

**The Pamela May Canal Boat, Droitwich**

The Droitwich Barge Canal links Droitwich to the river Severn, a distance of about six miles which offers pleasant level walks along the canal.

This canal is one of the first built in England by James Brindley in 1771. It was mainly used to bring coal to Droitwich and transport Droitwich salt to Bristol and around the world.

The canal was closed in 1939. Restoration was started in the 1970's and Max Sinclair worked hard to get the canal re-opened and in achieved this in 2011. Max is honoured by a plaque on the Barge Lock in Droitwich.

The Pamela May boat is a charity operated by trained volunteers who run trips for passengers from two to eight hours on the canal. Many people from care homes and those with learning difficulties take trips, but also family trips are welcome.

Bernard Clements had the inspiration to build the Pamela May boat and he founded the Pamela May Trust. Bernard was concerned for sick and disabled people not being able to enjoy the fresh air and countryside. This was in the 1990's. A legacy was left to Bernard by May Ward, the widow of the Worcestershire fast bowler Freddie Ward.

Bernard and his wife decided to use the money to build a canal boat to enable the sick and disabled to enjoy the countryside. He called the boat the Pamela May after his wife, Pamela, and May Ward.

The boat was built in Bromsgrove and launched in 1995 and operated from Hanbury Wharf with volunteers. When Bernard suffered ill health, Ben Lee took over responsibility following Bernard’s death in 1997. The Pamela May Trust was then set up.

In 2011 a new canal trust was established: Droitwich Waterways (Pamela May) Trust, to operate the boat and also to help manage vegetation and create new wildlife meadows along the canal.

There was a big recruitment for volunteers to run the Pamela May. There are now about 30 volunteers trained to safely operate the boat with passengers whether disabled or in wheelchairs safely.

Recently, it was decided that our beloved Pamela May (1), as we now call her, was getting old and our volunteers organised fundraising and helped to raise money to buy a new boat. Funding was also given by The Heritage Lottery Fund, Advantage West Midlands, Britis****h Waterways and Worcestershire County Council. The new boat is called the PAMELA MAY 2 and is all-electric, with solar panels to power the motor.

The Pamela May 1 has been sold to Canal Ministries in Cheshire, we wish it bon voyage, nice people are now looking after her.

Sadly the virus has interrupted this year’s activities and passengers could not be taken on the boat, but hopefully normal operations will resume next year.

The website is <http://droitwichcanals.co.uk>

**A St Richard’s Volunteer - August 2020**