

VIC 96

Report No 27

Chatham

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September 3rd 2011

After the fun at the Swale Match there were two working days before the Thames River Festival on September 9th. Numbers were down until the 3rd Sept so it was a bit hectic but thanks to a few extra bodies, things like the split windows and ashing out and tube cleaning and other preparations were finished. We have a new barbecue and it was looking good for a pleasant trip out to Stangate to meet up with the classic boats and Barges for barbecue and banter prior to an early start for them the following morning.

September 9th to 12th 2011

London Trip

We had expected to be full up for London but some were unwell or unable to make it. Still, we had a good crew in the VIC's wheelhouse and engine room and Ian well provided for crew in Barking. As it turned out it was all put back a day by extreme weather. Even with the delay we only had a few vessels moored alongside as Barking had decided to get up to Gravesend while the going was good, however during the evening a few more turned up and we were well fed by Jason et al and saw a lot of familiar faces and some lovely boats (that smack!) who were pleased to have space and warmth (and food and drink) from mother Vic. What a lovely place Stangate is with the curlews and other waders calling, the sounds reminding Joanna of her upbringing on a farm in the Lancashire fells.

Saturday 5am and we heard and felt the sail boys leaving for the Thames so we grunted and turned over to go back to sleep. At a sensible time, as Derek was not, for a change, intent on getting us up in the middle of the night, we set off, our run up the Thames only marred by the news that Barking had to stop to investigate a nasty noise but we were relieved to hear that nothing was found wrong and they continued without further problems, while we were catching up some of the classic boats on the way. With Jim and Frank on one shift in the engine room and Steve and I on the other it was fairly relaxed and we had time to do a lot of cleaning up to the extent that once up there quite a few visitors said "what a clean ship"! The entry into the lock at St Catherine's and through to our allotted berth by the coffee shop went so smoothly after some careful reconnoitering and nifty rope handling that some who know what were heard to comment that we really look like seamen. Careful, no big heads, still have to get back into Chatham lock!

No rest though, as soon as we had rigged the gangway, large numbers of the crowd who had watched our entry were streaming onto our deck for a look round. A very pleasant, if tiring, weekend left us with many new friends and quite a lot of contributions, helped I am sure by the position and our antics with the derrick and the fact that someone announced over the Tannoy that you could blow the whistle for a pound. I pity the hotel visitors, and the dads who had to keep dipping in! We actually had comments like "that enthusiastic old chap in the engine room explained it all so well" Jim, embarrassed, said Jean wouldn't

believe anyone actually liked his dissertation. Monday saw us in the lock and away by 2.30 so it would be touch and go to be out of the Thames by dark. With Nigel from Kingswear Castle in place of Steve sharing a shift with me we even had time to start polishing the brass and brain picking carried on as well. A really fast run with the tide and the trip up the Medway side by side in the moonlight was something to remember, topped only by the masterful way in which the skipper timed our entrance into Chatham lock to coincide with the tide turning and drifted back to power into the lock without a touch. Brilliant! But don't tell Derek or we'll not hear the last of it.

September 24th 2011

With everyone either busy or ill or away Jo and I had a quiet visit and check round, Jo not wishing to miss her visit to the Vic.

October 8th 2011

Tony, Steve and Dave Carter ashed out and then we exercised our muscles and cleaned the tubes, after sheeting up the lovely clean engine. While Tony checked the state of things to make sure we hadn't messed it all up while we had been away, Jo and Jean sorted the galley and supplied food and tea as Tony had already lit up. Later after loading up the ash into our big round ships bucket on the LandRover we spent a time examining the piston rods as there has been something happening with some evidence of pitting and white metal smear (as has happened before) so an interesting technical discussion ensued, and continues. Tony and Jean Steve Dave Joanna and Julian present

October 22nd

We turned up late with Logan and found Derek, Louise, Dave C, Tony and Jean at th Vic and Ian and I think Peter on Barking. Work was going ahead on winterizing the winch and the boat and getting gear away while Tony was busy in the engine room with the piston rods. Daves high power lense made it look frightening so the discussion continues but there is confidence that things will be put right and further trouble avoided by some preventative maintenance. Further efforts are being made to firm up plans for possibly going on the blocks for hull cleaning and painting maybe this year but probably next year. Derek, Louise, Tony and Jean, Dave C, Joanna and Julian and Logan present.

Forthcoming dates 5th November and 19th November 2011.

Cleaning ship, rub down and finish sealing the wheelhouse, and paint the roof. Cleaning engine room. Polishing brass **Anybody with other plans please keep us all informed**
Julian and Joanna