

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, Duchess of Brunswick and Luneburg.
(formerly Her Serene Highness, The Princess Caroline of Monaco.)

Trustees: Rev. Clare Le Marchant-Connell, Ian Seatear, C.V.O., Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, Bt., Mr. Paul Donert,
Sir Francis Le Marchant, Bt., RT.HON. Lord Crawshaw, Mr. Kelvin Robinson

Registered Charity No. 273207

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Leicester City FC,
now back in the
Premier Division,
have adopted us as
one of their
charities for the
coming season

25 Years of 'Days of Brightness' for so many...

**It is astonishing to look back over more than 25 years
and to see how the Peter Le Marchant Trust was first
conceived and how it has since developed.**

Having received a legacy from my brother Peter and recognising the calming influence and therapeutic value which water can bring to people who are subject to disability, serious illness or who have learning difficulties, I decided to build "Matilda", a specialised canal boat, for their benefit, and many disadvantaged people of all ages enjoyed 'days of brightness' during her first extended season. It rapidly became clear that the demand for her was so great that another boat was much needed.

The Peter Le Marchant Trust was formed, trustees were appointed and Her Serene Highness, Princess Caroline of Monaco graciously agreed to be our Patron.

It is thanks to the trustees, the Princess, and above all to the extraordinary work of our many Volunteers, and of course our Administrators and Skippers, that the Trust has achieved so much and my prayers have been answered, that the overflow of Peter's life should give so much joy.

Our visitors come from hospitals, special schools and day care centres; they include specialised groups such as stroke clubs, head injury units and hospices from all over the U.K. Our work is only made possible by the many organisations, grant-making trusts and individuals who raise money in so many imaginative ways to help keep us 'sailing'. I am immensely thankful for all the hard work and encouragement of friends, family and trustees. Our three boats are now far more sophisticated. My own happiest days have been spent in sharing the delight, beauty and sense of adventure that is experienced daily on board "Symphony" and "Serenade" and in knowing of people's delight as they go off on holidays on board "Melody".

I wish I could personally thank everyone who has helped so much over the years and who will continue to see the fruition of past and future prayer resulting in many further years of enjoyment.

How delighted Peter would have been.

Clare Le Marchant-Connell.



We were filmed by
BBC Nottingham
in 2002 for
Children in Need.
This was shown on
local News and on
the Telethon itself.

In 2002 we carried a
total of 3,042
Passengers

Serenade Symphony Melody

We have a team
of sixty dedicated
Volunteers who,
by rotation,
provide the crews
for 'Symphony'

We need £100,000
a year for running
expenses. Last
year donations
totalled £46,274
and other income
came to £28,640.
Leaving a shortfall
of £27,387. Will
you help us to
balance the
books?

Skipper Ray Fairbrother
took 'Symphony' to a
boat rally over the
weekend of 3rd/4th
May.

A steady stream of
visitors toured the boat.

William gets the go-ahead for a longer trip on “Serenade”.

The Glenfield project is a respite bungalow offering support to families who have a child with multiple disabilities, and one of their aims is to give the children enjoyable experiences they can't have elsewhere, such as holidays on canal boats.

One Sunday in May, William, Ann and Simon plus their carers and their picnic boarded the day-boat “Symphony”, skippered by Ray Fairbrother. The carers were assessing whether William would enjoy a four-day trip on “Serenade” later in the year, and whether he would fit in with the other children already booked on the trip.

As “Symphony” chugged along the canal through the fields towards the first lock, the carers and the children sat in the bow of the boat. William gazed at the water and shook his arms with excitement. Ann giggled and waved at the walkers on the tow-path, Simon sat quietly with his carer and then

wanted to walk around inside the boat. The carers sang songs with the children, or pointed out the sheep and the cows. There was a lot of laughter.

Ruth, one of the carers, told me they had researched many different holidays for the children but that a boat trip on “Serenade” was the only holiday for the children that was local, accessible and affordable. Water, the slow chugging pace of the boat past the trees and fields and villages, the excitement of the gushing lock, works a kind of magic that is difficult to find in any other context.

On Sunday the children responded in their own way to the experience, showing excitement or surprise at the sheep, or waking from feeling dozey to look at the ducks, or calming down from feeling agitated at the sight of the flowing water. The carers enjoyed themselves. And William, who had clearly loved the trip, was given the go-ahead for the four-day trip on “Serenade”. *Harriet Grace*

Today's Fleet



Symphony and Serenade leave their moorings

We have come a long way since our original 40' narrowboat “Matilda” which was launched in 1976 and carried 12 passengers. We now have “Symphony” and “Serenade”, both 65' long and 10'6" wide, both equipped for the severest disabled people, with hydraulic lifts, specially designed toilets and showers, resuscitation equipment etc. Both boats have fully certificated Skippers and operate from April to October.

“Symphony” takes up to 26 passengers on day trips at a cost of £5 per head; “Serenade” takes 10 passengers on 4/5 day holidays at a cost of £25 per head.

We also have a 65' narrowboat “Melody”, fitted out in the same way, which can sleep 5/8 people (depending on the disability) and which is available for weekly hire by families or groups with at least one disabled member. The hire charge is £90 per person per week, minimum £475.

A busy Season – but still so much more to do.....

says General Manager Charles Grace



All donations will always be gratefully received and acknowledged

If you are a tax payer and willing to sign a Gift Aid form your donation will be increased by 28% - a huge advantage for us and at no cost to you.

Trust reserves, at their current level, can subsidise the Trust's activities for only a limited period.

My target is to rebuild our reserves

As one of the original Trustees, I care passionately about the Trust and in 2002 I retired early from working in the City and stood down as a Trustee so as to be able to accept my appointment as General Manager.

We have two certificated Skippers, the boats and all the equipment and above all we have our sixty or so Volunteers – many have been with us for more than twenty years – who provide the crew for "Symphony" every day of the week from April to October and look after over 3,000 passengers a year. My target is not only to raise enough money for running expenses each year – we need a net £85,000 per annum – but also to rebuild our reserves so that we can fund a boat replacement when necessary. I am helped immeasurably by the commitment of our Volunteers who not only crew "Symphony" but also help to fund-raise. A Charity is dependent on its Volunteers, and we have the best!

We are making a short film about the Trust's activities, available in the Autumn in both video and CD formats. Our Patron has recorded a message for it, and Simon Bates, who broadcasts for Classic FM every morning, will do the commentary. He, and the film-making team, are very generously giving their services free, and therefore the film will cost a fraction of what it would otherwise have done. The Trust is very grateful to Simon, to Wendy Williams the Director, and everyone involved. The film will be very useful for fund-raising, and will be available to show to possible donors and also to groups who might be thinking about a trip.

I look to the future with confidence. I am in no doubt that we will be able to continue to provide the help, support and encouragement which it has been our privilege to provide for the past twenty six years. Donations are immensely important to us and **we are grateful for every single pound we are given**. If a Gift Aid form is completed, these donations will be increased by 28% - a huge advantage to us, and at no cost to the donors.

Charles Grace

Children from Vista, the Charity for the blind, enjoy a voyage in glorious sunshine aboard "Symphony", the Trust's 65ft x 10ft 6ins beam steel canal boat, which carries up to 26 passengers, including helpers, on day trips from our Loughborough base under the care of a certificated skipper and an experienced crew.



Trust Administrator, Lynn Smith, who joined the Trust last year. Married to Tony, she has two children, Emma and Oliver, who are both frequent visitors to the boats

Rod Foreman, the Skipper of "Serenade", is taking her down to Leicester for the big boat rally there over the weekend of 13/14 September. The boat will be all set up with beds so that visitors can see what the accommodation is like when there are up to ten people sleeping on board.

Charles Grace did a live broadcast on BBC Radio Leicester on 1st July on their Just for Funds spot. The interview was about eight minutes long and had a positive response.

Back page Round-up

Among the groups we have had on board "Symphony" and "Serenade" this season have been: Broughton Astley Stroke Club; Ash Field School; Loughborough Cancer Self Help Group; Loughborough Hard of Hearing Club; Crocus Fields; Shuttleworth Clarke; Mencap; Dawn House School; Glebe House; Royal Star & Garter Home, Richmond; Bleach Green, Tyne & Wear; Woodlands School, Plymouth; Age Concern; Abbeyfield; Vista (formerly RNIB); and Shopmobility Group.



Ray Fairbrother, who skippers "Symphony" had been a Volunteer for over 20 years, skippering the weekend trips before joining the Trust on a full-time basis last year after a career in engineering. He says "My main aim is to see the Trust maintain its position as the best outfit on the navigations, both in the manner in which we and our Volunteers conduct ourselves and the way we look after our passengers – in all we do we firmly believe the safety and pleasure of our passengers comes first."

Rod Foreman joined the Trust early in 1996, as full-time Skipper of "Serenade" and since then has got to know the River Soar, River Trent and the Trent and Mersey Canal very well indeed. He owns a narrowboat called "Jenesis" which is moored at Barrow. Rod has occasionally skippered "Symphony" when he gets the opportunity, to meet the Volunteers. He thoroughly enjoys the job and finds tremendous satisfaction taking lots of people for holidays and day trips on the rivers and canals.



Donors are welcome to visit us, look over the boats and see how the Trust operates.

Above: General Manager Charles Grace and skipper Ray Fairbrother receive a donation towards the running costs of the Trust.

Peter Le Marchant Trust

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