



Above: Artist and sculptor Ann Carrington checks some of the half a million gold buttons used on the red velvet banner (left) which decorates the royal barge.
Below: Alan Lamb poses next to some of the sculptures which will decorate the barge

'SPIRIT OF CHARTWELL'

Spirit Of Chartwell was indeed a vessel fit for a queen when it sailed down the River Thames. Accompanying the Queen was her husband the Duke of Edinburgh, on thrones underneath a diamond-shaped glass faceted canopy. The Queen's throne is actually slightly higher than Philip's but on this occasion they were the same height. The Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry were also aboard the 210ft luxury cruise boat, accompanied by some friends and acquaintances.

Spirit Of Chartwell was built 12 years ago and has undergone an extensive conversion. The exterior has been painted crimson and gold and is decorated with a gold-tinted film with a gilded carving of Old father Time at the prow. It was decorated with a huge red velvet banner, made by artist and sculptor Ann Carrington, which was sewn with over half a million gold buttons, depicting the Pearly Kings and Queens - the banner was so heavy it had to be manoeuvred by a forklift truck! Red, gold and purple flowers from the Queen's garden decorated the vessel while red carpets and red velvet drapes adorned the interior.



Above: The sumptuous interior of the royal barge (above centre)

the expected to get into trouble for stealing it, but were congratulated instead.

Another fascinating story belongs to the *Silver Queen*, which rescued troops off the French coast and set sail for home, but with no compass or map it got lost and ended up approaching German-occupied Calais. A distress signal called a larger British ship over for cover so that it could limp back to Britain, where it disembarked it's passengers and sank. It was refreshed and bought by Joe Radmore, whose grandfather had been one of the evacuees from Dunkirk. The boat now offers trips on the Thames from Windsor.

Group five - historic service vessels - is led by the Jubilant Commonwealth Choir singing modern versions of folk songs. The group contains the *CMB 9 Knock*, a torpedo boat which saw action in World War One. Group six are the working boats led by Shree Muktajeevan Pipe & Dhol Ensemble playing Bollywood tunes - the group comprises tugs and lifeboats including one called *Bernard Matthews II*. They are followed by the recreational motor boats. The music master for the pageant, Sir Nicholas Kenyon, revealed that in tribute to Handel's original, a *New* ▷