

# HISTORIC RIVER VESSELS

European Network of River Museums



## THE PADDLE-WHEEL STEAMER TUG “OSCAR HUBER” “HIGH” TECH IN SHIPPING HISTORY

Subsequent to manufacture by the Berninghaus shipbuilders in 1922, the steamer tug powered by side paddle-wheels initially set sail under the name “H.P. Disch VIII, Wilhelm von Oswald”. Only when the Karcher shipping company took it over in 1927 was the barge re-named Oscar Huber. The “Oscar Huber” sailed up and down the Rhine between Rotterdam and Karlsruhe virtually until the end of World War II.

In 1945, the German Armed Forces ordered it to be sunk so that the advancing Allied Forces could not acquire it. Only the funnels remained above water. Yet, the tug was only damaged slightly. In 1946 after the war was over, the “Oscar Huber” was repaired and re-launched in 1947. In 1954, the original coal-firing tug was converted to oil.

Until 1966, the paddle-wheel vessel used to tow up to seven unpowered freight-laden barges. At the end of the 1950s, diesel-powered pushers were introduced which would gradually replace the steamer tugs. The “Oscar Huber” served as a party ship for a brief period until the City of Duisburg bought it in 1971 and made it into Duisburg’s first shipping museum in 1974. The paddle-wheel steamer tug could thus escape being scrapped.

Today, the vessel belongs to the Museum of German Inland Shipping. Visitors can walk around virtually all parts, viewing the deck, the impressive engine room and the crew quarters as they used to be.



| Facts and Figures RK XIV “Oscar Huber”  |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Length  | 75,00 meters                |
| Width (including wheel case)  | 20.70 meters                |
| Laden draught   | 1.55 meters                 |
| Maximum load  | approx. 200 tonnes (metric) |
| Year of construction  | 1922                        |
| Boatbuilder's yard  | Berninghaus, Duisburg       |
| Fired by (until 1954)   | coal                        |
| Fired by (from 1954)  | heavy heating oil           |
| Coal consumption:<br>Duisburg/Ruhrort/Rotterdam and return (approx. 6 days)         | 70 tonnes(metric)           |
| Heating oil consumption:<br>Duisburg/Ruhrort/Karlsruhe and return (approx. 11 days) | 60-70 tonnes(metric)        |
| Horse power   | 1550 HP                     |
| Towing capacity   | 5000 - 6000 tonnes (metric) |