

73M - The Millicent - GCC Canal Boat - Dublin 1936

25 September 2008

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Technical Details

73M

Reg No:

73M

Built By:

Vickers (Ireland) Ltd

Year:

1936

Constr:

Riveted Steel

Length:

61' 6"

Beam:

13' 1.5"

Payload:

61 tons

Draft:

4' 5"

Weighed:

Killaloe 1936

Engine:

Bolinder E Type

Diesel Engine

Base:

Hazelhatch

73M was built in Dublin for the Grand Canal Company by Vickers in 1936. She worked on the Grand Canal, Shannon and Barrow carrying general cargo which included porter. It's the porter connection which leads to these boats being incorrectly referenced as Guinness Boats.

73M was sold at auction in Shannon Harbour in 1969 by CIE when they were disposing of some of the remaining fleet of canal boats. She was bought by Joe Giffen from Belfast for Â£60. She still had her Bolinder engine in and would have had been an empty hull as originally designed for cargo carrying with crew's quarters at the bow. Joe had great plans, but never got around to using her much or converting her for living on.

John Weaving's barge, 'The Talisman' also known as 'The Peter Farrell' had a pile driver fitted on one side of her, which he used for building harbours. When he used it his barge would lean over so he would regularly borrow 73M to tie to the opposite side to keep her steady. Gerry Oakman came across her in 1974 lying in the old canal beside Carrick-on-Shannon. He found out who owned her, and thought about buying her for several months. Meanwhile Noreen Griffen was looking for a barge and came asking Gerry, who sent her to look at 73M. She couldn't get the money together but suggested Gerry should buy it anyway. Joe was looking for Â£750. Gerry scraped up the Â£750 but then talked him down to Â£700. It cost the other Â£50 to get John Weaving to tow her to Athlone. Gerry fitted a modern diesel engine from a truck and any time he got some money together, he would spend it on steel or timber for the conversion. He slowly welded on the current superstructure and fitted out the inside.

He brought her up the Grand Canal to Dublin around 1976 and purchased a bar licence for her. He then took people on short trips along the canal in the Baggot Street and Mespil Road area. He had to give up this venture after a year as Dublin was just too dangerous to keep a boat so he took it back to the quay wall in Athlone.

Gerry lived on her there while he converted 56M and then 29B. He travelled all over the Shannon with 73M for holidays and often took in a rally or two along the way. In the late eighties he sold her to Ronnie Gallagher who eventually brought it to Hazelhatch. In the mid 1990's Ronny sold it to Paul McCormack who lived on it for a few years. The current owner has her since around 2000.