

# ELECTRIC BOAT *News*

Mer~~ry~~ Christmas  
to all our readers  
oo

The Journal of the Electric Boat Association

Volume 7 Number 4 Winter 1994

ISSN 0969-031X



**COOKHAM REGATTA**

**BROADS DAY**

**PENNINES PRINCESS**

**SPEED RECORD NEWS**



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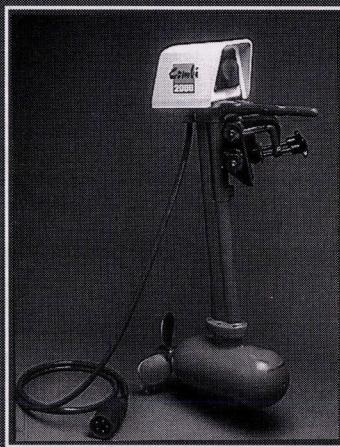
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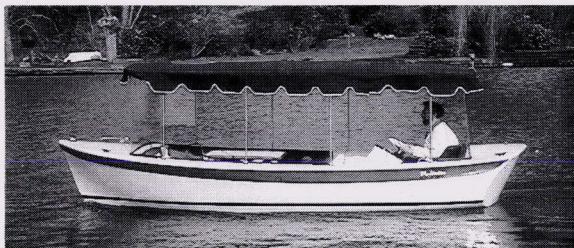
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## EBA CALENDAR 1995

Some of the events of 1995 which may be of interest to EBA members. The EBA may be present at some of the events, perhaps with its own stand.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>JAN 5-15</b>   | London International Boat Show, Earl's Court        |
| <b>FEB 7</b>      | EBA Winter Social. 7.30 pm at Cookham Parish Centre |
| <b>MAY 18-21</b>  | Inland Waterways Boat Show, Nottingham              |
| <b>MAY</b>        | IWA Trailboat Rally                                 |
| <b>JUNE 3</b>     | EBA SUMMER MEETING and AGM                          |
| <b>JUNE 18</b>    | Eighth Wargrave Rally                               |
| <b>JUNE 24</b>    | River Pageant, Boulter's Lock                       |
| <b>AUG 12-13</b>  | Traditional Boat Rally, Henley-on-Thames            |
| <b>AUG 26-28</b>  | IWA National Waterways Festival, Waltham Abbey      |
| <b>SEPT 2</b>     | Cookham Regatta. Parade of Boats                    |
| <b>SEPT 10</b>    | Broads Rally  |
| <b>SEPT 15-23</b> | Southampton Boat Show                               |

Notice of other events to Edward Hawthorne, please, on 01628 521606

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Electric Boat News welcomes contributions from readers and members.  
If you have anything you think might be of interest, please send it in.  
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Items of interest include letters, reports on rallies or events, reports of  
particular cruises or trips, articles or advice on building or running  
electric boats, and reports on items of equipment. We also welcome  
manufacturers reports on new items of equipment or boats.

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# The Journal of the Electric Boat Association

Volume 7 No. 4 Winter 1994

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**Founder editor:** Kevin Desmond

*Cover pictures: Members assemble before the Parade of Boats at the Cookham Regatta.*

*Smaller picture: Anne and Fraser Brown in Titch enjoying an English summer day at Cookham.*

## The Chairman writes ...

*Hello again,*

Well, here we are with the last issue of 1994. Time has certainly flown by, hasn't it?

Now is the time to be thinking about winterisation of our boats and making sure all's well with the batteries and charger - checking that they are correctly topped up and fully charged before lying idle, with a periodic check on the state of charge monthly.

Electric boating is still very active. Peter Howe's organisation of the Broads rally was a great success. Some 150 people and some 20 boats attended, refreshments were laid on by Eastern Electricity and a good time was had by all. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter and all the others who were involved for their hard work. Let's hope it becomes an annual event.

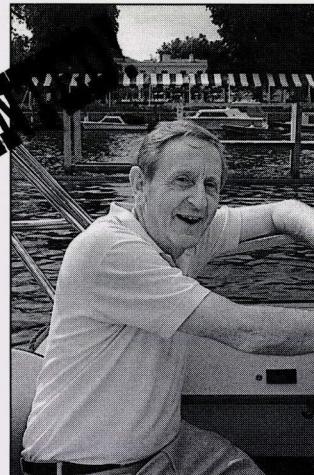
Charging points are still an issue at present. They are going to be installed on the Thames (two in December) but there is still considerable debate about which plug to use. We obviously don't want incompatibility with other waterways, so any letters stressing compatibility should be sent to the NRA, BWB and the Broads Authority. We will be pushing for the correct decision. Let's hope all goes well.

Again, with time of year in mind, don't forget our winter social meeting scheduled for 7th February 1995 at 7.30 pm. There will be topical presentations and discussions as well as a good opportunity for meeting socially, so please come along.

I would also like to thank the EBA committee and all the members for their continued support and hard work and I wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

*Phil Horsley.*

## and from the editor ...



*Look out for this face on 7th February, in or around Cookham Parish Centre. He will be seeking a contribution from you - for the pages of Electric Boat News. To avoid any aggro, have your articles, photos, letters, queries, complaints, suggestions, hints, tips, etc, ready. No-one will escape.*

-----  
In this bumper Christmas issue we report on three major e.b. events in the U.K. - at Cookham, on the Broads and across the Pennines - and also bring news from France and the USA.

Lots of people are contributing regularly now, but an editor can never have too much material. Please write, phone or fax me at the Camberley address above. More advertisers, too, are always welcome. We are currently reviewing our rates for trade advertisements.

This issue brings my first year as editor to a close. Thank you for making it a thoroughly enjoyable job.

*Roy Devereux*

# Stop Press!

## WORLD ELECTRIC WATER SPEED RECORD



The following fax message has been received:

North Olympic Peninsula Electric Car Club.  
October 8 1994

Two new electric boat records established

Due to flat water and calm conditions at the Devil's Lake Kilos in Lincoln City, Oregon, the speeds were not as high as expected, but two members of the one-year-old Electric Racing Boat Association set new high speed records.

Norm Boddy from Edmonds, Wa. went 55.97 mph, establishing a new World Electric Kilo record.

Burton Gabriel from Port Ludlow, Wa. set a new North American Hydroplane Electric Kilo record at 50.17 mph.

Boddy's 12ft runabout "Hardly Normal" is powered by a 48-volt Prestolite motor bolted to a Speedmaster lower unit running on 120 volts. Electrical power was from ten Interstate MT-58 starter batteries that provided approx 65 hp via a David Cloud-built two-speed knife switch. Boddy took two runs at the record, going 55.97 mph on the first and 55.13 on the second.

The Gabriel-Phillips Interstate sponsored boat is a converted runabout Tunnel hull, pushed by an Advanced D.C. 120-volt motor on a Sid Bass overdrive lower unit. 18 MT-26 Interstate starter batteries provided the 220 volts, 143 hp that was fed to the motor via an Energy Unlimited controller. Gabriel's first run was 50.17 mph but technical problems aborted the next two runs. Gabriel said rough water does let the boat go faster and he will race the "Thomas A Edison" next year.

## Startling news from USA! New world record claimed

In the last few years, the Americans have been creeping up on the record.

Electric boat races were held at Spada Lake, Washington, in 1991 and in the following year their regatta included a speed trial through a measured kilometre - inspired by the knowledge of Lady Arran's record. In October 1992, Burton Gabriel achieved 24.25 mph over the one-kilometre American Power Boat Association's course on Devil's Lake, Oregon, and announced his intention of building "a serious boat for racing". By 1993, the *Thomas A Edison* hit 41.12 mph, but that did not beat the American National Record of 45.76 mph set in 1978. On June 4, 1994, Gabriel and half a dozen other sportsmen (including Norm Boddy) had a head-to-head electric boat race at Silver Lake. Thus was formed the Electric Racing Boat Association.

### Editor's Note:

When we received the fax, *E. B. News* spoke to Lady Arran on the telephone. What did she think of the news? "Well, they haven't raised the record by very much, have they? I hope some young person will come along now and take it back from the Americans". Lady Arran doesn't have a boat these days but she is a keen reader of *Electric Boat News*. "I read the magazine from cover to cover. Unfortunately I've lost the last issue - the puppy ate it!"

We look forward to receiving further details from our correspondents in the USA in time for our next issue.



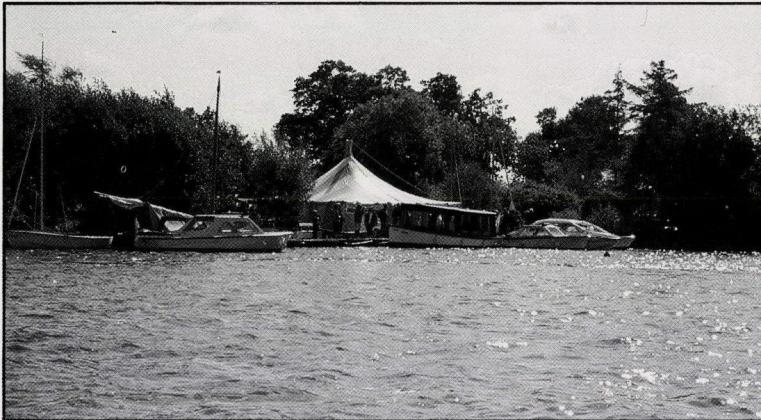
Lady Arran in the cockpit of *An Stradag*. Among her support team were former EBA chairman Gillian Nahum, seated on the right, and John Gardner, now the EBA Secretary (standing, fourth from the left).



# SILENT SENSATIONS

## A day of quiet enjoyment on the Norfolk Broads.

*In the last Electric Boat News, we announced that Peter Howe of Camelot Craft was organising an electric boat day on South Walsham Broad on September 11th. This report on the event comes from Peter, with pictures by Paul Wagstaffe.*



During the weeks leading up to this event, I constantly pondered various imponderables: had the organisation been sufficient? - would enough people turn up? - would the weather be on our side? - why on earth had I got myself involved? The fact that four weeks after the event I am busy planning another one for next year answers the first three questions at least.

Early this year I discussed the possibility of an electric boating event on the Broads with some members of the EBA committee. The idea was greeted with enthusiasm so I considered how best to organise it. Robert Paul, Chairman of the Broads Society, was as enthusiastic as I was, so much so that he enlisted the support of Eastern Electricity and The Broads Authority. Thus the idea of a simple electric boat rally grew into a full programme to demonstrate the pleasures of silent propulsion, the organisation of which became a "partnership" between the four groups involved.

Robert Paul was a tower of strength in arranging the venue - a large private plot of land on South Walsham Broad owned by Mr. John Aitken, a member

of the Broads Society. We are very much indebted to him for allowing his property to be used. Eastern Electricity were very generous in the financial support they provided which enabled a large marquee to be hired and refreshments to be provided. The Broads

Authority lent their support with publicity and use of their facilities.

The one item which had been left a little to chance was the provision of toilet facilities, but some were quickly discovered two minutes walk away and a potential crisis was averted! Robert also persuaded his long-suffering wife, Elizabeth, to dispense refreshments - although at the time she was under the impression she was being offered a relaxing day out! My own wife, Alex, found herself in the dual roles of PR person and Assistant Washer Upper.

As the title implied, it was "silent" boating which was the focus of the event, with canoeing, rowing and sailing adding to the attractions of electrically powered boats, both inboard and outboard. Three of our local wherries were also moored in the middle of the Broad and trips out to look around them were extremely popular. The wherry *Albion* is the only original trading wherry which remains on

the Broads and has no means of propulsion other than wind and muscle, but one of the other pleasure wherries is now fitted with an electric drive. Alex and I happened to overtake them as we all motored slowly - and quietly - back to our home base at the end of the day, and the view of these three stately ladies moving in total unison side by side elegantly down the river behind us was a sight we shall never forget.

The event was well supported by EBA members. Three groups hired electric day boats from Wroxham and enjoyed a silent motor down to South Walsham to join in the fun. Dave Rivett from Market Rasen brought his electric canoe and Bertie Wooster, a local member from Horning, brought his *Cygnets*. The Thames Electric Launch Company loaned *Sparkle*, which Paul Wagstaffe kindly trailed up to Norfolk for us, and several other EBA members visited by car. I brought our yacht, *Electric Excalibur*, with its inboard electric auxiliary and Fraser Brown provided an outboard which was clamped to the transom of my 8ft plywood dinghy which was then used as a ferry out to the moored boats.

There were plenty of other electrically powered boats from the local area. Eastern Electricity brought *Liana*, and she spent most of the day giving rides. Richardsons from Potter Heigham provided an electric day boat and we also had first sight of the new electric 'Eco-Boat' from Broads Tours at Wroxham.

On shore, the marquee was well used with several exhibitions provided by



*continued overleaf*

commercial and conservation interests. Of particular interest was the display by John Williams Boats with their new Regatta Launch, which will be available with an electric drive, and the full display by Oakdale Batteries of their range of traction batteries. Also in the marquee was a sumptuous buffet provided by the generosity of Electricity.

At midday, with everything in full swing, Paul Wagstaffe called for hush and presented the Emsworth Trophy to Rupert Latham of the Steam & Electric Launch Company. Rupert received the trophy in recognition of the two electric voyages of over 100 miles he has made and also of the vast amount of work he has done in pioneering and promoting electric boats.

The event attracted some attention from the media. Malory Maltby, who is responsible for the "Sail Away" programme on Anglia TV, spent most of the day filming the many different boats and talking to everyone concerned. It is very likely that he will devote a complete programme to the



*Broads Tours' Eco-Boat - first seen at the 1994 Earl's Court Boat Show and reported in the Spring issue of Electric Boat News.*

day but it will not be shown until the next series starts in the spring next year. I also believe that the series is going 'national' and may be seen outside the Anglian region.

We were so lucky that the weather on the day was perfect. South Walsham Broad looked a sparkling shade of blue, with bright sunshine for much of the day. There was also a good breeze to show off the sailing boats to best advantage. All in all, we can claim that it was a very successful 'first' for the Norfolk Broads. As Stanley Holloway might have said, "There were no wrecks and nobody drowned", but much fun was had by one and all and the cause of electric boating on the Broads was pushed a little further forward.

**Diary Note:** Next year's *Silent Sensations* on the Broads will be on Sunday 10th September, 1995.

# THE EMSWORTH TROPHY



Donated by the EBA's founder president, Rear Admiral Percy Gick, the Emsworth Trophy is awarded annually to the EBA member whose electric boat has made the longest cruise of the year or who has made a significant contribution to electric boating. Our picture shows the Trophy being presented to Rupert Latham by Paul Wagstaffe.

## RUMMAGING IN THE ARCHIVES



## **The way we were ...**

One of my first tasks as the new editor of Electric Boat News was to read as many back numbers as I could find. I haven't managed to lay my hands on a complete set yet, but those that I have seen are full of fascinating bits and pieces.

The very earliest precursor of the *News* seems to have been the "Private Boat Owners Section Newsletter". The

first in this series, written personally by our founder, Viscount St. Davids, was dated February 1983. Surprise, surprise ... the third item in this two-page missive reads: "**Newsletter.** *We ought to have at least a twice-yearly newsletter. Would anyone like to be editor? Comments and material for publication are welcome*". Plus ca change ...!

For the next few years the newsheet seems to have come out at irregular intervals under a variety of names ("Users' Group Newsletter", "Summer Bulletin", "Winter Bulletin", etc). At the same time, for some twelve issues in the late '80s Canal & Riverboat magazine published a full-page column entitled "Electric Boat Scene", researched and written by "Sparks". Then, in 1988, the EBA's news-sheet officially became the "Electric Boat News". Vol.1 No.1, five pages of duplicated typescript, came out in July of that year. In his introduction to Vol. 1. No. 1, the then (anonymous) editor welcomed "Sparks", alias Kevin Desmond, to his staff.



The front page of that issue announced the adoption of the great crested grebe as the EBA's official symbol. This was chosen, we are told, because this is just one of the riverside birds no longer frightened by the approach of an electric boat. Do not believe rumours, says the article, that the letters GREBE stand for "Generating the Revival of Electric Boats in Europe".

That issue also reported the very first Wargrave Rally. Seventeen boats and 99 guests attended and a number of entrants were recruited to the EBA. "Perhaps the most memorable moment of the rally came when almost the entire flotilla converged on Marsh Lock. Decorated as they were with flowers, ribbons, bunting and flags, it was probably the most colourful sight seen on the Thames this year".

Kevin Desmond remained the editor of the *News* up to the last issue of 1992 when he departed for France.



A big milestone in the magazine's history came in June 1990 when, with Vol. 3 No. 3, it became the professionally printed, hardcover, fully-illustrated, 12-page magazine that we know today. For the first time, advertisements appeared to help with the production costs.

\*\*\*\*\*

My collection of back numbers ends with Vol. 3 No. 3 dated June 1990. There is then a three-year gap until Emrhys Barrell's first issue (Vol. 6 No. 1 in January 1993). Does any member have some or all of these 'missing' issues? ... and would you lend them to me please?

## THE FRENCH CONNECTION - Part 2

by Kevin Desmond ("Sparks")

Well, in August the *Association Française pour le Bateau Electrique* formally came into existence under French law. Its declared objects are: to promote the conception, the construction and the utilisation of electric boats; to develop the waterways with electric charging points; to contribute to the protection of nature and of the environment; to establish liaisons with equivalent associations abroad; to favour exchanges with organisations concerned with other types of electric vehicle.

Just three weeks later, a classic boating regatta was organised at Nantes. Called *Le Rendez-Vous de l'Erdre*, among the fleet of classic boats two electrics were welcomed by M. Rabaland, retired engineer of Electricité de France, who was quoted as saying: "One of the reasons for this project is to initiate contacts with the English, who are the European leaders in electric boats, with a view to organising at Nantes the first European exhibition of the electric boat". One boat was the Volta of Emrhys Barrell, whilst the second was that of Margaret Gaddesden who runs a day boat hire company.

Again, three weeks later, back in Bordeaux, a seminar was held entitled "Le Véhicule Electrique de 2ème Génération", organised by the Aquitaine branch of the Society of Electricians and Electrotechnicians under the Presidency of Jacques Valade, also chief of the influential Aquitaine Regional Council (and maybe future Mayor of Bordeaux).

Following the expected lectures about advances in batteries, transmissions systems, composite materials and trans-Australia Sunracers, it was up to Gillian Nahum and Sparks to "reveal all" by a slide-illustrated talk on "bébés" (bateaux à l'énergie des batteries électriques) - which also happens to be the French for "babies".

At the end of the proceedings, one of France's most successful offshore yachtsmen, Yves Parlier of Arcachon, publicly announced his intention of joining and supporting the AFBE, which assured this boatless organisation

of some newspaper column inches

In the late afternoon of 10th October, there was a new meeting of the AFBE at the Microelectronics Laboratory of Professor Aucouturier on the Bordeaux University campus. Among those nine present, newcomers to the think-tank were experienced naval architect Yves Mareschal and racing trimaran electro-nic平 Hervé Henry. After four hours of discussion, it was decided, among other things, that given the conditions of availability for State and Regional R&D funds, purchase would be made of the bare glassfibre hull of the traditional local pinnace. The slimline shallowdraft double-ender shape of the pinnace would be ideal for use as a floating laboratory where different combinations of battery, engine, transmission systems and prop sizes could be tried out inside an Arcoa-designed superstructure.

For reports of such history-making epic 21st century events as The 24-Hour Record, the Paris-to-the-Sea, Cross-Channel ("Trans-Manche"), The Rally des Deux Mers (Med to Atlantic) - *regardez cette espace s'il vous plaît!*

**Gillian adds:**

The two past chairmen of the EBA were reunited in Bordeaux. We spoke in turn about our EBA, the history of electric boating and some of the latest developments.

The distinguished and influential audience received our slide show and talk with great enthusiasm. So much so that I was swept off later that day to examine hull shapes in an Arcachon boatyard. We found a reproduction "Pinasse" hull which was originally steam driven and all agreed that this was an ideal hull for electric propulsion.

All they have to do now is get some funding from the politicians in order to have the boat completed for some big celebration in May.

The highlight (apart from the food and a visit to Kevin's local vineyard) was being transported around the city by electric vehicle. What a peaceful world it would be if all our cities encouraged EVs.

# COOKHAM REGATTA 1994

## An eyewitness account.

This was the first time in the eight years of Cookham Regatta that it rained. Despite the wet afternoon, fourteen electric boats took their place at the head of the Parade of Boats.

Anne and Fraser Brown led the electric boats in their latest acquisition *Titch*, a pretty 8 ft dinghy, followed by Pat Wagstaffe's Salter's skiff, *Piec*. Two canoes came next: Robin and Liz Newlands' famous *Gena*, once more afloat after being hit at the regatta two years ago, and John and Rhoda Church's roomy *Libelula*. The Temple Mill Island Frolic 21s were out in force: Derek and Hilary Chamberlain in *Legato*, Ron and Margaret Callard and family in *Clivella*, John and Everett and his wife in their newly-acquired *Cobweb* and Denis and Madge Tye in their very practical weekend Deltic cruiser *Electra*. Marjorie and John Turk came in their Frolic *Aronda* and new members Peter and Theresa Cook brought their Frolic 21 *Psyche Too* down from Spade Oak.

Roy Devereux, EBA News editor, was seen braving the drizzly rain in Edward and Dinnie



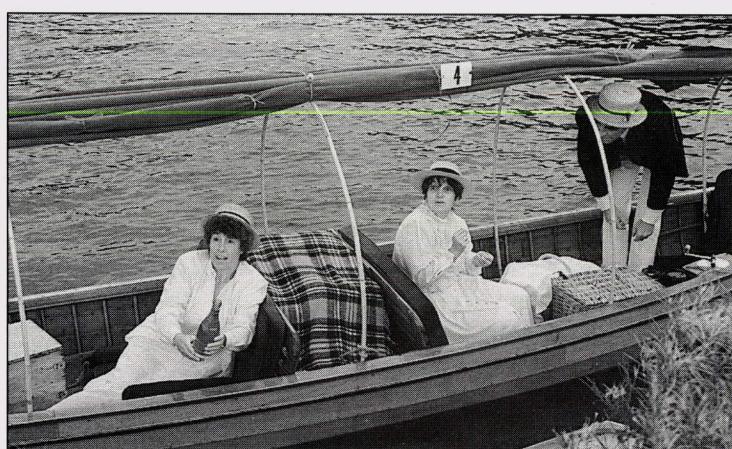
Preparing for the "Off"



"Margot" wins the Hawthorne Trophy



Let's get in and have that cream tea!



"Gena" fires a one-cork salute!

Hawthorne's open launch *Mystere* to get some photographs of the parade. There were two Voltaire 18s: Evelyn and Stanley de Leon's *Margot*, named after the famous ballerina, and the unique electric/steam *Irene*, owned and fitted out by Ian and Sylvia Rutter. Another braving the elements in an open skiff were Jon and Lynn Willmore, whilst Paul and Pat Wagstaffe brought up the rear in their stately 30 ft saloon launch.

Fortunately, the decorations survived the rain and, as usual, it was a close contest from which *Margot* emerged as the winner of the Regatta's Hawthorne Trophy. Imaginatively using the Panamanian colours to illustrate themes from the ballet, she presented an elegant display. We were told that the onlookers on the bank greatly enjoyed seeing the decorated boats and members were congratulated on taking so much trouble to decorate their craft despite the rain.

The show was rounded off with most of our members and their friends landing at the Hawthorne's boathouse to enjoy cream teas (organised by Pat, Anne and Dinnie) on the balcony overlooking the regatta course - rather cramped but drier than in the garden!

Next year's regatta is on Saturday September 2nd. Make a date!



News recently reached us about a remarkable new electric-powered passenger boat operating across the Pennines on the Rochdale canal. Three friends had, it appeared, built a 43 ft,

## "PENNINES PRINCESS"

40-seater craft largely from second-hand - sorry, "recycled" - components. The Ross electric motor, for instance, had come off a milk float and the batteries had once propelled hospital trolleys.

**Keith Parry**, designer of "Pennines Princess", tells the story.

Nothing about "Pennines Princess" is conventional. The catalyst was the partnership formed by craftsmen Eric Fairley and David Grayson and our mutual interest in the restoration of the cross-Pennine Rochdale Canal. After flirting briefly with the idea of a 12-seater, we decided to go for a full-scale passenger craft. I say "we" because, looking at "Princess" now I can hardly believe I'm credited as Designer. Electric drive? I can't recall us considering anything else.

So a trio of first-timers set about building a 43ft x 8ft boat able to take 40 passengers (because that would mean we could accommodate a full school class on educational visits) with galley, toilet and bar and designed for year-round, all-weather service.

"Princess" was built in the open air with a minimum of mechanical aids (even the power line was linked to a neighbour's supply). But the site was appropriate. It had once been a barge-builder's yard owned by one Job Cogswell. His canal carrying fleet recognised only a firm called Pickford's as competitor for trans-Pennine traffic. "Princess" was the first boat to be built at what the 1841 O.S. Map calls "Durn Dockyard" for at least 160 years.

We were not alone. Littleborough is still a tightly-knit community, David is chairman of the local Historical Society, Eric is secretary of the Rochdale Canal Boat Club and chairman of our community-based Regeneration Partnership, so friends and associates came in with help and support. I took every opportunity to promote the venture

through my connection with the Groundwork Trust and the Mersey Basin Campaign.

Our neighbour on site brought in his stacker truck when we needed to shift

steel sheets. Another friend

had the uncanny ability to find exactly what we were looking for at a fraction of the price we expected to pay. Carpet came free in return for work on the supplier's boat. When the time came, even the DoT inspector was helpful and complimentary.

Recycling was the order of the day -



*"I name this ship 'Pennines Princess'."*

we prefer that word to "second hand". "Pennines Princess" is powered by a 4hp Ross motor, using moving contacts and supplied by two sets of 48 volt batteries, one set under the stern deck, the other mounted amidships. In other words several elderly electric vehicles arrived on site and never left.

With "Princess" launched by Eric's wife Ruth (by this time very much involved in the project) the next move was a physical one - 100 yards along the canal to a disused Council Highways Depot leased by Eric and David with a view to development as a boatyard. The development is part of the regeneration programme designed to capitalise on Littleborough's new-found role as a leisure and tourism centre. It was also a superb gesture of faith in the future of the Rochdale Canal since it involves a substantial investment well in advance of any guarantee of anything like normal

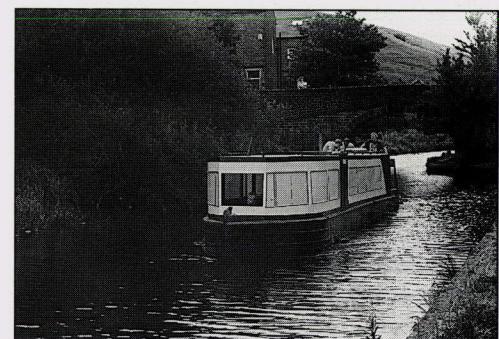
trading conditions.

Then came proving trials. Still only half fitted-out, we escorted the boat bringing Rochdale's Mayor to launch Littleborough's Rushbearing Festival in August. A month later came a full-scale test involving a 6-hour cruise with a full complement of passengers - a group of rail enthusiasts who were prepared to make allowances for any deficiencies. The pioneering cruise tested everything (including us) to the limit. From Littleborough Wharf we had to climb 120 feet through 12 locks in under two miles to the Summit level (at 600ft the highest navigable canal in the country) - and we only had half the

full complement of batteries installed. On top of that we served lunch on the way up, tea on the way down and kept the bar open all the time. "Princess" performed well. We were, frankly, shattered by the end.

Thoughts are now turning to the next project, likely to be a 6-metre forward drive dayboat/mini cruiser designed to cope with the particular demands of canal cruising. Meanwhile, we have our Winter Service to run. We're limiting ourselves to a single 90-minute Sunday afternoon trip (but we couldn't resist advertising Private Charter and Santa Cruises at Christmas). We'll be loading at Littleborough Wharf and climbing through 3 locks only, but even that means we'll be turning at a point well over 500 ft up - and Pennine winters are legendary. The boat is well heated and the bar well stocked, but how well will "Pennines Princess" cope with ice? No doubt we'll find out!

*Further information from Littleborough Leisure Craft, Durn Boatyard, Schofield Street, Halifax Road, Littleborough, Lancashire OL15 8BB (01706) 372522/371942.*



*On the proving run in July*

Dear Sir,

I was intrigued to see, in the article about our President Percy Gick in the summer issue, a mention of his boat *Patricia* and I thought an update to her story might be useful.

*Patricia*, or to be more precise *Patricia 11*, is now in the ownership of a third retired naval officer: me. In fact she has been owned by a Rear Admiral, Percy Gick, a Commander, George Gibson, and now a humble Lieutenant - who was also, like the Admiral, a Fleet Air Arm pilot.

As I understand it, she was ordered from Admiral Gick not so much by Lord Avon as for Lord Avon. David Hutchings had built (almost single-handedly) a new lock - named after the founder of the IWA, Robert Aickman - on the Upper River Avon (the Stratford Avon), and wanted a suitable craft for the opening ceremony to be performed by Lord Avon on 21st May 1983.

Percy Gick knew that Bossoms Boatyard of Oxford had by chance just produced another hull from the mould they had made 9 years previously from a derelict launch dating from about 1908 found sunk in the Thames. This elegant Edwardian boat was 31' 9" in length and of course of wooden construction. Bossoms's first *Patricia* was a built in fibreglass and was powered by a Severn Lamb twin cylinder steam engine. This lovely boat was exhibited at the London Boat Show in 1975 but I do not know her subsequent history except that I have heard that she has recently been converted to electric propulsion like her sister ship. I'm not sure if this is true, however.

*Patricia 11*, then, was fitted out - electrically powered, needless to say - by Percy Gick at Emsworth in time to be used by David Hutchings for the opening of the Robert Aickman lock in May 1983. She was, like her predecessor, displayed at the London Boat Show and from there bought by Cdr. George Gibson. He operated her as a trip and charter boat on the Kennet & Avon Canal, firstly at Bradford-on-Avon and then at his new home on the canal at Honeystreet near Pewsey. The boat, in fact, was present at another opening ceremony in July 1984, that of the



Kennet & Avon length from Dundas Aqueduct to Devizes.

I acquired *Patricia 11* from George Gibson in 1993 and she now operates on the very pretty stretch of the K & A between Bath and Bradford-on-Avon taking parties for picnic, pub lunch or cream tea trips, or just simple silent cruises.

Her 4KW Accumot motor is still going strong and three of her twelve 12v batteries are the originals - although admittedly they don't contribute much to her performance now!

Having been built for the Stratford River Avon, the boat has spent almost her whole life on the Kennet & Avon Canal. This August, however, *Patricia 11* ventured down Bath locks for a Regatta weekend and so reached the other navigable River Avon. For a few brief hours she was in her river element, leaping about like the elegant greyhound she is, before reluctantly returning to the shallow waters of the canal where she purrs gracefully over the surface bringing quiet restful enjoyment to many. She is, in fact, a tribute to the Association's President, Rear Admiral Percy Gick.

I enclose a recent picture of *Patricia 11* and hope this letter may be of some interest to your readers.

Yours sincerely,  
**Timothy Wheeldon.**

*Thank you, Mr Wheeldon. A most interesting follow-up to our summer article. T J and A W Wheeldon's company, The Bath & Dundas Canal Co, Brass Knocker Bottom, Monkton Combe, Bath, Avon, BA2 7JD (0225) 722292, has eight electric boats: 'Patricia', which is skippered, and seven assorted self-drive day boats.*



Dear Sir,

Whilst having my 24ft open launch surveyed, the surveyor commented that in order to comply with forthcoming legislation I would have to cover my two banks of batteries and vent them overboard during and following charging.

Surely this could concentrate an explosive gas which, in my case, would have dissipated naturally into the air from under the floor.

Just what is proposed in this forthcoming legislation which concerns those converting to electric propulsion and when will it become law?

Yours sincerely,  
**David Higgins.**  
Stratford-upon-Avon.

*Extract from the reply sent by the Chairman of the Electric Boat Association:*

Phase 1 of the Boat Safety Scheme, agreed by the NRA and BWB, comes into effect on 1 January 1996. There is no straightforward answer to your particular query, but a paragraph in the new legislation reads as follows: "The battery charging arrangement is to incorporate control of the battery compartment exhaust vent fan *when fitted* such that it switches on at commencement and runs for one hour after completion".

The EBA's trade member battery supplier says that if hydrogen gas exceeds 4% of the total air volume, there is a risk of explosion. They recommend that adequate ventilation be provided to keep the concentration below 1%.

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*The Committee of the EBA is currently considering a new advertising rate card. Details in our next issue.*

Eastern Electricity is a major sponsor of the EBA and their Environment Business Manager, Mike Cooper-Reade, has long been a good friend and supporter of the Association. When Mike retired recently, Gillian Nahum, on behalf of the committee, sent some flowers with our good wishes for a happy retirement. Here is Mike's reply.

**Dear Gillian,**

I was delighted and surprised to receive the lovely plants and your kind wishes at my retirement do the other evening.

They were featured in some of the photographs alongside the other present that I had from my friends and colleagues at Eastern Electricity - which was an electric hedge cutter!

Please give my thanks and send my regards to everyone at the Electric Boat Association. I have very much enjoyed my association with you and all the other electric boating enthusiasts and know John Hill, who is taking over from me, will be keen to carry on the good work with you and Phil Horsley.

We are still making good progress with the new 33 ft cruiser for Len Funnel and hope this will be on the water before Christmas and at the Boat Show.

I am very much looking forward to my retirement but hope I may still be involved with electric boating in some way or other in the future.

Thank you for all your help in the past.

Best wishes,

**Mike Cooper-Reade**

## **Viscountess Bury is saved!**

*In our last issue, the Chairman of the EBA commented on the sad decline of this classic electric launch and called for a SAVE THE VISCOUNTESS campaign. Such is the power of Electric Boat News that there was an immediate response!*

The future of the world's first 80-passenger electric launch, *Viscountess Bury*, has been secured by Linda Ashton of Ely and friends who have formed a trust named "The Friends of the Viscountess Bury". With support from Edward Hawthorne, the Chairman of the Users' Group of the Electric Boat Association, the 65 ft launch, which has been up for sale for the last three years, has now been bought by the Trust.

*Viscountess Bury* was launched from William Sargeant's yard at Kew in 1888 and for 21 years was the largest electrically-powered passenger boat operating on the river Thames. For four years she was on charter to the Prince of Wales, who later became King Edward VII. In 1910, after being converted to a petrol engine, she was taken by sea up the east coast to King's Lynn and then to Cambridge. For the last 80 years she has been a well-known sight carrying passengers on trips along the river between Cambridge and Ely. She was taken out of service in 1991. The Trust is working on plans to refurbish the launch including converting her back to electric propulsion.

*More details and pictures in our next issue.*

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