

HISTORIC RIVER VESSELS

European Network of River Museums



NIXE A STEAMBOAT FOR THE WATERWAYS ADMINISTRATION

NIXE was used as a tug boat, a supervisory vessel and a travel boat for the Prussian waterways construction office (Preußisches Maschinenbauamt) in Magdeburg-Rothensee in Saxony-Anhalt. The steamboat was constructed in 1934 by the Nobiskrug shipyard in Rendsburg in Schleswig-Holstein for the waterways administration at the Mittelland-Kanal and the Elbe.

After World War II the boat belonged to the Waterways Departement in Hitzacker in Lower Saxony from 1945 till the early 1970s. Then it was sold to the Netherlands, before it was bought by the Westphalian Industrial Museum and brought back to Germany. The boat became part of the Museum's collection of historical ships. Since 1998 the steam engines of NIXE are operable again.

The boat was built with a welded steel hull. It is 24,30 m long and 4,55 m wide and has a capacity of 750 tons. The chimney can be folded down to cross low bridges. The two three-cylinder steam engines each produce 55 horse power with 330 rpm.

A crew of four were necessary to man the steamboat: a skipper, an operator, a stoker and a deckhand. They were housed in the foredeck. Midships is a salon to accommodate visiting officials, equipped with a toilet and a coat rack. A maximum of 58 persons were allowed to travel on the ship.

The stoker and the operator had to have a good knowledge of steam technology and be able to work under extreme heat and pressure. Stokers used to work at temperatures of up to 60 degrees Celsius, checking water levels, refilling the boiler with coal and oiling all the moving parts. The operator was responsible for working the steam engine. He carried out the orders given by the skipper. His job was not only to regulate the speed of the boat and its direction, but also for maintaining the steam engine.

Until the early 1960s steam-driven tugs were an everyday sight on the canals. After that they were gradually replaced by diesel-driven tugs.

On special occasions, the museum today offers boat trips with NIXE for its visitors.



Passengers on board, 2014



NIXE enters the upper reach of the Schiffshebewerk Henrichenburg, 2018



NIXE and its crew in a lock at the Rhein-Herne-Kanal, 2014



The operator in the engine room, 2012