HUMBER SLOOP " AMY HOWSON"

This sloop which is now owned by the Humber Keel and Sloop Preservation Society Ltd. was built by Scarrs of Beverley in 1914. It was built for George Robert Scaife who fetched coal by water from the Yorkshire coalfields to Beverley for the local coal merchants. He also transported grain from Hull docks to the Sheffield basin. He named the vessel " Sophia " after his wife and had the hull rigged to sail as a keel.

Only two years after he had had this vessel built he bought another new boat and sold "Sophia " to Ernest Wright who in partnership with another wanted a ship to transport chalk and stone for work on bank protection on the lower Humber Estuary. It was at this time that Ernest had the keel rig changed to the fore and aft geiff sloop rig which made it handier for this new work. The conversions were carried out at Clapsons and Sons Barton Shipyard using the mainsail off an old sloop named "Success " which Ernest also owned.

After this heavy bank work Ernest Wright put the sloop, now named " I Know " and registered in Grimsby, into the parcel and general goods market trade, Grimsby to Hull run. This continued up to 1922 when the sloop was sold to the sloop and lighter owning firm of W.H. Barraclough. They re named the sloop " Amy Howson " for one of the daughters and registered the vessel in Hull. "Amy Howson " became one of 20 sloops in trade for the firm which traded in fertilizers, phosphates and oil seed rape to Brigg's Yarborough Oil Mill and Howdendyke. She also carried other cargo and there are records of her once again carrying grain from Hull to Sheffield basin.

During the 1930's cheap efficient diesel engines were being installed in vessels to give the quicker propeller propulsion. W.H. Baraclough converted his fleet one by one and "Amy" was altered in 193 with the fitting of an Ailsa Craig engine which drove a 36" propeller through a reduction gearbox. The work involved creating an aperture in the "deadwood" of the sternplates and installing the Ailsa Craigs stern tube with bearings. The cabin woodwork was removed and replaced in the foc'sle which was lengthened to take it by shifting the bulkhead one frame into the hold and re riveting it below the forrard headledge. To save cargo space only the plating above the foc'sle sole was moved and the remaining piece of bulkhead to the ships bilge plates was joined to the moved bulkhead by plating riveted to angle irons giving a steel floor to set the

stove on. The area under this to the hold is called the muddle for obvious reasons.

The Aisa Craig engine served very well for fourteen years until 1953 when it was replaced by a 30hp Lister Diesel. By the late 1960's river traffic was dwindling and Baracloughs sold off their fleet. "Amy Howson" was laid off in the River Hull to await her fate. The H.K.S.P.S.Ltd. had bought a keel named " Comrade " and work had commenced to convert her back to sail. The Barton enthusiasts however still sought a sloop although the society had spent all its money on the keel and also a suitable hull could not be found. Then Eric Burton a Barton man who had been Mate on "Amy Howson" as his fist job after leaving school got to know that she was laid derelict at Hull. He and other members of the society went to look at the vessel and eventually with grants from the Science Museum and Lincolnshire Arts the old sloop became the societies in 1976.

Unlike the keel "Comrade" which had been bought as a working barge " Amy" had been neglected for two or three years and vandals had taken their toll as well as the weather and time. Five years of rebuilding and

restoration work was rewarded when in1981 the sloop "Amy Howsen" fully rigged with Gaff Sail and Leeboards became the first ship to sail under the Humber Bridge when it was opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth on 17th July.

"Amy Howsen" is sailed regularly on the Humber, Ouse and Trent as well as attending rallies and water festivals on local waterways and canals. She is crewed and maintained by the enthusiastic volunteers and new members are always welcome.