in London, and lived in Cambridge, and had owned a steam launch called 'Texa' from 1900 or earlier until her replacement with 'Diana'. He became a Commodore of the Cambridge Motor Boat Club and organised regattas and races in the area.

There is a picture of 'Diana' in the November 1910 edition of 'The Motor Boat' magazine together with 14 other boats on the Cam at Cambridge reporting that they had taken part in a race and that "it is expected that a club would be formed next season"

In June the following year (1911) 'The Motor Boat' reports that there was something like 80 motorboats on the Cam in the Cambridge district and subscription to the club had been fixed at 5 shillings per annum. Finally a report of the second race meeting held in September's 1911 "The Motor Boat" tells that a race over two miles at Denver with ten boats taking part (including Diana) took place and that 'Diana' won.

She was awarded the Coronation Challenge Cup, which was presented by R de la Rue Esq., and was received by Rear- Commodore Barrett. (The Cambridge Motor Boat Club history states that it was founded in 1911, with many of the trophies having been presented by past club members, the oldest trophy being the Coronation Challenge Cup, commemorating the coronation of George V in their foundation year of 1911. This trophy is displayed at their Club premises at Clayhythe, together with a 'Commodores Board' listing all CMBC commodores)

The letter comments that "when racing, with Diana stripped, and with two people in her (one steering at the stern and the other by the engine) the speed reached was 7 knots. When under these conditions, the wash left her stern".

After Mr Barrett died in 1922 she was given to one of his son's who modified her, and eventually she passed to the other son, who wrote the letter.

In 1991 Peter Hansford, then Planning Manager of Brooke Yachts wrote to me to confirm that Diana's engine "is the earliest production engine number so far established, as a restoration. Brookes started building engines in 1902".

Many thanks to Richard for a very interesting article on a beautiful craft. There are more details if anyone is interested. Please contact me and I will put you touch with Richard & Jane.

5. Workparties

Workparties have been out and about cutting the grass in the Carpenter's Shop Depot and also collecting logs, fencing, plastic bags etc from the canal using Centauri. Several members of the team have taken their turn at the tiller and we have some new members too.



BW's insistence that if we wished to go ahead with Lock 18 gates, we had to raise the spill weir at Denton to increase the flow past the lock whilst we were working on it. Adrian and his team braved the sleet and biting wind and completed the job, making it vandal proof as arranged. About 10 days later, whilst in London, I get a call asking that we remove the construction as, after the rain there was now too much water in the canal. You can imagine what I felt like saying but as I had no intention of falling out with the person at the other end of the phone, I maintained that we couldn't do it as it was designed not to come out so there would have to be a plan B. How the beam we had in place was removed, I don't know but removed it was! We don't have to replace it, so I'm told, so presumably BW will be doing that. I sometimes wonder how I have managed to stay involved for 20 odd years and stay relatively sane! *(Ed with his Workparty Organiser or Operations Manager hat on)*

6. Archive photos

Val Roberts, who is the editor of The Historic Narrow Boat Owners Club Newsletter kindly sent me these photos and below is an extract from her text:



1

"Ian Goodson's archive pics took me back 40 years! I too was at that rally, with my then boat Wollaton. Wollaton, Gambler and Mercury were the last 3 boats allowed to pen up Trent Lock. This was 13th Oct 1973. We stayed above the lock overnight, and had to pen out in reverse as there was no space to wind.



2

Do you by any chance have a list of the boats that attended?"



3

*1&2. Show Mercury, Wollaton and Gambler locking up.
3. Wollaton ran out of water and had to back down
4. Showing that quite a few boats made it!*



4

Did anyone keep a list of boats attending?

Please let me know if you are happy with the balance of content in 'Bridge' and also if there is anything you wish me to include. Ed

Photos : Ian Wakefield unless credited otherwise

If you spot anything new or unusual on the Grantham, please contact the editor with photos if possible. Any questions and I will try to find answers.

The editor can be contacted at: ian.wakefield@granthamcanal.com