

39M - Caoife - GCC Canal Boat - Dublin 1927

21 May 2008

Last Updated 03 December 2010

Â

Technical Details

At Coole Harbour, Lough Derg

Reg Number:

39M

Built By:

Ringsend Dockyard Company

Year:

1927

Construction:

Riveted Steel

Length:

61' 6"

Beam:

13' 3"

Payload:

60 tons

Draft:

4' 5.75"

Weighed:

Killaloe 1928

Engine:

Bolinder E Type, 15 HP

Steering:

Tiller

Home Base:

Coole Harbour, Garrykennedy

Â

After the closure of the Grand Canal, in 1960, 39M was sold by auction to Ted Barrett of Lowtown. A syndicate of four led by David Coote subsequently bought her from Ted in 1964 and brought her to Dublin where she could be seen at Harcourt Terrace for many years. She spent some time on the North Shannon and in the late 70s returned to Lough Derg where she was used by various families over many weekends. 39M with David Coote was one of the 10 barges that went to Carrick-on-Shannon and on to Leitrim in 1972 to start the opening of the Shannon-Erne waterway.

Â

In 1986 it was bought by Bill Ahern. The barge was then extensively converted while lying at the 13th lock near Dublin. The timber superstructure was demolished. The barge was stripped back to the basic hull; the decks were cut back 6 inches off each side to allow a greater span internally. The new superstructure was fitted in sections which was prefabricated in a factory and transported down to the 13th lock and welded in place. The original Bolinder engine was replaced by Perkins 6354 diesel engine from a Coca-Cola truck! A PRM hydraulic gear box, hydraulic steering, aqua drive, new shaft and propeller and cavitation plate were all fitted.

Â

The Bolinder did not end up on the scrap heap, however as David Coote got it for spare parts for the 45M. In order to have full head height from stern (wheelhouse) to bow, the layout was designed with tiered levels which results in an open plan design. The conversion took 3 years. Just when it was ready to leave the 13th Lock the canal banks burst near Edenderry, so it was unable to travel to the Shannon.

Â

Two 50 ton cranes, one to lift the bow, and one to lift the stern were ordered. Both cranes nearly fell into the canal and failed to lift 39M. A 200 ton crane from Crane Hire finally lifted the barge. It was discovered that the barge weighed at this stage 54 tons and not 24 tons as estimated. After several attempts the barge was eventually loaded on to a low loader and left Sallins for Banagher. The low loader proceeded down the dual carriageway with the stern of the barge overhanging the trailer by 27 ft. After an adventurous trip through the country it was floated in Banagher.

Â

39M is based near Garrykennedy and continues to enjoy life on Lough Derg, hopefully for many generations to come.

Â

Crew Included

Scotchman Connolly was her first skipper. Three men from Rhode, Joe Cox, John Dunn and Con Lenihan were her crew for around 1948 to 1952-53. Jim Cox of Ticknevin, Christy "Ninthly" Bligh and his son Christy Bligh were on her after that. Dan McDermott, Tom Noon and Tom's son also spent some time on her. Her last crew was John Coyne, Peter "Gurkyman" Anderson and his son.

Â