

The Raising of GCC Boat 41M – Jul 1945

10 May 2010

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Canal Boat 41M sank in the tailrace just below Ardnacrusha hydro power station in early 1945; she was carrying a load of cement from Limerick when she went down. These photographs showing the raising of her by employees of the GCC (Grand Canal Company), were donated to the HBA in 2009.

They show in detail the complex operation of salvaging a boat with cargo still sitting in the hold. The two barges involved in the salvage were GCC boats 84E, an engineering boat used on the Grand Canal, and 55M, a company cargo boat similar to 41M. It appears from the photographs that they tried first to winch the 41M from the bottom using two floating pontoons. This must not have been a success, as the same winch apparatus can be seen across the decks of 84E and 55M. The use of the two bigger boats would have provided much more buoyancy than the pontoons.

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This work was done in July but the conditions would still have been dangerous; you can see the flow of the water in a few photos (photo a16 & a17). One of the failed attempts ended up with a large section of the deck forward of the engine room tearing away (photo a34). There is a photo showing 83E listing over after the pressure on the winch broke one of the support beams (photo a31). That same photo shows the sunken barge being moved down river to the shallower water below the tailrace. Down there they would have been out of the flow from the power station and would be able to use the tide to help in the final lifting of the boat. See background in photos a34 and a35, different than in earlier photos.

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The removed cargo of cement bags didn't go to waste they were used locally on the shore to build small boat jetties. Although nearly sixty five years has passed, Pat Lysaght reliably informs me that these structures can still be seen along the shoreline.

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41M was raised on July 25th 1945. She was cleaned up and went back into service with the GCC and remained in service until the canal closed to commercial traffic in 1959.

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[Double click on the image displayed to see a larger picture. Use the right and left arrow on your keyboard or your mouse, to view the next or previous image. Loading may take a few seconds.]

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{gallery}41M raised by GCC{/gallery}

History and more pictures can be seen here [41M](#)