

# The first Narrowboat to reach Monmouth Quay.

*Sharpness > Portishead > Chepstow > Tintern > Brockweir > Llandogo > Monmouth*

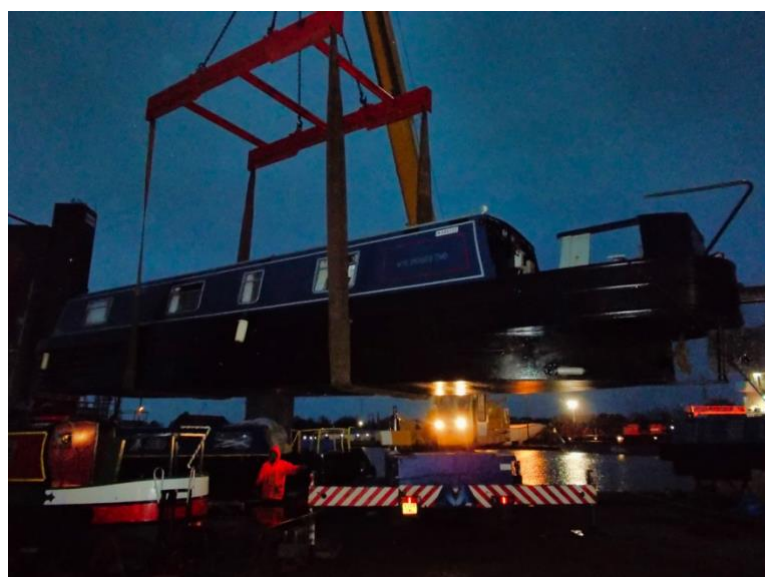


## ***Monday 18th March 2019***

Finished Winter maintenance on Wye Invader Two and ready to crane back on to the water.

## ***Tuesday 19th March 2019***

20.00 hours. Wye Invader Two was craned back on to the water. Start engine and run up to working temperature, then run in gear for just over an hour to check gearbox function and alternator.



**Wednesday 20th March 2019**

05.00 hours. Move through the lock and moor up on the pontoon in the outer sea lock as we were going to share with the NICOLE C after she had discharged her cargo of cement from Santander. High Water was at 07.24 hours, height 9.7 metres.



Wye Invader Two departed at 07.24 hours on top of the tide, the weather was cloudy and the wind speed was between 10 and 15 knots but, as the tide began to pick up speed we soon had a wind over tide situation, however as Wye Invader Two cleared the second Severn Bridge and the river became deeper this seemed to ease the situation and we were soon locking into Portishead, it was 10.04 hours. We cleared the lock and stopped for fuel in the Marina and then moved to Pontoon B to wait over for the afternoon tide and lock out at 15.30 hours.



**15.15 hours – Portishead.**

Wye Invader Two entered the lock at 15.15 hours to wait for lock down at 15.30 hours, the gates were closed and the lock-down took just over 15 minutes. We cleared the main channel approach to Avonmouth by 16.10 hours. As the tide was incoming, there was no wind over tide situation but as high water was predicted to be over 10 metres at Sharpness, the current could be felt as we crossed the River Severn towards Chepstow.

### **17.00 hours - Old Severn Bridge.**

Between the 2 bridges, the speed of Wye Invader Two was shown as over 10 mph on the GPS, we passed under the River Wye section of the Old Severn Bridge at 17.00 hours and the 2 miles to Chepstow road and rail bridge took another 13 minutes.

### **17.17 hours - Chepstow**

Wye Invader Two soon passed under Chepstow road bridge and on past Chepstow Castle on the port side, the 7 or 8 miles on to Tintern Abbey took just less than an hour.

18.16 hours. A few minutes to pass through Tintern and then on up to Brockweir, by this time Wye Invader Two was on the last of the light with not enough light for the camera to film, it was still just over 2 miles to go to Llandogo for our overnight mooring and we still had the benefit of the tide until about 19.52 hours.

19.30 hours. The trees on the quay at Llandogo were silhouetted against the village lights, this was the first we saw of the mooring as Wye Invader Two eased round the last right hand corner. The tide was still rising but the river had stopped flowing, the bow was moored to one of the trees forward and the stern was secured to a post with enough slack to allow the Wye Invader Two to move up and down with the tide, by now it was 21.00 hours and, after a meal onboard we adjourned to the local pub The Sloop Inn.

### **Thursday 21st March 2019.**

High Water 09.00 hours - Height 10.46 metres.

07.15 hours. The background sound of the 2 metres plus of river flood flowing past Wye Invader Two suddenly went quiet, that can only mean one thing, the tide is on its way back in, by the time I had checked the engine oil levels, Andy sorted the camera and tripod, it was almost 08.00 hours and time to slip the mooring and get underway.

Just over a mile up river, Wye Invader Two passed over Bigsweir, then under Bigsweir Bridge and up and over the new weir and the limit of the tide, about half a mile ahead on the port side we passed Whitebrook Quay.



A mile ahead the road runs parallel to the river and Wye Invader Two passed the road sign for Redbrook, for the next 100 meters as Wye Invader Two moved up to the corner below Redbrook Bridge, the current was more powerful, I moved Wye Invader Two to the left to ease into what was almost slack water, just enough to overcome the strong current on this corner, 5 minutes later Wye Invader Two sneaked by on the side nearest to the Boat Inn on the port side and on the inside of the bend. As we headed upstream to clear the bridge the time was 10.00 hours. Monmouth was about 1 and half miles ahead, a few hundred meters in front there were several large rocks and we passed on the starboard side to avoid them for the next half mile, there are fishing platforms on each side of the river coming almost to the mid-line and the final obstacle is a fishing weir that starts on the right side by the sewer works and comes downstream almost all the way to the port side bank with just a 5 metre gap to navigate through.

As Wye Invader Two cleared the gap, just ahead on the left bank are the remains of a 20 arch rail viaduct and about 100 metres further upstream, Wye Invader Two passed under the last rail bridge before the Monmouth Road Bridge ahead.



I chose the third arch from the left because the entry and exit were straight in and out, although there was about 2 and half metres of flood water in the river and about 2 foot of standing water on the top side of the bridge arch. As Wye Invader Two moved through the arch, the bows climbed up the wave of water and moved us from side to side as the stern was trying to push through aerated water, because of this the propeller had very little thrust until she was about halfway through the bridge and, as the bows cleared the top of the wave, the stern followed and Wye Invader Two was clear, I eased off and we glided to come alongside Monmouth Quay, Andy secured the bows to a mooring ring and I dealt with the stern and turned off the engine. The first Narrowboat ever to reach the Quay at Monmouth, it was now 11.00 am. The last time I had come up the River Wye to Monmouth was in 1989 with Wye Invader almost 30 years ago.

## ***Return Journey.***

13.00 hours. I checked the engine and gearbox oils and with no coolant leaks it was time to leave, we slipped the mooring and moved upstream towards Monmouth Rowing Club to turn, I selected the second arch from the Port left and lined up Wye Invader Two on the centre of the second arch, as we entered the arch the bows dip down as we passed over the 2 foot of standing water, in just a few seconds we were clear and on our way back down river a lot faster than we came up, the GPS put the speed of Wye Invader Two at between 12 and 15 mph.



The first pinch point came at the rocks just above Redbrook, Wye Invader Two moved to the port side of the river and then we squeezed through the gap between the rocks and bank and as soon as we cleared the rocks, Wye Invader Two moved to starboard to line up on the second arch from the right, the same one as the Wye Invader went through 6 years ago.



As soon as we cleared the bridge I moved to starboard to avoid some rocks put in the river as bank protection, about a mile down river we had a large rock in the middle of the river, Wye Invader Two passes to the left, as we clear this the GPS gives the boat speed as 15 mph. There is nearly 2 and half metres of flood water still on as Wye Invader Two goes over the top of new weir.

5 minutes later we passed under Bigsweir Bridge then over and down the weir, Llandogo is soon passed and within ten minutes Wye Invader Two was slowing so as to go about and then astern for the last 100 meters to moor against Brockweir quay, the last 15 miles took one hour and five minutes to Brockweir.

Tide 21.00 hours. Height 10.54 metres.

The tide tonight will cover Brockweir Quay by about 6 feet, to avoid Wye Invader Two over-topping, i.e. getting stuck on top of the quay when the tide turned, we carry two 4 metre scaffold poles to place down the face of the quay, held in place by the river mud at the base and with a rope loop from the roof of Wye Invader Two, this enables us to rise and fall with the tide with normal bow and stern springs.

19.00 hours.

The River Wye has gone quiet, the tide is now level with the top of the quay and has reached its limit as far as it can go upstream, the water level rises very quickly and over tops the quay

21.00 hours. Wye Invader Two is now on top of the tide, with the adjacent road covered.

22 00 hours. The river has dropped to clear the top of the quay and soon we are back to normal river flood levels, just 2 meters above summer level.

### ***Friday 22nd March.***

Tide 09.00 hours - Height 10.81 meters. This is the highest tide so far this year, 11.34 metres at Portishead.

07.15 hours. Wye Invader Two slipped her mooring and just passed under Brockweir Bridge on her way downstream, the tide has about one hour 15 minutes hours to high water.

08.35 hours. We passed through Tintern and are about a mile further downstream.



09.35 hours. Wye Invader Two rounded the last corner of the River Wye with Chepstow Castle on the starboard, a few hundred meters ahead was Chepstow road bridge, the tide is still level with the top of the Bridge piers leaving only the centre arch open, as we passed through, the Chepstow Boat Club pontoon is still well afloat.

09.45 hrs. Wye Invader Two passed under the Old Severn Bridge and joined the river Severn



11.00 hours. Wye Invader Two entered the lock at Portishead to stay overnight, we were booked on the 06.30 hour tide on Saturday.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

Tide 09.32am - Height 10.75 metres. The Severn Bore Tide is expected above Sharpness.

Wye Invader departed Portishead at 06.50 hours with an ETA at Sharpness by 09.28 hours to avoid any possible problems with the Severn Bore.

07.33 hours. Wye Invader Two covered the last 7 miles in 43 minutes and passed under the new Severn Bridge and was now about a mile in between the two bridges, I reduced the engine revs to 800 rpm.

09.28 hours. It was 4 minutes before high water, Wye Invader Two turned to starboard into the outer dock entrance, the tide should be almost at a standstill but there was still a strong current passing through the piers and past the entrance.

09.33 hours. Wye Invader Two was now in the lock and waiting lock up. No one hurt, no damage to Wye Invader Two and I think fair to say, "job well done".

