

44M - Sandpiper - GCC Canal Boat - Dublin 1928

22 September 2008

Last Updated 03 December 2010

Technical Details

Reg Number:

44M

Built By:

Vickers (Ireland) Ltd

Year:

1928

Construction:

Riveted Steel

Length:

61' 6"

Beam:

13' 2"

Payload:

62 tons

Draft:

4' 6.25"

Weighed:

Killaloe 1929

Engine:

Bolinder E Type, 15 HP

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44M was built in 1928 by Vickers (Ireland) Ltd., as were all the 40 series of M barges. During her trading days she travelled extensively along the Barrow, Grand Canal and Shannon, carrying coal, malt, fertilizer, bricks, building material, maize, sand & gravel, hides, farmers & blacksmiths provisions and of course Porter. 44M had an extensive crew as she was a replacement boat when boats went in for repair. She had retired from service in 1957 due to leaking decks which were wetting the cargo of flour being carried at that time.

Like a number of Canal boats 44M has its own personal tragedies attached to it. In this case it was the drowning, under the lock In Monasterevin, of a young lad in his teens, Christy Flood (Graiguenamagh) who worked on her as a Greaser. Her Skipper Jim Dunne was killed at Allenwood Cross when he left the boat for a brief visit home for a few hours.

In the 1960's 44M and 64M were sold to a man from Lough Neagh by the name of McFarland. Both barges were sailed up the Irish Sea to start a new life as sand barges. McFarland subsequently sold 44M to a Mr. Mullholland who drew sand with her for a number of years before finally abandoning her on the shores of Lough Neagh. She sank and remained under water for a number of years before being re-floated in the 90's. Her luck wasn't great, as a short time later she was attacked with acetylene torches and most of the steel above water line was removed and stolen for scrap.

However her luck finally changed, when she was recently spotted, by a barge enthusiast, Michael Savage who identified the hull from the etching marks on the bow and set his mind on purchasing her with a view to restoration. Michael has since passed on the vision and the hull to Carson Grant and Helen Elliott who are about to embark on one of the most ambitious restoration projects ever taken on a modern M boat.

Crew included-

44M was first taken out by Jack Daly of Ticknevin. The Dohertys of Graiguenamanagh crewed her in and around 1944. James Maloney (Andy's father) and his sons Larry and Matt, Billy Carroll (Banagher Jack) were on 31M which was a small barge so they swapped to 44M with the Doherty's. Andy Maloney then came to her for the first time. The Sheridans, of Ballinaleague, along with Martin Carey (Ticknevin) also served on her when their boat 47M was in for repairs. Paddy and John Doherty and Paddy's son Paddy had her again in about 1950-51 before moving a few years later to 68M. Kit Farrell was then the skipper for a while as well as Jimmy Ruane of Rathangan. Dick and Bill Shorthall (Athy) worked with Jimmy at that time.

In 1954 Eamon Pender of Ticknevin and Jack Gaffney got 44M while their boat 61M was undergoing repairs. An Allenwood crew consisting of Jim Dunne (Skipper), Pat Doyle had her in the mid 50's. When Jim Dunne was killed, Neddy Doyle of Allenwood took over and "Nanny" (Tom) Lyons went deckhand while Pat Doyle was in charge. After Nanny Lyons left, young John Doyle came to her leaving all Doyle's working together. Andy Maloney came in charge of her with "Tick" (Tom) Donnellan, they spent a couple of months on her in 1957 before she finished up.