

RECORD BREAKING VOYAGE ON THE RIVER TRENT

A revolutionary concept is taking many Abnormal Indivisible Loads off Britain's crowded road system.

Traffic reports warning of delays to road users caused by the movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs) have become fewer in number following the introduction into service of the Multi Purpose Pontoon ("Terra Marique") which is capable of transporting individual loads of up to 1,200 tonnes along the UK coast and inland waterways including the Manchester Ship Canal and the tidal stretches of the Thames and Trent.



"Terra Marique" is designed to work in association with a smaller vessel "Inland Navigator", which is able to transport AILs of up to 300 tonnes by water to and from points many miles inland. Towns and cities accessible to "Inland Navigator" include Leeds, Maidenhead, Nottingham, Rotherham, Worcester and York. Together the two vessels can transport huge pieces of cargo many hundreds of miles around the UK coast and to the ports and inland waterway systems of North West Europe.

The "Terra Marique" was constructed at a cost of £8.5million, 99% of which was met by a Department for Transport Freight Facilities Grant. The grant award, the largest ever given for a inland waterways project, underscored the Government's policy of maximising the use of water for the movement of disruptive 'abnormal loads', around 1500 of which crawl along Britain's roads each year.

When encountered on motorways and moving at a snail's pace, heavy and wide AILs are extremely frustrating for other road users. However, they are invariably extremely important pieces of equipment: petrochemical modules, transformers and turbines destined for power stations or key exports or imports that have to be routed via major deep sea ports. The vessel has for instance carried a 270 tonne transformer to EDF Energy's Cottam Power station in Nottinghamshire. Loads such as this



load would traditionally have been transported around 60 miles on the road network, travelling at speeds of between 5 and 12 miles an hour and causing significant disruption to road-users. In this instance, use of the River Trent meant that road movement is entirely avoided.

By passing through the centre arch of the historic Gainsborough Bridge, the “Terra Marique”, which is 80m in length by 16.5m in width and weighs some 2211 tonnes, became the largest vessel ever to navigate the River Trent upstream of Gainsborough.

Courtesy of Robert Wynn and Sons Ltd

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