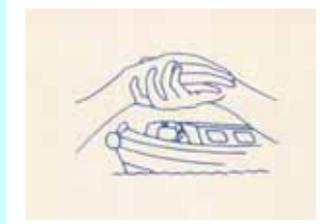


# On Board

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

Registered Charity No. 273207

Issue No. 2 March 2004.

# 'I like this boat, I do'

.... said the little eight year old girl.

She had arrived at the Peter Le Marchant Trust moorings at Loughborough with her carer for a day on 'Symphony'. Timidly she approached the boat and needed encouragement to go on board. They found seats in the bows and the Skipper cast off.

The boat glided along past fields and trees and negotiated a family of ducks and several locks, and stopped for lunch at a pub. It was on the return trip that she said these memorable words.

**They were the first words she had uttered for three years.**

This is not the only 'minor miracle' that has happened on these trips. Clare Le Marchant-Connell founded the Trust twenty seven years ago. She had the vision to see that water and peaceful scenery could have a therapeutic effect on the lives of people who face great difficulties, and she was the pioneer of these types of organisations. There are now many similar schemes in this country.



"Symphony" and "Serenade" at the moorings

**But what's so special about a boat?**

The highlight of the year was making a film to promote the Trust. Huge thanks to Wendy Williams (Producer), Sam Grace (Director and Camera), Fred Grace (Assistant Camera) and Simon Bates of Classic FM (voiceover) who all gave their services free

**Read about making the film on page 2...**

## MAKING THE FILM - What's so special about a boat?

Imagine being stuck inside the four walls of your house, or in a hospital or a home, spending the majority of your existence in the same room or building unable to get outdoors or have a change of scene unless someone helps you. What is it about a boat trip on the canal that can make such a difference to a partially sighted person, or a child in a wheelchair with multiple disabilities, or a very old person? Last summer a professional film crew joined the Trust to find out.

“Symphony” carried more passengers in 2003 than in any previous

They filmed four different groups: seven adults with learning difficulties from Casmington Court; a group of the elderly and partially sighted with a Loughborough Lions group; John and Sue Wilford and their disabled son Ian; and the Emily Fortey School, a special needs day school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties including visual impairment. With each group they looked for the telling detail and images, and they have ended up with a short film - a seven minute and a thirteen minute DVD or video – which shows better than any words why these trips are so worth while.

Charges remain the same as last year in order to keep trips affordable by all groups

There are some heart warming moments: Fred from Casmington Court leading the group singing ‘Michael row the boat ashore’, and later with Rod’s assistance steering “Serenade”; Lawrence from Emily Fortey School in his protective leather helmet, feeding the ducks and then deciding to eat the bread himself; Gwen, aged 89 and partially sighted, saying that kindness is the most important thing at her age and adding ‘I feel so content. God’s in his heaven and all’s right with the world.’

In their different way each group confirms the value of the trips. On “Serenade” it is the last day of the holiday and the camaraderie – the singing, the laughing - between the passengers and their carers, and Rod the Skipper, is tangible. On “Symphony”, Carol, a learning support assistant from Emily Fortey, explains that the children are aware of their environment, and enjoy different surroundings even if they don’t understand that they are on a boat. Sue Wilford on the family holiday boat, “Melody”, describes the difficulties of having a normal holiday when you have a ‘split family’. On board there is no time pressure which means that their normal child will not be restricted by the one with multi-disabilities, and the family can enjoy a holiday together, Isabel, who is blind sits in the bows of “Symphony” feeling the air on her skin and talks about how safe she feels on the boat. At home, even getting up and walking across a room can feel dangerous.

“Serenade” was out for most of the available weeks and every week passengers spoke of the benefit they had experienced.

An often repeated message: “We have had a really enjoyable and relaxing time”.

Both Rod and Ray, the Skippers, said that they get intense satisfaction from giving people, who normally wouldn’t be able to go out, the opportunity to be on a boat travelling slowly through beautiful countryside in a totally safe and secure environment with friends and carers they trust, and looked after by the Volunteers and the Skippers. The film vividly demonstrates this. That is why so many groups return every summer for another trip.



Right: The film crew at work on “Symphony”

We start 2004 in a far healthier financial state than for some years - our sincere thanks to all those who contributed towards that success. We have some way to go to rebuild our reserves.

## PART OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The cameras rolled as the Emily Fortey School boarded "Symphony" for a day trip. Nine children in wheelchairs and one in a buggy were pushed down the slope and on to the boat. It was a blustery, grey July day threatening rain and the children sat inside near the windows and then as the sky lightened took turns to be on deck in the bows.

Amongst the group were identical twins aged eleven who have been at the Emily Fortey School since they were five, a child who needed to be fed by tube, and a boy who had to wear a leather helmet to protect him from epileptic fits. Emily Fortey is a special needs day school for children from the ages of five to nineteen with profound and multiple learning difficulties including the visually impaired, and this was their fourth trip on "Symphony".

The six carers ranged from a trained primary teacher with many years' experience to a student nursery nurse, and they all had a very special way with the children, doing what was needed for them, affectionately encouraging them to be aware of their surroundings, but most importantly *being* with the children, taking the journey with them. The groan of pleasure from one child sitting in her wheelchair in the bows is a very moving moment in the film.

Brenda, a trained primary school teacher who has been with Emily Fortey for 16 years, explained that although the children are extremely ill, the school has a curriculum and covers all subjects except French. She sat on the railings in the bows and described how they love coming on "Symphony", and how each year she tries to make the curriculum subject fit in with a trip. Last year it was part of geography. This year it was part of history and they were doing the history of transport. Travelling on "Symphony" is a safe form of transport with easy access, and it means that these children can experience actual transport: feel the movement on water and the sense of travelling along. How much better than just looking at pictures of boats in a book.

*The Trust's new T-shirts, sweat shirts and polo shirts, in a variety of colours, are now available and have been selling like hot cakes to the Volunteers and others.*

Emma and her friends set up a stall outside her house on two occasions and raised nearly £100 - a marvellous effort!

### Acknowledgements:

Our grateful thanks:

to Microsoft for donating software worth over £1,200 for our new database system.

to Hex Holdings for donating paint needed for this year's refit of all three boats, after Fay James explained to Adena Hecks exactly what the Trust does.

to Mrs. Vaughan who donated money to cover the cost of this Newsletter, in memory of her late husband, Stanley, a supporter of the Trust.

#### Recent donors of £1,000 or more, include:

29<sup>th</sup> May 1961 Charitable Trust

Harry Dunn Charitable Trust

Thomas Sivewright Catto Charitable Settlement

Loughborough Community Chest

Beeston Marina

Mrs. M.A. Roberts

George Ernest Ellis Foundation

Lloyds TSB Foundation

Charles Littlewood Hill Trust

Customers of the "Cuckoo Bush", Gotham

and others who prefer to remain anonymous.

We are very grateful to all who give to make it possible for us to continue our work.

**The signing of a Gift Aid form, if you are a U.K. tax payer, enables us to claim 28% on top of any donations made by you.**

We will be holding a concert at St. Paul's School in Barnes, on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2004 and we hope that our Patron, HRH The Princess of Hanover will be present. The Princess who first became our Patron when she Princess Caroline of Monaco has always been a strong supporter of the Trust and recorded a special message for the film we made last year. Copies are available from the office.



Left:  
"Melody" at  
Sibley Mill.

# Back page Round-up

Bookings for the 2004 season are already at an advanced stage. There are only a few week-days left for day boat "Symphony" up to September but most dates for October and several summer Saturdays and Sundays are still available.

"Serenade" (the 4/5 day trip boat) has some weeks left but they are also going fast.

"Melody", available for weekly hire by groups with at least one disabled member, is also booking well but several weeks are still available.

**All enquiries to Lynn Smith at the office (please see below for details).**

We look forward to seeing old friends and some new ones.

**Steve Howie**, who played for Leicester City until recently, paid a visit to "Serenade" in September and met the Skipper, Rod Foreman, together with Lynn Smith, the Trust Administrator and Richard Kettell, a Volunteer Skipper and LCFC supporter. Steve has now left LCFC and we are pleased that Steve Guppy, on loan to the Club from Celtic, has offered to sign a shirt for the Trust to raffle in the summer.



A barbeque was held at the base for all Volunteers towards the end of the season and was a great success. Our grateful thanks to Tony, Lynn and Emma Smith and to Deidre Thompson for all their hard work in organising the food and drink. Pictured above some of the Volunteers enjoying the occasion.

Happiness is boat shaped



Steve Howie aboard "Serenade"



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

Peter Le Marchant  
Trust

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