

## Towing a Horse Boat

06 September 2012

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An event more suited to Heritage Week but as Phizzfest ( Phibsborough Community Arts festival) was scheduled for the week after a Dublin bridge-lift, we made the plan. From a conversation at a country market in Clare some months ago, contact with the Irish Working Horse Association (IWHA) was established and feelers put out for a member with a horse who would tow a canal barge.

David Burton from Virginia Co. Cavan volunteered to accept the challenge and travel to Dublin with his horse "Trenuggo Pirates Pride" (eighteen hands), for a date with 4E, a former horse boat. The most suitable stretch of canal bank with the least obstruction was deemed to be between locks three and five of the Royal Canal which runs adjacent to Whitwort Road.

4E was part of a fleet of fourteen boats leaving Dublin via Spencer Dock after a very successful Tall Ships event, and the Saturday morning of September 1st was busy for Waterways Ireland staff and Dublin Branch IWA volunteers alike helping the crews through the lift bridge and the flight of locks. With some minor delays, 4E arrived at lock three about an hour late where David and Pirates Pride were at the ready amidst a crowd of onlookers. No time was wasted in securing the tow rope and the job began. 4E was kept at a very gentle roll forward as Pirate took on the massive strain and cameras clicked from all angles.

Horse and owner bravely applied themselves to the task and the tow progressed along the bank until an equipment failure finally ended the spectacle. The crowd had been well entertained and hand shakes and congrats all round were the order. Pirate with owner and skipper stood for the photos with pride, no doubt an event to be repeated.

Sincere thanks to the Irish Working Horse Association and especially David Burton with his lovely Pirates Pride, a truly memorable occasion.

Some photos of the day,

{gallery}Towing\_a\_Horse\_Boat{/gallery}