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**PRESS RELEASE**

**19th January 2012**

**VIC 96 and Barking confirmed to take part in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant**

The afternoon of Sunday 3rd June will see a thousand boats gather on the river Thames in celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. It will be the largest flotilla in modern times on the river with rowing boats, working boats and pleasure vessels of all shapes and sizes beautifully dressed with streamers and Union Jacks, stretching for an estimated twelve and a half miles.

It has proved extremely popular with three boats applying for every place. The pageant organisers and representatives from the river community were involved in the selection process which included considering safety, fitness-for-purpose and range of vessel type as well as exploring whether the vessel was of historical significance or had an interesting story to tell. At the end of 2011, organisers confirmed to applicants the lucky boats who will take part in this historic event.

**VIC 96 and Barking owned by The VIC 96 Trust are delighted to have been selected to take part in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.**

The VIC 96 is a steam victualing inshore craft which serviced Chatham and Sheerness dockyards during WWII, until the 1950s.  Approximately 8 years ago is was found in Maryport, Cumbria, and a group of enthusiasts spent over 5 years restoring her and finally in 2009 steamed her 1000 miles back to Chatham, her original homeport.  Since then VIC 96 has appeared at various events including The Thames Revival at St Katharine's Dock and Ostend at Anchor in Belgium.

However, VIC 96 has a VERY large dent in the stern and we are trying to raise the grand sum of £20,000 to have this repaired before she goes in front of the Queen. We would like to invite members of the public to become Friends of VIC 96 and support us with a donation; details on our website http://www.vic96.co.uk/friends.html.

BARKING was built in 1928 by Jas Pollock Sons & Co Ltd at Faversham for the Gas Light & Coke Co and worked there until about 1970. By 1979 it was at Belsize boatyard in Southampton in a derelict state and with all machinery removed. Ian Woollett purchased this bare hull in 1979 and rebuilding commenced, first at Ferrol Road Boatyard, Gosport and then at his own premises. A new scotch boiler was installed and an ex Admiralty Harbour Service Launch engine, compound 8”+ 16” x 8” together with other machinery.

The tug was re-launched at Gosport in September 2004. Sea trials were undertaken in 2005 with a trip to Teignmouth. In the following years trips were made to the Isle of Wight, Faversham and the Thames.

BARKING is now part of the VIC 96 Trust and berthed alongside VIC 96 at Chatham No 1 Basin.

Further information available from: Derek Gransden

 Chairman, The VIC 96 Trust

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