

# Heritage Boatyard Update

Newsletter for Supporters Spring 2011

## WELCOME...

...to this edition of the Heritage Boatyard Update, with news of a major supporter for Mendip, a starring role on TV, new trainees and an update on the day to day progress in the yard.

## SUPPORT FOR MENDIP WORK



## TELEVISION EXPOSURE FOR BOATYARD

Countryfile presenter Ellie Harrison visited us recently – and the results were featured on the primetime BBC show on Sunday February 6.

The TV star was visiting the museum to film a segment for the programme. As well as hitching a ride on narrowboat Shad she spoke to volunteer Di Skilbeck, about life aboard a boat.

Ellie interviewed Jennie Morton and Lloyd Ellison – trainees who are part of the Future Jobs Fund scheme - in the Heritage Boatyard. She also tried her hand at the traditional roses and castles painting.



Chocolate giant Cadbury is sweet on our boat Mendip– thanks to a £10,000 donation towards the restoration of a part of the company's history.

In the boatyard Mendip has had new wooden bottoms fitted and repairs made to the steel hull. Soon she will be craned back into the water, where her refurbished diesel engine will be refitted and painting will be completed.

Much of the work in the Heritage Boatyard has been undertaken by young people learning basic boat building skills as part of a Future Jobs Fund scheme assisted by Heritage Boatyard staff and skilled volunteers.

In September once the work is finished, the boat will make the trip

through the canal network back to the Bournville headquarters of Cadbury. This will mirror the trips the boat made by Charlie Atkins 'Chocolate Charlie.'

*Mendip* has been part of the National Waterways Museum collection since the early 1980s. From 1948, *Mendip* carried chocolate crumb between Cadbury at Knighton on the Shropshire Union Canal and Bournville in Birmingham.

The journey, carrying a 25 ton load, involved 50 locks and took 14 hours. In a normal working week, Charlie would manage to do two round trips. During this time Charlie became known as "Chocolate Charlie" to local children, some of who helped with his work.

## TRAINEES COMES TO THE BOATYARD

March will see the arrival of three new trainees through the **Keeping History Afloat - Traditional Boat-Building Skills for the Future** project.

The trainees will undertake three work-based 18-month training placements working on vessels in the Heritage Boatyard as well as short placements at other yards.

Peter Collins, Collections Manager, National Waterways Museum, stated "There are currently no

accredited courses which cover the practical conservation of historic vessels and we are extremely pleased to be running this unique training opportunity, offering an 18 month programme that will develop the skills which are critical to the survival of our maritime heritage."

The £126,000 project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future programme will develop traditional boat-building and conservation skills.

## CURRENT WORK

**Box Boat 337:** Our next major project is going to be the renovation of Box Boat 337, which is among the last remaining examples of this highly specialised coal carrying boat design.

In the renovation she will get a new stem post and keel in seasoned oak, and new opepe bottom boards, a replacement for the elm which would have originally been used. Some of the side planking will also be replaced.

The restoration of Box Boat 337 is being supported by the Association of Industrial Archaeology.

**Mendip:** Once Mendip is back in the water work will be finished on the engine and other running gear.

**Ilkeston:** Work on rebuilding the cabin of Ilkeston is nearly complete. The conservation has also seen the gunnels replaced. The work on Ilkeston and Ferret is supported by London Canal Museum.

**If you would like to support the Heritage Boatyard by making a donation please contact Jenny Rogers**

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## WOOD DELIVERY ENABLES PROGRESS



The next phase of boat restoration projects has begun, thanks to a delivery of high quality wood.

The 15 tons of wood which arrived in the Ellesmere Port boatyard is another step on the road to being able to restore some of the historic canal boats in the museum. The oak, Douglas fir, and opepe – a replacement for elm which would have been used in the past- has been bought with the help of our supporters.

And the wood was unloaded with the help of a local plant hire company, William Bradshaw (Plant Hire) Ltd, who stepped in at the last minute.

Some of the wood delivered is already seasoned and can be used straight away, while other stock will be kept at the boatyard until it is ready for use.

General Manager John Inch said: "Friends and supporters of the museum have been extremely generous in helping with the project – both financially and in the donation of materials and skills. It amazes me that we've already had seven oak trees donated to the museum.

"However we're always in need of financial support and materials for future projects."

## Future Jobs Fund

And we're saying goodbye to our last group of Future Jobs Fund Trainees. Jennie Morton, **below**, who has been with us since August, said: "I've had a brilliant time at the museum—I've learned some great skills, been a part of some exciting projects and even found my artistic talent painting roses and castles!"

