

Friends of PRESIDENT

“Steaming Up” October 2006



President's Boiler

At the very start of the trip to Beale Park in August Dave Stott noticed that steam was still coming from the funnel when everything was turned off. After investigation it was found that one of the boiler tubes had failed, so the trip was aborted.

The only remedy is to completely retube the boiler (which was due to be done in 2007/8 anyway). This will involve a considerable amount of work and **YOU** could play a part. As a society we rely on a few doing a lot and the few have just finished a fantastic job on Kildare's restoration, so please give some time. Dave Stott is organising work parties, so please contact him for details. Don't worry about your skill levels, there is always something to do.

Next year we are investigating the possibility of bringing the boats to the IWA festival in St. Ives, a first for a FMC steamer (unless you know different). The plan is to do a tour of the adjoining waterway towns to promote the Museum so it could be a great summer.

David Powell

Firstly Kildare has now got her new bottom and footings and as this is being written on Bob's laptop, is about 6 feet away alongside the bank at the Parkhead Rally.

After stripping out a lot of the interior, we moved her down to Ian Kemp's yard at Dadford's on 23rd March, where we took the cloths, mast, stands, planks, floors and ballast out. Following the removal of the wooden gunwales and part of the fore cabin rear bulkhead, the real work followed on, after Ian had finished his lengthening of NB Bramble in early May.



The boat's bottom and footings soon fell foul of the oxy-propane torch and a large amount of rust, scale and steel was soon pulled and swept out from under the boat. A lot of hammering of the knees resulted in one or two becoming detached from the sides as the rivets fell out! Regrettably some very thin spots were found behind the knees and in the front bulkhead of the aft cabin.

Work started apace and a new keelson (interior box section keel) and bottom (10mm thick high-grade steel) were quickly in place and welded up to the knees. The footings up to about 13" up the sides were then profile cut and butt welded to the existing wrought iron sides. There had been some delamination of the wrought iron in places but it was not a serious issue in general. While the footings curve seriously at the bow a few judicious blows with a sledgehammer generated the necessary curvature in the plate!

Meanwhile a large amount of work was being undertaken on scraping and grinding off the metal gunwales, coating the wooden gunwales with Linseed Oil and then re-attaching them with felt to form the seal.

Some cross supports welded in place for the floor joins made it possible for the floor level to be dropped by about an inch and this, with a scheme to allow the chains to be dropped, allowed the headroom under the planks to be increased by about 4 inches – much appreciated by those of us with advancing age and girth!

Both internally and externally the new steel was covered with two coats of epoxy resin with the external old steel receiving two coats of bitumen. A few coats of red oxide inside and we'd finished the preparation work

So Ian, having finished his primary work, checked the hull for leaks with a hose and then on a memorable day in July shoved Kildare sideways back into the cut with his fork lift. The splash was impressive but resulted in only a couple of buckets worth of water in the hold! Ballast back in, replace the floors and put up the stands, planks and cloths. Boat ready for moving!

On a very hot day in July 20th we bow hauled Kildare up the 12 locks of the Stourbridge flight and met up with Bittell who had kindly come round from the BCLM to tug us back. A few hours later saw us slide back under the lift bridge at the Museum and moor in our normal spot.

Then a frantic month of vinyl floor laying, Ikea kitchen fitting, bathroom refitting, storage unit making, bunk refurbishing, bilge, water

and shower pump refitting, and then on the day before the boats left for the National Rally, she was ready! Not quite snag-free but certainly good enough to go boating.



Unfortunately the following day and ¼ mile out of the BCLM, President decided to blow a boiler tube, but that's another story!

Bob Crompton

I'll now take up the story, as Bob said we didn't get very far on the trip to Beale, in fact

Tipton Junction, before Dave Stott identified a split boiler tube necessitating a return to the Museum.

Although we have only found one cracked tube, as they are all the same age, logic dictates we need to change all of them.

Our future plans for President had included a requirement for the 5 yearly boiler NDT (testing that it doesn't blow up) to be completed at the end of 2008. As this also involved a removal of the boiler, we have decided to bring forward this work. This has the advantage of removing any major work immediately before our Centenary activities in 2009.

The down side is that it is unplanned expense and as we are already looking at approx. £15,000 for the Kildare work this year, we need to initiate some additional fund raising.

We've now got some estimates and it looks as though the total cost will be approx. £8,000 for the boiler re-tube and NDT. Work is now due to start towards the end of October with a plan to be back in steam for the Museum's pre-Christmas Evenings.

As part of the fund raising we decided to start a 'Sponsor a Boiler Tube' activity at the Bank Holiday weekend's National.

As the boiler contains 72 tubes, we are inviting sponsorship of a whole tube at £50 or £10 a foot. We will maintain a 'sponsorship book' and will have a draw at the end of the season, for a yet to be decided prize. Probably based on making something from one of the tubes.

We also attended Coventry and Parkhead, trip which should have had President in attendance, for some fundraising activity. Parkhead was visited with Kildare towed by Stour.

So how can you help?

Obviously any financial contributions will be well received, if you can contribute please send to me and indicate it's for the Boiler fund. There will also be the need for working parties to prepare for removal and re-installation

Nick Haynes



Final Reminder:

If you have any raffle ticket stubs please ensure you send them to John Byham by the end of October, so they can be entered in the Prize Draw.