

ON REFLECTION

Barton Hill History Group Boat trip to Beeses Sunday 24th. June.2007

On 24th June 2007 we planned a boat trip up the River to Beeses Tea Gardens. One of the Bristol Packet Boats, The Tower Belle, picked our members up at Wapping Wharf, Pontoon Watershed and Bristol Bridge. By the time everyone was on board the boat was virtually full.



The first thing Denton, the captain, did was announce to everyone that 'The Barton Hill Hysterical Group' were on board, so he obviously knew more about us than we

thought. He gave a commentary along the river pointing out various landmarks along the way. He said there used to be so much to talk about but most of the industries are now long gone with just traces of their existence. The most noticeable reminder was as we were passing Crews Hole, with the riverbank now covered with designer houses and flats, we caught the faint smell of creosote as we passed the spot where Butlers used to be.

We passed under several bridges the most significant being the massive brick arches that take the tracks into Bristol Temple Meads Railway Station. Some of the bridges along the river were very narrow and most of us were oblivious of the great care and skill needed to navigate these waters. However, Denton reassured us when he told us he had been doing the river trip for 40 years.

It took about an hour to get to Beeses Tea Gardens, the weather was holding up and most of us enjoyed a cup of tea with jam, cream and scones.



It was interesting to watch the ferry going back and forth to the Hanham side of the river at Conham. This is the oldest river ferry crossing on the Avon. The scene has not changed much since 1846 when Mr Bees would take travellers across the river to Mrs. Bees who provided refreshments.

The return journey had us watching the skies as large black clouds were gathering overhead and when the rain came it hammered down. But despite getting extremely wet everyone had an enjoyable afternoon.