

35M - GCC Canal Boat - Dublin 1926

21 May 2008

Last Updated 03 December 2010

Technical Details

Reg Number:

35M

Built By:

McMillans for Grand Canal Company

Year:

1926

Construction:

Steel

Length:

61' 6"

Beam:

13' 3"

Payload:

61 tons full laden, 50 tons currently

Draft:

1ft 6ins unladen, 4ft 6ins full load, 3ft 3ins currently

Weighed:

Killaloe, 15 March 1927

Engine:

Originally fitted with a Bolinder

Current engine purchased from a fisheries boat in Killybegs and rebuilt in 1993 - Ford 120hp K Series 6 cylinder diesel.

Steering:

Original tiller replaced by hydraulic pump and ram system

Home Base:

Cloondavaun Bay, Lough Derg

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35M was commissioned in March 1927 at Killaloe Co. Clare and her payload at the time was recorded at 61 tons. During the first phase of her life 35M carried cargo from Dublin down the Grand Canal and delivered along the way to the Shannon and down the Barrow. One sad note in 35M's history was that a young man named Roche, coincidentally the same surname as the current skipper, drowned off her in Lowtown Lock. Not much is known about the incident other than he fell overboard when trying to load his bicycle onto her at night and was not discovered until the following morning.

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When cargo deliveries by canal barge ceased 35M retired from that life in June 1960 and was converted to a dredger by the Office of Public Works. She worked away in that role until some time in the late 1960's when she was re decked and sold to Ballyteague GAA club in Co. Kildare. The club added a steel superstructure over the original hold area and used her as their club bar for many years. She was sold on by Ballyteague Club in the late 1980's and rested on blocks in Verolme Dockyard in Cobh, Co. Cork from where her present owners, Andy and Cathy Roche, bought her in October 1992. They brought her by "trombone" low loader from Cork to the Shannon and subsequently to Shannon Harbour to start her current conversion.

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Her "maiden voyage" with Cathy and Andy was in spring 1993 on the Grand Canal and was the first step in achieving the dream of converting her to a family holiday "home from home". Since then 35M has travelled much of the navigation. She made the trip from Lough Derg to Dublin with 68M, 4E and DABU to attend the launch of the Heritage Boat Association and World Canals Conference in 2001. During this trip 35M parted company with her wheelhouse. That incident was looked on as an opportunity to upgrade to the new one. That new one got some adjusting afterwards in Limerick but like all of the barges she proudly displays her war wounds.

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35M has participated in several Boat Rallies on Lough Derg, on the Grand Canal and in Shannon Harbour with her present owners and their family. She visited Limerick in spring 2003 and travelled with a large fleet of other canal barges and heritage boats to the Shannon-erne waterway and on to the end of navigation in Belleek in summer 2003. She travelled the Barrow to Carlow in the summer of 2005.

Like all of the old barges that worked the navigation 35M's heritage is so much interlinked with the men who worked on her. Pat Pender from Graiguenamanagh was 35M's first skipper after she was commissioned in 1927. Ned Pender was the next skipper with his cousin Dick as engine driver until 1947. Ned remained as skipper until then, the same year the locks in Shannon Harbour were extended and he then went to the larger St. Brigid. Paddy Hoare (Athy) was Greaser during the Greasers strike in 1936. Tom Bowers took over as skipper from Ned with Jack Gaffney, a Kerryman known as "Sullivan" Gaffney, as engine driver and with Paddy Sullivan from Allenwood as deckman from 1948 to 1949. Paddy Sullivan was replaced by Joe Duggan as deckman for a short time and Jack Gaffney was replaced by a new engine driver, Butcher Cross, a Robertstown man and one of a number of the men who married in Killaloe. Other deckmen on 35M were Jackie Addley, Nanny Lyons and Paddy Nolan who worked on her for a short time from October 1955 to 1956. Bert Conroy, another man married in Killaloe, was later an engine driver and after him the engine man was Paddy Bagnall from Allenwood. Long Pat Pender, a brother of Ned Pender, took over as skipper from Tom Bowers and his son Tim was deckhand for a short time up to Christmas 1959. The last skipper of 35M during her active service as a cargo vessel was Mick Conroy for the short period from Christmas 1959 until she retired from cargo service in June 1960, Simon "Hairy" Noonan (Robertstown/Killaloe) was Driver/Engineman.

