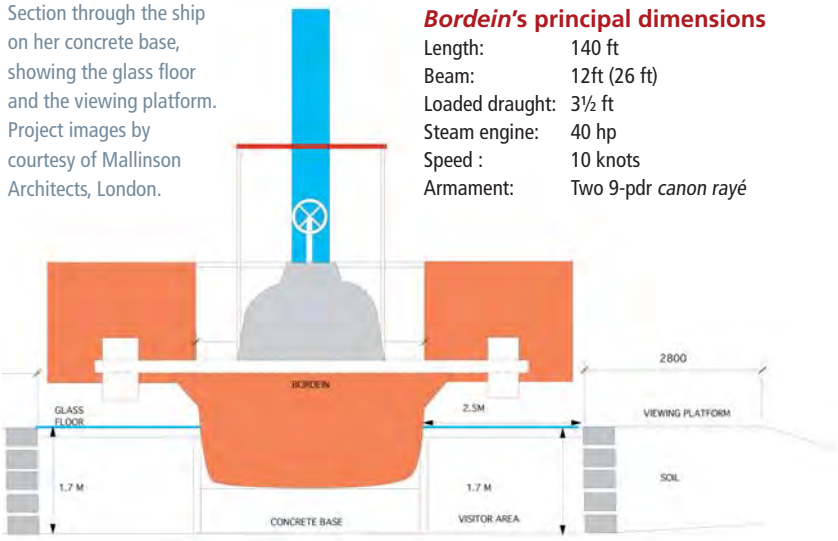
The proposed layout of the Bordein Museum, as submitted to Sudan's State Minister of Culture.

Section through the ship on her concrete base, showing the glass floor and the viewing platform. Project images by courtesy of Mallinson Architects, London.



Bordein's principal dimensions

Length:	140 ft
Beam:	12ft (26 ft)
Loaded draught:	3½ ft
Steam engine:	40 hp
Speed :	10 knots
Armament:	Two 9-pdr *canon rayé*

untapped resource, the country's rich and complex history – particularly the spur it might give to a nascent tourist industry.

"It is already starting to attract tourists," said Khartoum State's Minister of Culture, Media and Tourism, Mohamed Awad al-Barodi. "We were astonished recently when two buses of European tourists came to the area."

Many Britons and other history buffs still cling to the stories of Britain's long relationship with the Sudan. There have been at least four films based on the classic novel *The Four Feathers*, and the dramatic depiction of General Gordon calmly facing his attackers on the steps of the Governor's palace in Khartoum has become an icon of British stoicism.

A benefit to tourism in Sudan

The official unveiling took place on 26 January and there are plans for a glass-walled museum telling the story of the *Bordein* alongside the remains of the mud-walled fortification built up by the Mahdi who captured Khartoum and defeated Gordon in 1885. The Minister said he had put in a request to Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir to turn the Presidential Palace into a museum. Another British gunboat, the *Melik*, lies in a sand berth surrounded by bougainvillea awaiting restoration on the site of the Blue Nile Sailing Club, where she has served since 1925 as the Clubhouse.

Tourism remains a tiny industry in Sudan. The Minister had no official statistics for tourist numbers in the capital. Intrepid visitors have to fight through a forest of red tape to obtain visas, and risk arrest by taking photos without a permit.

Sudan's frequent conflicts, most recently in Darfur, have also left it with severe image problems when it comes to making it a major tourist destination. But Barodi remains optimistic that these sites will attract local visitors and, over time, foreign tourists. "The war in Darfur has distorted the image of Sudan for a long time. It has obscured the real nature of the Sudanese people. We are peaceful, hospitable and engaging ... and we would like people to come."

Hanan Abbas

Close-up of the hull and paddle-wheel housings.

Hanan Abbas

View from the stern, with the river in the background.

Design: www.louismackaydesign.co.uk

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Your annual subscription as a Friend of the Melik directly helps the Melik Society achieve its aims, including the restoration of the *Melik* and the *Bordein*, the promotion of interest in Anglo-Sudanese history, and the publication of *The Gunboat*, and regular bulletins.

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