

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE

WASC 1490

 **WAI 388**

...Rally Report... Rally Report... Rally

1



...500 Boats on River Lee...25,000 Visitors.

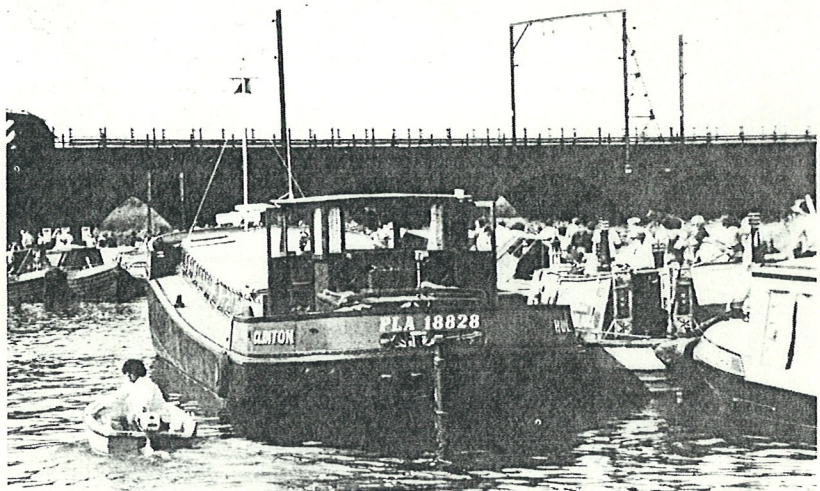
After the torrential rainfall of the previous few days, we had half expected the Lee Valley National Waterways Festival on 16th-17th August to be a wash-out. But no! The site was level and well-drained and, by the time we arrived on the Friday afternoon, the rain had stopped. Over the weekend 25,000 people came to see the 500 boats attending the Rally (1).

As well as half a dozen or so working narrowboats, Tam and Di Murrell brought the immaculately turned-out *Clinton* (2). Built by Warrens of New Holland in 1938, she was later purchased by Nene Barge and Lighterage Co. for carrying stone on the river Nene, where she was always known simply as the 'stonebarge'. T & D Murrell have now completely refitted her - coamings raised, new wheelbox, VHF radio etc - for carrying grain on the rivers Thames and Wey.

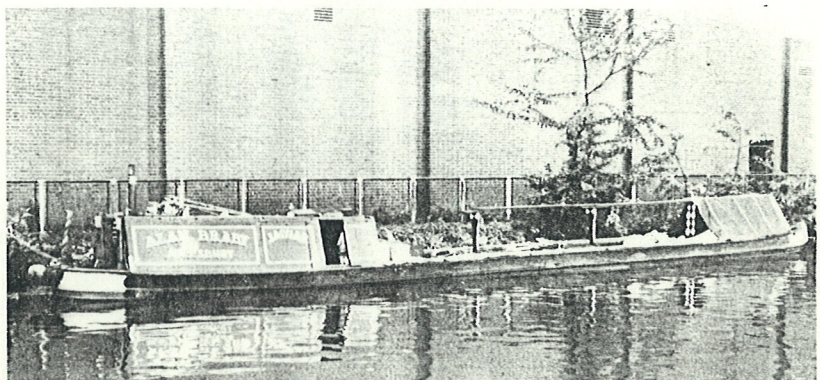
Winner of the Alfred Ritchie Challenge Cockerel for the steerer of the best turned-out working boat was Alan Braby on the well-known narrowboat *Jaguar*, fully laden with coal (3). Alan planned to deliver the coal to Bishop's Stortford, thus becoming the first commercial craft on the Stort for 8 years and the first loaded boat to reach Bishop's Stortford within living memory.

Among the interesting and historic craft on the river was the sole remaining Lee sailing barge, *Lady of the Lea* (4), built in 1931 to carry gunpowder from Waltham Abbey and now fully restored to sail (see over).

2



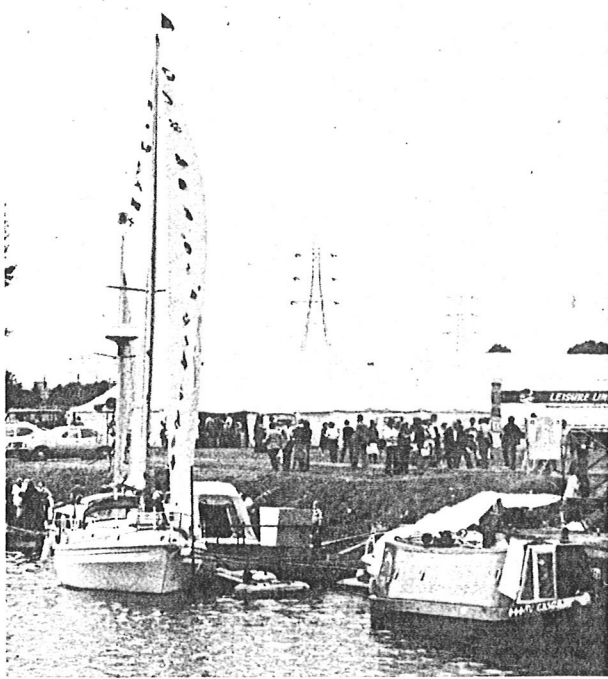
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Across the river from her was a very different sailing craft, Captain Lionel Munk's *Dancing Maid* (5), winner of the Peter Scott Challenge Trophy for the greatest distance to the rally on salt water (641 sea miles).

Winner of the John Player Challenge Trophy for best amateur-built boat was Alan Pickford of *Chubasco*, seen here with his wife Peggy (6). He built the entire boat himself, including hull, superstructure, fitting out and installation of the BMC 1.5 engine, in a total of 2,222 hours (he's got a log to prove it!), in a rented corner of the British Rail workshops at Swindon. The boat was completed at Easter and normally moors at Thrupp on the Oxford Canal. The *Chubasco* also



received special acclaim from the spectators in the illuminated procession of boats for the crew's efforts in raising and lowering the (smoking) chimneys at every bridge. Needless to say, the chimneys, paddle wheels and name 'Lea Queen' (7) were only temporary features of the *Chubasco*!

The award for the best decorated boat to illustrate 'Waterways Charter 80' was won by Captain Power's boat *Buccaneer* (8). His was the only entry in this category, but it was deemed by the judges to be most appropriate. Captain Power requested that the cash prize - given by Ladyline, who sponsored the Rally to the tune of £4,000 - should be donated to the waterway society of Ladyline's

choice. The cheque was presented by Sue Hardwick of Ladyline to the Wey & Arun Canal Trust (9).

Apart from the *Clinton*, most of the other large 'commercial' craft at the Rally had been converted for use as houseboats, including A&SC Woodland's 'Sheffield' keel *Daybreak*, which dwarfed the neighbouring narrowboats (10), the 'Lincoln' keel *Reliance* owned by Mike Thomas & Alison Taylor of Chiswick (which, incidentally, has ventured up the Thames as far as Oxford) and May & John Woodruff's 1924-built Dutch Luxe Motor *Liberté* which they had sailed from Rotterdam to their mooring at Iver on the Slough Arm.

Ill-health forced Jim McDonald to

