

100 years on.....

## Ilkeston's Centenary Journey Press Pack



2<sup>nd</sup> edition

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## **Ilkeston, Horse Boat, 1912 - 2012**

*Ilkeston* is a composite, horse-drawn, narrow boat, built in 1912 by Braithwaite and Kirk of West Bromwich as one of 24 iron composite craft ordered by Fellows Morton and Clayton Ltd. They were delivered between May 1912 and April 1914 at a cost of £190 each and used for carrying general goods on the canal system. "Composite" means that it has a wooden bottom but iron sides.

They were built using all-riveted, iron plate sides on forged iron frames and with an elm bottom.

*Ilkeston* was registered in Birmingham, No 1273 on 4th October 1912

The numbers on the cabin side also indicate that it was No 270 in the FMC fleet, its BCN gauging number, given in December 1913 was 21961 and its June 1914 Grand Union Canal gauging number 11860. The FMC Watermans Hall number for working on the River Thames was 1396.

*Ilkeston* could have been towed by the steam-powered narrow boats like *President* and later the motor boats owned and operated by the company.

In 1945, she was one of four boats sold to the Bridgewater Department of the Manchester Ship Canal Company for £344. With her cabin and running gear removed, *Ilkeston* was used as a mud boat on dredging operations on the Bridgewater Canal. She was renamed ***Mud Boat No 3 (MB No.3)***, also just plain ***No.6***.

In 1976 *Ilkeston* was sold to Tim Wood and kept at Bull's Bridge Basin, where an extended back cabin was added to increase the living space. Used for a while as a camping boat, she was sold to a family from Nottingham in 1980. Paired with the ex-FMC steamer *Vulcan* it was used as a home. In 1987, the wooden bottom eventually became unsound and leaks were making life unpleasant and she was sold to Nottingham Industrial Museum.

Restoration to her original condition began with the renewal of all the bottom planking and the removal of the forward cabin. The boatman's cabin was renovated and repainted in Fellows, Morton and Clayton livery.

Following closure of the Nottingham Canal Museum in 1998, the boat was transferred to the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port in 1999.

With financial support from the London Canal Museum, over the last two years further restoration work has been carried.

The centenary journey from Ellesmere Port to London celebrates her birthday, her restoration, and the partnership between the museums involved.

## **Why is Ilkeston making this journey?**

Ilkeston is a very special boat. It is a historic horse drawn narrow boat built in 1912 and one of very few such craft left on Britain's waterways.

A great deal of care, attention and money has been lavished on it over the last 3 years to restore it to its former glory. This has meant renewal of all the bottom planking and the removal of the forward cabin. The boatman's cabin has been renovated and the boat has been repainted in colourful Fellows, Morton and Clayton livery

The journey is a fitting thank-you to all who worked on her, and made the restoration possible through fundraising. This has involved teaching young people boat building skills via the Skills for the Future programme and been the culmination of a major project to rescue Ilkeston from its previously sorry state.

It is being made possible by the combined efforts of waterways organisations including the National Waterways Museum, the Boat Museum Society, the Canal Museum Stoke Bruerne, the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust, and the London Canal Museum. Volunteers working for all these organisations are being brought together through this exciting journey and continuing to encourage an appreciation of England's canal network.

In this massive year for Britain with the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics, it was thought that an epic journey through the England at the slower pace of life on canals would be a fantastic way to join in the celebrations and reflect on Britain's industrial history. For the final leg of the outbound journey to the London Canal Museum at King's Cross, London, Ilkeston will be drawn by a horse.

The horse Buddy is a regular boat-horse from the Godalming Packet Boat Company, and will draw Ilkeston from just west of Regent's Park to Camden and then to King's Cross on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, passing through Regent's Park from 1030, Camden locks around 1115-1215, with arrival at London Canal Museum due at 1300. The use of a horse to tow Ilkeston will draw public attention to the heritage of our canals and the way in which they were originally used.

## Notes to Editors

*Ilkeston* is part of the national collection of historically important boats based at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port.

It is a narrowboat, not a barge. Barges are wide-beamed boats.

The Heritage Boatyard project at Ellesmere Port is a partnership that has been set up to conserve the historic boat fleet at the National Waterways Museum and to teach young people boat building skills. Volunteers and young trainees work alongside each other on a wide range of boats, all originally used on Britain's canals and inland waterways. The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded the National Waterways Museum £110k from its Skills for the Future Fund. The grant is being used to further the work at the Heritage Boatyard, training more people in the necessary heritage skills so they can help conserving the historic collection.

The Waterways Trust runs three waterways museums. They are the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port, Gloucester Waterways Museum, and The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne, Northamptonshire. The Waterways Trust is planning to merge with the Canal and River Trust this year.

Independent waterways museums in England include the London Canal Museum, Yorkshire Waterways Museum, Kennet and Avon Canal Museum, Devizes, River and Rowing Museum, Henley, and Foxton Canal Museum, Leicestershire.

As an unpowered boat, *Ilkeston* needs to be towed all the way. Towing boats and crews are being provided by The Boat Museum Society, the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust, and the London Canal Museum.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> August there will be extensive photo-opportunities along the route and at the London Canal Museum. When the boat arrives at 1300, a band will be playing and BBC journalist Kate Adie will be on hand to welcome *Ilkeston* for its month-long visit

*Ilkeston* will be on display to visitors at London Canal Museum 24th August to 23<sup>rd</sup> September except 2<sup>nd</sup> September, on which day it will attend the Angel Canal Festival. Volunteer explainers in costume will show visitors inside the cabins.

### Contacts:

National media, and regional and local media north of Stoke Bruerne: Sarah.Burns@canalrivertrust.org.uk

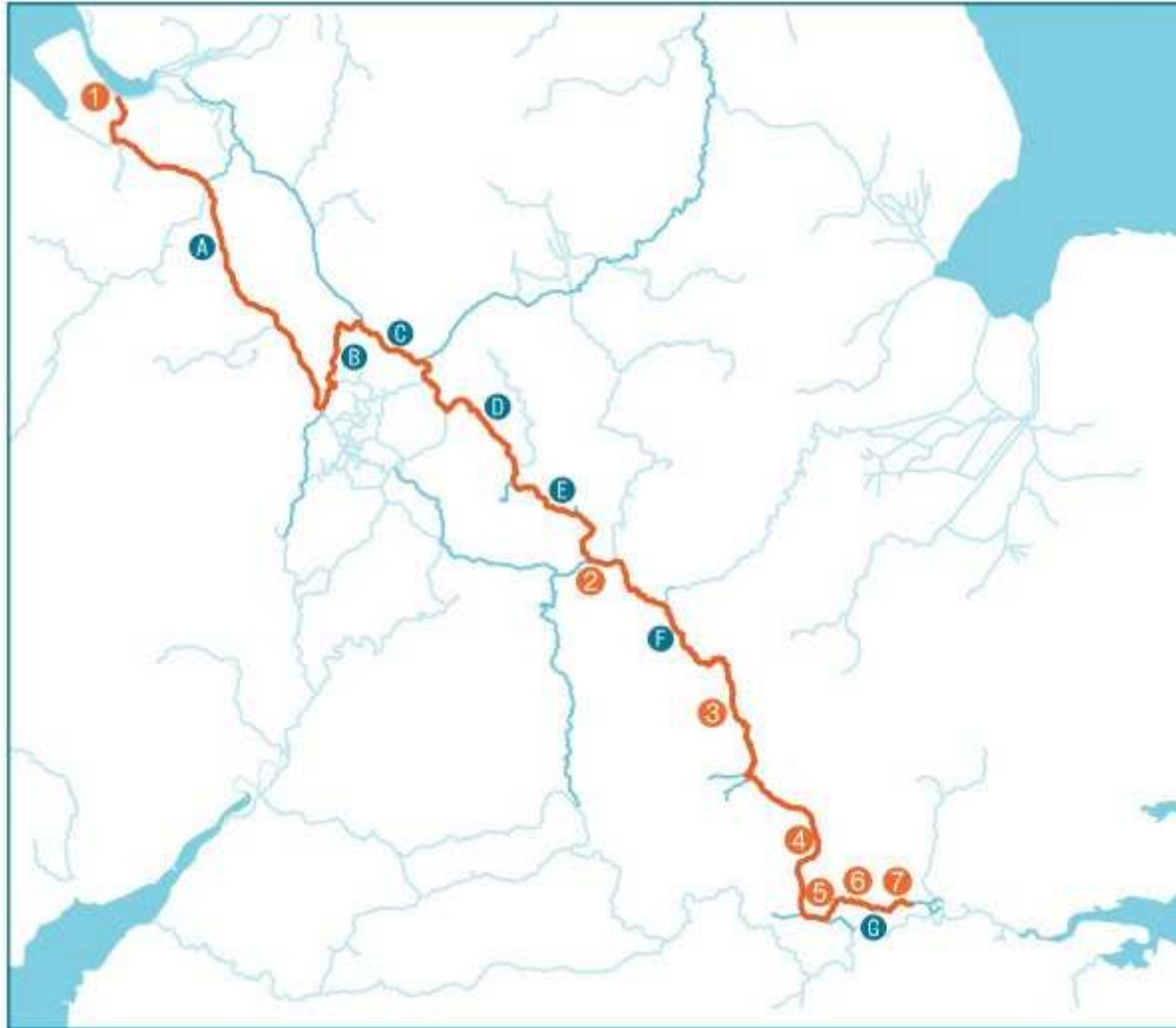
Regional, London and local media from Milton Keynes to London: directpr@btconnect.com

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## About our Canals

- Canals made the industrial revolution possible, providing transport for the coal that fired the new factories, and for the goods that they produced. Before canals, this would have been impossible, because the roads were so primitive.
- Canals are generally not very deep, which surprises many people. Most are between three and five feet deep
- The canals are used today for boating, walking, cycling, angling and as attractive places to enjoy leisure time. There is little goods transport on most of the network but in places, canals do offer an environment-friendly way to carry bulk materials.
- The Regent's Canal, where Ilkeston's journey ends, celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year of the passing of the Regent's Canal Act in 1812.
- The first wholly artificial canal in the UK, independent of rivers, was the Bridgewater Canal. It is nowhere near the town of Bridgewater. It was built by the Duke of Bridgewater and carried coal to Manchester from his mines at Worsley. It opened in 1761 and its success led to a period of "canal mania" in which much of the network was constructed.
- The canals are currently (June 2012) managed by British Waterways, the last remaining nationalised transport industry. They are due to be transferred, whilst Ilkeston is on its long journey, to the Canal and River Trust, a charity set up to bring the waterways into the "third sector" in the light of the many changes that have occurred since nationalisation in 1948
- The canal network is a living heritage site, stretching from Yorkshire to the south. Reminders of the waterways' industrial past are frequently to be seen on any canal journey, ranging from industrial buildings that once took in their wares from boats, to the remains of water-saving engineering features and the infrastructure required for horse-boating.
- Living afloat is popular but there is a shortage, not of boats, but of mooring locations. Residential moorings require planning permission and suitable sites are not plentiful. The attraction of living with wildlife and heritage all around means that demand far exceeds supply, especially in London and other large cities. Residential boat owners are not except from Council tax but they are exempt from the clean air legislation so you still see smoke coming from the chimneys of canal boats.
- Canals provide a haven for many wildlife species including wild flowers, birds, and fish. Although murky in appearance, the water is generally not polluted.

## Ilkeston's Route



### The Places

- ① National Waterways Museum
- ② Braunston
- ③ Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne
- ④ Rickmansworth
- ⑤ Bulls Bridge
- ⑥ Little Venice (Paddington)
- ⑦ London Canal Museum

### The Canals

- Ⓐ Shropshire Union
- Ⓑ Staffs and Worcester
- Ⓒ Trent and Mersey
- Ⓓ Coventry
- Ⓔ North Oxford
- Ⓕ Grand Union (Main Line)
- Ⓖ Regent's

## Royalty-Free Pictures for the Media

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[www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston1.jpg](http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston1.jpg)

Ilkeston's cabin before the restoration

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston2.jpg>

Restoration team at work at Ellesmere Port



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**Above:** Ilkeston in dry dock at the national Waterways Museum

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston3.jpg>

**Right:** The restored cabin of Ilkeston

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston4.jpg>



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## Ilkeston's Journey Press Pack



**Top left:** Ilkeston under tow by a horse

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston6.jpg>

**Top right:** Ilkeston under way

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston7.jpg>

**Left:** Ilkeston on the Grand Union Canal

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston8.jpg>

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**Top Left:** *Ilkeston* towed by *Roger*, near Watford

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston9.jpg>

**Left:** A classic picture of *Ilkeston* in the sunshine

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston10.jpg>

**Above:** *Ilkeston* in a lock with *Roger*, near Watford

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston11.jpg>

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**Top Left:** Ilkeston in Batchworth Lock. **Above:** Ilkeston's bow  
**Left:** Ilkeston at Rickmansworth

<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston12.jpg>  
<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston13.jpg>  
<http://www.londoncanalmuseum.co.uk/ilkeston14.jpg>

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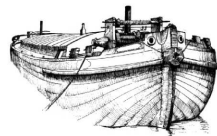
## The Partners in Ilkeston's Journey

### National Waterways Museum

The National Waterways Museum, formerly The Boat Museum, is Britain's largest waterways museum and is home to the national collection of historic boats, a collection designated as being of special historic importance. The site includes a large exhibition hall, displays of boats, a set of period cottages and other attractions at the point where the Shropshire Union Canal meets the Manchester Ship Canal in Ellesmere Port. The Heritage Boatyard is an ongoing major project to preserve and teach heritage boat maintenance skills to a new generation whilst at the same time working to restore and preserve the collection.



### The Boat Museum Society



The Boat Museum Society founded the Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port, which is now the National Waterways Museum. It is a voluntary organisation that still provides a great deal of support to the museum and has an active role in the care and restoration of the national collection of historic vessels.

### The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne

The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne, is Britain's oldest waterways museum. It is located in the beautiful village of the same name, and tells the canal story on three floors. There are outdoor trails, a waterside café, opportunities for boat trips, and for enjoyment of the two popular waterside pubs.



## The Rickmansworth Waterways Trust



Rickmansworth Waterways Trust is a heritage education charity, which provides a variety of programmes at Batchworth Lock, Rickmansworth. It organises an annual festival and provides a canal information centre and boat trips for the public. It has restored and maintains the historic working boat *Roger*.

## The London Canal Museum

The London Canal Museum is at King's Cross, beside the Battlebridge canal basin on the Regent's Canal. Opened in 1992, the museum tells the story of London's canals on two floors in a former ice warehouse that stands above two huge Victorian ice wells used for imported natural ice from Norway. It provides a range of educational resources and a programme of special events, tunnel boat trips and is an unusual venue for a range of private events. The museum sponsors *Ilkeston* and *Ferret* in the national collection by funding of materials and expenses for restoration and maintenance.



## The Canal and River Trust



**Canal &  
River Trust**

The Canal and River Trust is the national charity that took over management of the waterways of England and Wales in July 2012. There are some 2000 miles of waterway under its jurisdiction. The new Trust will enable more public participation in the waterways as a national asset to be enjoyed by everyone.

## Horse Boating – 10 things you might not know!

1. A horse needs three meals a day. Oats, hay, bran, roots and beans were amongst the most common food fed to working horses.
2. One horse can pull a canal barge loaded with 50 tons of goods.
3. In the days of horse boating, obstructing the towing path by mooring a boat alongside it was strictly forbidden. The path had to be left clear for the passage of boats.
4. Canal infrastructure is built for horse boating with slopes, not steps, to climb over bridges and at locks. To help horses grip, brick or stone surfaces were provided, with ridges where needed to help the horse get a good grip.
5. Posts or bollards were provided at locks to be used for “strapping”. A horse boat has no brakes or ability to reverse an engine to stop. A rope would therefore be passed around the post and pulled tight so that friction between the rope and the post could be used to slow or stop a heavy boat in the right place.
6. Horses sometimes fell into the canal, due to slipping, straining, or bolting if frightened. Underwater ramps were provided in places that were especially prone to such accidents so that the horse could be led out of the water. Examples may still be seen today.
7. The larger canal transport companies provided stables at intervals along the canals. Canalside public houses provided stables for the independent boatman’s horse and others, and of course offered refreshments for the boatman himself!
8. To enable boats travelling in opposite directions to pass, it was usual for one boat’s horse to stop, allowing the tow-line to drop down into the water. The other boat could then pass over the sunken tow line. In this way, neither boat needed to be detached from its horse and the minimum of time was wasted.
9. The biggest strain on a horse is starting the heavy load. To ease the burden, a technique was employed called “blocking”. The line was attached to a fixed point on the opposite side of the water and ran through a pulley block on the boat, creating a leverage effect that got the boat moving from still. As the boat exited the loft the change of angle caused the rope to be detached from the fixed point, allowing the boat to continue on its way.
10. Internal combustion engines in boats first replaced horses in 1911, steam never having been a great success in canal boats. Despite the widespread adoption of engines in the 1920s and 1930s, some horse boating continued until the 1950s.