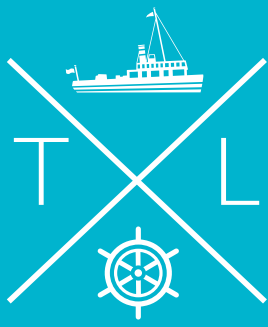


ISSUE 11 – MARCH 2024



# TOWLINE

The Official Newsletter of the Danny



 **THE  
DANNY**



**A STEAMSHIP  
EXPERIENCE  
— WITH A —  
*Unique Story***



## Chairman's Piece

### Stuart Wood

Danny's busy winter refit ended, and the season proper started in March 2023, with a call at the ever popular Royal Albert Dock. The season's programme contained an impressive mix of activities, both static and cruising on and along our three operational areas – the Mersey, the Manchester Ship Canal and the beautiful Weaver, all providing many different activities and themes.

Team Danny is becoming familiar with setbacks and surprises and 2023 was no exception.

The price of coal was baffling in its changeability, chiefly upwards. Our current supply comes from Colombia with the price increasing daily as it crossed the Atlantic.

Prolonged and persistent problems with the Weaver swing bridges were a serious challenge. However, rapid and imaginative replanning by our staff led by Andrea Ward meant that while the problems were not solved the full scale of the difficulties was greatly reduced. On one occasion due to continuing swing bridge problems, Danny was trapped the wrong way around at Sutton Weaver with a trip to Liverpool beckoning. Our cry for help was answered in fine style by the team at Carmet Towage, who sent two of their vessels to tow Danny stern first down to Marsh Lock, turn her round and tow her stern first back to Sutton Weaver. What it is to have such good friends. A similar problem occurred on the final trip of the season, but this was due to too much water in the Weaver after a long period of heavy rain. After cancellation and disappointingly without passengers, Danny arrived safely in Canning Dock. Here she took part in several high-profile events organised by our Learning and Participation Manager, Cathriona Bourke. Firstly, we were in position to witness the remarkable River of Light, a weeklong evening light show at Liverpool's waterfront. This was followed by a groundbreaking three days in Canning Half Tide Dock charting the history of harbour towage and the fuels used for the vessels as part of our

Maritime Heritage, Maritime Futures project, which Cathriona covers in more detail on the pages within. The story started with a 1903 steamship – The Danny – touched on a mid-20th Century motor tug – the Brocklebank – and ended with a right up-to-date super tug – Svitzer Trident skippered by our Marine Superintendent, Dan Cross. This event received great support from Peel Ports, Svitzer Marine and Canal & Rivers Trust and caused a huge amount of interest on a wide scale.

By far the most significant event for me of 2023 was Danny's 120th birthday celebration in early September. A great day was had by all at Sutton Weaver, music of all sorts and lots of visitors including two fully operational traction engines – well they are steamers too of course! Here's to the next 120 years!

With that thought in mind it is right to look how another 120 years could at least be started. With the continued determination, expertise and indomitable good humour of all our volunteers it is possible. And yes, you have heard this before, but Our Little Steamer is leading the way nationally insofar as she is a Dual Fuel ship. This is a plan for the future in this country probably, but we are there already. How? Well, we use coal – expensive- and we use Volunteers- priceless!

Talking of the future, I am facing a certain heavyweight birthday this year and with that in view I have decided to hang up my skipper's cap after one last trip repositioning The Danny from Sandon to Canning on April 24th.

I intend to continue my long association with DAPS, focussing on my role as Chairman and promoting The Danny through our talks programme and as an on-board ambassador.

It is a great privilege to be part of the amazing team keeping The Danny going. Long may it be so. Let's make 2024 a super year, hopefully with new volunteers, after all the whole operation is good fun!

# 2024 CRUISES

Bookings can now be made online at [www.thedanny.co.uk](http://www.thedanny.co.uk)

## May

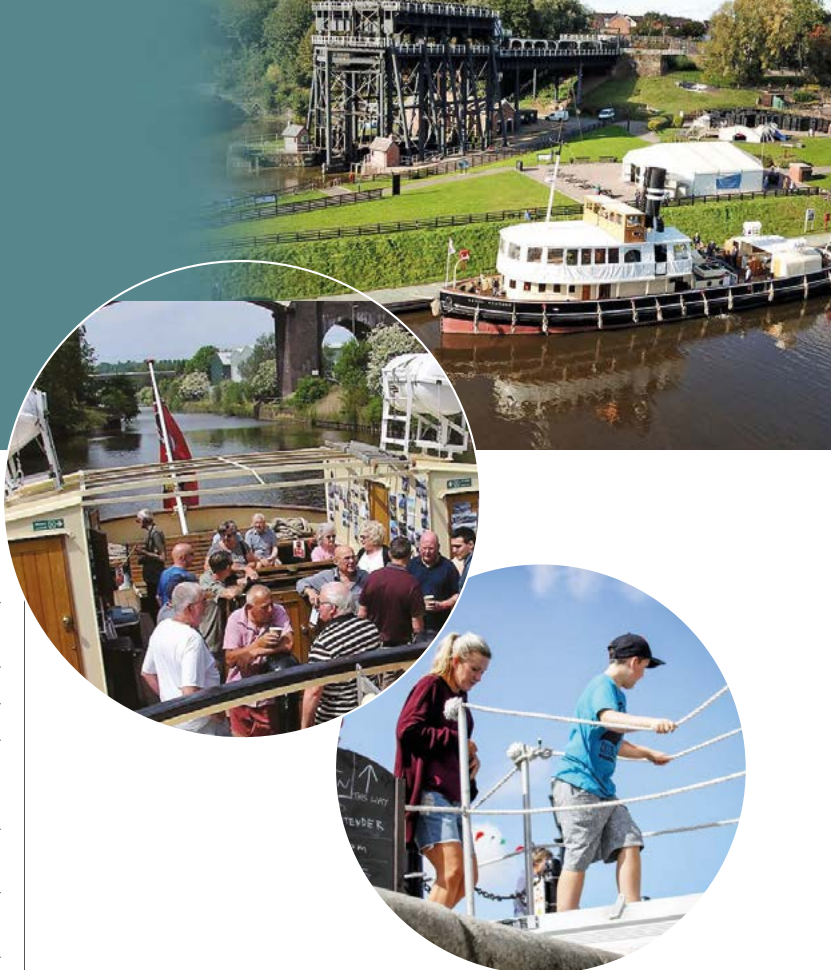
<b>SUN 5</b>	Canning Dock, Liverpool - Mode Wheel Lock, Salford	<b>0830-1800</b>	£120
<b>MON 6</b>	Mode Wheel Lock, Salford - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1000-1600</b>	£85
<b>THU 9</b>	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Acton Bridge	<b>1100-1330</b>	£40
	Acton Bridge - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1400-1630</b>	£40
	<b>FAMILY CRUISE</b> Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Marsh Lock - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1800-1900</b>	£5-10
<b>FRI 10</b>	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1200-1600</b>	£50
<b>MON 13</b>	Anderton Boat Lift - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1230-1630</b>	£50
<b>FRI 31</b>	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port via turn at Runcorn	<b>1300-1630</b>	£60

## June

<b>SAT 1</b>	National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port - Latchford - National Waterways Museum	<b>1100-1500</b>	£60
<b>SUN 2</b>	<b>TWILIGHT RIVER MUSIC CRUISE</b> featuring Leeanne James National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port - Canning Dock, Liverpool	<b>1700-2100</b>	£70
<b>SAT 22</b>	Canning Dock, Liverpool - Acton Bridge	<b>1130-1800</b>	£90
<b>SUN 23</b>	Acton Bridge - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1100-1230</b>	£30
	<b>MUSIC CRUISE</b> featuring Top Monkey Anderton Boat Lift - Acton Bridge - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1330-1700</b>	£45
<b>MON 24</b>	Anderton Boat Lift - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1200-1600</b>	£50

## July

<b>FRI 12</b>	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Acton Bridge via Marsh Lock	<b>1700-2030</b>	£45
<b>SAT 13</b>	Acton Bridge - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1200-1330</b>	£30
	Anderton Boat Lift - Anderton Boat Lift via Acton Bridge	<b>1700-2030</b>	£40
<b>SUN 14</b>	<b>MUSIC CRUISE</b> featuring Top Monkey Anderton Boat Lift - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1400-1800</b>	£55
<b>FRI 26</b>	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port via turn at Runcorn	<b>1200-1530</b>	£60
<b>SAT 27</b>	National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port - Mode Wheel Lock	<b>1100-1700</b>	£85
<b>SUN 28</b>	Mode Wheel Lock - National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port	<b>1100-1700</b>	£85
<b>MON 29</b>	National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1200-1800</b>	£75
<b>TUE 30</b>	Anderton Boat Lift - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1200-1600</b>	£50



## August

<b>FRI 16</b>	<b>FAMILY CRUISE</b> Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Marsh Lock - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1400-1500</b>	£5-10
	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1700-2100</b>	£50
<b>SUN 18</b>	<b>FISH &amp; CHIP CRUISE</b> Anderton Boat Lift - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge via Marsh Lock	<b>1330-1900</b>	£60
<b>FRI 30</b>	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1700-2100</b>	£50
<b>SAT 31</b>	Anderton Boat Lift - Anderton Boat Lift via Acton Bridge	<b>1200-1530</b>	£40
	<b>MUSIC CRUISE</b> featuring Top Monkey Anderton Boat Lift - Anderton Boat Lift via Acton Bridge	<b>1700-2030</b>	£45

## September

<b>SUN 1</b>	<b>FISH &amp; CHIP CRUISE</b> Anderton Boat Lift - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge via Marsh Lock	<b>1330-1900</b>	£60
<b>SUN 8</b>	Anderton Boat Lift - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1100-1500</b>	£50
	<b>FAMILY CRUISE</b> Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Marsh Lock - Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge	<b>1630-1730</b>	£5-10
<b>FRI 20</b>	Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge - Anderton Boat Lift	<b>1200-1600</b>	£50
<b>SUN 22</b>	<b>MUSIC CRUISE</b> featuring Top Monkey Anderton Boat Lift - Anderton Boat Lift via Acton Bridge	<b>1300-1630</b>	£45

## October

<b>THU 3</b>	Anderton Boat Lift - National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port	<b>1100-1700</b>	£75
<b>MON 7</b>	<b>FINALE CRUISE</b> Acton Bridge - Sandon Dock, Liverpool with River Mersey & Dock Tour	<b>1000-1700</b>	£95



## A Message from our Director **Andrea Ward**

I can't believe how fast last year went, and this year is going!! You can read all about our busy year on the following pages, so I won't repeat anything here... we are currently in our winter maintenance, and I was made up to be asked to help with the boiler survey prep... being the

littlest member of the team has its uses and I was put to work cleaning the inside!! Dirty work, but someone had to do it!

I hope you enjoy this edition of Towline and we get to welcome many of you aboard this year.

# 20 years of DAPS

Many of us are becoming familiar with the beautiful pictures of The Danny earning her keep on the River Mersey, Manchester Ship Canal and River Weaver, but it seems opportune to take a look back 20 years today when things were very different.

In early February 2004, despite being a unique century-old maritime survivor, she was earmarked for scrapping at Garston. But word of this soon got around the tightly knit maritime community and a group of 20 individuals held a hastily arranged meeting to inspect The Danny and Daniel Adamson Preservation Society (DAPS) was formed on 21st February 2004.

The campaign was spearheaded by Mersey tug skipper Dan Cross, with the help of Tony

Hirst, a former director of the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum. Dan's employer Svitzer Marine, on hearing of the steam tug's plight, offered to dry dock and survey her for free to assess whether she was in fact worth saving. The next thing he knew, Dan had bought the Daniel Adamson from owner MSCC for the princely sum of £1.00 and the campaign was underway.

The scale of the challenge became clear when the cost of insurance, simply to tow her from Eastham to a berth across the river in Liverpool, was quoted at £2,000. But with the goodwill and generosity of many, the money was raised. Even though she had been stationary for two decades, and the move from Ellesmere Port would not be done under her own steam, a new chapter





in the Daniel Adamson's life was about to start. There was a determination that she would steam again, and the support from many quarters gave DAPS the confidence to throw everything into the campaign.

The next task was clearing two decades' worth of mud, rainwater and rubbish. As the media and Internet forums spread the word about the Daniel Adamson's rescue, more members and volunteers joined up to DAPS, bringing much needed skills, enthusiasm, and crucially, time. Ships' surveyors and engineers, pipefitters, plumbers, joiners, electricians and many more, retired and still in employment, all offered their services free of charge.

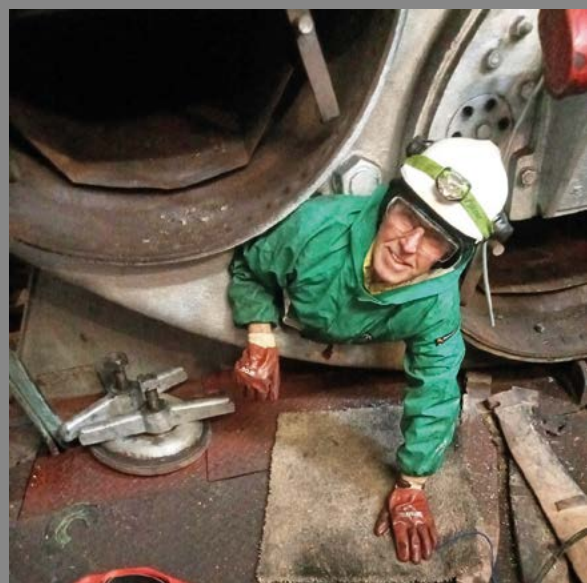
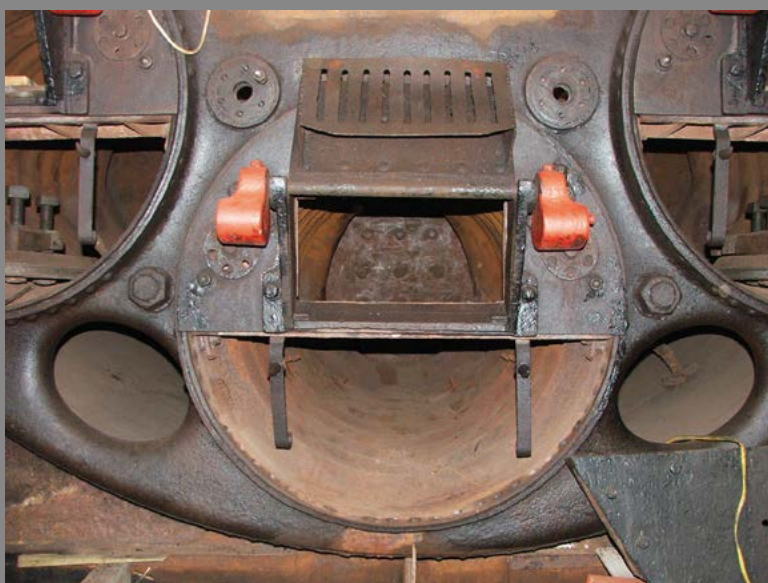
Original members of the crew also turned up, including John Deakin, whose knowledge of the quirky workings of the old vessel proved invaluable. But more – much more – was needed. The commitment and fundraising drive paid off, and in February 2015 the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded £3.8m to restore the Daniel Adamson to full working order. The exciting news meant that she would once again be able to sail under her own steam. And here we are eight years on, still run by our amazing volunteers and two members of staff – these before and after photos highlight this amazing achievement.



# ENGINEERING UPDATE

**Andy Dobbs** Chief Engineer

December saw our boiler inspection carried out after a sterling effort by engineering volunteers to empty and internally clean the boiler and remove the safety valves, main stop valve and sight glasses for inspection by the boiler surveyor. Cleaning out the inside of the boiler is a somewhat difficult task due to the accessibility but Graham was ably assisted by Andrea who can get through the lower manholes a lot more easily than some of us older less flexible volunteers.



January has seen us start to replace the fire bars some of which are not in an ideal condition. New ones have been ordered but we are machining some of them to get some more life out of them.



As we put overhauled valves back on the boiler we need to 'lap in' the valves to their seats to provide a tight seal when they are closed. Some of them are more accessible than others.



In the engine room we have taken off the doors from the starboard condenser and removed the sludge that accumulates because we spend most of our time cruising on the Weaver Navigation, with its relatively low depth of water compared to our draft. This causes the pumps that circulate the cooling water through the condensers to pick up sediment which can block the tubes through which the cooling water passes. The sludge is shovelled out and then each tube is flushed through with a hose. A very labour intensive and messy job.

# Maritime Heritage Maritime Futures

## Float Your Boat Challenge, June 5th, 2024

**Cathriona Bourke** DAPS Learning & Participation Manager



In 2023, we were awarded £98,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to spearhead a learning project connecting young people in the region with their maritime history, and with the contemporary maritime industries and how they are gearing up for a greener future. We also aimed to increase support for The Danny from within industry, and specifically maritime industries, through the project.

The first phase of the project involved taking a deep breath and testing out what support there would be for the project – we had promised to introduce young people to maritime industries and to how the sector is working towards a sustainable future, one where they might even find their future careers. But would the maritime sector be interested in helping us deliver this agenda and shape how we do it?

It's been a really happy journey so far! First of all, the Canal and River Trust have been brilliant partners, introducing young people to the marine environment, and what we are protecting down there. Working together means a better offer for the young people and the colleges, and shared work in reaching the colleges and getting students on board.

Then Svitzer stepped in, at first very thankfully in the form of support from naval architect and head of fleet Richard Young to develop the shape of the project around a hands-on design challenge for the students. The challenge is now defined: groups of students from colleges in the Liverpool City Region are competing to design the vessel which will transport the greatest number of half-filled 25-litre

water barrels from a pontoon in Salthouse Dock 130m to a landing area on the floating stage within a timespan of half an hour, at the lowest economic and environmental cost.

To equip them for the challenge, and to introduce the historic context of maritime in the Liverpool City Region, we began to plan a series of learning events. For the first event, the Canal and River Trust ran underwater cameras from the floating stage and a marine biologist engaged the students in discussions about marine ecosystems and the importance of supporting them. They also ran a water safety session, so that if we are encouraging young people to get on the water, we are doing so responsibly, and they know how to keep themselves safe. Richard, the naval architect from Svitzer introduced basic principles of naval architecture, using an array of Tupperware and metal trays and a variety of weights, and supported by the Canal and River Trust canoeing instructor who gave them a quick run out in the water to explore buoyancy and stability at first hand! Finally, one of the marine engineers from Safeguard Engineering discussed material science and sustainability with them. It was a great day, and 36 young engineers emerged from the cold, rainy day full of enthusiasm.

For the next learning day, focussed on heritage and sustainability, we had amazing support again. For the first time, Svitzer brought a commercial tugboat into the city centre, so that students could visit and compare tugboat technology from 1903 (The Danny) through the mid twentieth century (The Brocklebank)



to the present (Svitzer Trident). It was a rare sight, the three tugs lined up at Canning Dock. Furthermore, we had great support from National Museums Liverpool with the head of the Maritime Museum making himself available to speak to the students about the history of the Port of Liverpool, based on the objects and buildings they could see from where we were berthed. Finally, the head of decarbonisation from Svitzer made himself available to talk to the students about how Svitzer have gone about meeting the challenges of sustainability and decarbonisation. What an amazing learning experience for the students.

And now the challenge of designing their own vessels gets closer. The next great support from the project came from Kirsten Shoemith, naval architect at Cammell Lairds, who hosted an inspiring session for students from Hugh Baird, Riverside and Cronton Colleges. Not only did they have the chance to learn about shipbuilding on Merseyside and the work going on at the shipyard, but they also had the opportunity to talk to naval architects in small groups, troubleshooting and developing their own plans for the Float Your Boat challenge.

The work will go on in the colleges, on their boat designs, over the coming months. They've had a great offer from Cammell Laird's for feedback on their designs before they start to build their boats, and they will also have one more learning event: a trip in the docks in April, during which they will have the time to find out about the hydraulic system that used to power the docks, and also about the work Peel Ports do in running the port and the ways that they are changing their business practices to make them sustainable. Then the next time they meet will be June 5th, for the Float Your Boat event at the Albert Dock.

This part of the project is working with engineering students, to enrich their learning journey, and make them consider the rich maritime history of their region, and the potential future marine engineering jobs in the area. We also plan to continue our work with young people who are not on a mainstream learning track towards a career, and to include them in the events of June 5th. Canal and River Trust will be working with them to explore ways of harnessing the power of water, and we will be working with them to explore and capture the maritime history of the region. The aim is for their work to be showcased at the June 5th event, so that they are included in the cohort considering different ways in which maritime may be part of their future.

We have been delighted with the response from the maritime and education sectors to the project. We started it in response to young people's feedback that they didn't know about maritime history, or about what goes on at the port today, and also feedback that they enjoyed being part of the community around The Danny. We aim to build the project up so that greater numbers of young people in the region can experience the connection with our maritime past, the potential of the future and of new green technologies and so that we continue to build a supportive community around The Danny, that will help us on our own path towards sustainability.



# Crossing the line and earning an Equator Certificate

**Dr Peter Scott** Volunteer and board member

Back in the distant past, two or three centuries ago, 'crossing the line' or equator for the first time was something to be feared. You were likely to have to endure a ceremony which could turn out to be very rough. Fatalities were not unknown and sailors were often apt to sew their equator certificates into the bottom of their kitbags. This was proof that they had undergone the initiation ceremony of 'crossing the line' and they would therefore not be subject to it again.

The origins of the initiation ceremony are lost in time and modern interpretations of it vary but, in essence, it involves a trial before the court of Neptune (or a seaman dressed as Neptune) followed by immersion in water. The water might be the sea or it could be a container containing water onboard the ship.

Back in August 1974 I crossed the equator for the first time in the Pacific Ocean en route from the Panama Canal to New Zealand. I was a 19 year old Senior Ordinary Seaman onboard a Norwegian tanker that was on a round the world trip that had begun in Ellesmere Port.

The ship, the Essi Silje, had a crew of around thirty. A few days before we crossed the equator four 'policemen' were appointed. They were generally the biggest and strongest members of the crew. The day before the crossing the policemen asked to see every crew member's equator certificate. If you couldn't produce a certificate you were going to have to face the initiation ceremony. I was told that the policeman had virtually unlimited powers. If you retired to your cabin and locked the door they would break down the door and you would be responsible for the damage.

As the ship approached the equator the policemen arrived to bundle all those on their list on to the deck. All the crew were assembled there including a seaman dressed as 'Neptune.' You were first taken to be examined by the 'doctor' who was another seaman with a stethoscope



Equator Certificate

around his neck. The 'doctor' determined that all initiates had to have their body hair shaved off, they then were 'prescribed' medicine. I don't know what went into the cocktail but it was awful. Finally, the initiates would be ducked in water.

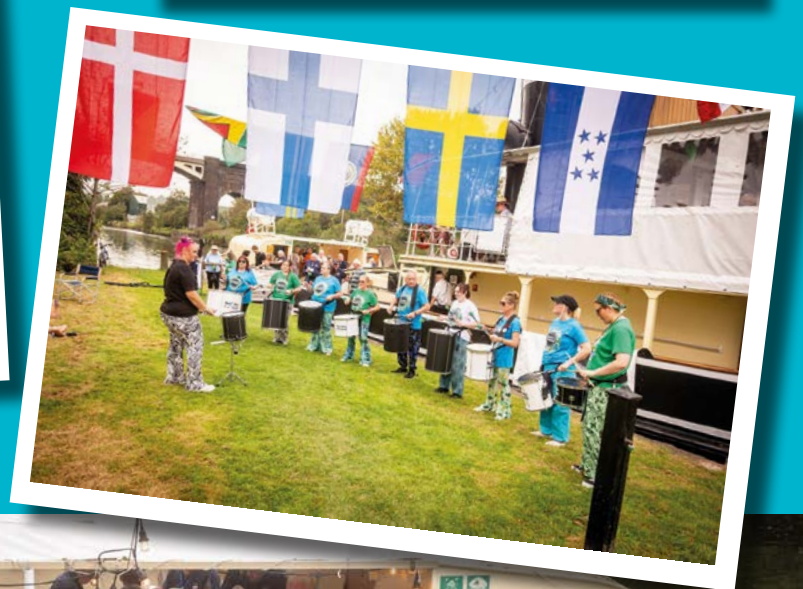
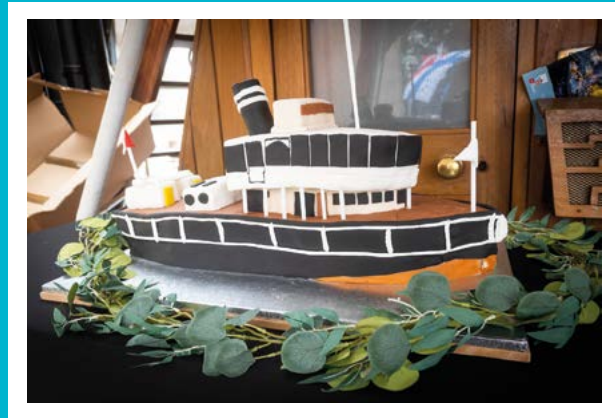
This wasn't as bad as it might have been. The shaving of body hair was a token gesture which didn't involve the loss of any hair and on our ship there was a rudimentary swimming pool so we didn't have to go over the side and into the sea. When it was my turn to be thrown into the swimming pool I managed to wrestle one of the policemen in there with me. That meant that I had to again be referred to the 'doctor', have my body hair shaved and be 'prescribed' more of the medicine.

I'm sure ships of other nationalities conducted similar initiation ceremonies but mine may have been just the Norwegian version. My equator certificate is written in Norwegian with a Latin title but you don't need to understand Norwegian or Latin to roughly make out what it says. Ekvator Sertifikat is easily translatable as Equator Certificate. The ship's stamp has faded after nearly 50 years but the date of 1/8/74 is still clear.

# THE DANNY CELEBRATES HER 120TH BIRTHDAY

In September 2023 we celebrated the 120th birthday of our little steamer at our Sutton Weaver berth! All members and volunteers and their families were invited, along with supporters such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Canal & Rivers Trust, local councillors and businesses and a lovely day was had by all who came along.

There were games for the younger visitors, beers for the older visitors, live music from local bands and visiting steam attractions for all... a specially commissioned birthday cake was cut by Dan Cross and Louise Sutherland from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and the achievements of both The Danny and the Society were recognised and toasted... well done everyone!





## Education Update

**Cathriona Bourke**

DAPS Learning and Participation Manager

# The Danny's impact: Young people's mental health and wellbeing

Our partnership work with Ancora House Community School in Frodsham really took off in 2023. The students at the school have all been facing struggles with their mental health, and the school aims to build their confidence to get their education back on track. Part of this work aims to support young people in engaging with the community, and we have been able to offer some great opportunities for the young people to connect with us and with the wider community.

From their first visit, it was clear that they felt a rapport with our wonderful and welcoming volunteers. "On The Danny, everyone is really friendly and makes us feel welcome. They make us feel that it's okay if we are not up to joining in at times, depending on how we are feeling. I like that because sometimes I feel bad if I don't join in, but I know I can just 'be' with people on board and that is enough. I feel more confident from it." They also drew inspiration and confidence from the story of The Danny's rescue from the scrapyard and restoration to full operation thanks to the volunteers: "It shows us that something can be very run down, but that with help and time and not giving up, it can feel good again - just like us."

With that connection in place, we introduced

them to a way that they could get involved and play a part in what The Danny offers to our community – by working with us on our events for the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic. The history, in particular of the merchant navy's role, ignited their imaginations. Our own Captain David McNamee came into the school and talked about the merchant navy, but also about his own career and the many roles he had played in the course of his 50 years at sea, and his presentation was met with rapt attention. "We were truly inspired by Captain Dave's presentation and talk – it's made us want to do something with our lives, and made us feel we can get there as long as we never give up." Ex-Danny crew member and long-time Danny volunteer, Colin Leonard, presented the research he and some of the volunteers had been doing on The Danny's role during the Battle of the Atlantic, assisting vessels back into Manchester for unloading of vital cargoes that kept the country going.

The students were fully on board with being involved with the project, and the next time we visited, they had produced artwork, timelines, and captions to display alongside the heritage boards we had produced for a display in the Art Deco saloons. Support from Cheshire Community



Foundation meant that they could produce a very professional looking display. When they came to visit The Danny for the first day of the Battle of the Atlantic events, they were really proud of what they had achieved, and that they were getting recognition for the contribution they had made: "The art exhibition for the Battle of The Atlantic gave me so much oomph and boosted my confidence- when I saw so many people coming on board to see MY work it really made me feel honoured and excited."

It was very apparent in talking with the students that engaging with The Danny had really helped them build their confidence, communication skills and sense of their own potential and ability to fulfil that potential. This was also borne out in the monitoring the school carried out with the students, using their own bespoke mental health and wellbeing tools and scales, derived from NHS assessment tools. On all the criteria they

assessed: communication, engagement, effective learning, etc, the students had moved several points up the scale. What I was most delighted about was that being part of The Danny's Battle of the Atlantic public events had a huge impact on their sense of their own potential and the positive possibilities the future holds for them. They could see that not only had they gained something, but they had given something to us, and they could be proud of their contribution.

"It has been good to keep the history alive, especially when we are the younger generation and can learn from one another, and it makes The Danny volunteers and experts view young people in a new light."

We are talking to the next cohort of students from Ancora House this year to engage them with our Maritime Heritage Maritime Futures project, exploring both maritime and environmental themes, in partnership with the Canal and River Trust.

## The Danny partnership with Halton Mind

**Nic Lunt** Halton Mind Director

We are looking forward to working with the Danny in 2024 with a programme of Wellbeing Wednesdays on board, following on a successful pilot project around the topic of building resilience.

Participants on the pilot project enjoyed the feeling that, though they were only a few minutes from home, the peaceful environment made them feel like they had got a bit of distance from their daily lives. They felt welcome and enjoyed the activities on board, and the feeling of distance allowed them space to reflect and gain perspective on some of the challenges they face, while we delivered sessions that aimed to equip them with tools to help them deal with some of these challenges. For us it was significant that no one dropped out of the project – considering that many of the participants were coping with significant anxiety, this alone was a very positive outcome.

The Danny, with her history of survival despite adversity, and thanks to the help of a supportive community, is a symbol of resilience, and a great setting for practitioner-led training courses. However, it's also an enjoyable nature and heritage setting, a volunteer project and it offers

different ways that people can positively engage with their community and make a contribution, and we would also like to build on this, opening some of the events to the general community to take part in wellbeing activities.

As Halton Mind turns fifty this year, we celebrate fifty years of supporting our local community. One of the ways we can offer more to our community is through building partnerships, and we are very proud to develop our work with the Danny together with our project participants and the Danny volunteers.



# Linking the Midlands to the Mersey

## The Danny's Role in the History of the Shropshire Union Canal

*In this article, Les Green examines the background and reasons for the development of the Shropshire Union Canal and why the owners, London and Northwestern Railway, the largest company in the world decided to build The Danny and how both have fared in the 20th century.*

The Danny was laid down in 1903 by the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company when this canal - the Shroppie - was in its heyday as a profitable transport hub finally ending with the First World War. However, the history of the Shroppie goes back well before The Danny was thought of and parts go back to the very beginnings of the Industrial Revolution with its need for a cheap efficient transport system to end the days of the packhorse and horse and cart.

Opened in 1779, the core of the system was the barge-sized Chester Canal, a failing enterprise, aimed to link Nantwich with the Dee at Chester to bolster the fortunes of Chester. Chester had been, in medieval times, a major port in the Northwest enjoying strong links to the Irish Sea and coastal trade. This waterway was in dire financial straits when Beeston Lock collapsed, and a partial closure was implemented. However, with the proposed Ellesmere Canal or the Llangollen as it is now known, in 1790, its fortune changed, and Chester had to bow to the inevitable and open a link to the Mersey in 1797 and Ellesmere Port developed.

Liverpool was the deep-water port capable of handling the largest ships with direct routes across the world's ocean to new markets that all the industrialists and entrepreneurs in the Midlands wanted. The Ellesmere or Llangollen Canal was to reach Llangollen in 1808 after joining the Chester in 1805. But unlike the Chester Canal, it was built to narrow boat 7ft wide standards, as were all the later canals that were to form the Shropshire Union later in the century.

Trade began to grow as the canals reached new markets and the Llangollen Canal spread with branches to Newtown, now called the Montgomery Canal or Monty for short, into

Whitchurch and Ellesmere. The cross-Mersey connection was at Ellesmere Port which was a river port with wide tidal ranges and the narrow boats were unsuitable for the crossing, hence the need to tranship cargoes in Ellesmere Port. Sailing craft was the first mode of transport across the Mersey but by 1815 steam powered vessels were beginning to be used all along the Mersey estuary routes, with the first steamer on cross-Mersey traffic arriving in the 1870's. The Mersey estuary lays a claim to having the first steam-powered vessel in the world. Unreliable and lacking power these early steamers were to be the beginnings of modern maritime propulsion and The Danny was one of the last in line to this heritage

### **Thomas Telford and the Birmingham to Liverpool Junction Canal**

Telford was the key driver behind the Birmingham to Liverpool Junction canal, opened in 1835 with an initial share capital of £383,000 pounds but actually costing £762,000 to complete. It was to link the Staffordshire and Worcester Canal at Autherly Junction near Wolverhampton to an end-on-end junction with the Chester Canal at Nantwich. Again a narrow canal, it was eventually to be 66 miles long and to save a 20-mile canal journey through the old route via Trent and Mersey Canal to the Mersey.

Built very much to railway civil engineering standards with long straight cuttings and embankments, unlike the previous contour style builds of the first canal engineers, this canal was to bring increasing trade and profits. It also attracted new links to other canals with the Middlewich Branch to the Trent and Mersey and the Shrewsbury and Newport Branch to the River Severn.

The main cargoes carried fed industries from Birmingham to Liverpool and their supporting conurbations with coal, iron ore, china clay, building materials, grain and foodstuffs. Whilst many canals in the late 19th century were suffering against railway competition, The Shroppie came into ownership of the London & Northwest

Railway (LNWR) in the 1840's and ran through the territory of rivals the Great Western Railway. Taking trade from its rival and being in profit saw The Shroppie trade up to the First World War as a going concern. The whole system was to be called the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company as the original intention was to convert the canals to railways, but apart from one railway line, none were changed over.

Profit levels on some aspects were respectable with up to 24% profit (C19th accounting methods) on general trade, whilst the cross Mersey trade, of which The Danny was to be a part, produced up to 16%, but sadly the Ellesmere Canal (Llangollen) never paid a dividend to shareholders. Ellesmere Port continued to expand its facilities. In 1905 the network was still carrying a total of 606,000 tonnes of cargo, of which The Danny and her sister vessels took 587,000 across the Mersey.

### **The Manchester Ship Canal and sale**

The arrival of the Manchester Ship Canal in the 1890's gave trade at Ellesmere Port an enormous boost, with now seven miles of "still" water in front of the docks rather than a strong tidal flow.

The LNWR saw that the canal was making a reasonable profit, it was taking trade from their bitter rivals the Great Western Railway and it was well run. In the 1906-1909 Royal Commission on Canals report it said of The Shroppie - "the canal appears, overall, well maintained and worked". The Danny clearly played a part in this report.

The Danny was one of the last vessels involved in the regular carriage of passengers on the waterways with her passenger decks operational until 1915.

However, the end of the First World War was to see the waterways run down, factories moved away from canal side sites, and lorries were much improved and available at the end of the war. Road transport could offer door-to-door service and higher labour productivity.

In 1921 government support for the railway companies came to an end and the cash strapped

LNWR decided to sell off some of its best assets, and Ellesmere Port and its facilities were in profit and attracted the interest of the Manchester Ship Canal.

The Danny and her two sisters were sold on and another chapter in her history began.

### **The 20th Century Heritage Movement**

In the years of the mid-20th century, governments and society seemed determined to close down much of the transport system that energised the industrial revolution in Britain. The Shropshire Union lost, amongst others, the Montgomery Branch into Mid Wales. This started in 1936 with a canal breach and then by Act of Parliament it was officially abandoned in 1944. The Llangollen canal was only saved because of the need for a water supply from Bala Lake to Cheshire. The Danny, likewise, only survived the arrival of the diesel tugs in the 1960's because she was the corporate hospitality and directors' inspection vessel. This only lasted until 1984 when she was effectively abandoned, ironically in Ellesmere Port.

However, by 1948 a small group of waterway enthusiasts began a movement that was reflected widely in society, which was to slowly change the way governments and society looked at the last remaining artifacts of Britain's industrial heritage; the Inland Waterways Association – IWA – was formed. The Danny had to wait until almost in the breakers yard, then DAPS was formed, and on The Shroppie, although the main line to Birmingham was saved, much of the original Shroppie branch canals were closed. But happily, like The Danny, parts of the Shroppie are now being restored and are going through the same fund-raising process, National Lottery Heritage Fund included, and they are appealing for volunteers.

Because of all the efforts of dedicated volunteers, the link, first planned by Thomas Telford in his Birmingham to Liverpool Junction Canal, is now firmly established for all to enjoy.

# Letter from Rangoon

Capt David McNamee

I flew to Singapore on September 16 1997 then onto Yangon (Rangoon), where I spent an enjoyable weekend before joining the AHTS (Anchor Handling Tug Supply) "Hines Tide".

The "Hines Tide", together with "Norwich Service", were the supply vessels on charter to the Oil Company and supporting the drilling rig, "Marine 305", shipping drilling equipment from the supply base on the Pegu River at Rangoon to the rig some 110 miles distant. The ship was a basic, no frills American built supply ship owned by Tidewater International Marine and was one of 42 ships the company operated in South East Asia.

The "Hines Tide" spent an average of two weeks on location at the rig followed by 203 days alongside at Thaketa – twenty minutes drive from the centre of Rangoon. The time alongside gave me the opportunity to explore this fascinating place. My late father spoke with great affection of Burma and it's people – I now understand what he meant. The village of Thaketa was like going back in time and not part of the 20th century. Houses built on stilts and constructed from bamboo. Electricity was hit and miss and the only reliable form of illumination were candles and oil lamps. For the vintage vehicle enthusiast this was a paradise. Buses dating back to the early 1940's were very much in evidence including World War II gun carriers that had been converted to buses.

It is more than a 100 years since Kipling sailed up the Yangon River to the Myanmar capital, but the glistening gold stupa of the Shwedagon Pagoda continues to dominate Yangon as perhaps no other single structure does in any other major city in the world. But while the Shwedagon Pagoda



The AHTS vessel "Hines Tide"

dominate Yangon from its post on Singuttra Hill three kilometres north of the city, it is far from the whole show. Looking beyond the ageing, British colonial architecture of most of Yangon's buildings there is a cosmopolitan city of 19th century charm, with tree-lined avenues and a people who are known and be gracious and fun loving. The facelift conducted by the military government at the beginning of the 1990's has not changed much and still preserves the city centre as it was when the British left in 1948.

The rig was alongside a platform where a series of well were being drilled and was to be there for several months before moving to another platform two miles away to drill a further series of "holes." Strong and unpredictable currents made ship handling difficult and tested a Master's ship handling skills to the limit.

By the end of October the south-west monsoon and associated heavy rains had given way to clear blue skies, calm seas and temperatures into the 90's F.

However at the beginning of November, tropical storm Linda was tracking north-west in the Gulf of Thailand, across Burma and into the Andaman Sea and had been upgraded to typhoon status and was heading our way. On the morning of November 4th I was "snatching" cargo from the rig in deteriorating weather, when I was told to "stand off" and wait for instructions as the rig was going to be evacuated due to the fast approaching typhoon. At 1730 that afternoon the last helicopter had left for Rangoon, leaving the rig unmanned. Shortly afterwards I received a radio call from Rangoon requesting me to stay on location "to monitor the situation." I politely told the caller that I had no desire or intention of staying at the track of a typhoon and like the crew of



Preparing for towing



Towing the rig away from the platform





*Underway to Singapore*



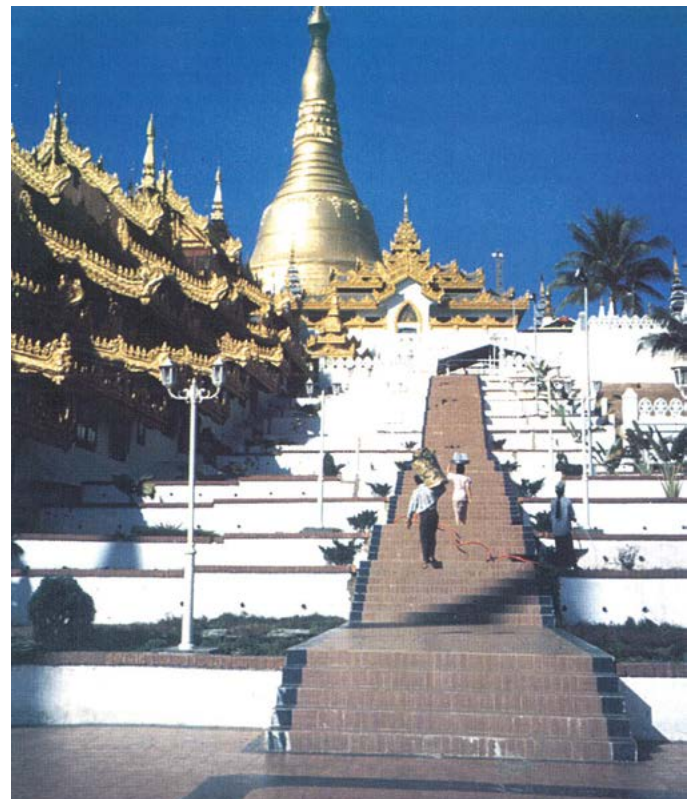
*Has this guy not heard of GPS?*

the rig would be leaving for "somewhere" safer. After three days the wind and sea began to moderate so I turned the ship round and steamed back towards the rig. As daylight began to appear on the morning of November 7, I noticed a fishing raft (constructed of bamboo) drifting in a moderate sea and heavy swell. On closer inspection there were 10 persons on board waving and shouting frantically and who were obviously very distressed. Swinging the ship and putting the stern to the weather I eased the ship towards the raft and successfully got all the fishermen on board. The raft had broken adrift from its moorings, many miles to the east several days previously and its crew had been without food, water and had no idea where they were. Eventually they were transferred to the rig and flown to Rangoon. During the next few days we sighted several more rafts, all deserted and many in advanced stages of breaking up.

By the end of June 1998, drilling had come to an end and the rig was to be towed to Singapore. The "Norwich Service" stayed on as supply vessel for the complex and the "Hines Tide" and "Leopard Tide" would undertake the tow.

Up until then my towing experience had been limited to towing large construction barges/pontoons around the UK coast and the occasional rig move in the Persian Gulf. As one employer told me, "towing is common sense and if you're anything of a seaman you will be OK" The Master of the "Leopard Tide" was "towmaster" and in charge of the whole show. Fortunately for my first long distance tow the weather couldn't have been better – calm seas, light airs and temperatures approaching 100F. We departed from the Yadana Gas Field on July 6 and soon settled down to a routine. Our course took us south through the Adaman Sea passing close to the island of Phuket off Thailand. As we approached the Malacca

Straits shipping became busier but presented no problems. The only problems were small fishing boats that on occasion got too close to the tow for comfort. On July 20 we eased the tow across the traffic separation scheme and brought the rig to the western anchorage in Singapore. The "Leopard Tide" remained with the rig for a further twelve hours but after we had retrieved our tow wire we proceeded round the southern end of Singapore to the offshore supply base at Loyang. After minor repairs and surveys for the next charter we left Singapore for Kemaman on the east coast of Malaysia but that, as they say, is another yarn.



*Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon*

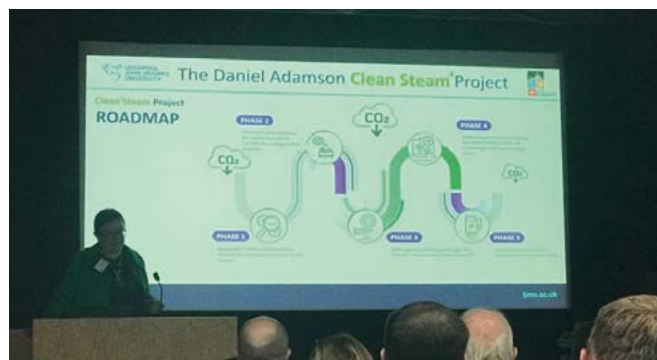
# The Danny Clean Steam project

**Cathriona Bourke** DAPS Learning and Participation Manager

In 2023, Liverpool John Moores University secured funding to research how we measure our carbon footprint, and how we could reduce it over time. Increasingly, the question of our carbon footprint comes up in our interactions with the public, so it is good to be starting to address the question, in keeping with both maritime and heritage sector partners.

Our researcher, Rushdie Rasheed, first of all, put the question of carbon emissions within the context of commercial shipping, regulated by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and required to reduce emissions by 50% by 2050. It was interesting to see just how much of this is expected to come from more efficient processes and design innovations before the challenging topic of fuel even comes into play. It was also interesting to see that towage is not subject to this target, but that it is proving good business to nonetheless investigate and work towards decarbonisation.

Rushdie proceeded to identify a roadmap for The Danny, and a measure of our carbon footprint, which we can easily calculate year on year to evaluate what changes are caused by measures we introduce. As far as processes and procedures go, the Danny engineering team is always looking to increase efficiency, being only too aware of the cost of coal. As far as adopting new ways of generating power – for example, introducing solar panels or switching to HVO for the generator, or testing ways of getting up to steam using cleaner, shoreside methods, these are all being discussed by the Danny engineering team, who are seriously addressing one of the questions relevant to all powered historic vessels



- that of finding a balance between our heritage value and our environmental impact.

Beginning to have these conversations has helped us in bringing us into line with the concerns of the maritime industry, and has been a key factor in our recent successful bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It has also brought us closer to maritime companies – the head of decarbonisation gave a talk on board about how Svitzer has worked to achieve net zero towage, and the head of Environment and Sustainability from Peel Ports introduced Peel Ports Group sustainability policy, which aims to guide them to net zero by 2040.

We were invited to present on the clean steam project at the National Maritime Heritage Forum in 2023, and the presentation has generated much discussion and interest in the maritime heritage sector. It presents a potential way to talk about sustainability for the vessels within the sector whose heritage value depends to some extent on fuels with a high carbon intensity. We have not yet reached a solution, but we have started to address a question that more and more of our public and our partners are asking of us.

## DAPS 100 CLUB

Our 100 Club is a great way of raising much-needed funds for The Danny with a chance to win a cash prize of up to £100 every month! There is a subscription of £10 per month payable by standing order and each member of the Club is allocated a number between 1 and 100. On the 28th of each month a number is drawn by a computer-driven random number generator and the member whose number is drawn wins a cash

prize of 10% of the pool for that month up to a maximum of £100 paid into your bank.

Under Gaming Rules, the 100 Club is only open to members of the original DAPS membership scheme or the current Supporters Scheme. Please email Sheila Leonard, our membership secretary, at [sheilaeleonard60@outlook.com](mailto:sheilaeleonard60@outlook.com) to sign up.

# DAPS Presenting Team



Back in 2015 one of our volunteers accepted an invitation from the Lymm Dingle Historic Society, and together with Les Green they delivered the tale of The Danny - that was the start of our volunteer presentations. The current team comprising Bob Cannell, Les Green, Stuart Wood, Chris Ellams and Peter Scott have continued to promote The Danny with their two presentations - one on the unique story of The Danny and her restoration, and the other on the spiritual home of The Danny - the Manchester Ship Canal.

Since 2015, over 200 presentations have been delivered, including Zoom talks during Covid which enabled us to go country-wide, spreading our message and raising much-needed funds.

In 2023, 29 presentations were made to various interest groups including the University of the Third Age (U3A), History Societies, Probus, and various local community groups - these were broken down into 13 Danny Restoration and 16 Manchester Ship Canal presentations. A few of the groups have taken advantage of booking both talks, and we are finding that 2024 has started off with requests for the talks to be repeated for different group members.

Whilst Zoom presentations have dwindled since the end of lockdowns, we are still keen to do Zoom talks, so wherever you are in the country, if your Club is interested in us giving a talk please contact Sheila for more information.

The geographical spread is quite wide over the Northwest of England for our live presentations and our team has travelled over 2100 miles spreading the word of the Danny... they are to be commended on their commitment to raising

the profile of the Daniel Adamson and the Manchester Ship Canal which are both unique in their heritage for the area.

We have now created an additional talk called "The Restoration and How We Did It" and it shows the trials and tribulations of the first volunteers working hard to bring a vision to life. The story of the first 11 years from 2004 is told in this shorter presentation which we will be taking out to local groups. You can see in the photograph some early volunteers, having lunch alfresco on an open deck.

If any member or volunteer is a member of a society or club that may want to hear one of the team's presentations, please contact Sheila Leonard at [sheilaeleonard60@outlook.com](mailto:sheilaeleonard60@outlook.com)

## Birthday Boy!

Happy 50th Birthday to Dan - the reason we have The Danny today! His passion started young... or was it a prophecy?



# Danny's role during the Battle of the Atlantic

**Colin Leonard** Researched by DAPS Member Nigel Farrell

Last May The Danny was moored in Canning Dock, Liverpool which coincided with the commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Atlantic.

Not many people are aware of the role The Danny played in the 1939-1945 wartime efforts on the Manchester Ship Canal, so we thought it would be appropriate to have a display of photographs and information telling this story, especially in 1943, and we had volunteers on hand to answer any of the public's questions.

## The Danny's tasks with the 250-tonne crane during this time

**Designer** at EP 27/6/41 loaded 2x locos

**Atlantian** at EP 5/10/41 discharged 1x Gun barrel

**Baluchistan** at M/cr 8/10/41 loaded 2x locos

**Empire Eve** at EP 17/9/42 discharged 5x heavy lifts not specified

**John Fiske** at M/cr 31/3/43 discharged 2x locos

**Samuel Bakke** at M/cr 4/7/43 discharged 2x locos

**Matthew T Goldsboro** at M/cr 11/7/43 discharged 2x locos

**Fridtjof Nansen** at EP 30/7/43 1x tank landing craft in 3 sections

**Robert Eden** at M/cr 8/9/43 discharged 4x locos

**Gilbert Stuart** at M/cr 3/11/43 loaded 1x mobile generator for Russia.

**William Windom** at M/cr 4/11/43 loaded 1x mobile generator for Russia.

Salvage of concrete barge at M/cr 12/1/44

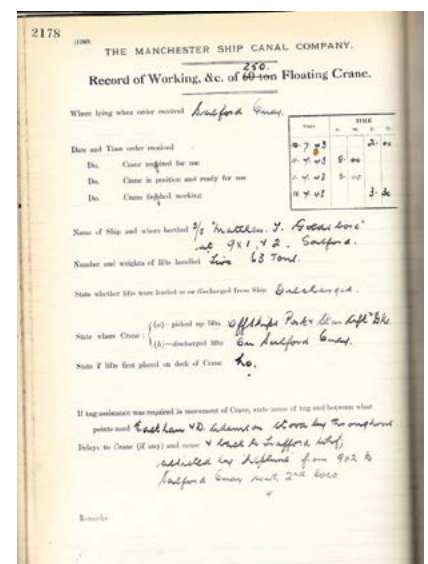
**Ocean Strength** at M/cr 21/1/44 loaded 1x 100 ton lift not specified for Russia

**Samconstant** at M/cr 10/7/44 loaded 1x mobile generator for Russia

## Below is a list of vessels sailing the North Atlantic in May 1943 bound to and from the MSC. I wonder how many of them survived the war?

Belgian Gulf, Bralanta, British Character, British Destiny, British Engineer, British Fidelity, British Respect, Charles Sumner, City of Dundee, City of Glasgow, Clain Macbrayne, Clausina, Blavella, Comanche, Dilworth, Dorcasia, Dromore, Empire Chapman, Empire Cobbett, Empire

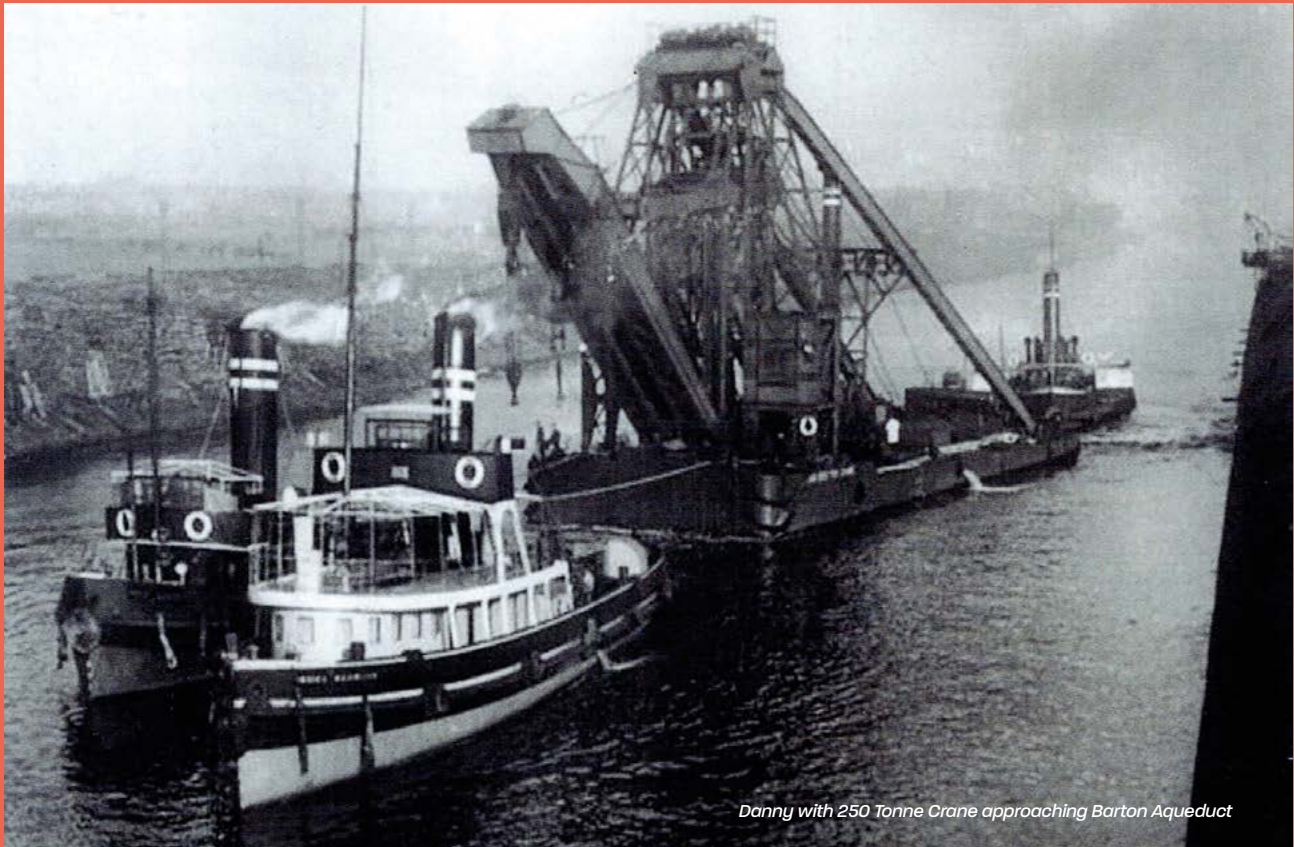
When we researched The Danny's role, we found that as well as assisting ships from Eastham to Manchester and points in between, there was an interesting fact that we hadn't known. We found out that a lot of the ships that entered the canal at Eastham were too deep to sail to Manchester, so they moored at Ellesmere Port to be lightened before they proceeded up the canal. The Danny would then sail back up to Salford towing the crane to continuing discharging and loading heavy lifts.



A page from the logbook of the 250 tonne crane showing The Danny in attendance.

Emerald, Empire Grange, Empire Lancer, Empire Thackeray, Esso Providence, Forresbank, Fort Finlay, Fort Grahame, Fort Meductic, George E Pickett, Gullpool, Henzada, James Hawson, Kronprinsessan, Luninetta, Manchester Commerce, Manchester Division, Manchester Exporter, Manchester Progress, Manchester Trader, Morgenen, Norbryn, O B Sorensen, Ocean Faith, Paul Harwood, Salamis, San Veronico, Shirvan, Solarium, Wearfield, William Wilkins.

\* The 250 tonne crane left Eastham 17 July 2021 for the River Tyne to be broken up.



*Danny with 250 Tonne Crane approaching Barton Aqueduct*



*This photograph shows the first post-war visit to the Daniel Adamson, just days after the end of the war, of Minister of War Transport, Alfred Barnes. His visit so soon after the war over testifies to the significance of the contribution of the merchant navy in the Manchester Ship Canal to the war effort. Image courtesy of Greater Manchester County Record Office / Peel Group Archives.*



## Membership Report

**Sheila Leonard**

Membership Secretary

I hope all our members have had a good Christmas and New Year and hope you are all looking forward to perhaps joining us on one of our cruises this summer - you may find I'm on there too, selling our popular merchandise items. Please make sure you introduce yourself to me, as it's great putting a face to a name and having the opportunity to meet you in person.

A reminder that membership renewal is due on 1st May and many thanks to all our members who are paying by standing order, as the funds raised by our membership are an important source of income for us.

I am sad to say since the last Towline, ten of our members including four who were also volunteers have passed away and they will be sadly missed by all their friends and fellow volunteers aboard the Danny.

We send our much-felt condolences to the families and friends of Don Thorpe (210), Douglas

Banner (215), Albert Fleming (146), Derek Smith (56), Charles Cooke (424), Allen Thornton (360) and our volunteers who will be greatly missed Bill Ratcliffe (524), Jack Nulty (33), Di Skilbeck (50), and John Karlberg (SS12).

If any of your friends would like to become a member of DAPS or would like to join us as a volunteer, ask them to get in touch with me and I will send them a joining form.

If you would like to purchase any memorabilia, please see the advert showing some of the items we have on sale. We can also send out via post. Remember all fundraising helps to keep the Danny afloat!

Please note a change of email address – having a few blips with my Danny email address at the moment.

sheilaeleonard60@outlook.com  
01928 576967

## FEBRUARY PICTURE QUIZ QUESTION



**Name this Ship in the Photo, that was taken moored at Old Quay, Runcorn, Inward Bound .**

If you think you know the answer contact Colin on [colin\\_leonard@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:colin_leonard@hotmail.co.uk) and the winner can choose a gift from our Merchandise range.

**ANSWER** to the picture quiz in last TOWLINE

**Captain Dave McNamee (Member No.714) correctly identified the mystery ship in the February Edition of Towline 2023 as the ELM HILL.**

**Built 1943 - FORT LA PRAIRIE for Canadian Government**

**Sold 1950 to County Ship Management**

**Renamed - ELM HILL**

**Scrapped 1967 - Hirao, Japan**

# A SAMPLE OF OUR COLLECTABLES

Support our fundraising efforts and purchase some of our merchandise to keep The Danny in steam!

All can be purchased from The Danny Galley or email: [Sheilaeleonard60@outlook.com](mailto:Sheilaeleonard60@outlook.com) or call 01928 576967



## Picture Keyrings

£3 each



## Gomm Badges £4 each



## Mugs £6 each

Celebrating  
120 Years



## Postcards

£2.50  
set of 5 or  
60p each



## Guide Books

Official Souvenir  
£5 each



## Teddy Keyrings

£5 each



## Leather Bookmarks

£3 each



## Edgar Hodges Painting

Signed £20 each  
Unsigned £15 each



A STEAMSHIP  
EXPERIENCE  
— WITH A —  
*Unique Story*



## Hire The Danny for your special event

Whether it's for a corporate or private event, we can offer a memorable, elegant and welcome setting for your celebration whilst we are moored at our berths at Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge or within The Royal Albert Dock in Liverpool.

## Book a Presentation

Either on Zoom or in person at your premises, our presentation team will deliver an entertaining and informative audio visual 1-hour presentation either on The Danny Story or the History of the Manchester Ship Canal answering all your questions.

## Take the Free Tour

On weekends when not cruising The Danny is frequently open for visitors to take a free tour. our crew are always to hand to share her story and answer your questions. Hot drinks and a range of snacks and alcoholic drinks available. Donations appreciated if you enjoyed your visit.



For all enquiries please email  
[enquiries@danieladamson.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@danieladamson.co.uk)  
or go to [www.thedanny.co.uk](http://www.thedanny.co.uk) to learn more!