

60M - Eureka - GCC Canal Boat - Dublin 1929

24 September 2008

Last Updated 04 April 2009

Technical Details

60M

Reg Number:

60M

Built By:

Vickers (Ireland) Ltd

Year:

1929

Construction:

Riveted Steel

Length:

61' 9"

Beam:

13' 2"

Payload:

62 tons

Draft:

4' 6"

Weighed:

Killaloe 1929

Engine:

Bolinder E Type, 15 HP

Home Base:

Ferryhaven, Portumna

Operated as a cargo boat on the Grand Canal from its launch in 1929 until the end of commercial traffic in 1959. She carried a range of cargos a lot of which were seasonal, such as grain, sugar beet, turf, and of course Guinness all year round.

In 1953 she was left in for a refit of new engine bed, a job that was not unusual on the M boats but could take some time depending on backlog in the workshops at any given time. It was not unknown for a boat to be out of operation for 2 to 3 years awaiting completion of works.

60M was sold off by CIE in the early sixties and ended up on the River Barrow at New Ross where she was used in the construction of the new bridge. She was later sunk and abandoned under the road bridge in New Ross. In 1973 Artie and Oonagh Corbett applied to and got permission from New Ross Harbour commissioners to raise 60M.

At this stage it was completely submerged and covered in silt and mud, even at low tide. Over the next few months Artie persevered in the recovery operation and even learned to dive. In 1974 60M was lifted from the bottom and moved to the side of the river. Unfortunately she slipped back into deep water so a second salvage operation was put into place after a few months when tides and weather were more favourable. The second recovery was more successful, with the 60M being successfully delivered across the river to the protection of shallow waters.

Between 1975 and 1977 the Corbett's worked on restoring her, putting in an engine and converting the cargo hold into a living area. In 1979 they brought 60M up the Barrow, intent on getting to the river Shannon. Things on the Barrow navigation weren't all that great at this time and it took them a full year to complete the journey. Extensive weeds had clogged up the canals making passage by motor difficult. Some days they only managed to travel as little as a mile with Artie spending more time in the water than out. Another delay was waiting two months for a lock gate to be replaced before they could pass through. On the main line of the canal, the biggest delays were caused by plastic bags and shopping trolleys. In the mid to late 80's the original wheel house was demolished when coming down the river Shannon from Carrick on a flood. A new permanent wheelhouse was built which gives 60M "Eureka" a very distinguishing profile but due to air draft restricts her movements to the Shannon.

Artie and Oonagh enjoyed a nomadic lifestyle on 60M for a number of years in their retirement. In the early nineties 60M got a more permanent berth when a group of boaters developed Ferryhaven at Portumna Bridge. However Ferryhaven is just a winter base, as Artie and Oonagh spent a lot of time in Dromineer and Athlone where they are both very active in sailing.

Crew Included -

Scotsman Connolly was her first Skipper. In the early 40's her crew was Martin and Paddy Connolly, Jim Flynn and Paddy McCormack. Tragically Paddy fell in to the canal one night between Daingean and Ballycommon and was drowned. Paddy Sullivan, Tom Nolan, Hairy Loonan and Paddy Sullivan were in her in the late 40's and tied up in 1948. Jim Maloney, originally from Kildare but married in Banagher, worked on 60M as did six of his sons at different times. They were Tom, Matt, Larry, Abie, Andy and Martin. Martin was known as "Tim" and also known as Sonny.

From 1948 to 1953 Matt Maloney, Andy Maloney and Jim Cox were her crew. She was tied up for about two years and when she came back after that her crew were Boney McGrath with his brother-in-law Jimmy Roche and Matt Duggan. About two years after Tony Dunne, Larry "Sleepy" Brien took her out. Tom Connolly of Shannon Harbour, Jimmy Nolan and "Capetown" Maher from Rathangan spent a while after that. Tom left to 56M. The last crew were Andy Maloney skipper, Tick Donelan engineman and Abie Maloney was deckhand.