

45M - GCC Canal Boat - Dublin 1928

06 May 2008

Last Updated 06 January 2015

45M pictured during the making of Three Men go to Ireland, Oct 2009

Technical Details

Reg Number:

45M

Built By:

Vickers (Ireland) Ltd

Year:

1928

Construction:

Riveted Steel

Length:

61' 6"

Beam:

13' 2"

Payload:

62 tons

Draft:

4' 6"

Weighed:

Killaloe 1928

Engine:

Bolinder E Type 15 HP

45M was built in 1928 by Vickers(Ireland) Limited and worked for only 17 years before she sank in Lough Derg in December 1946 with the loss of three of her crew. She operated as a Hack Boat, sub-leased by Tom Moore of Carlow, for about two years during the "Emergency", being used to carry sugar and general goods between Carlow and Dublin. She was also used for the shipment of turf into the city. In November 1946 Christy "Copper" Cross was Skipper with Jack Boland driving and Tony Brien as deckhand. They had left Dublin with a cargo of porter for Limerick. "Copper" father was seriously ill and on meeting 61M at Lowtown he swapped jobs with "Red" Ned Boland for the week so he would be close to home.

Two days later on Sunday morning December 1st, 45M travelled down the lake from Portumna heading for Killaloe. The lake was fairly rough so they pulled into Kilgarvan. After a couple of hours they decided to chance going on to Killaloe so they headed off again. Two hours later they pulled into Garrykennedy for shelter. The St. James came down the lake afterwards and also called into Garrykennedy. In the late afternoon 45M lit the lamp (started the engine) and once again headed off down the lake. After a short while the St James followed her on, eventually taking the 45M under tow. Opposite Parkers Point 45M was struck by a gale that passed over the lake. The high winds caused the cargo to shift. The tow rope snapped as large waves swept across the deck and the barge heeled over and sank. When she went down "Red" Ned Bolan, Jack Boland and Jimmy McGrath (who was Webbing) all died. Tony Brien swam to safety and was the only survivor. Jack Boland's body was recovered the next day on the shore, "Red" Ned's body was found about three months later in Killaloe and Jimmy McGrath's remains were never recovered. "Copper" father also died that fatal day. 45M lay at rest for the next 29 years at the bottom of Lough Derg.

In 1975 after buying it from CIE for £20 Donnacha Kennedy salvaged 45M from where she rested in 80ft of water. 42M was used as a base of operations for the salvage, John Weaving and 125B and a number of other boats were also involved in the operation which is a full story in itself. When she was brought up from the bottom the general condition of the hull was beyond their dreams as a thin crust of lime formed over everything and when that was knocked off the original paint showed underneath. To the everlasting credit of Swedish Engineering the Bolinder was started without a full dismantling or overhaul. In 1976, David Coote bought 34M from Martin Winston with a view to restoring her to original working state. As Donnacha intended converting a hull and David restoring one, they agreed to swap and in March 1976 45M was sold to David Coote. She was moored at Hazelhatch for many years during her restoration, with the Bolinder being restored in the garage at home. Boat and engine were reunited in 1980 and she had her first voyage with her restored engine that year.

In the mid 80s she travelled back to Lough Derg to her current moorings near Killaloe. She has travelled between Lough Derg and the Grand Canal in the years since then. 45M has been made famous world wide by the 1991 Waterways programme with Dick Warner, Dick and Declan Kearney when she carried a cargo of bricks, crystal and stout from Dublin to Limerick.

More recently 45M has appeared in the BBC television series Three Men go to Ireland in 2009.

Crew included•Her first skipper was Dan Logan. In January 1939 Joe Connolly, Shannon Harbour, joined the 45M as Greaser, at that time her crew were Mick "Oilhat" Connolly as skipper, Tom "Nanny" Lyons as deckman and Paddy "Smythy" Dunne as engineman. Tom Moore from Carlow with his two brothers Eddie and Jack, operated 45M as a Hack Boat.