

VIC 96

NEWSLETTER

January to April 2012

27th December 2011

Luke and Julian put AC Sociable on trailer and the James and went to Chatham Dockyard with the Moore Family, where they met up with Julian Hopper and took everyone for rides. Luke arrived at the VIC with Josie on the bike. Derek and Louise arrived early in the Riley Gamecock and lit both stoves before Julian and Joanna arrived. Then visitors started arriving from the Dockyard, including Rob, Nigel and Pam. Thank you for the paint Ron.

7th January 2012

Derek and Louise polished brass in the wheelhouse etc. Steve and Nigel were in the engine room checking valves. We had bacon and egg on the stove in the fo'castle courtesy of Joanna.

20th January 2012

An article appeared in the Medway Messenger regarding VIC 96 and the Queen's Jubilee. Derek was interviewed by KMFM radio. Publicity at last!

21st January 2012

Tony, Nigel and Steve were in the engine room. Derek, Louise, Julian, Joanna and Pam were tidying the hold and removed surplus reinforced insulation, among other things. Jean and Louise had potatoes baking in the oven.

4th February 2012

Derek, Louise, Ian, Jim, Frank, Nigel, Pam and her friends Claire and Richard. The fire bars were taken out of Barking and we made a chain to Ian's Land Rover, as he was taking them home to have the spaces made wider. Frank removed the bolts on the manhole covers over the bunkers and replaced them with counter-sunk ones. Found supports for fire bars in the VIC were moving – a job for next time.

18th February 2012

Derek, Louise, Steve, Tony, Jean, Jim, Shital, Ian, Frank, Julian and Joanna. Fire grate supports were repaired and strengthened. Bolts on starboard coal bunkers were changed and the rim re-sealed by Frank.

Shital and Jim cleaned the tubes, Shital then cleaned the combustion chamber and tube plates and they both cleaned the corrugated furnace

In the meantime, Ian completed the starter motor installation on his auxiliary diesel and demonstrated it. The story goes:-

- First find your Volvo diesel. This one happened to be in a sunken yacht off Malaysia.
- Next, install it in your tug

- Then get onto eBay and find a starter motor which rotates in the opposite direction from all others
- Make up a complete new starter mount on the side of your diesel
- Find an Isuzu starter ring of just the right diameter & pitch
- Dismount the diesel, remove flywheel, machine to size & shrink the starter ring in place
- Reassemble & make a new flywheel casing
- Carefully bend new conduit to fit & wire up
- Test. It runs an air compressor for power tools, a welding generator, a circulating pump an extra bilge pump.



Tony and Steve cleaned out around the boiler. Julian took away 5 more bags of soot. Shital took our orders and went off to the chip shop.

2nd March 2012

Derek joined Julian and Joanna with Adrian to help move the strong backs for jacking against.

3rd March 2012

Derek, Louise, Julian, Joanna, Tony, Jean, Jim, Daniella, Nigel and Pam

Derek and Louise arrived early and with the fire in the Rayburn still lit, baked potatoes were put in for lunch. Julian and Joanna arrived with more oak packers. The boiler was cleaned out before the fire bars were replaced. Daniella was small enough to get in the boiler to help Nigel.



10th March 2012

Tony, Jean, Steve, Ian, Julian, Joanna (and Derek)
Julian made teak packers to shape of ship and carried on jack pushing.

13th March 2012

Julian and Joanna spent several hours drilling holes ready for rods.

17th March 2012

Julian and Derek continued working on the dent. The timber frame was dismantled.

24th March 2012

Derek, Louise, Tony, Jean with their friend Brian, Julian, Joanna, Nigel, Pam, Martin

Works to the dent took place over a number of weeks, here are Julian's comments:

First, a bit about how I think, which is quite like you lot in some ways. As you all know I get a bit boring about originality and using the ship in as original condition as possible (without actually endangering our lives of course). I sometimes take this to extremes, for example my 1920 AJS motorcycle combination, although repainted still has most of its original wheel spokes, whereas some would say fit all new ones. So I hang on where possible to original parts and take great pleasure in riding these ancient machines in the way my uncles rode them, with all the skill they needed to get the best from early designs. But, of course, we actually think simple is best. Would many modern machines still work well, with fettling, for 100years, like the AC Sociable we play with, which still has almost all its mechanical parts as made, even down to the white metal bearings? It has done the Brighton Run for decades without much trouble and is easy to drive, once learned, as quite a few have found at the winter social at the Dockyard. Ask for a go next time it comes! Steam buffs will quote much earlier stuff still going, of course.

So, back to the dent in Vic 96, I have always wanted to attempt to save as much of the riveted and joddled plating of the stern as possible. As I was talking to Robbie Jardine about it and our efforts to raise some cash to sort it this year, like Ian he said "If it's going to cost that much you've nothing to lose in trying to knock it out first. Even if it still looks a bit battered afterwards, it would match the rest of the ship". Ian had a jack to try so we built a timber structure to jack off but could only get a few inches of movement which sprang back a lot but this gave us some hope. Jacks can slip when pushing at an angle so we were looking for a safer way. Another friend, Chris Axon, a steel man who helped me on some rather ambitious jacking jobs on ancient houses, said "the forces required are not that great, the 50 ton Tangye jack we used for that chimney job will do it cold but you'll need something strong to pull against! "Pull it out! Now there is an idea! It would be safer and not push the bulkheads too much! He said two 200mmx75mm heavy channels spaced apart 35mm would make a good strong back to hang down the outside and studding could be used to pull/push the dent out towards the strong back, bearing on the top and bottom rims of the stern of the ship. I used two 24mm high tensile studs (safe load 30 tonnes each) with a jack between them. After a struggle, we managed to get it over the stern and drilled some holes and managed to push the dent out in the middle about 75mm as a trial. The timber framework helped as we used it to back up the push so we could use the jack more efficiently. Much conversation and advice from all confirmed what experienced people had already said, that you should work from the edge of the dents inwards, and get rid of the flanges of the angle frames where they are bent inwards. All this can be seen in the photos as it was when we started.

Having tried the idea out, with much cutting and drilling we made two more strong backs and hung them over and I got my Roped Access gear out so I could hang over comfortably to shift them about and fit the studs and plates. We hired a 50 tonne ram and pump and got going and soon had it moving but after a couple of days, and a lot of bent 25mm thick spacer plates and some thinking, both Derek and I remembered we had seen hollow rams so swapped the ram for a hollow 60 tonne one and it was much easier to jack on one stud (and less holes to drill, and patch later). So one 24mm studding will take much more than 30 tonnes! As we were clearly getting somewhere we had plenty of help on the jacking pump and good progress was made and despite various dents and creases you now see it pretty much as it should be. I must say it is typical of everyone in our team that we all throw ourselves in to pull together when needed. I am sure Derek has had his doubts about the beaten up look still left but you could not wish for a better bloke to work with and we were both coming up with the same ideas and both keen to see it work. We tried heating and hammering the small area in the centre creased part, but with the expansion and contraction it stays rather lumpy.

Of course the heavy jacking has broken out the fibreglass temporary repairs we did to the stern on the way back from Maryport in 2009 and we now see clearly the rotten areas of plate above the dent area. This week, weather permitting, while it is on the tidal blocks at Acorns yard, being painted, we have arranged that we will cut out more of the rotten plates and Malcolm at Acorn has arranged for us to have a plater to plate just the top rotten area and repair the rotten pieces of deck plate in the perimeter gutter. They will do it job by job so we can stay within our very limited budget. Malcolm has been very helpful and as long as they are doing some of the work is pleased to help us keep at sea and not get into debt.

Thanks to all, but let's keep it up for a few more weeks to be ready for Ostend and London in a month.

31st March 2012

Derek, Louise, Tony, Steve, Dave, Ian, Pam, Nigel, Arthur, Gladys, Julian, Joanna, Logan, Jim, Jean, Claire, Jason

Following Derek's call for all hands to the pump, we had a good turnout. Barking was loaded with a landrover load of coal. Jim held the weight while standing on the scaffold platform, Julian was in the aft cabin swinging the sledge hammer so hard nearly knocking Jim into the drink, and he had to take a break. (I think he found out the hard way there is a way to hold a backup weight without leaning on it and getting the weight of the sledge hammer and 15 and a half stone of Julian slamming into him).

7th April 2012

Derek and Louise were amazed when Julian and Joanna arrived at 10.10am after a journey to Peterborough to take Logan home.

Rob arrived on his tractor. Filing out of holes ready for Derek to weld in the plugs. Then Julian painted them before he left. Pam left to help on VIC 56. Derek and Louise undercoated the light boxes. Ruth filled the water containers in the hold, Louise oiled the steering chains, and Tony painted boiler pipes in the engine room.

8th April 2012

Jim and Jean filled, rubbed down and painted the area of the engine room over the stairs, making it much lighter in the engine room. Derek applied the top coat to the light boxes. Julian and Joanna called in.

9th April 2012

To coincide to the Dockyard's open day, we also had the VIC in steam and despite rain showers we had 3 new visitors. Julian cut out the D section on the stern deck. Derek tested the radar in the wheelhouse, Tony lit the boiler and cleaned up ready for the steam test and filming in the morning.

10th April

All arrived just before 8.00am. Julian brought Luke, Adrian, Oscar and James for an hour to lift the tipping bucket off the trailer onto the pontoon. They then helped to fill it with coal, made a run up to the coal bunker manhole with a safety rope. The derrick guys were retrieved from the hold connected up ready for hoisting the derrick and the fenders were put in place. Arthur fitted the light boxes with James' help. We were joined by John Sergeant, Brian Stanley (the director), Andre, 2 cameramen and a safety officer. At 13.00 we went into the river and arrived back at 16.00. After a few aborted attempts to beat the wind, Derek showed great patience and in the end slipped in with hardly a touch! Tony as engineer, Jim and Pam on the winch.

14th April 2012

Barking steam test – Ian and Derek. Ian came down on Friday and lit up ready for the steam test. Derek arrived in time to make Ian Farrance, boiler inspector, tea and buy chips for lunch. Present was Ian, Derek, Tony and Jean.

18th April 2012

It was blowing 5 to 6 south westerly, with heavy rain gusting to 36 knot, locked out a 11.30am and took Barking around to Gillingham Marina. Lifted out in their hoist, indicated weight 40 tonnes. Marina staff scraped and pressure washed to remove mussel growth and sea slugs (snotty-goggles) whilst we went to the café. The crew was Derek, Ian, Tony, Steve, Rob and Pam.

A fire was then lit in the VIC ready for tomorrow.

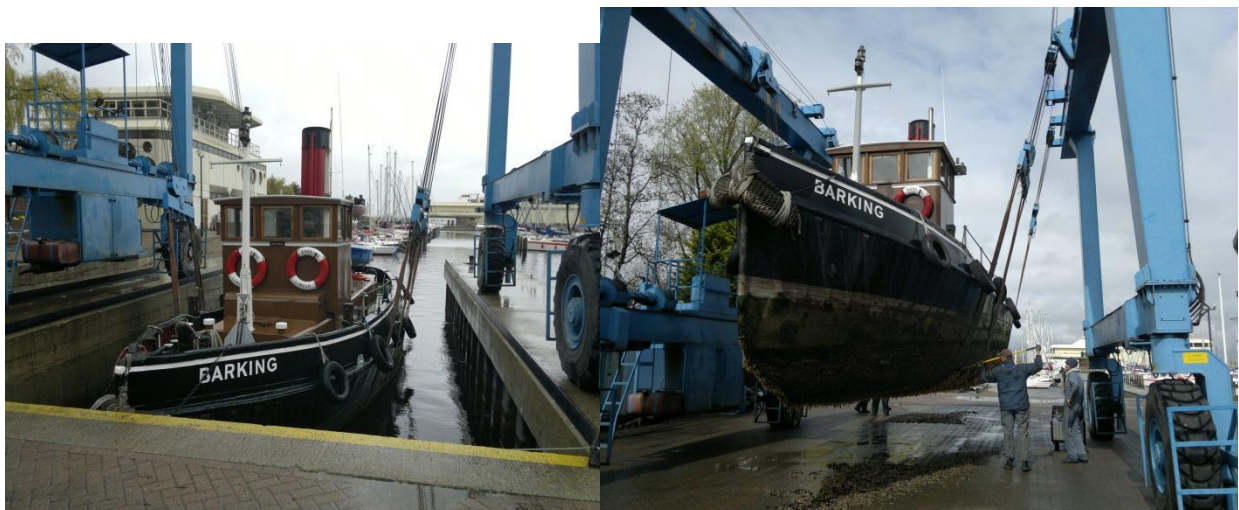
19th April 2012

An early start for Tony, who re-lit the fire at 7.00am, prepared for an 11.30am lock for a leisurely trip up to Acorn to go on the blocks. The crew was Derek, Tony, Ian, Peter, Jeremy, Steve, Julian, Joanna and Pam.

Arrived at Acorn in glorious sunshine, had tea and cake, packed up to go and work on Barking just as a cold front came through. It was raining on our return to Barking, so went straight to the café, unbeknown to us, the Swifts and Jeremy lay under the tug scraping.

20th April 2012

Work party on Friday, scraping, wire brushing and priming the sides and applied first coat of antifouling to the bottom and primed the sides, first coat black gloss applied above the water line. Derek, Ian, Peter and Keith present. Propeller cleaned and polished.





21st April 2012

Julian arrived about 11.30 and lit the fire, opened up and started setting up to change the hatch tarpaulin, when Joanna and Luke came an hour or so later we barred the winch over to lift the derrick bucket off the hatch and knocked out the wedges and rolled the tarp back halfway, moved the boat down then rolled the rest of the tarp up and into the Land Rover. Thank goodness for Luke's muscles.

We then realised that the ship was going down like a lift so stopped the tarp job and just managed to push the ship over enough to triple fender it so when it settled on the blocks we would have room to work against the dockside, hard work again with the wind and tide against us. Time for tea, made by Julian! Luke decided he likes Earl Grey made strong with three tea bags.

Back to the tarp, we unrolled the larger of the old ones and spread it out, but could not find the small one, although there was a new looking one rolled up tight and small. This turned out to be the small one after much searching so we rolled that out too. Badly creased and starting to crack on the creases, so it was left in the glorious sun to warm up and flatten, some hope!

At this point Joanna decided we should spend the next hour or so till the tide went out enough, to start on Ron's' cream paint, so the tarps were left rolled back a bit and we set to with scrubbing brush, sand paper and wire brush, mixed a batch of paint and Luke painted a third of the hatch coaming and side. Paint went on well and dried quick. Thanks again Ron.

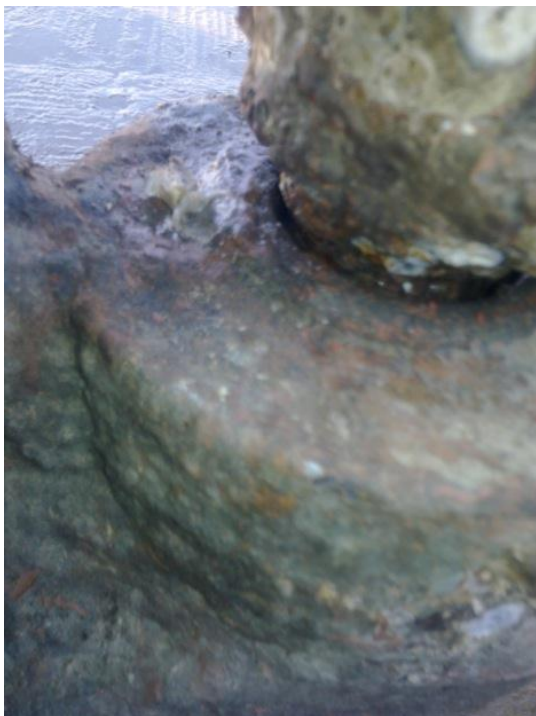
After the paint was finished we looked over the side and we were nearly down and were able to get down to start at 5.45. Joanna and Luke started with scrapers and I swept the rest of the concrete the Acorn boys had not cleaned (if you sweep the sloshy mud down to the edge the next tide just washes the concrete and is easy to clear next time you get down). Again Luke's muscles were a great help with clearing the mussels from the bottom where the Acorn lads had not finished the washing down, see the photos for the results. (Get that, muscles for the mussels? oh never mind)

These are two photographs of the same place on the bows, first as left after pressure washing anti fouling flaking badly, second after just a wipe with my hand. Odd that, but it was the same over the whole band at that height all around the ship, easily seen on some of the other photos, could it be the sun after the pressure washing, but why did the washing not knock it off?



These are also two of the rudder pintle. We jacked the trailing edge of the rudder to move the pin and it moved between 4 to 6 mm sideways. Julian could get a piece of 3.5mm welding rod (flux cleaned off) down the gap to try to find the length of the pin which seems to be about 40 to 50mm into the socket. Photos show all the sideways movement, there is no up and down movement.

Checked the valve from the forepeak and it was closed. Pam did that as she left on Thursday. Luke had to go, so we spent half hour or so wedging the sheet down and measured for new hardwood battens and went home as it got dark at 8.30. Incidentally, the tide had not started to make by then as we were watching to see how much time we would have to work between tides. We started as soon as it had receded from the ship enough to get round it at 5.45 and the water continued to recede until we left making 2 hours 45 minutes which if doubled to bring the water back to where it was when we started, could give us 5 and a half hours to work in. Does that sound right Derek but it is how it looks? Present at the VIC Julian, Joanna and Luke.



Meanwhile, at Barking Jim, Derek, Tony and Ian ably assisted by Keith from the Kent tug. A second coat of antifouling applied to the bottom and sides, second coat gloss black applied above the water line. 10 new anodes welded on. Barking now complete and ready to go back in the water on Monday.

23rd April

Barking put back in the water at 12.30 and after lunch sped back to Chatham making 8.1 knots over the ground, half a knot of tide. The crew was Derek, Ian, Tony, Jason, Claire and Pam.

Latest news from Acorn Wharf...

The VIC looks very good with only a few patches of the original hull plating flaking off. The spots etc are just the undercoats showing, nearly all well keyed on. The larger areas of bare and clean metal are the new plates welded to the ship in 2004, which have flaked off to clean and mostly bright steel so we will need a good primer and a couple of coats on these before anti-fouling by Acorn. Malcolm said he would leave this to us to wire wheel it off and check the bottom before they spray on the anti-fouling later. Julian

Ostend at Anchor

This year the theme is Steam in Ostend and we have been allocated a prime position in the Mercator Dock. We will be hosting live entertainment, playing throughout the festival, on our hatch cover. Prior to leaving we will be bunkering 12 tonnes of steam coal and would ask you to forward your contribution in the sum of £240 per person to Simon or Derek.

The Queen's Jubilee Pageant

Coal contribution for this event will be £120 per head, please forward to Simon or Derek.

Julian and Joanna Swift
Derek Gransden
24/04/2012

Photographs of the work carried out over the last week have been included on the website under Current Works and Barking Photographs