

Summer 2015 No 134

Plan

Informe





Black Pig Morris was a popular arena event.



Minions and friends another popular attraction.



This hound was relaxing in the back of a miniature steam wagon, and stole the show!

Chairman's Notes

Cathy Fleming



With Steve retiring at the AGM I was a little press-ganged by the Committee into taking on the role of Chairman. (And the first thing Mike asked me for was Chairman's notes). I will not be doing everything that Steve did, a lot of the meetings he attended, and the initiatives he followed, will be delegated to others. This brings me to the biggest worry we now have, (in line with many similar organisations) which is the fact that we are short of people on the Committee. We really do need more people or else we will fall into desperate times. As it is, if only two

members can't attend a meeting, it will not be quorate. If you can consider either offering your services or persuading someone else to get involved it would be a big help. Alternatively we are considering widening the field and asking people from our various partnerships to come on board. Steve will be a hard act to follow, and we are very pleased that he has accepted the post of President for which he was nominated by David Stevenson who felt it was time for



him to step down. We would like to thank David for all the work he has done for the Trust.

Elsewhere in this issue there are articles about Steve, and Richard, who has also retired and will be missed.

The wonderful news in this issue is that the Foxton Locks Festival was a great success this year, exceeding even last year's records. A very big thank you goes to Ann and her hard working team for doing a wonderful job once again and topping up our finances.

We sent an invitation to the Festival to Harborough District Council and were pleased to welcome

the Vice Chair, Janette Ackerley and her consort Neil Ackerley to the event. They spent around 90 minutes walking around the Festival with me and spoke to many stallholders. I received a thank you letter from Janette and Neil which read as follows:

" Thank you very much for making us so welcome and showing us round the Festival grounds. Please pass on our thanks to all the people involved with the Festival and the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust. A great deal of work is clearly involved"

There are photographs of the Festival in this issue and a full report is to be found in the next few pages.



Chris from Welland valley Traction talks to harbourmaster Keith Lodge on Hadar. The bridge was a main entrance to the site and CRT had to post volunteers at each end to control traffic.

Festival 2015

by Ann Bushby



Well here we are another Festival all done and dusted and already people are enquiring about 2016 - aaagh! my life is being taken over! Before we finalise having a Festival next year we have to dissect this year's Festival.

Lawrence is currently sorting through all the income and expenditure for this year's Festival (no mean task) but it is already looking like we have had another successful Festival and that is down to YOU. (Early results put as at making a profit of £18,000)

We had more volunteers than ever before this year (many thanks to Cathy for managing to cajole so many of you into giving up your time to help). We also had invaluable help from both the local ATC based in Market Harborough and Corby and they did a sterling job marshalling the car parking and giving out programmes and entry tickets.



Ann's Army Market Harborough and Corby ATC

The craft tent was very busy, particularly on Saturday when visitors wanted to be inside.



The weather on Saturday was drizzle until about 5 pm when the sun decided to shine but still the visitors came including over 1,000 who paid just to go to the Foxton Rocks evening music and to drink in the bar.

Sunday dawned warm and sunny and coincided with Father's Day - Foxton is always a good venue for dads and the visitors kept on coming all day. They managed to drink the bar dry, eat some of the caterers out of their food stocks and generally enjoy themselves. Once again we had record attendance totalling over 8,000 visitors over the two days. So far the feedback I have received has all been positive (some suggested



Ann consults the Volunteer site manager, Will.



Volunteers, Derek, Bob and Christine help put final touches to the Trust tent Penny had set up the day before. HoloVis had lent us a very large posh screen and sound system so that we could show video on site. Popular with the enthusiasts on Saturday.

changes/improvements should we be mad enough to do it again in 2016) so I feel we must be getting something right.

The Festival wouldn't have happened without my sterling band of Festival committee members and the volunteers who turn up to help over the weekend. We are always in need of more ideas and people to put them into place so if you would like to be involved in the organisation of next year's Festival - step forward now. Initially we meet once a month, with individuals reporting on their particular



A second hand book sale was organised and raised a significant amount. Christine and Adam were on duty, organised by Glenys.



Gabriel is both exhibitor and volunteer at the festival, he makes jewellery out of old coins recycling by cutting designs inside the coin.

area, but obviously as the Festival nears it gets more hectic.

or Cathy on cathy.fipt@gmail.com or 07752007099.

If you would like to be involved in the festival organisation either - email me on foxtontfest@gmail.com or ring 07710795057

More photographs available on Festival and Museum face book.



Historic and trading boats are a popular free attraction on the towpath above the locks.





The owls were among the animals on display that captivated everyone.

Derek Harris performed as Half Cut Theatre and presided over the Sunday morning service.

The dog show was supported by Market Harborough and District Canine Society.



Throughout the festival, bands played on the stages. After 6pm on Saturday the festival became 'Foxton Rocks' and the entry price went up to £10.



The Cooks, Georgie (pictured twice) Frances and Gill had their usual knitted toy stall, the annual donation from which is substantial.



Val Loves Minions! She is pictured here on her way to replenish the loo rolls in the toilets. She was one of the wonderful volunteers keeping the toilets clean, helping out at the book stall, taking turns on the gate...





The star attraction was the Vikings and Saxons. They had a village with wool spinning, and domestic displays. In the arena they held mock battles and explained how well the clothing and shields protected them, or not!

What Richard and Steve Did!

By Mike Beech and Mike Cooper.

At this years AGM two committee members retired. They will remain members and Steve Bowyer has agreed to accept the role of President. This was suggested by David Stevenson who decided that he could no longer support us in the way he would wish and nominated Steve as his replacement. So we also have to thank David for his now long service as President, the only person to start with us as President, become Chairman and then retire to be President. David steered us through some very difficult times and I am sure he will still follow us and occasionally make comment! Happy Retirement David.

Richard Pickering joined the Trust in March 2009, and has been volunteering ever since. In the July he was invited to attend a committee meeting as an observer and took up the option of joining in due course. In Jan 2010 he accepted a position on the committee, with a responsibility to report on the Museum as he had done quite a bit of training and volunteering for us as a museum assistant.

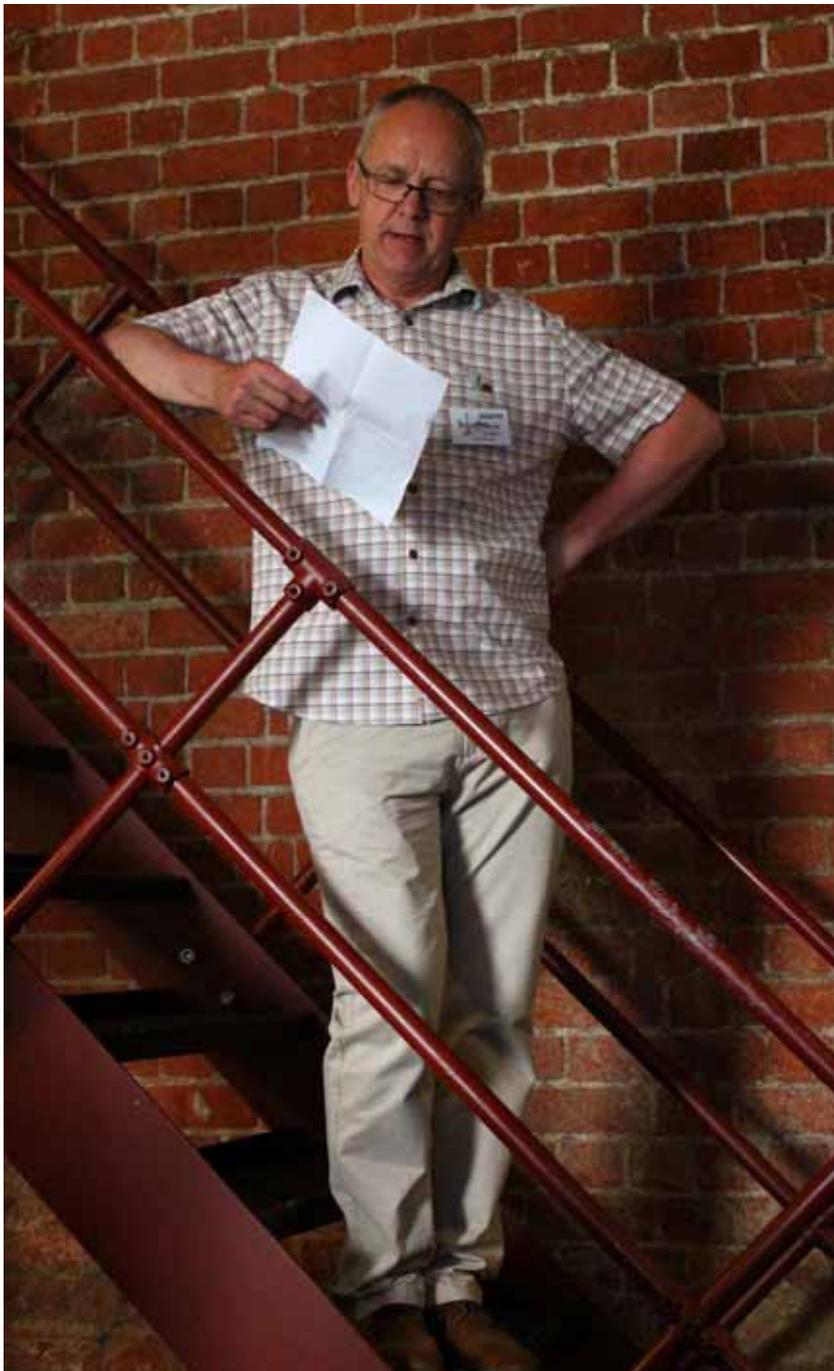
At the march 2010 AGM The challenge was to appoint/recruit a

Chairman and a Treasurer. Richard Pickering suggested that he might be able to take on the work of Treasurer. He would discuss this with Tony Faithfull-Wright who was retiring from the job. In May 2011 it was proposed by Tony that Richard would indeed be his replacement. He was to serve as treasurer for a year and did a wonderful job moving us to a new accountancy system and implementing new ideas. He worked hard for us, often to be found in the museum covering for me or helping with all manner of museum duties. In recent months his work for the Congregational Church was keeping him too busy and he reluctantly decided to step down.

In 2009 Steve Bowyer visited me in the museum and showed keen interest in doing something for FIPT that might help us restore the incline. He attended a CoM meeting and quickly got involved. At the 2011 AGM he was being proposed as Chairman everyone's hand shot up before he could change he mind. In May 2011 he was elected to the

position of Chairman replacing David Stevenson. Steve quickly proved that he was good at communicating with other organisations and took a major part in various studies which sadly led to the conclusion that CRT would not financially support the restoration of the lift and eventually we were forced to the conclusion that restoration was unlikely in the

foreseeable future. A big blow for us all. But Steve led us onward. The conclusion from discussions with Lottery and CRT was that it would be beneficial to look at digital models of the lift as a way of interpreting the lift; a fall-back position but, as it turned out, a very good option. Steve led the drive to re-write the constitution to make sure that we



were doing things properly and then liaising with Leicester Shire Promotions who helped us get the grant which has resulted in the refurbishment of the museum including the production of high quality digital animations of the lift. When we officially reopened earlier this year Steve had a big smile on his face.

Steve at the BoilerHouse opening, Sorry they didn't capture the smile!

Bits & Pieces

By Mike Beech

First of all I can pass on that at last the updated constitution has been accepted by the Charity Commission. It appears that they are badly understaffed and overworked making it very frustrating for organisations like us, trying to do the right thing to get information and replies. You can't ring them and ask what is happening, you just have to send in the files and hope. Steve is to be complimented on his perseverance.

Having now worked our way through the first two months as the BoilerHouse we are starting to get sorted out. We have taken more money from slightly less numbers of people, but the publicity is only slowly kicking in and the changeable weather hasn't helped. If you have visited please consider commenting on 'trip advisor' and other 'social media' so that we can build a good reputation.

We have had more school visits than ever before, this has kept Penny and me very busy. We had 34 classes usually split into 4 groups - around 136 sessions - adding up to more than

1,030

Children! Some of them spent money in the shop—Bouncy Balls proving to be a very popular new line. All this is due to our partnership with Canal and River Trust Explorers. They are already taking bookings for September onwards.

The locks have been trouble free so far this year with a really good team of people operating them. The regular CRT volunteers are now good at the job and most of them take the time to come into the BoilerHouse to learn the history, and promote the BoilerHouse to the public.

The one outstanding piece of work required to the locks is a gate at the bottom lock to stop visitors falling down the steps. The lock gates are all starting to show their age and I think that we will start to see them replaced in the next few years. The two paid CRT people on site are steadily getting everything repainted. Compared to other important waterway sites that I have visited,

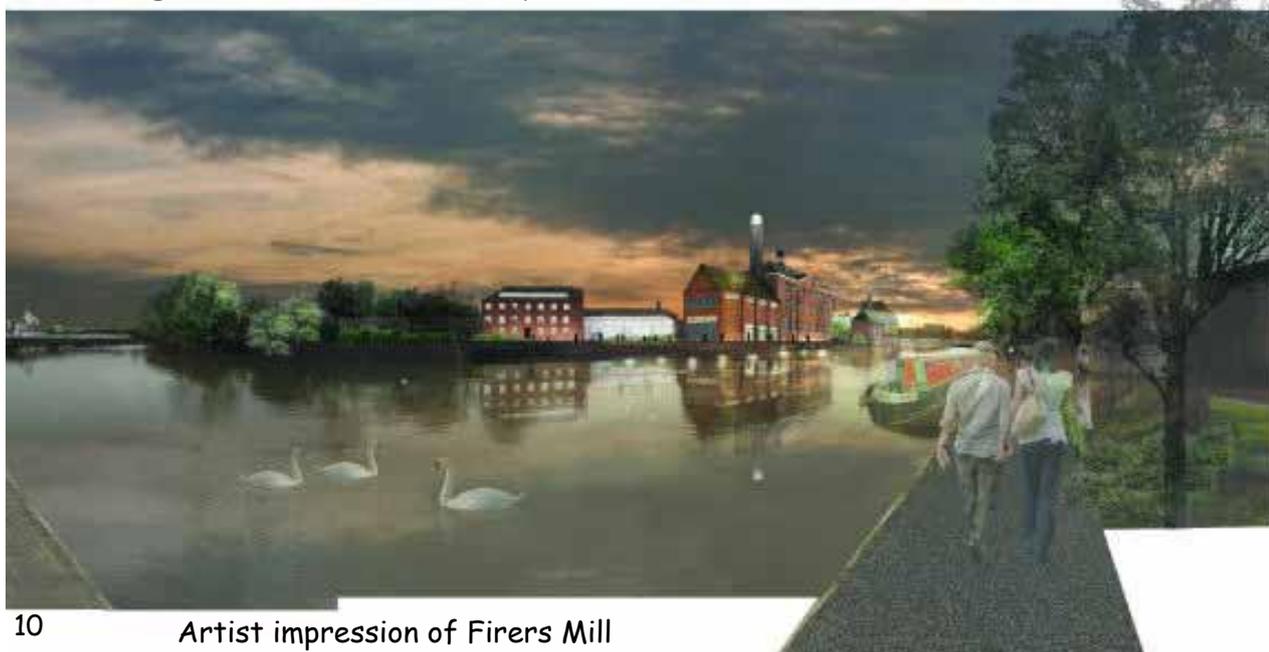
Foxton is looking pretty good.

This month I attended the River Soar and Grand Union Partnership meeting held at the Dock, in Leicester. The first question that CoM had to consider was 'what is the point of us being part of an organisation mainly based on the river to the north of us?' This is partly answered by looking at the glossy pamphlet they use to say what they are—page 2 has a picture of the Locks and the back page has Foxton in the snow. We are the southern most point of the organisation. Part of what they do is promotion, but it is good to know that the entire waterway corridor is being improved and promoted. It is the only forum where ecology, Councils, CRT and a wide range of other organisations come together. Leicester Mayor, *Sir*

Peter Soulsby is the Chairman. It is worth attending meetings for the networking. They have met at Foxton in the past. As most of the partnership is based on the CRT **Central Shires** rather than our local South East Waterways we gain an insight into the waterways and promotions to the north of us, Leicester and Loughborough being a major base for our visitors. To find out more visit

www.goleicestershire.com/outdoors/leicestershire-waterways.aspx .

At the meeting we were told about the various schemes being implemented along the river corridor in the City. They add up to around £80 million from various pots concentrating on getting an improved access waterway and encouraging the owners of the various



demolition sites to regenerate the space. New moorings for visiting boats will open at Friars Mill near West bridge in October. CRT have contractors, Land and Water, dredging the City section of the navigation. They are based at the old Marina, some of you will know as Pearl Harbour because of the number of sunken boats that used to live there.

The old part of Wolsey Mill, Abbey Park Street, which runs along the rivers edge has reopened as flats, offering independent living to people who are over 55, or over 50 with a support need that requires this type of accommodation. This ends years of semi

dereliction when the building was let as small commercial units to people who mostly disappeared quite quickly,



Above, a tower and the chimney is all that can be seen of the Woolsey complex from this side of the site. Below, the Space Centre's ultra modern buildings,



and used the river as a waste dump, simply by throwing the rubbish out of a window. After the meeting I took

Belgrave Lock is close to the Space Centre. The CRT man with the umbrella, I think was a contractor for CRT, expecting a dredging boat. He told me that there are a large number of big rats in the area.



A wide mud flat on its way to Belgrave lock. It is shorter than the old version, but it can share the lock with its Tug.

the opportunity to take a look at the waterway with some of the other delegates. I was surprised just how far it had deteriorated since I last

took a boat through, but then the navigation isn't that bad, it is mainly a backwater problem.

Farewell to Bob

By Mike Beech



Robert Bindley sits in the back of his canoe, his father sits in the front. He built the canoe in the early 1950's. They are in the centre of Market Harborough, which flooded regularly at that time. Church and shops in background: 'Foster Brothers' 'Hiltons' and 'J.Wood & Son' The Harborough Mail Reporter stands at the side in the water but we think he is bending his knees to dramatise the event. This was Bob's first boat which he used on the canal. It is now part of our collection and is on display at the top lock stable.

Robert known to us all as Bob Passed away peacefully on 3rd July 2015, aged 77 years, having suffered with Motor Neurone Disease.

He was an early member of the Old Union Canals Society and a waterways supporter. He and his brother owned a boat called Triad II which was used to explore most of the canal system.

The funeral service took place on Monday 13th July.

Donations, if desired, for LOROS Hospice

may be sent to

J. Stamp & Sons, Funeral Directors,
15 Kettering Road, Market Harborough,
LE16 8AN Tel 01858 462524

Braunston Festival

By Mike Beech



Ever since it started I have wanted to visit the Historic Boat Festival at Braunston, but I have always been working at the Museum. Now we have a first class volunteer who is capable of covering the museum. So this year, the weekend

after our own festival I was down at Braunston. This is the only place where you can see 100 plus historic boats and they move so you can here the engine and see how they handle. The event is centred on and run by Braunston



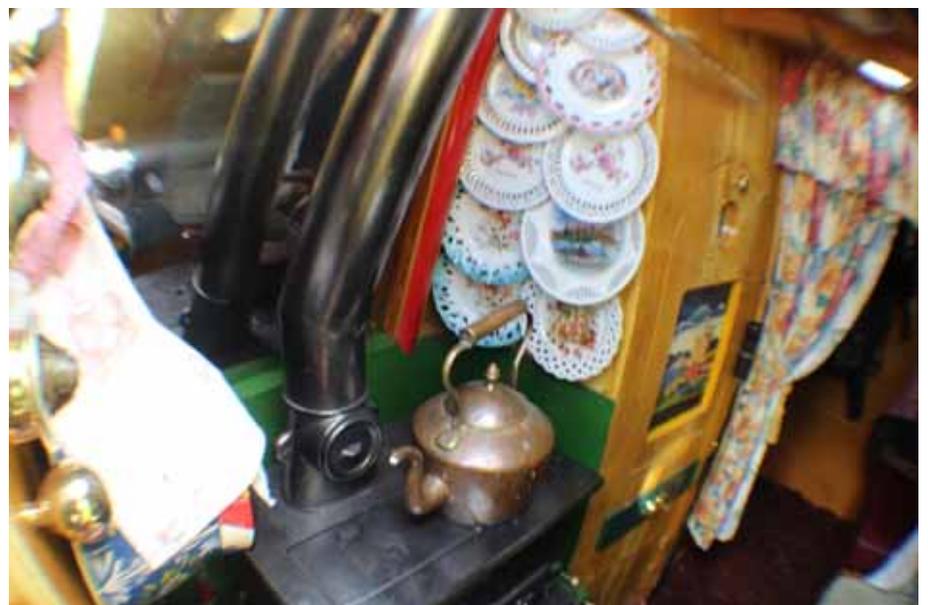
Marina, with any profit going to waterway charities. They cram a lot into the space and still find space for music and dance. Whilst there I spoke to around 20 people that I know and got on board 3 of the boats. At Braunston they have a unique circular route through the marina, so the boats parade twice a day. They turn left out of the marina, go to the canal junction, turn round and head back. Then they enter the marina, run through it to the other end and round on to the canal and back to the moorings. Sometime the last boat of the morning is still trying to get back when the first boats of the afternoon set off. It was the perfect day and very crowded, entrance is £10 per car or free if you walk. Despite cones on the village roadside, lots of cars were parked there, so I assume that some mean people were taking advantage. I was parked in a hay field behind



Above, Boiler for Adamant, not truly historic, but a wonderful eccentric steam powered narrowboat.

Braunston pumping station. Each year they have a theme, this year it was FMC so the old wharf was packed full of old FMC boats some in original livery some converted and others with more recent colours. I will go again, and if we could find enough volunteers it would be a good place to take a display stand.

The interior of Raymond, sorry it is a bit distorted. I was trying a wide angle lens as you can't get much in with a normal camera.



Membership July 2015

by Val



Hello members

Greetings from the BoilerHouse.

2015 has been a funny old year as until April I was unable to enter the museum due to the refurbishment taking place and was banished to my local garden nursery.

Since that point I have been following up those few members who have not yet renewed for this year. Those of you have haven't yet paid could I ask that you send in your renewals as soon as possible.

We shall be implementing new systems this year which will make joining our merry little band a whole lot easier and enable individual members much more flexibility than previously.

I am

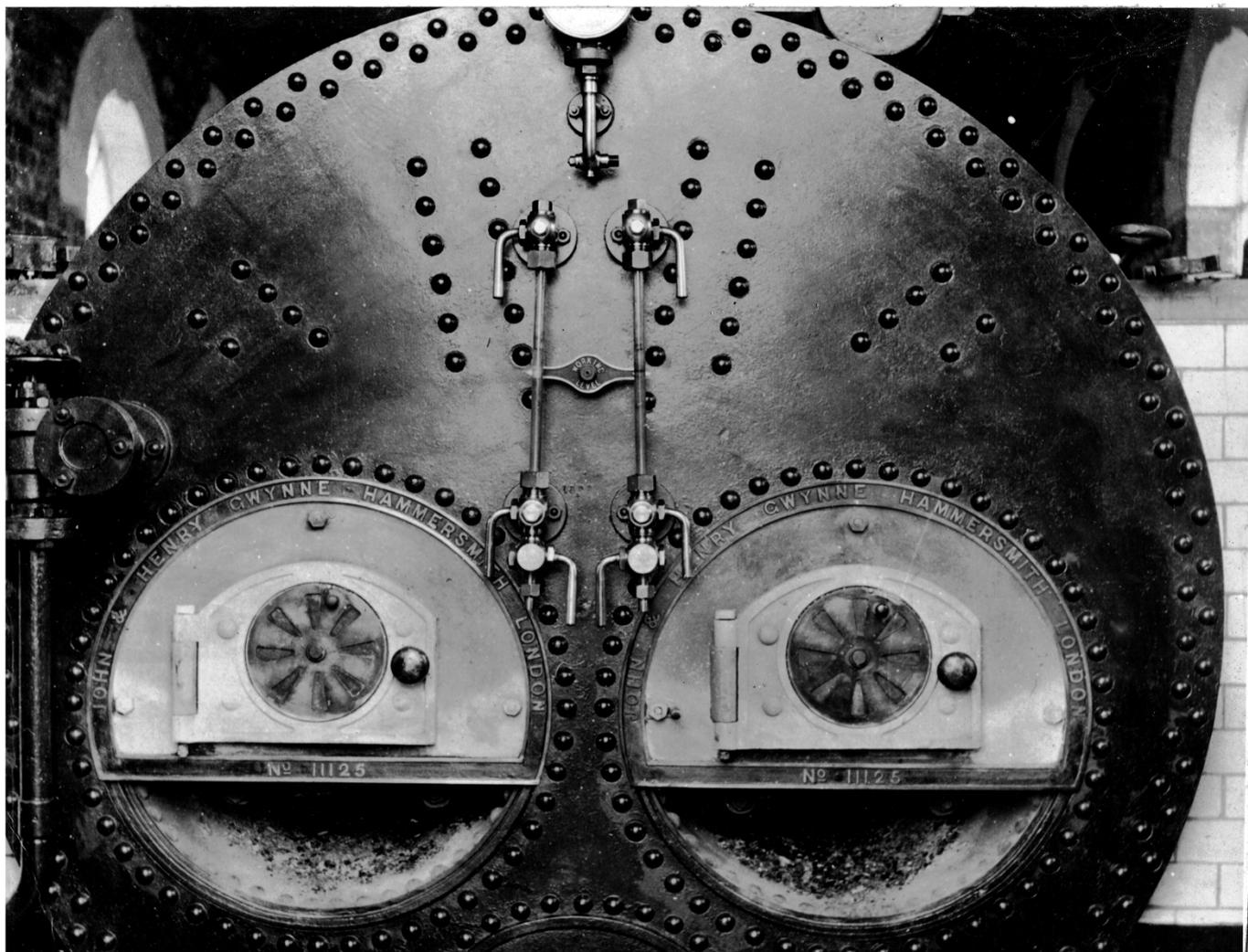
learning the new software

'mode' as we speak and will try to keep you advised of the progress as it happens. Please bear with me during this period regarding any questions you may have. The new web based system will automatically generate reminders and you can download a membership card if you wish.

As usual we are looking for volunteers, particularly people to come on to the Committee, to help move things forward.

More news in the next magazine.

Val



One of Foxton's pair of boilers in place in the boiler house (now, known as The BoilerHouse!). The photograph is believed to be very early possibly during testing. There has been a fire in the boiler, you can see the ash, but the picture is cropped and in the rest of the picture there is a lot of junk laying around as if it is all unfinished. The end of what looks like a big spanner can be seen top right along with the handle of what may be the long shovel or the 'pricker' used for cleaning the boiler out. We

have the 'pricker' on display it is a long iron bar with a handle on one end and a pointed hook bit on the other. I am told this was for breaking up clinker or fishing coal out of the fire bars. This was found in the eaves of the top lock stable. We also found an iron bar with identical handle, but it was shorter and had obviously been cut off. Someone had spotted the useful metal shovel and cut it down to a useful length! The long shovel we have on display was donated - we don't know where it started life.

Lancashire Boiler

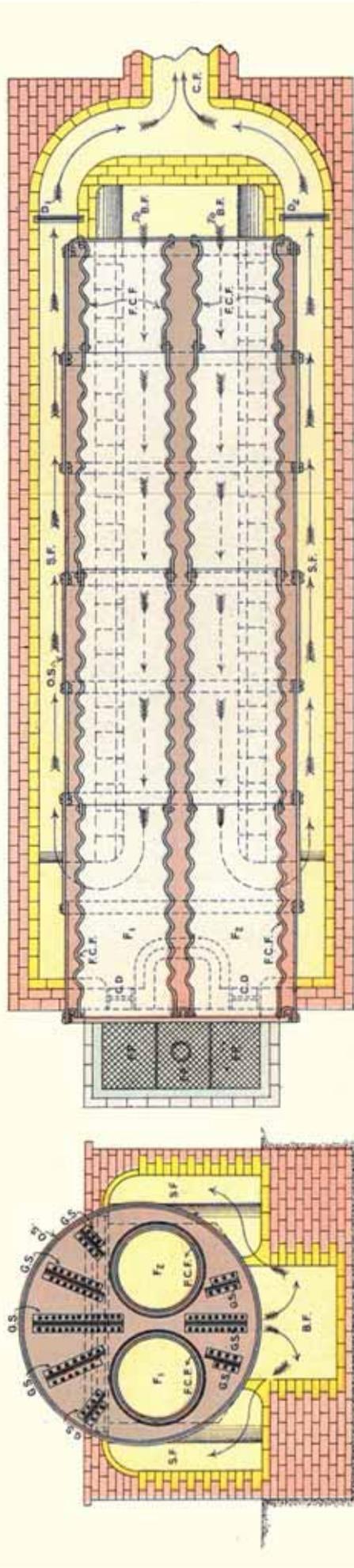
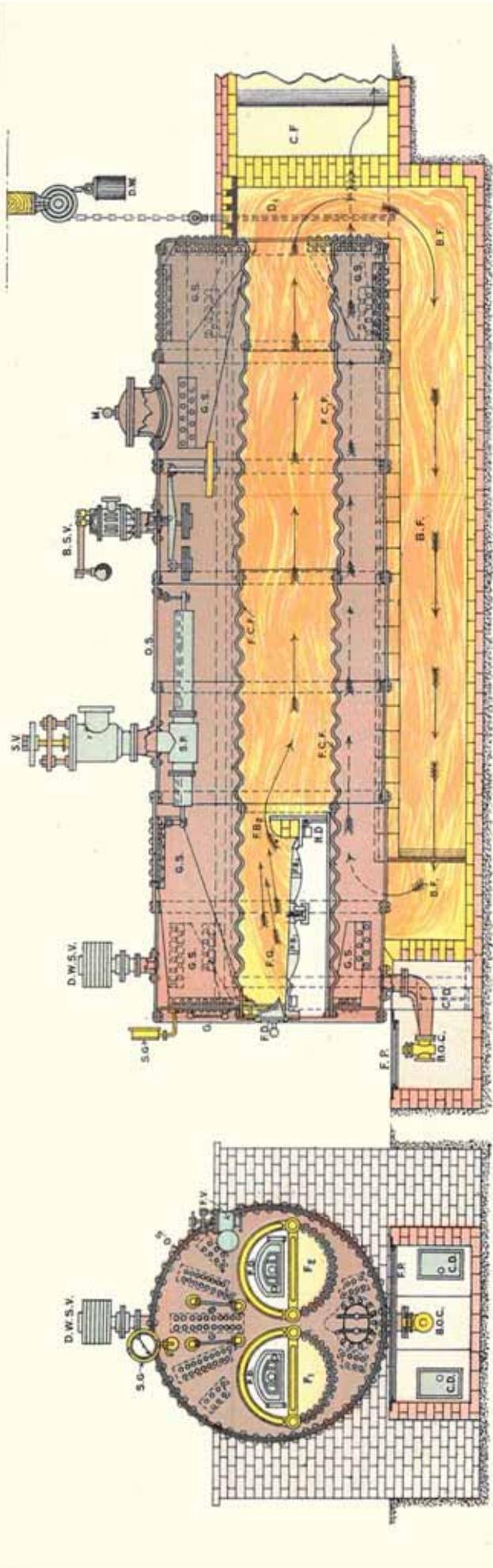
by Mike Beech

In the BoilerHouse the Boiler Game is very popular with children of all ages, but only gives a very basic idea of how the boiler itself worked. Eventually we will have a companion guide book which will have more information about things like the boiler. This article is from the research for that book.

Every steam engine required a boiler in which the energy from burning fuel (usually coal) was used to heat water and produce steam under pressure. The boilers at Foxton were Lancashires. They have the makers name of J and H Gwynne of Hammersmith on the castings round the face plates, but we have long debated that they may have brought them in from another company (common practice with the Victorians) and put their own name on them. This led to speculation that they were made in Loughborough and floated to us along the canal.

The high efficiency of the Lancashire boiler was the result of more than 100 years of continuous development. Thomas Newcomen's boiler of 1712 was circular with a domed top and built over a furnace in which coal was burnt. The boiler

pressure was only 3 or 4 lbs per square inch (p.s.i.). A lot of heat was wasted because it escaped from the sides of the furnace, instead of heating the water in the boiler. A replica is on show at the Black Country Living Museum. In order to cope with higher steam pressures (up to 30 p.s.i.), James Watt designed the 'wagon boiler', so called because it was shaped like a horse-drawn cart. Around 1810, Richard Trevithick developed the cylindrical Cornish boiler. This boiler had a single fire tube running centrally along the length of the boiler, surrounded by water. Having the fire in a tube that was immersed in water greatly increased the amount of heat energy transferred to the water. The Lancashire boiler was developed in 1844 by William Fairbairn, born in Scotland. His Lancashire boiler had twin furnace tubes side-by-side, which gave it a much larger heating surface than that of the Cornish boiler. The addition of 'Galloway tubes', patented in 1848, brought a further improvement in heat transfer and



Typical layout of a Lancashire boiler.

fuel efficiency. These were metal tubes that crossed the hottest part of the furnace. They improved water circulation and increased the area of the heating surface. Galloway tubes also acted as stiffeners and greatly strengthened the main flues against collapse. To produce steam, coal was shovelled through the firedoors at the end to maintain a fire in each of the furnace tubes. A typical Lancashire boiler would consume around six tons of coal per day. Foxton's were relatively small and we think they used about 3 tons a day.

The level of the water in the cylinder which surrounded the internal fire tubes, could be monitored by checking the glass gauges on the front of the boiler. The water level would be maintained by opening the water feed valve, as required, to replace the water that had been converted to steam. The steam pressure in the boiler was indicated by the steam pressure gauge, which is positioned just above the water level gauges. Checking water level regularly was vital to safe operation. Even the best designed boiler cannot withstand the tremendous pressures created if the water level is allowed to drop too low. Allowing the water level to drop below the tops of the internal flues would be likely to cause an explosion. To avoid this kind of accident, boilers

were fitted with safety valves. These valves made a loud noise, as they released excess steam, to draw the attention of the engineer (on the boiler game we have animated film of Fred in front of the engine with everything shaking and the room full of steam). Lancashire boilers were surrounded by brickwork flues. This meant that the hot flue gases produced by burning coal could circulate under and along the sides of the boiler before reaching the chimney. Thus, instead of escaping straight up the chimney and being wasted, the flue gases helped to heat the water in the boiler.

Stoking the boiler is a very skilled job as the fire has to be even over the full length of both the fire boxes. Cleaning and maintaining the boiler was a dirty and difficult task. Only one of the boilers was in use most of the time, the other was then free to be cleaned. If extra demand was forecast then both could be fired up, but it is unlikely that this happened regularly as traffic never reached predicted levels.

If I remember correctly there is an article in a much earlier *Informer* from David Heathcoat giving his experiences of firing a similar boiler. When I get the *Informers* back from the store I will dig out the article and reprint it.

The Foxton Inclined Plane Trust

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Membership is open to all who have sympathy with the aims and objectives of the Trust upon payment of the appropriate subscription:

£9 Single- renewable Jan 1st

£12 Family - renewable Jan 1st

£150 Individual Life

The BoilerHouse is run by the Trust and its volunteers. It holds extensive collections of artefacts, models, archives, and photographs of the Lift site and associated waterways. The Museum has won numerous awards and contains something for everyone and every age, including touch screen interactive displays, a play boat and working models, the boiler game and large screen projections. Refurbished in 2015.

Plane Informer: Nothing printed in these pages may be construed as Trust policy or an official statement unless stated otherwise. The Trust and its employees accept no liability for any item in this journal.

Press Dates - For copy to be included in the *Plane Informer*, it must reach the Editor, at the BoilerHouse, before these dates:

Winter: Mid-November

Spring: Mid-February

Summer: Mid-May

Autumn: Mid-August

Visit us on www.facebook.com/FoxtonCanalMuseum



Leicestershire and Rutland 4x4 response were out in force supporting Ann's team. Ann was heard to say that she 'couldn't run the show without them'



Another festival, Braunston Boat Festival with 100 boats all trying to move round the

Download the Foxton App

Download the free App for information on the locks, Inclined Plane Boat Lift, places to eat and drink and the Discovery Trail.

To make the most of your visit to Foxton Locks and to enjoy the full inclined plane boat lift virtual reality experience upgrade the App for just £3.99. This gets you into the museum for free, but as members you can do that anyway.

The Foxton Discovery App uses the latest technology to recreate the Inclined Plane Boat Lift. By using your smart phone or tablet device you can see the boat lift magically appear before your eyes, all in the exact position boats would have made their journey in the past.

This exciting new Discovery App also provides additional information including -

- Detailed information and multimedia for the Discovery Trail
- Voucher that applies the purchase price of the app towards admission tickets to the BoilerHouse
- Looking glass reality which will provide a digital version of how the boat lift on the Inclined Plane would have looked
- Foxton Quest exploration game

To download the App, simply visit the Google Play Store or Apple App Store before you arrive (N.B. to find the App in the stores search for 'Foxton', or 'Foxton Discovery' not 'Foxton Locks').

