

## 78M - GCC Canal Boat - Dublin 1939

19 September 2008

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78M was built as part of the Grand Canal Company's new motorised fleet in 1939 by Ringsend Dockyard Company. Ringsend boats were fondly remembered as McMillen boats after the builder and were allegedly faster and lighter to handle than Vicker's boats. Like the boats in the new fleet she was powered by a 15hp Bolinder semi diesel and capable of carrying over 50 ton payload.

In 1946 Jim Gill joined the boat to work with his father Paddy, who was the Skipper, and brother Tom, the engineman. Tragedy struck in 1948 when 78M hit Hartley bridge in Ticknevin, and Jim's father was knocked into the canal by the tiller and drowned. Jim stayed with the boat until 1949.

"Paddy Gill Junior... decided to trade 31M for 78M because of his father's connection with 78M. He managed to close the deal with the addition of a few pounds and became the proud owner of 78M"

78M wasn't sold off in 1960 but stayed with CIE and was used intermittently as a maintenance boat until the 1970's when it was retired. Paddy Gill Jnr had bought the 31M from CIE at auction in 1965, but on hearing that 78M was potentially on the market, decided to trade 31M for 78M, because of his father's connection with 78M. He managed to close the deal with the addition of a few pounds and became the proud owner of 78M.

Paddy brought 78M to Graiguenamanagh where he has kept the original Bolinder and fitted out the hold for accommodation. While Paddy doesn't live locally, his brother Jim looks after the boat and the Bolinder is regularly started. 78M has been known to venture up to Bagnelstown to the festival and will hopefully be a regular attendee.

Crew Included -

1943 to late 1940s - Paddy Gill (Skipper), Paddy Kennedy (Skipper), Joe Connolly of Shannon Harbour (Engineman & Skipper Tpy), Tom Gill (Engineman), Jim Gill Jnr, "Hairy" Loonan (Deckman & Engineman Tpy), Billy Murphy (Greaser), Pee Judge (Greaser & Deckman Tpy), Jack O'Neill (Greaser Tpy)

1949 to 1954 - Tom Lawlor (Deckman), Jack Betson (Deckman), Paddy Cross (Deckman), "Ninety" Blythe (Deckman & Engineman Tpy), Christy Blythe (Deckman & Engineman)

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