

# On Board

## The Newsletter of the Peter Le Marchant Trust

Providing day outings and holidays on waterways  
for people of all ages with any kind of disability or serious illness



**Patron:** H.R.H. The Princess of Hanover  
(formerly Her Serene Highness, The Princess Caroline of Monaco.)

**Trustees:** Rev. Clare Le Marchant-Connell, Mr. Ian Scleater, C.V.O., Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, Bt., Mr. Paul Donert,  
Sir Francis Le Marchant, Bt., The Rt. Hon. Lord Crawshaw, Mr. Kelvin Robinson, Mrs. Serena Richards, Mr. Tim Rolph.

Registered Charity No. 273207

**Issue No. 13 November 2009.**



### **A happy holiday on “Melody” – an email from the Dunwell family**

We wanted to send you an email to thank you for a fantastic holiday. We all enjoyed ourselves so much, even if we were having palpitations over Oliver all the time!

The holiday was just the thing to recharge the batteries and we are already contemplating coming again next year! It is very rare we take the kids on holiday during the school summer break because of Georgia's disliking of crowds, but this holiday was such an eye opener. It was so quiet, compared to the usual type of things we do (museums, zoos, theme parks, etc.). The boat exceeded our expectations and catered for our family perfectly.

Once again, many thanks for a wonderful week and keep up the good work (we hope to see you soon!)

Nick, Suzi, Taylor, Georgia and Oliver Dunwell (22nd - 28th August)

*Georgia has cerebral palsy and is in a wheelchair. “Melody” is our narrowboat, specially designed with wheelchair lifts for weekly hire by a family or group with a disabled member.*

## PROFILE: RAY FAIRBROTHER



At the end of March 2010 Ray Fairbrother will be retiring from his role as full-time Skipper of the day-trip boat, *Symphony*. He and his wife, Sue, joined in 1979 as weekend Volunteers and have been working enthusiastically and tirelessly for the Trust ever since. Their contribution has been enormous and the Trust is extremely grateful.

The role of skipper requires a unique combination of skills and experience. Ray was one of the first Volunteer Skippers to gain his MCA (Maritime & Coastguard Agency) licence, and in 2002 became a full-time Skipper. From April to the end of October, this involves taking groups of up to 26 people on day-trips on the canal, five days a week and quite often at weekends as well. The Skipper, supported by the Volunteer crew, is solely responsible for the safety of the passengers and the driving of the boat. The safety and welfare of the passengers is paramount to Ray. He is there to make sure the group and their carers have a good day out. Each group is different with different requirements and Ray has always tried to be sensitive to what the group needs to make themselves feel at home and relaxed enough to enjoy it. Some groups like to have music playing. A regular Asian group like to bring their own spices and food to cook for lunch rather than going to the pub. During the winter months the Skipper has to dry-dock, maintain and make any repairs required to the boats. For all these skills, Ray has been well qualified.

The sixth of eight children he was born in Aylestone, south west of Leicester and has lived in Leicestershire all his life. From an early age he took up boxing at school and just before his seventeenth birthday gained his professional boxing licence. He left school after 'O' Levels, joined an insurance company, passed his First Year exams but then realized he wanted to become an engineer, so left and gained a deferred apprenticeship in engineering. For five years he worked in the tool room and one-off shop of Ratby Engineering amongst highly skilled men, thus gaining excellent experience which led to a successful and fulfilling career. He became an expert in setting machinery to produce components for machines required in the car, aviation and other industries, developing an expertise in improving and designing machines which he still loves doing, and later taught himself to work with computer-controlled machinery.

Married to Sue for over forty years, they have two children, four grandchildren; and have always had dogs, mostly German Shorthaired Pointers, which they have involved in country sports - rough and pigeon shooting. He played football until he was fifty, refereed until he was fifty five, and during this period ran three local football clubs. 'I have been lucky. I have always had a very full life with enough challenges,' he said, and added, 'But the Trust has always taken preference over my other activities.'

In retirement he plans to become more involved with his dogs and country sports. He and Sue have bought a caravan and want to travel round the country with the dogs to visit dog trials. He will still be connected to the Trust. 'I'm there when they need me,' he said. We wish him all the very best in this next stage of his life.

Harriet Grace.



Derek and Winifred Smith are 89 and 88 years old and have been happily married for over 68 years. They live at the Peace Mills Care Home in Nottingham, and over the years they have fostered 120 children. They are pictured after an enjoyable day out on "Symphony".

---

### **MAKING A DIFFERENCE.**

The Trust takes a huge diversity of groups on their two big boats, and some of their passengers are so ill it could be difficult to imagine what they get out of a trip on the canal.

Recently Deirdre Thompson was on a day trip on Serenade. There were three children and six carers. The children were aged about ten and had no control over their bodies and couldn't speak. The six carers cleared the space inside Symphony and put down large cushions and laid the children on to them so that they felt comfortable and safe, and were able to see out of the windows to the side and up to the sky through the openings in the roof of the boat. With Chris as skipper, the boat set off along the canal. The three children were quite agitated at first, as the carers helped them on to the cushions, but as they lay safely on the cushions feeling the movement of the boat and looking up into the sky, they became calm. After a while they smiled. Deirdre said it was difficult to describe in words the exact effect on each child, but she could clearly see a transformation in their well being.

---

### **Donations**

We extend appreciative thanks to all our donors and particularly to the following who have given £1,000 or more since May 2009:-

Dunn Family Charitable Trust

Freemasons Grand Charity

Worshipful Company of Joiners & Ceilers

Four Winds Trust

Helen Jean Cope Charity

The Henry Smith Charity

All your donations, large and small, helped to provide day trips and holidays in 2009 at a very low cost to a large number of groups and individuals who otherwise would have been unable to afford it, and we are very grateful.

# Back page Round-up

## Peter Le Marchant Trust

*All enquiries to:*

*Canalside Moorings,  
Beeches Road,  
Loughborough, LE11 2NS  
Tel./Fax 01509 265590*

[www.peterlemarchanttrust.co.uk](http://www.peterlemarchanttrust.co.uk)

Registered Charity No. 273207



**(Left)** Chris Morton, Skipper of "Serenade", was nominated by his son for Best Dad of the year - which he surely is! - and was picked by Daddies Sauce to feature on their bottles for the next year!

Picture courtesy mark warner/pageonepictures.co.uk



**(Right)** Children from Westgate School enjoy a trip on "Serenade", organised by HSBC in the Community.

## Melody Serenade Symphony



## Melody Serenade Symphony

The staff of Leicester Shire Promotions (above), the organisation responsible for promoting Leicester and Leicestershire to visitors, return to Pillings Marina from an enjoyable (if a little wet) cruise.