

# Misneach - Horse Boat 1 - Dublin 1878

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## Technical Details

No. 1 Misneach at Banagher

Reg Number:

No. 1

Built By:

Vickers (Ireland) Ltd

Year:

1877

Construction:

Riveted Iron

Length:

60' 8"

Beam:

13'

Payload:

48 tons

Draft - Original:

4' 6"

Weighed:

Killaloe 1900

Draft - Current:

3' 3"

Air Draft:

9' 3"

Engine:

Allis Chalmers 6 cylinder BUDA

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Propeller:

24" x 32"

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Home Base:

Hazelhatch

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The Chairman of the Grand Canal Company, William Digges La Touche announced the order of two new iron trading boats on August 10th 1877. These boats were delivered in 1878 at a cost of £820. More iron boats were then ordered to take advantage of the then low cost of iron.

The design and construction of the first two iron trading boats No.1 & No.2 was similar. A riveted structure with hatters felt between the joints. A characteristic of the iron 3/8inch cladding was the tendency to crack on heavy impact. Modern steel will bend and absorb an impact. A number of riveted patches were to be found on the hull, especially towards the stern. This was an indication of heavy use during its working life.

The earliest recorded weight for No.1 boat was at Killaloe Ballast office on the 30th of May 1900. Weights were added and the draft measured. At 48 tons she was down 4ft-6ins in the water. On board when weighed were 1 anchor chain, 4 covers, 5 ropes, 2 tiller handles, 3 skids, 10 rumors, 8 hatches, 3 trippers, 1 cork fender, 1 rope fender, 2 poles, and 1 boat hook. While this boat is numbered No.1 it wasn't the first boat on the Canal, but the start of a new numbering system and the first of a new set of iron boats purchased by the Grand Canal Company (GCC).

The boat had no engine but was drawn by a horse. Every bridge on the canal system carries evidence of the horse drawn towline as it wore a groove into the limestone buttress. These boats carried wool, corn, wheat, beer, spirits and other goods with a crew of 3 and 1 horse. Horses were changed and rested at various stations along the canal. Hazelhatch was the first such station from Dublin and the stables and associated buildings still exist today. With the introduction of the motor boats, No.1 was retired from trading service in 1928, but was retained for canal engineering uses. The sides of her were cut low to make shovelling the podelling clay easier from the boat.

This is a clay with waterproof qualities, used to seal watertight the bottom and sides of the canal, thereby reducing the loss of water so essential for year round navigation of the system.

In the early sixties Fr. P.J. Murphy (1935-1975) of Robertstown swapped an M Boat for the No.1 as it was being brought to James St. Harbour for decommissioning. Fr.Murphy inspired the reawakening of interest in the Grand Canal and was involved in restoring a number of Canal Boats.

As a horse boat, No.1 then called 'Pomeroy' held pride of place among the Robertstown fleet, being used on all special occasions. In the early sixties she carried a coffin to a funeral in Robertstown. On the sad and sudden death of Fr.Murphy, the Robertstown Canal Project lost impetus and Pomeroy lay for years rotting away on the bank in Robertstown.

Eventually Pomeroy was sold as it badly needed extensive repairs. Much of the bow, stern and hull had to have the plating replaced. The conversion design and most of the work were done by the new owners and No.1 was renamed Misneach which is the Gaelic for 'Courage'.

In the early 80s the boat got its first engine installed. It was an Allis Chalmers 6 cylinder BUDA that previously saw service driving an air moving unit at a Roadstone gypsum mine in the 1950s. Also added was a 2 inch diameter stainless steel propeller shaft and 24 x 32 inch propeller which were liberated from the Clondalkin Paper Mill on its closure. These had been previously used to mix the pulp from which the paper was made.

The antique Oak and Scots Pine used for the interior of the boat saw previous incarnations in the old Jameson Distillery, Dublin. On a warm day, the spirits from the old oak casks are known to give off the vapours.

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The following taken from the Freemans Journal in August 1877, mentions an order for two new boats for the Grand Canal Company.

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