



Can you identify this River Mersey steam tug? Please send your answer to Dan Cross, by January 31, 2006. – Prize for the first correct answer drawn – Bottle of Whisky

Competition - Name the Mersey Steam Tug

The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society



No 6



October 2005



Editor: John H. Luxton

The Tow Line



Daniel Adamson enters the Mersey at Eastham – April 10, 2004. J.H. Luxton (DAPS)

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www.danieladamson.com

Daniel Adamson Preservation Society Officers and Committee	
Chairman	Tony Hirst - 39, Liverpool Road, Chester CH2 1AB Tel: 01244 373880 Email: tony@thenterprises.fsnet.co.uk
Vice Chairman	Dan Cross – 17, Cedardale Park, Barrows Green, Widnes. Tel: 0151 4231393 Email: dan@uptonrocks.fsnet.co.uk
Secretary	Patrick Crecraft – 8, Newlands, Naseby, Northampton NN6 6DE Tel: 01604 740144 Email: pat@pcrecraft.freeseerve.co.uk
Treasurer	Alan Hughes -11, Rockwood Drive, Skipton BD23 1NF Tel: 01756 701320 Email: hughes@skipton4.fsnet.co.uk
Press Secretary Newsletter / Website Editor	John Luxton – 236, Smithdown Road, Liverpool L15 5AH Tel: 07973363370 Email: luxtonjh@btinternet.com
Fund Raising Coordinator	Diana Skilbeck – 21, Arkwood Close, Bebington CH62 2AU Tel: 01513344432 Email: diana@skilbeck5.wanadoo.co.uk
Working Party Coordinator	John Deakin – 8, Woodhall Drive, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 5QB Tel: 01928573877
Archivist	John Griffiths – 24a, Egerton Park, Rock Ferry CH42 4QZ Tel: 01516440186 Email: johndanntenacity@hotmail.com
Committee Member	Neil Marsden – 91, Prestbury Avenue, Prenton CH43 0UQ Tel: 01516082868 Email: neil.marsden3@ntlworld.com
Events Coordinator	Colin Leonard - Tel: 01928 790 893 Email: colin_leonard@hotmail.co.uk

DAPS Supporters	
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Editor's Notes
Welcome to edition #6 of "The Tow Line". Apologies for the delay in publication.
The delay was due to the society awaiting notification from the Heritage Lottery Fund of the outcome for the Project Planning Grant application.
One hopes that the news revealed elsewhere in "The Tow Line" more than compensates for the delay in the publication of issue #6!
- John H. Luxton, Editor
The Tow Line - published end of January, April, July and October. Press date for contributions is the first day of the month of publication.

Suffice to say, whichever gentleman was honoured by the naming of our vessel, he was also I believe a Chairman of the Shropshire Union Railways & Canal Company.

We know also that 'Lord Stalbridge' was a Director of the LNWR, so that his name would be readily associated with one of the three tugs, not to mention the largest of the three docks at Garston.

The Railway Year Books for 1904, 1911 and 1922 show that W. E. Dorrington Esq., of 101 Portland Street, Manchester was a director of the LNWR.

John Goodman, in his book on LNWR Loco Names published by the RCTS states that William Edward Dorrington became a director of the LNWR in 1894.

The Railway Year Book for 1926 shows him as a director of the LMS."

So it was that the three tugs worked on this route until 1921 when they were sold. No doubt the competition from the railways and the growing success of the Manchester Ship Canal all played a part. Significantly it was the latter company who provided further employment for all three vessels and perhaps rather poignantly the modifications in 1936 to the oldest of the three, 'Ralph Brocklebank' to emerge as 'Daniel Adamson' in a role which would preserve her long after her 'stable mates' had been scrapped.

Daniel Adamson, the man, was born in Shildon Co. Durham April 30th 1820. He was a successful engineer having learned his craft with the Stockton & Darlington Railway, later he moved to Stockport where he developed a cotton mill and an iron works, the latter manufacturing boilers

which were exported worldwide. It is no surprise with his engineering background and business acumen that he was one of the strongest proponents of the MSC. In the 1880's he was largely responsible for saving the scheme to build the canal, despite severe opposition from rival canal and railway companies!! The inaugural meeting of the campaign to build the canal was held at his home, the Towers, Didsbury on 27th June 1882 at which he was elected Chairman of the Provisional Committee for the Manchester Ship Canal.

Thanks to his efforts, the authority to proceed was at the third attempt passed by an Act of Parliament in August 1885. At this point he became Chairman of the Board of Directors, a position he held until just February 1887 when he resigned over a disagreement concerning the financial re-structuring of the company. Adamson died at the 'Towers' on 13th January 1890, so that he never saw the canal in operation.

So what's in a name? Surely it is very fitting that a vessel originally built for a company who's decline may be partly ascribed to the building of the Manchester Ship Canal, named in honour of a man who must have ranked as a leading opponent to it's construction, not only became 'flagship' of the Ship Canal Company, but honours to this day, the man who was it's greatest supporter!

I personally doubt this came about by coincidence, but who knows??

I would like to thank Ted Talbot & Paul Rouet of the LNWR Society and Tony Hirst for their assistance in compiling this article.

- Neil Marsden

Netherpool connecting to the Mersey by way of three wide locks. This became the port of the Ellesmere Canal hence the name Ellesmere Port by which name the area was known soon after.

The canal to Ellesmere Port was built by William Jessop assisted by Thomas Telford. In the 1830s Telford built the link to the Midlands from Nantwich. Earlier the Ellesmere Canal Company merged with the Chester Canal Company and later when railway competition was on the horizon became part of the Shropshire Union Railways & Canal Company which was leased to the London and North Western Railway.

Telford was responsible for the major enlargement at Ellesmere Port in the 1830s to cope with the increased traffic to and from the midlands. He designed the famous winged warehouses but died before their completion. The new works enable sea going craft to enter the dock complex.

In order to link with the Port of Liverpool and at the same time the Leeds/Liverpool Canal, these three tugs provided a direct service between the two ports giving speedier and more efficient service. As well as towing the canal company's barges, each tug was fitted with basic amenities for up to one hundred passengers thus providing the added advantage of a ferry service.

When these vessels were built the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Co. was itself a part of the mighty London, North Western Railway, a considerable organisation owning not only railways, but canals, steamers and docks including those at Garston, to this day still independent of the much larger Liverpool Dock system.

So who were the people who gave their names to these vessels? Well as far as **'Ralph Brocklebank'** is concerned, he was a member of the famous 'Brocklebank' family of ship-owners; note I did not say 'Liverpool Ship-owners' although the name and the ships will always be synonymous with the city. The company's founder, Daniel Brocklebank was a native of Whitehaven. (With origins as far back as 1770 the company could with some justification claim to be the 'oldest shipping company in the world' a point they perpetuated long after their absorption by Cunard.)

Unfortunately the 1881 Census shows that two Ralph Brocklebank's (father and son) lived at Childwall Hall, near Liverpool, both are listed as having the same occupations, viz *'East India Co. Merchant, JP & Shipowner'* Both were born in Liverpool, Ralph Snr. in about 1804 and Jnr around 1840.

Aside from Mrs B and an elderly sister, they managed to cope with only a single butler and eight other servants in the household!!

By comparison with other Liverpool 'Brocklebank' households who's 'Heads' are listed as 'Cotton Brokers' and 'Shipowners' respectively, with as few as a mere seven servants apiece and children too! It would seem that both Ralph and son were 'comfortable.'

It is probably the older Ralph who was for a time between 1863 and 1869 Chairman of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. It is not clear which one was largely responsible for the first Mission to Seamen opened in Hanover Street, Liverpool in 1876 or the Liverpool Seamen's Orphanage/Hospital at Newsham Park, also in Liverpool which he paid for.

Chairman's Letter

To those who have for some time expected their newsletter I apologize for the delay, but this has been for a good reason. We were waiting for confirmation that we had been successful in our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. I can now tell you that the wait has been worthwhile, as we have been awarded up to £50,000 to undertake the majority of our work to survey all parts of the DA. These will both give us the requirements to enable her to be restored to a specification that will enable her to obtain a 'class V' passenger certificate for sheltered waters. Coupled to this will be work to determine how to restore the saloons and other areas not critical to her seaworthiness requirements to their 1930s glory. We will also gain the appropriate knowledge guidance for the foreseeable future to maintain her historic integrity while she is in use. The outcome of this and subsequent work using the information gained will provide us with a fully costed programme of work to return the tug to full operational order.

The nominal total cost of the project is estimated to be £72,000. The HLF grant will fund up to £50,000 of this; we have already committed £4,000 of our existing resources as well as to undertake 106 days of work on the tug as a contribution in kind valued by the HLF as equivalent to £15,900. The latter will be easily obtained based on our present work effort but before we are allowed to start we must have a further £6,000 of guaranteed money available. On top of this to complete the project a further £12,000 is still required. Time is short as we are trying to get the DA back in steam during 2008 for the celebrations as part of Liverpool being Europe's 'Capital of Culture'.

We had decided that our case for the additional funding would be weak until we had confirmation of the HLF grant. Since receiving this we have already sent out applications to some potential funders and more will be sent soon. The sooner we can start the surveys the sooner we can develop our case for funding the complete restoration to meet our target date for steaming.

All members can help us achieve our objective and give others confidence in the Society to complete the restoration. The critical factor is the funding of the next £6,000 so that we may place the first contracts. You can help get the project started as soon as possible, by making a donation towards the £6,000. Remember that if you have signed a gift aid form (if you haven't, you can still do so if you pay the standard rate income tax) we can add at no cost to you a further 28% on top of your contribution from the taxes you have already paid to the government. Just send your cheque to Alan Hughes; every contribution will help.

Since its formation the Society has gained an enviable reputation for being 'a doing' society. Our now 200 members have undertaken over 9000 hours work on the tug, others have put in countless hours in support work and many have already made donations of over £5,000, to which we have added £1,300 from gift aid; not to mention the over £25,000 given by others in services tools and materials. Member's donations have in the first year averaged £25 per member; just a further £23.50 (plus gift aid); average per member will enable us to start work. I am sure many will wish to help get this project underway; thank you.

**Tony Hirst
November, 2005**

Daniel Adamson – Visitor Rules

Due to the unexpected arrival of visitors recently it would be appreciated if members wishing to visit the "Daniel Adamson" bear in mind the following rules.

1. The vessel is not open to the general public.
2. Current DAPS Members not normally engaged as Working Party Volunteers may visit, but only by prior arrangement with Working Party Coordinators (John Deakin / Neil Marsden please see the contact page for details). Members should also be in possession of a valid membership card.
3. None members attending in a professional capacity will do so by arrangement with the relevant committee member who will be present for the duration of their visit.
4. Only in exceptional circumstances are none members allowed to visit and again such visits will only be made by prior appointment as outlined above. The DAPS Member authorising the visit must be present throughout.

The reasons for these rules lie in the fact that the vessel is currently berthed in a secure part of the dock estate to which the public are not normally admitted. It should be borne in mind that a considerable amount of conservation work is ongoing aboard the vessel and is therefore a 'work place' with the attendant hazards this implies.

All those engaged in working parties aboard the vessel are contributing members of the Daniel Adamson Preservation Society who attend at their own expense and give of their time freely.

As a D.A.P.S. Member you have contributed to this process already and will always be welcome, but please let us know in advance that you wish to visit.

Welcome to New Members

Once again a warm welcome to those listed below, who have joined us since the last Newsletter - in support of the *Danny* (adding representation in W. Australia and Norway, to the USA, Ireland, Belgium, Wales, Scotland, and around England).

Derek Armstrong, Croxley Green, Herts.; Captain Ray Atkinson; Normans Heath, Cheshire; Douglas Banner, Poynton, Cheshire; Mrs. Barton, Brighouse, Yorkshire; Joe Bourke, Thorne, Doncaster; John Broadhurst, Hyde, Cheshire; Rolf Carlsen, Oslo, Norway; The Hilton's, Southport, Lancashire; Tom Chambers, Eastham, Wirral; David Chatfield, Llandudno, Wales; Peter Dudley, Sale, Manchester; Mike Escott, Crosby, Liverpool; Mike Johnson, Nantwich, Cheshire; Peter Johnson, Prudhoe, Northumberland; Frank Keogh, Rockingham, W. Australia; Henry Moss, Helsby, Cheshire; David Owen, Moreton, Wirral; Nigel Pinches, Tyldesley, Manchester; Don Thorpe, Eccles, Manchester and J. Stankevitch, Birkenhead.

There have been 225 enrolments - some 10% not renewing this year. Thanks are due to the majority of members who have renewed their membership for 2005-06 which is vital towards the *Danny's* restoration.

Please contact me if you have not had your membership card.

– Pat Crecraft

DAPS On Tour

During the late summer and autumn DAPS attended a number of transport related events to raise public awareness about our project, meeting existing members and most importantly recruiting new members.



The first event attended was the annual National Inland Waterways Festival at Preston Brook, Runcorn over the August Bank Holiday Weekend. On Saturday August 27 the "Daniel Adamson Military Band" performed at the festival.

DAPS paid its second visit to the Annual Malpas Vintage Rally over the weekend of September 10 / 11.

What's in a name?

It is likely that many readers of this newsletter will be familiar with the historical background to the vessel and will know that she was built in Birkenhead (then Cheshire) in 1903 by the Tranmere Bay Development Company. This company was a joint venture between Laird Brothers Shipbuilders and John Jones & Sons Engine builders, of Liverpool (then Lancashire) She was built for the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company and originally named '**Ralph Brocklebank**'. Unusually she was also registered in Chester. She was the first of three similar vessels built to replace an earlier trio dating

The final event attended this season being the annual Bus Rally and open day at the Birkenhead Tramway on Sunday October 02.



With 2006 just around the corner, DAPS will be looking to attend more events during the forthcoming season.

If you know of any Transport or Industrial Heritage events which you think that DAPS should attend please contact Colin Leonard (details on contacts page).

from the 1880's. The other vessels were named '**W.E.Dorrington**' and '**Lord Stalbridge**'

The three vessels provided a combined passenger and towage service between Ellesmere Port and Liverpool.

Ellesmere Port, which until the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal had in fact lain on the southern bank of the River Mersey, had its origins, when on 30th April 1793 Parliament authorised to the Ellesmere Canal Company to construct a canal from Chester to

When I was very young my great-Granddad used to take me on the bus down to the Pier Head for a trip on the ferries. We very rarely got off over at Birkenhead because I think that's how we used to avoid paying!

Anyway, many years later when I was about 8 or 9 my Mum and Dad bought their first boat a Hardy 18ft GRP job. Hardly luxury but it was a start. We initially had it based up at Borough Bridge near York.

When I look back at our first few trips, going up the big locks with paddles full out and no ropes out, protecting the boat from stonework with a mop, God knows why I didn't take an instant dislike to boating! Shortly afterward we moved our boat to Acton Bridge on the glorious river Weaver.

That's were my interest I think really took off. I used to help a mate of mine aboard his passenger boat "River Princess" and later worked for him for a few years, obtaining my Boat Master's licence during that time.

My interest in the local marine community eventually lead to me gaining employment on the River Mersey, working aboard the tugs of the then Cory Towage, formerly Rea Towing.

I have been in this job now for over eleven years and find it extremely interesting, never dull and more often

than not very hard work. I am mate aboard the tug "Ashgarth" and we work a week on and a week off rota.



The job can at times take me to some strange places such as Angola where we used to operate two of our tugs on a long-term charter for many years. I would then be away from home for two months each trip.

In 2001 I managed to obtain my inshore tug-masters cert. Our company was taken over in 2000 and again in 2002 and is now known as Svitzer Marine, part of the huge AP-Moller-Maersk organisation. It's through my position working on the tugs and having a few contacts I managed to get the "ball rolling" as it were with the formation of "DAPS" but that is another story.....

Married to Rachael since 1999 and our first child, Tom was born 30th April last year.

– Dan Cross

BBC Radio Merseyside John Deakin Interview

On July 27, 2005 our Chief Engineer John Deakin was interviewed by BBC Radio Merseyside. In the 33 minute in depth interview John talks about his nautical and engineering career on the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal.

Recordings of the interview are available on CD from the society at a price of £5 – proceeds of sales being donated to the Daniel Adamson Preservation Society.

Please contact John Deakin on 07729760148 if you would like to purchase a copy.

Heritage Lottery Fund Project Planning Grant

The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society is pleased to announce that it has been successful in an application for a Heritage Lottery Fund Project Planning Grant.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has notified the society that a Project Planning grant of up to £50,000 towards the cost of drawing up a Conservation Management Plan and associated surveys has been awarded.

The award of the Project Planning Grant along with other funds means that work to restore the vessel can now proceed to the next stage. As part of this, asbestos will be removed from the vessel to facilitate a detailed survey of the ship's structure, interior and mechanical components. All areas of the vessel will be examined both to determine its condition and how her historic integrity can be maintained.

DAPS Barbeque

A while ago, George Pennington suggested that 'DAPS' should have some form of 'social get-together' to enable members, their family and friends to spend a little time getting to know each other a little better.

So it was that George suggested a barbecue as a good way to relax, enjoy something to eat and drink and above all meet 'new faces'.

'Great idea, George, get on with it then!' - Or words to that effect were the response, and 'get on with it' was exactly what he did. Easily said but with working parties to organise, stalls to crew at rallies and other commitments, finding a suitable date was a problem. So it was that

The completed survey will enable the Society to develop a fully costed plan to return this historic vessel to full working order and ensure her preservation for the enjoyment of future generations.

Commenting on news of the award, Daniel Adamson Preservation Society Chairman Tony Hirst said: "This grant is a major boost to achieving the Society's objective of restoring the Daniel Adamson to her former glory. We believe that it will also be a catalyst for raising further funding towards this goal. We are extremely grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for their support"

Commenting on the award, HLF's regional manager Tony Jones said, "The Heritage Lottery Fund has always recognised the important role that our industrial past has played for local communities as well as its ability to attract volunteers and visitors. I'm extremely pleased that HLF has helped fund the next stage in this project allowing valuable planning and research to get underway."

September 24th was agreed as the day it would take place.

The biting questions were how many would attend? Have we got a large enough barbecue to feed everyone?

How much food should we buy and will we end up out of pocket? Oh yes and what will the weather be like in the last week of September?

Despite notices on the web-site and in 'The Tow Line' the initial response wasn't too encouraging. Nevertheless as the day drew near things improved, George set to, to build the 'industrial grade barbecue' we considered essential should there be a last minute rush.



After some modifications and a little extra welding by David Broomby it was completed. An awesome 'twin furnace job' mounted on a tubular steel frame.

Since making the original suggestion, unfortunately George's working hours had been dramatically changed so that he was actually on 'night shift' prior to the 'big day' and only managed to finish work at 3.30 am.

Notwithstanding this the Pennington ladies pitched in to ensure that all went well, George's wife and daughter prepared all manner of side dishes to accompany the main courses. John Deakin also managed to secure a supply of first class sausages and burgers, to add to the steaks, chicken breasts and pork cutlets which George had provided.

Restoration Diary

August



On August 9th, we received a visit from Dan Stringer, Product Manager

A fine table was set aboard on the promenade deck, while ashore, George 'flashed up' the 'barbie' a good breeze supplying 'natural draught' ensured we were up and running in no time. Just as well, for very shortly afterwards the guests arrived and what a great turn out! Around fifty folk turned up, thankfully we had ample food for all and I feel sure nobody went away hungry; rather we couldn't eat any more!

The day generated a modest profit for the society's funds; this was supplemented by an additional £41 raised by raffling a bottle of whisky kindly donated by Colin Leonard.

The ultimate winner of the whisky was Pete Murray, for once not diving in the engine-room bilges replacing the main engine holding down bolts, a task he has cheerfully undertaken over several working parties of late. His exertions and ability as a contortionist make him a truly deserving winner of the prize.

So there we are a great day, a great success and one to be definitely included in our future timetable of events. Finally many thanks to George and his family and for all those who attended to give their support. Thank you.

(Power Tools) of HILTI (Great Britain) Limited, based in Trafford Park, Manchester.

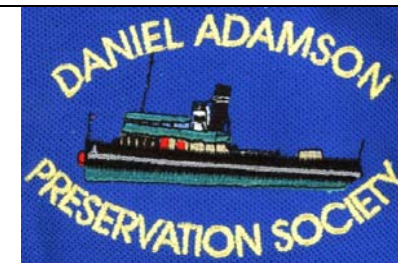
Dan brought with him a very useful piece of equipment which will be invaluable in tackling the massive amount of steelwork on board which requires cleaning up, prior to painting.

The Hilti TE104 is an electrically powered needle gun, which with adaptors can also be used to chisel and chip paint-work and rust. The

The DAPS Shop

Please help support the restoration of the Daniel Adamson by purchasing merchandise from the society shop.

The polo shirts make great Christmas presents!



Polo Shirts £16.50 inc P&P

Embroidered Daniel Adamson Logo
Available in sizes: Small to XXL

Please contact Alan Hughes to confirm availability of sizes.



Set of four Daniel Adamson Post Cards - £1.75 including P&P

Please send orders to:

Alan Hughes

11, Rockwood Drive, Skipton, North Yorks, BD23 1NF

Tel: 01756 701320

Email: hughes@skipton4.fsnet.co.uk

Cheques should be made payable to The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society.

Officers and Committee – Who's who? Part 4

Due to pressure on space it in the July edition of The Tow Line it was not possible to continue our look at some of the people actively involved in the running of the "Daniel Adamson Preservation Society".

We can now resume this feature and with Vice-chairman Dan Cross.

Dan Cross

It is difficult trying to describe your self! Well here goes: born in 1974 In Liverpool and later moving to sunny Widnes I think I always had a fascination with the Mersey.

Bill Thompson of JPS Scaffolding, install a replacement.



Fortunately the weather was kind to us as the replacement was carried out, although occasional gusts of wind did provide a foretaste of what lies ahead over the coming winter.

John Deakin supplied egg, bacon and sausage for a hearty breakfast enjoyed by all, being ably assisted in preparing the meal by John Huxley, suitably attired in an 'egg yolk yellow' boiler suit!

The new cover will hopefully last as long as its predecessor, while being of a more conventional white colour, should also provide a greater degree of daylight within, a definite improvement over the 'Martian' atmosphere created by the green one!!

To all those involved, giving their time and energy at such short notice, a big thank you for another job well done!

- Neil Marsden

needle attachment is used to bring the metal back to pristine condition before the application of preservatives and paint.

Until recently we have had the occasional use of a similar loaned item but now with this new machine our volunteers will have full time access to this equipment.



Following the presentation of the TE104 by Dan, it was immediately put to use by volunteer Phil Janion (above), in the aft peak hold area.

On behalf of DAPS our most sincere thanks to Dan Stringer and Hilti (GB) Ltd.

With both machines available on Saturday August 20 and a dozen volunteers eager to 'get on with it' we were very glad of the new generator and its ample power output.

The generator easily coped with the two needle guns, angle grinder, drill and jig-saw as well as all the necessary lights. Our previous generator struggled to provide enough power at the best of times, so it is really great to have the new power supply up and running.

The new generator incorporates safety trips so protecting it from any excess load, another very valuable and reassuring feature. So to all members whose contributions have

paid for this item once again many thanks!!



During mid August a new temporary companion way was installed securing access to the aft accommodation. John Broomby and Gordon Owen have done an excellent job.

September and October

On deck the chipping, scaling and needle-gunning of old paintwork and rust continued unabated with great strides being made. The aft peak hold neared completion while the inner bulwarks are looking a great deal better too.

A general first impression is that a lot of care and attention is being applied to 'the old girl' and that 'she' is looking the better for it.

With frequently as many volunteers in attendance most Tuesdays as attend our Saturday gatherings, progress is readily visible. It is gratifying to hear comments from our regular visitors such as TTE's Boris Baugh, to the effect that each visit reveals new progress. It has to be said that this progress is almost entirely due to the hard work of the volunteers and has been achieved on a very modest budget.

As mentioned previously, in conjunction with TTE we have been

Join A Working Party

Those wishing to attend should contact: Neil Marsden – 91, Prestbury Avenue, Prenton CH43 0UQ. Tel: 01516082868 Email: neil.marsden3@ntlworld.com or John Deakin on Tel: 01928573877.

Forthcoming Working Party Dates for December

Every Tuesday – (Not December 27). Saturdays December 3rd and 17th. Please contact Neil for details of January working parties.

Daniel Adamson Live on The BBC!



Members living in North West England may have seen the excellent report shown on the BBC North West

regional news on Tuesday August 23. This was filmed during that Tuesday's working party and presented by reporter Kate Sims. The "Daniel Adamson" appeared live in a short report on the lunch time regional news bulletin.

A longer recorded feature on the evening bulletin featured interviews with several members including Chairman Tony Hirst, Vice Chairman Dan Cross and Chief Engineer John Deakin.

overhauling many of the engine room valves, an absolutely essential job and one which will ensure the safe and efficient operation of the vessel in the future. So far the majority of these valves have been of modest proportions and thankfully, generally easy to remove.

However, we could not expect to have a completely smooth run and we were not disappointed when we turned to removing, or rather attempted to remove the main steam inlet/control valve on the port main engine.

It's almost identical counterpart on the starboard engine gave only token resistance and after a little 'persuasion' we succeeded in dismantling it with relative ease.

Not so it's port side twin, after weeks of effort with spanners, hammers, chisels, wedges, releasing agents of every conceivable type, the application of heat, much sweat, tears and words of 'encouragement' we had hardly made any difference whatever, the securing bolts, nuts, even the jointing were seized solid. Anxious not to fracture what is after all a 'brittle' casting, we had almost abandoned all hope of ever succeeding in removing the valve.

Tuesday October 4th saw the breakthrough as Boris and Paul of TTE applied heat with an oxy-acetylene torch they had brought aboard. The carefully concentrated heat was just enough to get us started and we took it in turns to hammer, chisel and ultimately hacksaw our way through bolts and studs literally 'fused' in place for untold years!

By 17:00 with not a toothed hack-saw blade remaining, one partially severed bolt remained to frustrate us. The remainder had succumbed to this tremendous effort, all but this last one!!

We eagerly awaited the Saturday working party with new blades and a suitably refreshed team to finish the job!!

The working party on Saturday October 8th set to, determined to free the last remaining bolt holding the port engine control valve. As mentioned already this valve had displayed resistance above and beyond the call of duty, almost defying every effort to free it for a well needed overhaul.

We had been down to the last bolt on Tuesday when for the lack of a toothed hack-saw blade between us we were compelled to abandon the attempt. Perhaps it's no surprise then that as each volunteer arrived on Saturday morning, they produced handfuls of new hack-saw blades, so many that it seems unlikely we will need more for some years to come!!

With a suitable blade selected from the 'mountain' available, the lifting tackle holding the valve was readied and the strain taken up. There followed an audible 'click!' For a moment a horrible thought that the valve body or flange had cracked was evident on the faces of all present, this soon turned to broad smiles as it was realised that it was the remaining bolt having sheared. It was almost as if this decidedly 'inanimate object' had 'sensed' further resistance was futile and finished the job for us!



The valve (above) appropriately resembling an old cannon ball was carefully hoisted out of the engine room and made ready for overhaul. Hopefully this will reveal no defects and suitably restored and certificated, we can replace it ensuring all bolts, nuts and joints are suitably lubricated to avoid similar problems of removal in the future.

Doubtless this experience will not be unique, especially as we turn to the boiler fittings in the future, one thing is certain, we won't be stuck for a hack-saw blade!!

As the effort to remove the valve progressed other volunteers were hard at it too. Peter Murray and Gordon Weston replaced all but the last of the 40 main engine securing bolts.

The final one located directly beneath the reluctant steam valve was considered in too hazardous a position to attempt while others worked above.

In particular Peter's efforts in this work cannot be praised too highly, for several weeks he has scabbled around the bilges, for hours on end, covered in oil to remove the old bolts and replace them with new ones, a great job well done.

Despite the need to replace one last bolt, Peter's boiler-suit had reached the end of it's useful life and as no washing machine on earth could have saved it, much less his marriage had he tried, a fitting 'Viking Funeral' was given to what remained of the garment!

Meanwhile Walter Graham continued with his work in opening up main engine bearings to establish their condition and clearances. Most recently with the help of some extra

pairs of hands the port LP bottom end bearing was opened up.

Now we know these are tiny by comparison with some ship's engines, but they're still a tad bigger than your average Ford or BMW bottom ends and you certainly wouldn't want one on your foot!

Some wear was found to be evident to the white metallised bearing surface and this will require attention in due course. Naturally all component parts of the engines must be thoroughly checked and faults identified, repairs made and checked before any return to operation can progress, so that while outwardly the casual observer might see little 'evidence' of change, I can confidently report a considerable amount of progress!!

At the end of October the decision was taken to renew the covers which were installed during the late summer 2004.

The cover has proved invaluable in protecting both the fabric of the ship and as importantly the working party volunteers from the elements.

The cover's original 'intended' purpose had been to protect a cricket pitch from the occasional disruptive downpour. Pressed into service by D.A.P.S it has performed a wonderful job withstanding gales, torrential rain and just about anything else that can be described as typically British weather has thrown at it.

However, it was becoming apparent this autumn that the ravages of wind and rain have taken their toll with many holes appearing.

On Saturday October 29th a hastily arranged 'extra' working party was convened and eleven volunteers turned out to remove the old cover and to assist our dedicated supporter