



THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

The Newsletter of the McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society

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Summer 2018

Wow! What a Party!

Time flies and it's hard to believe, but the Shreveport Water Works is now 131 years young, and on May 5 it celebrated with what had to be the best birthday party (but maybe the only one?) in its hardworking history. Music, a birthday cake (and cupcakes), blacksmithing, animal friends, and the list goes on, were all to be found at the historic water works from the Victorian era. Queen Victoria herself took note of the festivities and put in an appearance in spirit to wish the museum well. Read on for all the details!

As seems to be the case for all the outdoor events at SWWM, the weatherman threatened rain, but the day was instead sunny and warm for the party-goers. There were



Keith Tonnies disembarks a load of visitors



Visitors line up to tour the historic pumphouse

plenty of them, too, and when the day was over, about 275 visitors had come through the gate, mostly aboard the



Kevin Haines (L) & Randall Palmer take a break from tour guiding

RMS Titanic parking lot shuttle, which was capably navigated by Captain Keith Tonnies.



Blacksmith Marty Young pounds some iron into shape for onlookers

After arriving, party-goers had a lot of activities to keep themselves entertained. As usual at recent events, multiple food trucks offering tasty selections were a popular stop. We had a nice silent auction going that offered an eclectic array of items from two electric arc welders to a collectible John W. Audubon print, and bidders scooped up nearly everything to give themselves a birthday gift.

Making a return appearance at SWWM were Marty Young and Bob Hauser with Red River Smiths. The Smiths made the sparks fly as they hammered out clever iron creations. Blacksmithing was still a widely practiced skill at the birth of the water works and some of the small



Left: Look out donkey!

Right: Displays from Walter Jacobs plus a bored owl

Below Left: Joannie Nerretti sings with an impromptu chorus



tools on site are handmade. Did you know that a skilled team of two could make up to 10,000 nails per day back when that was the way to do it? Walter Jacobs Nature Park also returned to SWWM with Sabrina Prus and Sarah Wilkerson bringing a baby alligator and a young owl that got a lot of attention, particularly from the children. And, no birthday party would be complete without



pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey and other kids games, so after looking at the animals, the kids moved on to the games.

Joan Nerrettig and her guitar were in the front yard of the pumphouse and entertained visitors with some great music.



Sitting in the shade of the 100-

year-old live oak and listening to Joan with a cold drink in hand would be a great way to spend the afternoon even if there hadn't been anything else to do. Probably the most popular activity was touring the "birthday girl" water works. Visitors lined up every 20 minutes all day to see and hear about making clean water from tour guides Charlie Johnson, Randall Palmer, Kevin Haines, and Dale Ward.



Above: Queen Victoria cuts the official 131st Birthday Cake

But, the highlight of the day at the Victorian era water works had to be a visit from Queen Victoria herself. She arrived after lunch, issued a proclamation in honor of the water works, and officiated at the cutting of the 131st Water Works Birthday Cake, punctuated by a rousing chorus of "God Save The Queen" by party goers. The cake was delicious, the Queen was regal, and the whole thing was a lot of fun!



Right: The Queen reads her proclamation honoring the Water Works



L - R: Birthday Party hostess Liz Swaine, Queen Victoria (a.k.a. Marilyn Joiner), the Queen's aide (a.k.a. Jeff Little)



This youngster seems to approve of the official Birthday Cake

Give For Good

Regular readers of our newsletter probably remember that Give For Good is an online “donate-a-thon” sponsored each year by the Community Foundation. The McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society has been participating each year to raise money for expenses at Shreveport Water Works Museum.

This year’s event took place on May 1. So, how did it go? Pretty well, thank you! Donations plus the Community Foundation’s contribution (\$861) totaled almost \$7,000, which is 13% of the museum’s budget for 2018. There were also 7 first-time donors who became the newest friends of the museum.

Speaking of the budget, here’s an update on that: The Preservation Society’s board has estimated that \$54,000 will be needed to pay all the bills in 2018, but projected income (including Give For Good) based on previous years is only \$26,000, leaving a deficit of \$28,000. There is enough cash being carried forward from last year to cover this year’s shortfall, but running in the red can’t go on forever, and the board is working hard to generate ideas for raising more money to keep the museum open and in good repair.

More From England

Historic steam powered water works are scarce in America, but a bit easier to find in England. A volunteer at the Twyford Waterworks in southern England, Matthew Feldwick, has been keeping in touch with SWWM to compare notes.



Visitors at Twyford admire the newly rebuilt boiler

Matthew reports that after almost ten years of work, they have succeeded in restoring the 1906 Babcock & Wilcox boiler and the 1914 Hathorn-Davey triple expansion pumping engine and have been operating on steam several times this year. Wouldn’t this be a great road trip?!

Actually, one of the Preservation Society’s board members, Jeff Cornelius, HAS been on a road trip to a historic steam museum in London, the London Water and Steam Museum. This is the site of one of London’s original pumping stations from the mid-1830’s that still has its original pump and a huge walking beam engine with an 90” steam cylinder that still runs. Unfortunately, it’s pretty hard to make a photograph of that engine because it is so wrapped up in the building itself. But the museum has a wonderful collection of other engines like the one pictured nearby.

If any of our readers really do take a “road trip” to England, both of these museums are worth checking out. Please give our regards to Matthew!



One of several beautifully restored engines that can be seen at the London Steam Museum

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You Can Help.....Make A Donation!

The Preservation Society needs money for restoration and operation of the museum. Your donation can be put to good use!

Name _____

email _____
(If you provide your email address, we can send you occasional updates on activities)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to MSPSPS, P.O. Box 957, Shreveport, LA 71163. Checks payable to MSPSPS
Donations can be made online at www.shreveportwaterworks.org