

31B - Williams & Woods - Bye-Trader - Portadown 1910

01 May 2008

Last Updated 04 February 2012

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Technical Details

Reg No:

31B

Type

"B" (Bye Trader or Hack Boat.)

Name:

The Williams & Woods

(also known as The Jam Boat)

Built By

Either Portadown Foundry or Bright Patent Pulley Lisburn

Built For

D.E. Williams, Tullamore

Length :

60 feet

Beam:

12' 9 inches

Material:

Riveted steel

Ballast:

Concrete 14 Tonnes

Engines:

Bolinder 1919-1958

BMC 1978 - 2001

Perkins 6354.4 2002 to date

She also had twin Seagull outboards attached to the rudder in 1978 or 79

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31B was built in Northern Ireland, circa 1910, for D. E. Williams Ltd. of Tullamore. She was weighed in Killaloe in 1912 and traded on the Grand Canal and River Barrow carrying grain until 1927.

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From 1927 to 1946 she traded on the Grand Canal under two owners, P. Cafferky of Mountmellick and J. Gill. In 1946 she transferred to Williams & Woods Ltd, for whom sheâ€™s still named. While with Williams & Woods 31B carried various confectioneries the length and breadth of the navigation, a welcome relief from wartime rationing.

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In 1958 she was taken over by CIE and her engine was removed. She was later sold to a civil engineering company and was used alongside the "Eclipse Flower", a former Ranks Flour Company barge as a floating platform for a crane during the building of the new bridge in Wexford in 1959. She then lay abandoned, either under the bridge or in the salt marshes beside it until 1978.

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At this point her purchase was negotiated and she was refloated by Pat Benson who after fitting a BMC engine brought her up the coast to Dublin and later down the Grand Canal to Athlone. Her last act as a working boat appears to have been in 1979 when she was used to carry building supplies to one of the islands on Lough Ree for the construction of a house.

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She was then brought to Edenderry, where she was converted.

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31B was sold again in the early nineties to a Mr Ward, but fell into bad repair and after being vandalised it sank in Shannon Harbour around 1997. She was then bought by Michael and Mai Devlin in 2000 who refloated her and after a spell in Shannon Harbour dry dock she was brought north to County Leitrim where she underwent a refit. Over the winter of 2001/2, a Perkins 6354.4 engine was fitted to replace the BMC engine which had "expired" on the way back from the Lough Derg Rally. Hydraulic steering was fitted during the winter of 2002/3.

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The current owner, Mick Farrell, bought her from Mick and Mai in October 2004. Following some hull plating and construction of a superstructure over the bow cabin in Roosky dry dock, he took possession of her in March 2005. Although she has hydraulic steering fitted, her tiller is still attached. Mick Devlin said that he was "loathe to cut it off" and Mick Farrell says that the thought of cutting it off now after 95 years of faithful service didnâ€™t appeal to him either. In 2005 while travelling as part of the HBA fleet 31B got back on the Barrow participating in various events along the navigation and visits, on tidal waters, to New Ross, Inistiogue, Carrick-On-Suir and to Waterford (for the Tall Ships Event), all of this must have reminded her of her days in Wexford Harbour!

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The summer of 2006 was spent on the Erne system while in 2007 the Williams & Woods was once again back on the Canal.

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