

Willow Boat Painting
IN ASSOCIATION WITH VIMART SIGNWRITING
Tel: 07791 245134 www.willowboats.co.uk

EXTREME MAKE-OVER

by
WRT

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FROM THE EDITOR

In Holland, going to Grammar School in the seventies usually meant visiting Rome. So did I in 1973. One of our duties was to write a travel journal. This was the start of the numerous travel journals I wrote over the years.

So when the word 'narrowboat' entered my vocabulary I immediately realised: this is going to be a journey as well (but not as we know it). I kept track of everything narrowboat-related after that. And when I finally moved to the UK I decided to keep a weblog. Primary for myself, but also for 'the folks back home'.

But reading a weblog on a day-to-day basis is one thing, reading all posts about one subject in one go is very awkward. Reading it as a pdf or as an e-book is a lot easier.

This document contains all the posts of the painting of nb Wea-Ry-Tired, written by WRT herself.

If this book is unreadable on your e-reader, please tell me, and I will try to correct it.

Enjoy reading.

Magda Wensing

I f@\$%#*G KNEW IT ! – 08 MARCH 2016

I f@\$%#*g knew it!

Something was wrong. How many people start their annual cruise in the middle of winter? How many cruising boats did I meet?



Happily cruising down the Bridgewater Canal

We're happily cruising down the Leeds & Liverpool, Bridgewater canal, Trent & Mersey, to the Shropshire Union. At Hurleston Junction we turn onto the Llangollen. Been there before. Like it. And meeting Linda, from Cheshire Cat, whom I know from my time in Overwater Marina, is a good omen, I think. Especially because SHE DID REMEMBER ME!

But then it happens: we turn into Swanley Bridge Marina. First I thought: maybe for fuel? Or water? Or laundry? No, we moor up... Strange...

We don't move for five days, but there are all kinds of strange people visiting me, looking at me, and at various parts of me. Strange...



Moored for five days

Then the following happens. They strip me almost naked.



Almost naked

And inside I get all kinds of covers.



Internal covering

Then Lawrance starts the engine and steers me into a dead end part of the marina. I can but close my eyes and pray. It all goes so fast, I don't even have time to decide which part of the Perkins engine I'm gonna use to break down.

When I'm slowed down I open one eye... and see the trailer. I'M TAKEN OUT.



Leaving the water

Oh, no. The last time I was out of the water was in April 2014, when I got examined by this guy Magda hired to look at me... When I was sold... **THEY ARE SELLING ME!**

Oh, it's happening again. I really thought they loved me. My engine room just done up, all the things Magda is crocheting for me. I just can't believe this. What do I do wrong?



Where am I going?

But after my bottom had a shower, Magda comes up to me, with a big smile, and says: “WRT, old girl, you are going to get a complete make-over! You’ll be looking even better than when you were brand new. And every boat will envy you. You will look so shiny... It will take about four weeks. And don’t worry, we are just around the corner, in a caravan. If you shout I’ll probably hear you. And I will visit you every day to see how you are doing and to cuddle you if need be.”



Bottom showered



Do I fit?

Pheew.

And here I am. In a shed, bottom clean, waiting for things to come. I should have known...



My new home for four weeks

LAYERS TO KEEP ME WARM – 09 MARCH 2016

They always say that wearing a lot of (thin) layers is better to keep you warm than one thick layer. Can you imagine how flippin' cold it was last night? With temperatures well below zero and with all your layers taken off? Luckily I was still wearing my socks and knickers...

It was a tough day anyway. They said they would first give me a scrub shower, and then they would play Scrabble with me. I wasn't sure about that Scrabble, but I definitely didn't want that scrub. Had that when I was young. It was horrible and I didn't want it again. So I told them: "I don't need it." And told them again. And again. Then they finally realised that I knew what I was talking about. That indeed I had been through it when I was young.

So they skipped that, put earplugs in every one of my ears, and started... No, I must have misunderstood them. They were going to scabble me, not playing Scrabble with me. I certainly would have preferred the Scrabble, I told them that loud and clearly. But they didn't hear me. Well, to be honest, you could hear the noise this scabbling makes at a two mile distance.



Scabble, not Scrabble

I didn't even hear Magda opening the sliding door of the shed at the end of the day. You know, that's why I love her. She braved the deafening noise just to see how I was doing. And to comfort me. If it wasn't for various other reasons I would endure all this just for her.

But she could have thrown her newly crocheted throw over me, for the night...

WRINKLES? – 13 MARCH 2016

I still think of myself as young and beautiful. Even being naked I think I look terrific. But what did I hear Magda say, when she came to visit me yesterday? “WRT, you’ve got wrinkles!”

She was standing at the stern, looking over my roof. And all present agreed with her. Oh, I wish I could see myself in a mirror.



Wrinkles? Me?

I’m not too happy anyway. Remember I went through the process of being scabbled? And managed to avoid this scrub (that they call shot blasting)? Well, next time I will be scrubbed. The people who did it when I was young, did a very bad job. My port side, the side I always call my best side, has been done properly, probably due to the fact that at that moment Andy was there to supervise it. But as soon as he left, the people either ran out of scrubbing material, or decided to use only 25% of it, to save money.



End of proper shot blasting

So parts of me are hardly done, and half of my bum isn't done at all.



Left: scrubbed; right: not scrubbed

So next time I get painted I have to endure this scrub again. For now I will get some extra underwear (hope they buy it at Victoria's Secret).



First layer

Other than that, I'm not doing too bad. I have two layers of underware already. With a thickness of 11.3 micron. So I have only 69.7 microns to go. Most of my unused holes are marked and they will be filled in later today. And filling holes turns me into a piece of art.



69.7 microns to go



To fill or not to fill

So everything is going OK. Except for these bloody wrinkles...

SWANLEY HOUSE? – 14 MARCH 2016

And what about Magda and Lawrance? Well, while I'm getting a complete make-over, they have temporary accommodation in a caravan. For a month they will live in a space the size of my saloon plus dinette. With a 40 litre fresh water tank, a grey water tank they have to empty every so often, a cassette toilet with a tank for flushing they have to fill every so often. And "every so often" means: at the most inconvenient moment. Just when they want to make tea in the morning they run out of fresh water. And when they empty the sink after doing the dishes, the grey water tank will be full, and suddenly there is rice all around the caravan. No, I won't mention the moment the toilet flush tank is empty. Telephone signal is bad, as is the TV, and they don't have wifi. And the worst thing? No solid fuel stove. In fact, basically no heating at all, except for their small electric bathroom heater.



Temporary home

But they have a beautiful garden, and a nice drive way. And if it wasn't for some trees, they could see the shed I'm in.



Temporary garden



Temporary driveway

So far they spent their time visiting me, and going out for dinner with Ann and Mick, who got stuck once again because one of the locks of the Audlem Flight is closed for maintenance.



Guess who got the double portion?

Except for the second day (when it was raining, and grey) they've had sunny days so far. And freezing cold nights as well.

Only three more weeks to go...

I HAVE MY DAY OFF – 20 MARCH 2016

And all my undies on!

I consider the grey as my thermal undies. To keep me warm, but not visible to any passers-by. And since they are not pleasant to look at anyway, I really felt ashamed, all the time people could see me in them.



Thermals finished

But they are covered. Finally. I thought they would never stop putting more layers on. I ended up with 104 micron on my bad side and 97 micron on my good side. That will certainly keep me OK and warm until my next make-over. Although I'm not sure how badly the extra 7 micron on starboard side will affect the tilt I already have (caused by all the books Magda has...).

My bum is covered now as well. Nice black velvet, to keep me warm and to protect my delicate bottom parts. And I wear now a set of nice coloured underwear. Well, in fact I'm wearing three sets.



Black velvet



First coloured layer

On the day I got my first coloured layer, Andy and Christine came to see me.

Saying that, I have the feeling that they just used me as an excuse to go out on their trike. But anyway, it was good to see them again. And we talked about that time, now seventeen years ago, when I got my first set of clothes...



A thin layer

One day later my first layer of proper undies was taken back to a very thin layer, before I got my second layer. And the same happened a day later. Only after they had put on the third layer I managed to convince them that I really do like the colours...!



Final underwear

But now I can show you my final layer of underwear. Looks shiny, doesn't it? Well, apparently this is nothing compared to the gloss I will get next week. I can hardly wait...!

Oh, and what did Lawrance and Magda do, in the mean time? They went on a safari in Cheshire. Watching all the wild animals, roaming around the caravan, like pheasants and sheep. And had a delicious supper in The Thatch, an inn, build in 1450 AD. No, don't worry, the food was not harvested in that same year.



Pheasant and daffodils



'Wild' sheep

ANNIVERSARIES – 23 MARCH 2016

Thirteen years ago today Magda and Lawrance met. On a boat, but one a wee bit bigger than I am.

Two years ago today Magda got an email, telling her that they got a boat: ME. Subject to survey, of course, but I knew that a survey wouldn't be a problem.

A day ago today I got my first glossy layer.

So far for the good news.

Now the bad news.

No, I won't go into details about the relationship between Magda and Lawrance. And about my relationship with both of them you can read on this website. But I will tell you about my relationship with my first glossy layer:

IT'S TOO GLOSSY...!

I know exactly what is going to happen. Look at this picture.



Too glossy!

What do you see? Magda. And the shed I'm in. Do you see me? NO. So once I'm glossy all over, people will just turn to me to powder their nose, rearrange their hair or to apply a new layer of lipstick. They will just use me as a mirror. And they won't see the pleasant personality that is me. Won't see my elegant body, or my beautiful colours.

It's too glossy, so I decided to take measures. I made the paint stay wet(ish). So they can't take off part of the gloss today, before applying another layer. Sally isn't happy about that, to say the least. And when Magda and Lawrance come to visit, Magda is really cross with me. Well, so be it. And I didn't tell them that the reason the ordered paint didn't arrive yet, is because I phoned Holland and told Epiphanes to take a very long Easter Holiday...

I'm getting enough of all the sanding anyway. Yesterday they sanded my last underwear down.



Removing most of it again

And something else happened. Look at the picture.



Something important is missing



Adrift

What is missing? Yes, I'm totally adrift now. No rudder, no tiller.

And think of it: at the moment I also have no windows, no front doors, no inner window frames, no mushrooms, no vents, no hatch... You can't do that to a vulnerable soul like me...!?

But then again, I'm doing absolutely fine, compared to this old, wooden boat, craned out at Nantwich Canal Centre on her way to a complete make-over.



Craned out

Yes, I will be strong and endure it!

SUICIDE – 26 MARCH 2016

Getting a complete make-over, like the one I'm getting now, is physically very stressful, for a delicate being like me. The out- and in the water, the much too hot shower just after that, the scabbling and the sanding. And then the ultimate thing: the little hairs of the paintbrushes. Because I'M TICKLISH.



Glossing on the go

But it's also a huge psychological stress. I consider myself as the perfect boat, but since I'm out of the water I got a few very unpleasant findings. Like that about three third of my body has a skin disease (called mill scale), I've got wrinkles, and the drainage holes in the handrail are not all the same size. Danny, the engineer, mentioned that I'm too heavy and should loose weight. And yesterday Martin, the make-up artist, told me that only one of my mushrooms is in the right place, the others are all out of line, up to a tenth of an inch!



Out of line

Look! Can you see it? Isn't it awful?

That really put me down. One: I can't see it for myself, because it's on the roof (but if I concentrate I think I now can feel it). And two: there is nothing they can do about it. And make-up won't hide it. And when Sally told me that I might be allergic to the dark green paint (it dries only very slowly) I got into a deep depression. And actually thought of committing suicide.

But how do narrowboats commit suicide? It takes a lot of effort to find a railway aqueduct, jump out of the water and land diagonally on the tracks. And I still have to find a tree, strong enough to hold a 60 ft 18 ton narrowboat. Well, I suppose, I could use a bridge to hang from, like the motorway bridge near Worsley. But it is too busy there. People would see me and try to talk me out of it. I can't use gas, because of all the detectors

and alarms inside me. I could take some tablets. But that only messes up the engine, and they would just replace it. And cutting my wrists? Or use a gun? Maybe the train is the easiest way. But it has to be a freight track, for obvious reasons.



Second gloss

What keeps me going at the moment is the excitement of Magda and Lawrance. They like the gloss, and Magda absolutely loved the porthole, all cleaned and polished. Just see the difference with how it looked at the end of last year!



Shiny porthole

They can't wait to see some of my make-up put on, and will discuss the most important part of it on Monday. Let's just hope that remaining three of the team of five not also get the Scarlet Fever. That would really be a disaster!

Oh, by the way, this is what I will have to endure next time...



Next time

LITTLE MISS PERFECT? – 02 APRIL 2016

I consider myself to be a very special narrowboat. Not a 'twenty-in-a-dozen' off-the-peg boat, no. On this planet there is no boat like me. And over the last week I proved it again.

Easter Sunday I'm completely ignored by Magda and Lawrance, when they visit the paint shed. It is time to discuss my make-up with Martin and Sally. Of course I make sure I don't miss anything of the discussion, in case they plan something I don't like.

Easter Monday Magda and Lawrance are here again: I'm a problem. I'M NOT PERFECT...

I have two sides, a good side and a bad side, a dark side and a sunny side. Or, to stay in naval terms: portside and starboard side. 'Good' is not the same as 'bad', 'dark' not the same as 'sunny', my portside is not the same as my starboard side. As much as I like to be a balanced boat, it needs all Martin's skills to get me as balanced as possible. And Magda and Lawrance need to take difficult decisions. Which they do. And I'm happy with it. Magda alters her drawings to reflect the new paint scheme and is happy with it (she thinks). On Tuesday though she wakes up with the thought: STOP THE PRESS. IT'S NOT RIGHT.

Out comes the computer again, and more possibilities are looked at. And they make their way to the paint shed as early as possible, to (once again) discuss things with Sally.

Did I say I liked the way Martin lined out the make-up? Guess what: it stays that way!

What way? No, I'm not showing you any pictures. A girl must be allowed to have some secrets. But I will reveal that I get an ochee arch on the back doors...



Ochee arch

On Wednesday doctor Danny performs an operation on my rudder, and puts it back in place.

On the Friday Magda turns up and puts on her overalls...

First I think she's going to paint me pink, her being in her pink period at the moment. No, she's going to paint the plant pots and the fender hooks. But halfway through the day she gets some additional facts about me.

They tell her that my good side is $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch longer than my bad side. I'm not happy with that, but at least it's the good side that is longer. They also tell her that my front draining holes on the roof do not line up. I already knew that my mushrooms are all over the place, so to speak. So you can imagine: I'm not a happy girl. I know I'm well build, but I do feel a bit deformed, at the moment.



Mushrooms all over the place

Luckily Martin, professional as he is, manage to disguise all these faults of mine. No one will see it. But I certainly feel it!

Other than that, things are progressing to plan. Yesterday I got my coach lines. Today my windows are back in. I can't see it, but they tell me the inside window frames look like new, after Rob has done them up.



Bathroom window



Dinette window

And Martin is writing down my name on the side. With Magda supervising the process: we don't want spelling mistakes. Or names like WEA-PY-TIRED or WEA-RY-TIPEX, as some of the stages in the process seem to lead to.



Wea-Py-Tired

Magda and Lawrance leave by the time my correct name is on my starboard side. Last comment from Martin: "I might paint something else on portside..."

No, I trust him; he won't.

I'M SO EXCITED – 05 APRIL 2016

I could just jump for joy. Not that I'm going to do that. No, it would cause chaos. A lot of casualties, a demolished shed. I would probably make the Nantwich Herald, tough.

It's my last hours in the paint shed. A party is planned for around lunchtime-ish, when I'm going to be revealed to the world. That is, when they manage to finish all the odd jobs that still needs to be done. And lo and behold, they don't.

So when Andy and Christine arrive for the party, there is no opening of shed doors, cutting ribbons or smashing bottles against my bow. They have to view the results of my make-over while I'm still in the shed. But they love it! And they really like the addition to my name.



The First

Yes, I am THE FIRST. And do you see what glossy means? Exactly, there are two Andys and two Christines. But there is only one me...



New jewelry

And do you see my new jewelry? Shiny black chains. I will get new beads in the near future, colour matched when Bob has recovered from his medical problem.



Spot the differences

It's close to 5 o'clock in the afternoon when finally my taxi arrives, and I'm transported back to the water. Yes, even in daylight I look absolutely stunning. And I'm so shiny, people around Nantwich seek shelter in the secret bunker: they think the sudden brightness is caused by an atomic bomb.



Just in the water

As soon as I'm in the water it starts to rain, and the wind picks up. – So when I'm back at the jetty I have my first paint scratched off (Lawrance was at the tiller).

And you can see the entire marina reflected in my paint. Just as I feared. No one will ever see me, the next few years...

Boo hoo hoo



Reflections

WILL THEY LISTEN? – 15 APRIL 2016

I'm still in Swanley Bridge Marina. Today I get my new engine covers; the last job before we set sail, so to speak.

Because I'm more experienced than Magda and Lawrance I try to tell them how to handle me, now I'm freshly painted. Should have done that earlier: the first paint is already off...!

I try to convince them that I want to go on a canal with the tow path on the right hand side. Thus avoiding the trees on the non-towpath side that might damage my upper body.

I also tell them on a windy day not to go on a canal that has small locks and huge bywashes.

I tell them that the fender hooks they bought, and painted dark green, are of no use: they will snap.

And another thing: I don't want to cruise too many hours a day. I just want to spend a lot of time, admiring myself in the only mirror I can see myself in: the canal. So I ask them to do short cruising days.



Daisy, Daisy....!

But will they listen to all this?

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