KEW BRIDGE HOUSEBOAT CASE STUDY

Turning a wartime ammunition carrier into living accommodation







Saniplus, Sanivite, Showermatic, Sanitop

The transformation of a wartime ammunitions carrier in to a beautiful houseboat that graces the banks of the Thames at Kew Bridge was in no small part due to a range of pumps and macerators from Saniflo.

The steel-vesseled lighter, owned by Rex Leyland and his wife, was originally built in Doncaster in the 1930's to serve in the First World War. Its purpose was to replenish destroyers with ammunition during naval operations and in order to avoid risk of fire – which could blow up its precious cargo – the carrier was built without an engine and towed out to sea by tug.

Having been re-discovered by a previous owner, an engineer, in a Royal Naval scrapyard in Portsmouth the steel hull of the lighter once again found itself being towed by tug – this time round The Wash, up the Thames - to a boat yard in Brentford for reconfiguration before being moored on the Thames; one of few 'in perpetuity' mooring spaces in London.

In order to turn the space in to living accommodation the engineer – a war time enthusiast – acknowledged the lack of traditional drainage solutions and set about finding a solution that would work on-board. He turned to Saniflo who were able to recommend macerator pumps for the bathrooms and domestic pumping units for the kitchen and utility room.

Current owner, Rex, initially rented the houseboat and when the opportunity to buy it came up he didn't hesitate to put in the winning offer and subsequently set about renovating the 2250sq ft interior to his own taste.

Access to the renamed boat – the Ceri-Ann – is across a small footbridge which leads directly on to main deck which enjoys an outdoor garden space and plenty of greenery. Stepping inside a surprisingly spacious dining/lounge area has been sympathetically decorated and leads to the galley kitchen which boasts a range of mod-cons including a stainless steel sink and dishwasher. Both units discharge water into a Sanivite pump located unobtrusively under the sink which dispatches the waste water along the voids in the roof into a dedicated outlet pipe that evacuates in to the Thames – where the high tides recycle the waste water.

A cloakroom on the same level is powered by a Sanitop which pumps waste from a washbasin and toilet through a 22mm pipe that runs along a void underneath the floor discharging into a dedicated sewage tank located in the boiler room in the steel hull of the ship.

The lower deck is accessed by a wooden staircase and consists of 4 double bedrooms. A sumptuous guest room features an en-suite with bath, shower, basin and wc all expelling waste through a Saniplus macerator which is neatly boxed in behind the toilet but easily accessed through a hatch acting as a shelf. The main bathroom uses another discreetly installed Saniplus unit and backs on to a utility room where a Showermatic pump processes the waste water from the new, level access shower (the new 'flat' installation wasn't able to work with the Saniplus piping). The water is pumped by the Showermatic into another Sanivite pump which takes waste water from an ice machine and washing machine also located in the utility room.

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This clever installation takes the toilet and basin waste out one way to the sewage tank on board and the water from the other appliances in another direction to be pumped out of the boat in to the Thames. A further en-suite in the master cabin is powered by a Saniplus for a bath, toilet and basin.

The whole project is a master class in planning. Three large metal vats in the boiler room located in the boat's hull were once used for pressurised water to power a sprinkling system to douse the munitions in the event of a fire. Today they are used for sewage, water and oil.

The sewage vat has an electronic float device to indicate it is full so that the waste can be evacuated in to a main sewer and treated along with and in the same way as the waste from nearby houses and flats.

For owner, Rex, the opportunity to create his dream home on the edge of the Thames would not have been possible without the solutions provided by Saniflo.

"The team at Saniflo has been invaluable in helping us with the technicalities of installing bathroom and kitchen facilities in what can only be described as an unusual space. Subsequent service from the Saniflo service engineer has been excellent; he is knowledgeable, helpful and full of advice. This is a good company to deal with."

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