

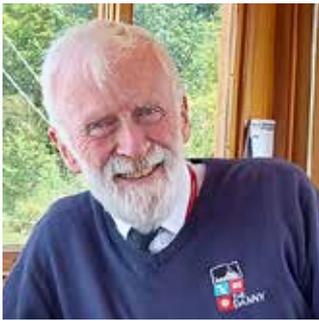
TOWLINE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DANNY

ISSUE 8 - NOVEMBER 2021



**THE
DANNY**



Chairman's Piece

Stuart Wood

It is a great privilege to lead this issue of Towline. At the time of writing we are about to embark on the final four cruises of this season's operations. And what a season it has been. The amazing people who ensure that The Danny keeps going have performed quite remarkable feats of time travel since early July insofar as an almost complete programme of events both static and cruising has been squeezed into less than four months. This is a major achievement however it is measured.

The wretched time everyone has suffered during the pandemic has changed attitudes, systems and planning for ever. It was some time before we saw a clear enough picture of how we could keep our little steamer in the public eye and attract folk on board safely. The guidelines were drawn up, put in to operation by our volunteers, were closely monitored and proved totally effective. I have said elsewhere that these systems DAPS put in place to protect both visiting members of the public AND our volunteers were a masterclass in such precautionary measures.

The Danny continues to thrive on the beautiful River Weaver and cooperation with agencies near to the river is expanding very steadily. These include local and national government, CRT and Environment Agency. It is a pleasure to welcome Mike Cooksley to the Board of Trustees. Mike brings a wealth of local knowledge and contacts to the Board and was kind enough to say how flattered and excited he was to be approached to join us.

Our planned day to day operations are very impressive – static offerings include wedding receptions, birthday parties, engineering and education projects and art and music events. These will be expanded in 2022 alongside the cruising programme. We all hope that increased clarity and calm on the Covid 19 front will allow us to carry out these plans without unnecessary interruptions.

Well done to all our volunteers who stepped up to go above and beyond to keep The Danny going. Our manager Andrea together with Cathriona and

Georgia continue to do wonders to ensure the unique business of running a 118 year old steam ship sails along so very well.

And finally I make no apology for stating my perhaps familiar mantra: Central Government pay attention please! The Danny is already a dual fuel ship; coal at over £300 per ton and volunteers... priceless.

ON SALE

The Danny Official Souvenir Guidebook



This Official Guidebook contains the full history and fantastic images of The Danny!

A great gift idea for Christmas!

Email sheila.leonard@danieladamson.co.uk or call 01928 576967

Welcome Aboard! Membership Report **Sheila Leonard** Membership Secretary



I hope all our members have had a safe, healthy and enjoyable summer.

To the 70 members who still haven't renewed their membership fees in 2021, I would request that you renew as soon as possible as your memberships are a valuable source of income to the Society, as subscriptions are still needed to cover all the things they have paid for in the past, Towline, insurance, printing, postage etc. I will shortly be sending out some emails reminding you, as I'm sure you don't want this to be your last Towline due to lapsed membership.

A reminder also that Single Membership is £25.00 and Family Membership is £30.00.

We are very sorry to announce that John Huxley one of our longstanding members and one of our earliest

volunteers and a very good friend to many of us, passed away in March after having suffering from failing health for quite a while. He is greatly missed by all his friends and family.

We are pleased to say we have a some new merchandise items (see below) added to our shop with the keyrings, mugs, caps etc still for sale, which perhaps might make nice Christmas presents for fans of the Danny. Please email or phone me as per details below. Postage and packing will be added.

We have also got the new Danny Souvenir Brochure (see left) which has been very popular and would make a great read for all members.

If any of your friends would like to become a member of the Preservation Society ask them to get in touch and I will send them a joining form. Thankyou.

DANNY COLLECTABLES



Paperweights £10



Mugs £10



Fridge Magnets
£2.50



DVD
£12

Coasters
box of 4
£7



Enamel
Badge
£2.50



Postcards
set of 5
£2.50

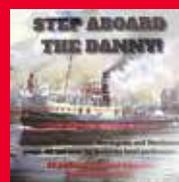


Teddy
Bears
£4.50



Caps £10

CD £7
folk & shanty songs



All purchase details: Email sheila.leonard@danieladamson.co.uk or call 01928 576967



News from the Engineers **Peter Field**

We need more engineers!



The often quoted saying that the Danny runs on coal and volunteers is very true, especially in the Engineering Department.

It takes seven engineers to crew the ship for a cruise and working parties on one or two days a week all year to keep on top of repairs, maintenance and improvements.

Currently we have about 26 people who I can call active volunteers – some weekends this year we have had cruises on four days running so you can work out the commitment of those who have to turn up on maybe all of those days because there aren't enough of us. Add into that mix those who have "sick notes" and you can see that we are running on a knife edge. So, we desperately need more volunteers – enthusiasm and a certain level of physical fitness are all that is required. An engineering background would be nice but marine engineering isn't a necessity – all training will be given by your friendly and willing fellow volunteers.



All volunteers, following an induction talk, start as a Trimmer in the boiler room to learn what's going on. The Trimmer is basically an assistant Fireman, both do the same job but the Fireman has the responsibility of running the boiler room so that steam is available in a safe, timely and economical fashion. Two Firemen and two Trimmers are rostered for a cruise and take turns in pairs working for 30 mins and resting for 30 mins. On a hot summer's day it's good to get out of the Boiler Room!

The opportunity is there to become a Fireman once the appropriate competencies and experience have been proved to the Chief Fireman. It's not necessary if you choose to stay as a Trimmer.

Those who wish to work in the Engine Room start as an Assistant Engineer and can rise to 2nd Engineer and Chief Engineer, again once the appropriate competencies and experience have been gained. However, you would still have to start as a Trimmer to gain experience on where the steam comes from, unless medical conditions prohibit shovelling.

If you have a strong engineering background you may prefer to concentrate on maintenance and repair instead of cruising, well that's fine as we have well equipped workshops at our winter base in Sandon Dock, Liverpool as well as workspace at Sutton Weaver, our summer base.

Whatever your background you'll be welcomed and assisted so that we can all get the best out of your time. We're a friendly bunch so why not give it a try?

Visit our website at www.thedanny.co.uk/volunteers for more information or email volunteering@danieladamson.co.uk to get started.

You know you want to...



Ten tons of coal please!

Bunkering the Danny is normally a relatively straightforward and trouble free operation, mainly due to the experience of Mike the grab truck operator and of the volunteers. It is carried out at Acton Bridge where the grab truck can park close to the ship and the 10 tonnes of coal is loaded straight into the bunkers one grab at a time assisted by a Trimmer or two. 99% of the coal goes straight in with little spilt.

Once in a while the plan goes awry and the ship isn't at Acton Bridge when coal is required or the grab truck isn't available when we need it, as happened in September.

The only option available to us was for the coal to be tipped loose onto the car park at Sutton Weaver and a team of about 15 pensioners (plus Dan and Jordan) persuaded to manhandle it into the bunkers. Luckily it was a nice day and the operation was completed in a morning, much to everyone's surprise.



The ash bag system



The wheelbarrow system



The job ahead



Early enthusiasm



Process running smoothly



Bunker supervisor



Final destination

Two methods evolved to keep everyone busy:

System 1 was to shovel the coal into ash bags, load 3 bags onto a sack truck, trundle it down the slope and empty into the hopper of the conveyor which was positioned to empty into the required hatch.

System 2 was to shovel coal into wheelbarrows, again trundle down the slope and empty into the conveyor's hopper. Both systems worked well and suited different people, delays only being caused by moving the conveyor to the other hatch and by the frequent tea breaks necessary to keep up morale.

We all hope this will not be a regular occurrence but were surprised that it wasn't a longer job. Maybe it was the novelty – next time only three people may turn up!

The Rivet Saga

One fine day in September near the end of a cruise two of the boiler room crew were resting between shovelfuls and one said to the other "That rivet there looks like its leaking" and so it was. On the side of the centre furnace just behind the ash plate. The first step in a rapid but unscheduled repair that involved cancelling a cruise and a lot of work for some of the engineers.



A few busy days followed which included a visit by the boiler inspector, who said the rivet needed replacing immediately, contacting a boilermaker in Lancashire to book a visit and hiring a compressor. The

inspector also did a visual inspection of the rest of the boiler for other problems, but none were found. Not bad for a 68 year old boiler!

The boiler room needed clearing to provide a clear and safe space for "hot things" to happen - this included closing the bunker hatches and removing all coal and flammable material from the working area. The firebars were removed and the furnace cleared of ash and made safe.

On the Monday when the boilermakers arrived it was obvious to them, but not to us until they said, that the whole of the furnace front and door had to be removed to provide sufficient room for them to work. Now that's a task on its own as the components are big and heavy and the nuts and bolts reluctant to move as they never do! So, this caused a delay, and it wasn't until the afternoon that the boilermakers could finally do their repair.

As you probably know, the basic steps involved are



to remove the old rivet, prepare the hole and trial fit the new one, heat it up, insert it in the hole and round both ends off using pneumatic hammers. You'll have seen the process in old documentaries about building liners, I expect.

I'm told this didn't take long at all, maybe ten minutes to heat and fit the rivet – considerably less than the hours of preparatory work and then the reinstatement work!

So that was that, the boiler inspector proclaimed the repair satisfactory and the furnace was then rebuilt ready for a cruise at the end of the week. A short but labour intensive few days in Dannyland, it's amazing that we have the skills and dedication readily available amongst the volunteers and professionals to get these potentially disastrous occurrences sorted quickly.

Well done to all the organisers, spanner welders and grafters involved...



Bus 2 boat or Coach 4 cruise?

When the 'Danny' started sailing regularly on the Weaver, it became inevitable that some sort of Park and Ride operation would be needed to move passengers between a car park and the points where the 'Danny' berthed.

Initially she sailed between Sutton Weaver and Acton Bridge, neither of which had adequate parking space for our passengers – but the hope was that she would soon reach the Anderton Boat lift (where there was a large car park) and this was achieved in summer 2019. Anderton was also chosen for parking as it is adjacent to the Northwich depot of Holmeswood Coaches who were able to provide double decker buses ideal for carrying a full load of 'Danny' passengers. It wasn't the height of luxury, but there was a good view of the Cheshire countryside from the top deck – not that all our passengers enjoyed climbing the stairs!

After not sailing in 2020, bad flooding in winter 2020/21 meant we could no longer get the 'Danny' to Anderton in summer 2021, so Acton Bridge became our turn-around point and we had to transport passengers between the 'Danny' and Anderton before and after nearly every cruise. However with passengers numbers being reduced, we were fortunately able to use coaches, which are much more comfortable for our passengers and meanwhile the double deckers have been pensioned off – so it looks like coaches again for 2022.

Those who have watched our different skippers manoeuvre the 'Danny' on and off the berth may have spotted they don't all do it quite the same way. The coach drivers are no different, and approach the challenge of getting a large coach into a small space between parked cars at Acton Bridge in their own different ways. We appreciate the patience of (most of) those road users delayed slightly whilst this is going on. Hopefully in 2022 the 'Danny' will be back at Anderton and fewer sailings will be loading at Acton Bridge.

When passengers book, they are advised where and when to park, and those who book well ahead will normally receive a reminder e-mail too. Passengers not wishing to use the coach are asked to advise us in advance – and some of them actually remember to. Most passengers therefore arrive at Anderton – where their first hurdle is to buy a parking ticket from a very temperamental machine. Needless to say the queues get longer just before the coach is due to depart.

Whilst most passengers arrive in time, it is quite rare that they all do. Before despatching the bus with less than the expected number of passengers, we try to phone and locate those who are "missing". Some may be held up in traffic, some have lost (or forgotten) their instructions and others had been given their tickets by someone who had not passed on the vital information. We are still trying to work out how half one party thought they had to go to the boat when they'd all been told to go to Anderton!

One of the biggest challenges in 2021 was when the



Mark managed to get the Holmeswood 29 seater turned inside the Sutton Weaver compound, to take guests & crew to Acton Bridge for the 'Danny's' final 2021 sailing.



Eddie, one of the regular drivers, with a Holmeswood coach waiting for 'Danny' passengers at Anderton.



The Halton Community minibus, with John at the wheel, was used for the passenger shuttle, as well as crew bus.

road between Anderton and both Acton Bridge and Sutton Weaver was closed for 3 weeks in August and September. The suggested diversion routes appeared unworkable so we had to switch our parking place from Anderton to the Dormex factory car park near Sutton Weaver. Whilst this was within easy walking distance of our berth it was on the opposite side of the busy A56 main road and there were no safe crossing points for pedestrians. For morning departures a shuttle mini-bus service – provided via Halton Community Transport, who also shuttle our crews round at the end of the day – was used, and for arrivals and Acton Bridge departures Holmeswood coaches were still used. This worked well with excellent assistance from Dormex and the two transport companies to whom we are most grateful.

The resilience of these arrangements was put to the test one sunny Sunday afternoon in August. All the passengers had boarded at Acton Bridge for a gin cruise and the 'Danny' was ready to cast off when a message was received that Dutton Lock had a problem so we could not sail until next day after repairs had been made. Our quick-thinking skipper decided that the gin-fest should continue, so the Holmeswood driver was recalled two hours later to take both passengers and some of the crew back to Sutton Weaver to pick up their transport and most of the passengers opted to re-book for another cruise rather than have their money back!

Dick Clague, Volunteer



Volunteer Update

Bob Cannell

Well, we moved into 2021 and back to our berth at Sutton Weaver with high hopes for a full season of static events and cruises but were again set back by further Covid restrictions. Working hard behind the scenes a protocol as developed to allow us to attain "Ready to Go" accreditation which eventually allowed us to open as a static venue over the May Bank Holiday. This involved setting up a reception station on the quay with QR code registration, sanitisation points, a one-way system around the Danny with one-to-one guiding limited to groups of six visitors moving from key points with guides in constant touch by walkie talkie. This worked well and after a quiet start developed into a well oiled operation much appreciated by our visitors who had been locked down for many months and appreciated the opportunity to get out and about again.

As always, the galley proved popular with the team doing sterling work providing sustenance which was served in the outdoor bistro area set up on the quay at the berth. The generosity of our visitors was simply astounding, with the donation boxes full of high value notes, and the introduction of the contactless donation equipment proving very popular as the world moves towards cashless transactions.

The new guide book, developed by Sheila Leonard, Les Green and Bob Gwynne has proved a great success and adds greatly to the Danny experience as something tangible to take away.

When cruising finally restarted it was a hectic time especially in August, as we worked hard to reschedule cancelled trips and put some order back into the schedule. All departments worked flat out to honour our commitments, and again a big thank you goes out to all volunteers who went the extra mile to give our passengers the Danny experience. Please take a look on the social media platforms for reaction to our cruises, everyone mentions the warmth, friendliness and knowledge given out by the Danny crew. Again, well done all on board, on shore and behind the scenes.

Some notable trips were our charter from the Abandon Normal Devices art group who ventured onto the Manchester Ship Canal for two days with some stunning visual and audio art interpretations, even impressing the hard bitten Danny crew. Another high point was the recent Travel Editions trip from Acton Bridge to Ellesmere Port as part of a three day escorted package of the North West heritage waterways which again proved very successful and led to a repeat booking next year.

Covid restrictions led to a curtailment of live talks by the presentation team but embracing the modern technology of Zoom there have now been 52 presentations to interest groups all over the country of both Danny and Ship Canal talks. Live talks are just starting to be scheduled as groups begin to hold group meetings once again.

Recruitment of new volunteers has been difficult this year with the prevailing Covid situation, but a taster day was held in October which we hope will attract new recruits especially in the Engineering department.

In conclusion, the dedication of all the Danny family and hard work of Andrea, Georgia & Cathriona has enabled us to weather a very difficult period, which has seen the demise of several high-profile heritage organisations.

Well done all, and looking forward to returning next season, to show our Danny off to the world.

FILMING FROM CHANNEL 4

Filming has been taking place on the Danny in October for Channel 4's new 1980s crime caper "The Curse".

The new series will feature 6 episodes and will air in 2022.



My Volunteer Story John Goodier

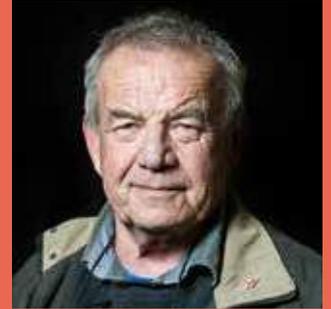


Image © Andrew McClaren / Am Images

Tale from a tall ship. Not a tall tale from a ship.

The bicentenary of American independence was July 4th 1976. As part of the celebrations there were to be parades of tall ships through the harbours of New York and Boston attended by ships from all over the world. The European contingent were to make the voyage in a series of races. With a fleet of ships comes added safety.

Having worked within the British Sail Training Association as Bosuns mate and relief Bosun I was keen to take part and cross the Atlantic under sail. However, finding a berth proved to be problematic. All vacancies seemed to be filled with waiting lists as well.

An advert in Sea Breezes was looking for crew for an Irish brigantine called Phoenix so a few phone calls later I'd secured one of the last remaining berths on the ship to take part in the leg from Tenerife to Bermuda. I knew nothing about the ship but had heard of the organisers, a group called Young Mariners international.

A couple of weeks later I was aboard the ship in Tenerife and preparing to sail. The sight of all the fleet heading out for Bermuda was fantastic. Everything from four masted Russian training ships to 50ft yachts.

The ideal tactics were to head South and pick up the usually reliable Easterly trade winds to provide a good bit of speed and not too much sail handling. But - mother nature doesn't always play the game. Light variable winds from day one. We were never going to be in Bermuda in time to catch our charter flight back, so time for plan B. We were calculating daily what speed we needed to average to be in on time but it soon became obvious that we were going to have to

withdraw from the race and turn on the engine.

It was a huge oily Hundested diesel which seemed to fire every half minute or so but it would push us along at six and a half knots. To start it meant hand starting the genny to charge the battery for the air compressor to start the main engine.

The next problem was that we had a thousand miles to go but only had diesel for about seven hundred. So a call on the radio to asked if anyone had spare diesel.

We received an answer from an American barquentine called ' Regina Maris' . They had spare diesel and arranged for us to meet us at 28 degrees North, 50 degrees West. We arrived early the next morning and approached the ship. In true American style they loved to put on a show and had erected a large canvas banner saying

"FILL UP HERE. LAST GAS FOR 1,000 MILES" A very welcome sight.

We soon coupled up and pumped a ton of fuel over with a semi rotary pump taking about an hour.

Whilst we were pumping another yacht turned up, they had a crew member on board who needed to catch the charter flight but the skipper wanted to sail all the way so we signed on his spare crew at sea and I believe our skipper labelled him as D.B.S. Distressed British seaman.

We managed to catch our flight with almost a day to spare and so ended a memorable trip.



Fundraiser Report **Les Green**

Fundraisers Enjoy Another Good Year

Fundraisers at the “Danny” have managed to raise substantial funds and develop new ways of doing things despite the impediments brought about by the Covid pandemic and subsequent lock downs.

Their biggest earner by far, the presentations to groups such as U3A and history societies, looked doomed in 2020 but then Zoom came along and in the 12 months since their introduction in September 2020 some 58 talks have been ordered and most delivered by the DAPS team of presenters. The previous record year, albeit all live presentations was 31 thus during lockdown DAPS saw over 80% growth in demand.

The talks were given to groups from across the UK, right down to Southampton , South Wales and Yorkshire raising some £2785 for nil cost. Zoom talks which are in essence environmentally friendly will



continue to be offered even though live presentations are now being requested. Zoom does have its disadvantages as presenters can't meet and influence group organisers to book trips to the “Danny”, sell merchandise or distribute cruise leaflets to the audience but the knowledge of the “Danny” to such a geographical spread offset these.

Raffles on board cruises have been well supported by customers and continued to provide good revenue at £1647 assisted well by some new enthusiastic volunteers. Merchandise sales were hampered by the lack of direct contact with the public but were boosted by the publication of the “Danny” guidebook which was well received by the public and cruises produced regular sales of over 10 books per cruise.

The value of a good guide, and the “Danny's” is excellent, cannot be underestimated because whilst the customer takes away a souvenir of the day and the “Danny” has good revenue it is also free marketing as the customer passes the book to friends and relatives who may also book a cruise. Receipts may not have been as good as the last full year when we traded in 2019 but the 12months since the team got back into action have shown great promise; new ways of working and products developed, and everyone enjoyed being a part of a high performing outfit.



Manchester Ship Canal Talks boost for “Danny”

The presentation team, always watching trends and looking for opportunities, have noted that the Manchester Ship Canal presentation has now overtaken the “Danny” in popularity with orders for 33 talks compared 25 for the “Danny” product. One reason for this could be the simple fact that the market is limited and the “Danny” presentation has been around for some 6 years. A very pleasing fact is emerging with a pronounced cluster of bookings from all forms of societies along the Weaver Valley and Cheshire reflecting the interest in the vessel.

Covid restrictions and the volume of work on the current presentations has delayed work on a further presentation called “Coal up Salt down” specifically on the Weaver and St Helens Canal.



The “Danny” Brand is Protected

An off-hand comment made by a customer about the recording of a “Danny” presentation and its unauthorised publication on their web-site led to a flurry of activity behind the scenes to take full protection of both our copyright and our brand name.

The “Danny” brand name had no legal protection and large corporations are ruthless in seeking, developing and protecting brand names so we were vulnerable. Volunteers were able to quote examples of the Ford

Motor company and Yates Wine lodges taking action to protect their brand.

Now as a direct result we have “Danny” and two derivatives using the word “Danny”, as a registered brand thanks to the relative of one of our volunteers and an assertion of copyright on the presentations.

Thanks to all involved for their work especially on the type of endeavour rarely seen.

NEW FOR 2022

We are currently planning many new cruise routes and themes for 2022. Look out for Cheese & Wine cruises, Cheshire Botanical’s Gin Cruises, Craft Ale cruises, Real Ale cruises and then additional food options such as bowls of scouse on long cruises, afternoon tea boxes – all options will be from Cheshire food and drink producers.

We thank you all for supporting us over the past few years and we look forward to the festive season and 2022. Please don’t forget gift vouchers, which can be used towards cruises, are available from the website.



Recollections from a Life at Sea: PART 2

Captain David McNamee

The voyage I will never forget

I left Union Transport in April 1992 and decided to go into Offshore Support Vessels (OSV's) and accepted a Master's position with Sealion Shipping who operated a fleet of OSV's, which included supply ships and emergency response ships which served the rigs and platforms in the northern and southern areas of the north sea. The ships were well found and the tours of duty were four weeks on and four weeks off. Working in the northern sector of the north sea we sailed out of Aberdeen and Lerwick in the Shetland Isles. Winter was not very pleasant (which I will talk about later) Even in the summer there was always a long swell coming in from the Atlantic. The southern sector wasn't too bad but winter gales and strong tides made ship handling difficult when working a rig. Our home port was usually Great Yarmouth but on occasion sailed from Lowestoft.

In a sailor's lifetime at sea there is always one voyage that will never be forgotten. On December 19th 1994 I drove to Humberside airport to fly to Lerwick, stopping at Newcastle where the rest of the ship's crew boarded and we joined the *Toisa Conqueror* in Lerwick. All Sealion ships names were prefixed with *Toisa*.

Toisa Conqueror built in 1977 by Cochran's of Selby. Gross tonnage 1553.26 and previously had the name of *Seaforth Conqueror* and classed for anchor handling. On joining the ship I was informed that we were to sail for the drilling rig "Santa Fe 140" approximately 150 miles North East from Lerwick and our brief was to attend a shuttle tanker that was to tie up to a floating storage unit and assist in her operations by sending our tow line to the stern of the shuttle tanker and keep her head to wind.

After the usual handover with the outgoing master, I signed the crew onto the ship's articles, bunkers and provisions for the month ahead were taken on board and we sailed from Lerwick around 1900 hours. The passage time would be somewhere in the region of fifteen hours and we arrived on location at 1000 on December 20th. It was still dark at that time of day

and if my memory serves me correct our latitude was 62° north and daylight came at about 1000 hours and going dark just after 1400. I reported into the rig and passed on all the ship's details and was told that the shuttle tanker would be with us in a couple of days.

The weather forecast for the next few days wasn't good. Winds of gale to strong gale were forecast and there was very little we could do so I took the ship a couple of miles away and hove to. Christmas came and went but the cook did put on a nice dinner albeit that we were now experiencing some bad weather. Still no sign of the shuttle tanker.

The 2nd engineer who I had sailed with in other Sealion ships was anxious about his wife who was pregnant and was starting to have problems (whether the engineer should have rejoined the ship or stayed at home was his choice). It was getting to the stage where he couldn't concentrate on his job and I spoke with the office and said that we should try to get him off the ship and arrange for him to go home – easier said than done. I spoke with the manager on the rig and told him of the situation and he couldn't have been more helpful and understanding. The weather was worsening but helicopters were still able to land on the rigs heli-pad and if I could get the ship into the rig, they would send the basket down and get the engineer off. I told the engineer that I would only get one go at this as the sea and wind were increasing. The ship was equipped with controllable pitch propellers and fairly powerful bow thrust. I kept the ship well into the wind and slowly drifted downwind and easing the ship in to the rig. I saw the basket being lowered with two persons and when I was near enough shouted to the engineer to get on the basket. As soon as he was on, the basket was hoisted up and I put both engines full ahead and got clear. My heart was racing and my palms were wet with sweat but I had got the guy off the ship and a helicopter managed to land and fly him to Lerwick and then another plane to Liverpool. I have met the engineer on a couple of occasions and he always says how grateful he was for what I did and mother and baby daughter were all well. A few days later I had to do



the same operation in reverse to get the new 2nd engineer on board.

The shipping forecast was giving winds of force 11-12 and needless to say was giving me cause for concern as I had nowhere to find shelter. I remember going to the bridge around midday on Dec. 31st, both wind and sea increasing to storm force but the ship was riding well but shipping a great deal of water. I remained on the bridge all afternoon and into the night – no New Year celebrations that year!!!

New Years day came in with fury and at 0300 I saw this huge wall of white water coming towards our ship. One of Dan's colleagues in Svitzer, Chris Pritchard was mate with me on the bridge together with an AB from Fleetwood who was an ex. trawlerman. The sea hit us and the Toisa Conqueror climbed to the crest of this huge sea and then down into the trough and our ship was completely enveloped in water. How we never incurred any damage was beyond me but the ship and all on board were safe.

At 0600 Jan.1st 1995, the radio operator on the rig wished us all a Happy New Year and if it's any interest Captain, at 0300 hours the wind speed was recorded at 129 knots (148 mph) and a wave height of 20 metres. Chris Pritchard will testify to that. Certainly not a sailors yarn.

The weather continued with gales and severe gales and we were all looking forward to getting

back to Lerwick. We were tired and exhausted and just wanted to go home. On 18th January we were relieved by another Toisa ship and sailed for Lerwick.

Sealion shipping chartered a light aircraft for twelve passengers for the flight to Newcastle, Humberside and Norwich. I and two others were getting off in Newcastle and the rest of the crew to the other two airports. The flight was rather turbulent and we were being thrown around quite a bit. There wasn't a bulkhead between the passenger seats and the flight deck so we could see everything that was going on. As we started to drop down and clear of the cloud, I could see the lights on the airstrip and we were approaching at an angle of about 45° and looking like something from the Crypton Factor. I could see the pilot pull back on the joystick taking us back into the clouds. On the next attempt to land he came in at some speed and when we came to a stop we all gave a loud cheer. The pilot asked if I was the ship's Captain and he told me he wasn't prepared to take the plane to Humberside or Norwich due to the weather conditions.

I then had to start finding accommodation for the crew who should have been continuing on and once this had been sorted I and two crew members were given a hired car and I drove them to Liverpool and then home where I arrived at 0400 hours on 20th Jan 1995.

Capt. David McNamee AFNI, HCMM, MNM.



Learning and participation update

Cathriona Bourke

It's been a very different year for community events on the Danny. We knew we'd be reaching fewer people on the Danny, so we focused on finding out more about what people need and want from us, and how we can have the greatest impact on our community.

Schools

We had a healthy take-up of our offer from schools in the summer term, but before they could come, Covid rates went up again and the Public Health Directors in our areas recommended schools cancel all trips, so all were cancelled. We decided to focus instead on working with schools to identify what is most needed after Covid, and what will have most impact on visiting schoolchildren.

The answer came back clearly that children who had been at a disadvantage at the start of Covid were more likely to have heightened emotional and

social needs coming out of it, as well as a loss in key literacy skills. We decided that we would work to gear our workshops to meet those needs, aiming to make the children feel welcome and happy, to build confidence, boost learning, and build literacy skills.

We connected with children's poet and national poetry day ambassador, Simon Mole, to build the literacy element of the workshop, and with our volunteers and local children's services to think through how to make the day meet our wellbeing objectives. Our first trial was with St Martin's Primary in Runcorn this September, and it was a huge success.





The children loved looking around the Danny and enjoyed slowing down to take notice of their surroundings and capture it in words, colour and image. The resulting work formed a rich basis for the poetry workshop they did with Simon back at school, and the poetry they created very clearly shows how much they loved the Danny. One example:

I am the all great and powerful Danny
My steam engines pump
My fire burns bright, because
I am the all great and powerful Danny

The teacher felt the workshop 'pushed some children out of their comfort zone with their art skills and provided them with confidence. The poetry session at the end of the trip was magnificent. It allowed children to explore the Danny from a different perspective which was fantastic for their learning and development.' The children reported that they felt 'happy and joyful' or 'nervous at first but then really enjoyed it', and my favourite comment was one of the replies to the question as to how we could improve: 'Smile, and nothing else, because it was amazing. Every bit inspired me.'

We are now working with Simon Mole, and with an organisation supporting looked after children, to develop online resources for visiting schools next year, as well as to plan learning events and activities for children and their foster carers next Easter and Summer holidays. Coming soon to the Danny facebook will be Simon Mole and St Martins Year 6 performing 'One hand for the boat' – written in response to our safety talk by Simon and the children. From the challenges of this year of Covid, we've developed a really strong offer that responds to the needs of all children, but most especially those who have lost the most confidence and the most learning during Covid.

Young People

Reports ranging from international research by the OECD to national research by Young Minds and the BMJ have concluded that Covid 19 has had a significant negative impact on young people's mental health. We are working towards the Danny's social mission of having a positive impact on our local communities, and this felt like an area where we could make a difference.

We already had some evidence that the Danny provides a very positive, welcoming learning environment which can build young people's confidence, and we had already decided that this would be the year that we focus on engagement with young people.

We also already have positive relationships in place with Riverside and Cronton Colleges across engineering, art & design and foundation studies, and have a steady trickle of young people engaging with us through projects and placements. The engineers have been wonderful at supporting young people to engage with us, and Peter and Andy have steadily been formalising our offer to make it more meaningful for the young people who engage with us, and to make it work better for us. Next year, we will also start to work with the business students to see how they can learn from and contribute to development of our business in the area. Alongside our work with schools, we're developing a steady track record of working with young people in education.

With support from Halton Education, Inclusion and Provision team, and with Interference Arts, who work with museums and galleries, engaging with children, young people and families on a range of creative and wellbeing projects across the region, we decided we were ready to embrace the new challenge of working with young people whose mental wellbeing had taken a knock, and whose confidence to proceed with their education had been eroded.

With a new youth worker added to the team, we recruited young school leavers to take part in a programme that would be led by their own interests. Two young people took an engineering route and seven others worked with artists and engaged with the Danny to build skills and creative activities week by week. In the first week, they looked at the Danny and their surroundings using photography, as well as watercolours. Some of the young people were interested in looking at early photographic technologies, and some in getting closer to nature, so the next week, we took clippings of riverside plants, and used these to create cyanotypes, or sun prints. Following up on an interest in textiles, we went on to embroider onto the cyanotype printed material.



All of these activities were relaxing and gave time and space for the artists to really listen to the young people and for the young people to relax and open up.

Throughout, youth workers and artists encouraged young people to reflect on what they would like to achieve with the Danny as well as what they were already achieving, in terms of confidence and social engagement as well as skills and ideas. One young person wanted to build skills in working with the public, and she volunteered to run a workshop, passing on skills she had learned to children and families at one of our family events. Others were talking more about their own wellbeing, and gradually the programme became more focussed on the five ways to wellbeing – taking notice, learning, keeping active, connecting with one another and the people they met through the Danny, and giving back their ideas and their commitment to the Danny.

One young person was interested in animation, and he worked alongside an artist to create little animations about following the five ways to wellbeing on the Danny. Another talented young person shot photos and video clips on the same theme. The others experimented with print, drawing and other techniques to create a zine exploring how young people might engage with the five ways to wellbeing to improve their own mental health.

Several of the volunteers supported the young people each week, joining in or sharing skills or knowledge when asked, and sitting back and allowing the young people space when that was what they needed. The chance to explore, experiment, develop, question and learn in such a warm and connected learning environment had a really strong impact on the young people, which was really revealed at the end of the project.

We had carried out mini-evaluations throughout the project, but had not had much feedback from the young people, so it was when they had their final

event with their artwork exhibited on the promenade deck, and their films on show in the saloon, and their families to show round the Danny and share their knowledge with that the young people were really able to share the impact that it had on them.

The words they used to describe how they felt about the project – fun, grateful, smiley, alive, optimistic, fantastic, relaxed, calm – revealed what a positive environment the Danny was for them. And the things they had gained – pride in their achievements, connections with new people, confidence – were things they are taking with them as they advance in their lives. Feedback from their parents gave us a picture of how the Danny project had had an impact on the young people in their home lives: “I think the care and I’d say the love [my daughter] felt from everybody put her at ease and helped her to open up”, “Coming to the Danny each week has given him a purpose. I know that he has enjoyed it and it has given him back some confidence that he had lost.”

It was really moving for all of the Danny team to see the impact the project has had on the young people, and as one of the parents said: “There has obviously been a lot of thought and work involved with the project and I would like to thank you all for your time and patience with [my son]; it has truly been a fantastic experience for him, one that I hope can continue for lots more young people in the future.”

Now that we know for sure the far-reaching impact that the Danny can have on the learning and wellbeing of young people struggling with their mental health, we will definitely do our utmost to ensure that the work does continue. We will continue working in partnership with Halton Halton Education, Inclusion and Provision team, and we have entered into a partnership with Youth Federation, an organisation that works with young people across Cheshire, with whom we hope to reach more young people in 2022.



Children and Families

"We don't always go out as a family with Gran & Grandad – but when we do it's good to have something that interests us all. A mix of an interesting environment, outdoor space, some nice cream tea/bites and experiences or activities for the kids."

This year, the use of the grassy slope at Sutton Weaver alongside the visit to the Danny came into its own. As restrictions eased, families started having days out together, but were keen to have Covid-safe, well-ventilated spaces, where their children could enjoy time with their grandparents without putting them at risk. Parents were very keen for children to have experiences they had missed out on during Covid, and to have enjoyable and engaging learning activities. The Danny has proven an ideal location for family wellbeing, providing lots of ways for families to enjoy time together and to connect, take notice, learn, stay active and give us support, ideas and feedback.

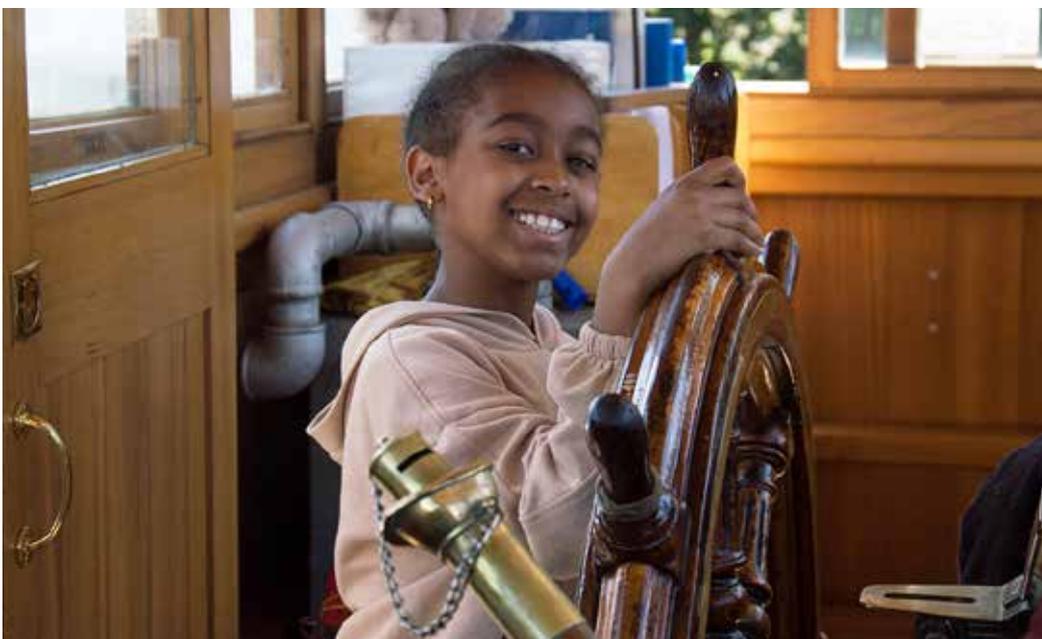
We worked in partnership with Halton Libraries to create Summer Reading Challenge events, which engaged the children in both learning about the history of the Danny and in taking notice of the natural environment, in actively creating and decorating boats and in listening to stories and learning and singing songs together.

Upon arrival, families were given a sheet with plants that you can find at the riverside, and were challenged to find as many as they could. Children responded with enthusiasm, noticing things about the environment that they would have easily overlooked. They were able to use leaves they had picked to create cyanotypes or sunprints, learning how to actively create prints from the natural materials they had gathered.

Then it was onto the boat, and the race was on to find the teddy bear crew and passengers from the teddy trail. As always, there was great enthusiasm for exploring the Danny and asking our crew hundreds of questions (both children and the adults). There was time for the children to do some maritime crafting before the call came for storytime, which took place under the trees in the shade at the top of the slope, followed by river and sea songs.

Families enjoyed being able to slow down and river watch, and enjoyed exploring with the children on the Danny and the riverside to find the items identified in the trails. We incorporated much of what worked at the library event for our mini-mariners event, adding in coal-shoveling and rope-throwing challenges, as well as our virtual reality challenge to drive the Danny.

We will be running family days for looked after children and their families and foster families next summer, building on the success of the focus on wellbeing and literacy and the Danny's ability to connect with and engage all members of the family across generations.



FROM PRAIRIE TO PLATE

The "Danny" Had A Role in Feeding The Nation



The population growth during the Industrial Revolution was to bring about a major change in the world of commerce as large amounts of grain was imported into the UK beginning in the latter half of the C19th and our "Danny" was to play a vital role in this trade.

The trade began when the hated Corn Laws were abolished in the 1840's. These protectionist laws kept the price of bread high as duties were imposed on cheaper foreign grains. Following a campaign in parliament by the Anti Corn Law League led by Richard Cobden and John Bright the abolition of these high duties resulted in a worldwide trade in grain with imports which included the North American Prairies, California and the Baltic all arriving in Liverpool.

British banks in particular had been major investors in American Railroads as the Prairies and Great Lakes opened up with eventually North America taking over 50% of the trade. As a result, when the "Danny" was built the trade was very well established and at the same time to cope with this rapid expansion the millers had greatly increased their capacity by moving from wind power to steam and later electricity. Traditional millstones had been replaced with roller milling worked by iron gearing as opposed to traditional wooden whilst the many varieties of foreign grains could be blended with poorer grains to still give a quality product.

The dominance of Liverpool with the emergence of commodity traders, expensive transhipment for cross Mersey and inland waterway transit was to annoy the population of Manchester in particular. The Liverpool based companies such as Balfour Williamson and Bolton Ogden were soon referred to as "Grain Barons" and it was not until the C20th that organisations such as Rank, Cargills and Spillers emerged with Kellogg's, Hovis and CWS who had their own berths at Trafford Wharf arriving because of the Manchester Ship Canal opening.

Mills migrated to waterside sites with for example Chester, Wrenbury, Grindley Brook and even as far south as Oswestry taking grain brought across the Mersey by the "Danny". The best known miller taking grain from this

cross Mersey traffic was A.A. Peates who had a mill at Maesbury near Oswestry and it was their option in 1934 to use lorry transport rather than narrow boats led to the closure of the Montgomery Canal.

Grain had been carried on the inland waterways prior to the abolition of the Corn Laws but in very minor quantities however by the time the "Danny" entered service the tonnages of grain entering Ellesmere Port was equal to that of iron, steel, and bricks. Evidence given to the Royal Commission on Canals in 1910 demonstrated that between 1906 and 1909 grain was a main cargo on the Shropshire Union canal ranking with coal, iron, and bricks.

Transhipment proved to be expensive, the grain often bagged in 2 cwt sacks was double handled firstly in Liverpool Docks into barges and then into narrow boats in Ellesmere Port or sometimes in Chester. Eventually milling operations migrated further to become port industries with facilities dockside and the cross Mersey traffic died out.

Grain did not just get transported to Ellesmere Port as there was a thriving barge traffic to the mills in Warrington which was only to come to an end in 1984 when Allied mills closed its Bank Quay facility. Two small barges, "Panary" and "Humber Trader" continued to service the mill often with Bridgewater Department tug M.S.C Bennett or M.S.C Dolphin assisting and both still exist, "Panary" being laid up in Liverpool and Humber Trader now a houseboat in Suffolk.

To this day grain is still taken up the ship canal with Arklow boats into Manchester and a barge "Loach" offloading at Wiggs Wharf in Runcorn into road transport for mills in Stockport.

The cross Mersey trade that the "Danny" had a role in has now virtually disappeared but once again this unique little ship shows her presence in some of the major events in British history.

This article was adapted from an original piece of work written by Les Green and Nigel Bowker

EVENTS IN 2021

We hadn't expected to host such an interesting array of events this year, but despite restrictions we have hosted weddings, corporate events, family parties and private tours. Bookings are now being taken for private hire events for 2022 and we already have confirmed bookings for private cruises and static hires.



NOVEMBER PICTURE QUIZ QUESTION



Name the Ship in this photo was photographed outside Eastham Lock and the vessel shown was a regular visitor to the Manchester Ship Canal in the late 1970's

If you think you know the answer contact Colin on colin.leonard@danieladamson.co.uk and the winner can choose a gift from our Merchandise range

ANSWER to the picture quiz in last TOWLINE

The winner of the mystery ship competition was Member No.2, Nigel Bowker who correctly identified it as the MV Nordic. 8875 GRT and was pleased to receive the prize of a Danny Restoration DVD.

The MV Nordic was built in 1943 (originally named Chinese Prince) - On charter to Shaw Savill 1950-1963 renamed Nordic, was scrapped in 1964.