

HBA in Ballinasloe - May 2008

01 June 2008

Last Updated 03 April 2011

Â

Weather fantastic, great ambience, 19 heritage boats and lots of other craft made the trip.

Gerry Burke, Hon Chair 2008 greets the Mayor of Ballinasloe and two of the visitors to the HBA Flotilla in Ballinasloe Harbour over the June Bank Holiday weekend 2008

The Heritage Boat Association had a great Bank Holiday weekend in Ballinasloe. The HBA included Ballinasloe in the itinerary for 2008 to help highlight ease of access to this east Galway town via inland waterways. HBA members present extend a warm thanks to Ballinasloe in the very generous welcome the town has extended to the group who have travelled up the River Suck to congregate in the fine harbour that has been redeveloped over the last number of years. The original Grand Canal extended from Shannon Harbour in west Offaly across the Shannon and right up to that Harbour. HBA members hope there is lots of interest in the craft that have made the visit, and connecting with individuals and families who had inland trading and cargo links with the inland waterways in times gone by. Further article below.

HERITAGE BOATS TO BALLINASLOE by Paul Martin, Vicki May

The June bank holiday weekend saw the HBA fleet travel up the River Suck to Ballinasloe. Despite the boats being scattered the previous weekends by high winds and many of them being further from Shannonbridge than had been planned, crews made a great effort to make up ground, or should that be water, and by Friday evening a good number had gathered for the necessary briefings in Killeens and Lukers.

Saturday morning saw the heaviest of metal in the form of 4E and the JD McFaul take the lead up the Suck and were through the lock and into Ballinasloe well before lunch, closely followed by the rest of the fleet. It must be said that Beth had made an amazing break from Dublin and Aqualegia had arrived on the Friday night, must be a record there somewhere for the fastest East West transit since the horse teams galloped the tow paths! In all eleven of the barges and canal boats and the same number of cruisers moored up in the town harbour right beside the main Galway road. The heavy metal moored bow on to the road and when the fleet was dressed and with many of the boats flying the new HBA blue flag, sure it was a grand sight! The newest addition to the fleet, Damien's converted beet dumb barge also arrived. Twelve months ago it was under eight feet of water in England, another record? Well done Damien.

There had been good coverage of the visit in the previous week's Connaught Tribune and Athlone Voice as well as a good mention on the RTE Radio 1 Drivetime show. As a result there were lots of visitors over the weekend including some who had worked in the Canal Terminus before it had closed down in 1961.

On Sunday afternoon the Association hosted a small reception for the mayor of Ballinasloe, Mike Kelly, and some of the town councillors and Chairman Gerry Burke presented the mayor with a copy of Cool Metal Clear Water. The mayor in his short speech thanked the Association for visiting Ballinasloe said how impressed he was with the turn out of boats and said we would always be welcome back to the town. There was some light refreshment followed by some heavy refreshment thanks to Cormac's latest offering on the cocktail front called not Sex on the Beach, but Sex on the Suck, or was it in the Suck, anyway after two it did not seem to matter!

The weather had been fantastic all weekend and Monday again was a beautiful day. Some boats decided to stay put to enjoy the Summer and moved just a mile downstream to the new Moycarn Lodge and Marina where Bobby Finn the owner made us welcome and we enjoyed a wonderful lunch. Mooring is free to those using the facilities and weeklong mooring is available for a nominal fee, so it is that many of the boats are still in Moycarn and looking forward to another weekend to come. See www.moycarnlodge.ie for details. Thanks Ballinasloe for a great weekend.

À
À