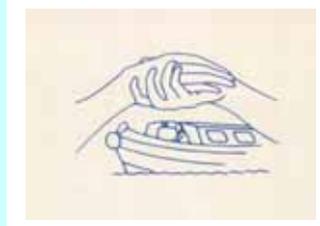


On Board

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.

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THE VITAL VOLUNTEERS

A love of boats, caring for people, flexibility, sensitivity, working as a team, camaraderie, each day different... these are the attractions for a Volunteer.

The Peter Le Marchant Trust has a remarkable team of Volunteers, many of whom have been with the Trust for over twenty years. They provide the crew for 'Symphony', the day boat that takes groups of up to 26 people with any kind of disability or serious illness on trips six days a week and the trips could not be run without them.

When the Trust started in 1976 everyone was a Volunteer. The founder, Clare Le Marchant-Connell, skippered the boat helped by volunteer Police cadets and a growing band of friends and friends of friends. Now there are four members of staff, including two Skippers, and about fifty Volunteers.

Their role is to provide the safe conduct of the boat and the safe custody of the passengers. Their job is to create an environment where for a few hours the group - be it a group of children with multiple disabilities or an elderly, partially-sighted group - can make the boat their home.

Each group is different, requiring subtly different kinds of support, ranging from how to place the chairs to the amount of contact with the passengers or their carers. The Skipper steers the boat safely and steadily. The crew offer their support within clearly defined and necessary rules of health and safety; and the passengers - and the carers - relax and benefit from the trip.



See inside for: Why do they do it?

A Passage to India

Helping the passengers ashore
after the trip.

WHY DO THEY DO IT? The Monday Crew



Left to right Alec Chadwick, Horace Weedon, Ann Fairbrother, Jean Mawby and John Beedsmoore.

Ray Fairbrother joined as a weekend Volunteer twenty-five years ago. He had been Commodore of Sileby Boat Club taking parties and groups on day trips and heard about this 'new Peter Le Marchant Trust' and was keen to join. He soon became a Skipper on the day-boat at weekends, and when it became compulsory, obtained his Boatmaster's Licence which allows him to skipper a boat carrying more than 12 passengers. Two and a half years ago he became an employee of the Trust as Skipper of 'Symphony', the day-boat. He is also in charge of the Volunteer Training Programme which is now required by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

The Trust means a huge amount to Ray and his wife, Susan, and he gets enormous satisfaction at the end of each trip for having provided a good day for his passengers. It is very rare for a group not to enjoy the trip in their own particular way. He sees agitated children become calmer. He notices withdrawn, frightened, people, who are not sure about coming on board, becoming animated and not wanting to leave. He loves the camaraderie of working with the volunteer crew and the challenge of working as a team providing support for the wide variety of different groups.

Ann Fairbrother retired from the Payroll and Purchase Accounts department of International Radiators in Leicester and heard about the Trust from Ray who is her brother-in-law. She joined the Monday crew about a year ago. She had never worked with the disabled or the elderly before and finds she loves the work. 'It's absolutely brilliant with children,' she says. 'You can literally see them calm down. You can be silly with them - say something like, "Is that a giraffe in the field?" and they giggle away.'

Jean Mawby joined the Monday crew in August 2003, and was one of the first volunteers to have to abide by the new laws and get Police clearance. She fostered children for twenty two years and knew about the Trust from when she took a disabled foster-child for a holiday on the Trust's narrowboat 'Melody'. She likes being part of the crew and mixing with the different groups, and is particularly good at being with the very disabled and knowing how to communicate with children or adults who can't speak.

Horace Weedon retired from full time employment in 1983 and took up consultancy work. After the tragic death of his daughter in 1985 he became involved in a project to help victims of serious crime which resulted in more support for the victims including the introduction of Police Family Liaison Officers. He also worked for the Stroke Club and in 1986 joined the Peter Le Marchant Trust. Helping others helped him through his tragedy and continues to do so. He enjoys the teamwork – and the banter – of the Monday crew, loves meeting the groups on the day trips and has made many friends.

John Beadsmoore has been with the Monday and Friday crew for six years. He holds his Boatmaster's Licence and is also a Volunteer Skipper. He has always been a boating man, and was the editor of a boating magazine who interviewed Clare Le Marchant-Connell, the Trust's founder, twenty five years ago. 'Where else can you go boating twice a week on the rivers of your youth with such good company?' He loves the practical, hands-on work and getting to know the different groups, many of whom come back two or three times a year.

Alec Chadwick joined the Monday crew in April 1980 and apart from holidays had hardly missed a week until last October when he had to have a hip operation. He heard about the Trust and its work by chance. Having retired as a naval architect and designer for a small company in Kegworth and being interested in canals and boats he was wandering along the towpath and got chatting with Clare Le Marchant-Connell, the Trust's founder. He was the first Volunteer of the Monday crew and for about twenty years the crew was manned by the same people. He is back crewing now and is the proud owner of one of the original hand-knitted and embroidered Peter Le Marchant sweaters, the envy of the other Volunteers.

And a very special mention of **Tony Beadsmoore**, John's brother, who sadly passed away in July this year after a long and courageous battle against cancer. He had also been a Volunteer for some years and will be sadly missed by us all.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

Monday 14th June, 2004. Fine wisps of high cloud in a blue sky, a light breeze and a promise of rising temperatures provide a beautiful backdrop for the dignified group of elderly Asians as they arrive in cars and mini-buses and walk slowly towards the day boat, 'Symphony'.

Ray Fairbrother is the Skipper supported by today's Volunteer crew, Ann Fairbrother, Jean Mawby and John Beadsmoore. The Volunteers have arranged chairs in the bows and rows of chairs inside and prepared the galley. They greet the visitors and help them on to the lift, two at a time, and then show them to the chairs in the cabin. Once the group is settled on board and the boat on its way, they would normally take round tea and coffee and biscuits to the passengers, but today, the group wants to bring their own food and drink. The carers move into the kitchen and soon a large saucepan of water, milk, sugar and tea bags is simmering and the spicy smell of yellow, savoury cakes wafts through the cabin, accompanied by the sound of Gujarati as the passengers start chatting to each other. Later, they sing songs in memory of a friend at the Day Centre whose funeral is happening at that moment.

This is not a typical day. But no day is typical. The skill of the Volunteers is to be flexible and offer the kind of support that suits the particular group. Volunteers are not trained or insured to care for the passengers and are not allowed to lift them unless they are under instructions from a carer in charge, but they can talk to the passengers or sit with them. Today few of the passengers can speak English which means that the Volunteers are less involved. But the group is happy and clearly feels at home, and that is what is important.

At lunch time, the Skipper and crew moor up, and the carers warm up vegetable noodles and green, masala chapattis. The group wants to remain on the boat. Again, the Skipper and Volunteers fit in with their needs and sit at a table on the waterside near enough if required to help, but not interfering with how the party want to conduct the day.

Overhanging trees rustle in the breeze. Yellow irises, elderflower, dog rose border the canal. Ray smoothly steers the boat back to the base. Jean, Ann and John open and close the locks. The wisps of cloud melt in the azure sky. The heat rises and is perhaps reminiscent of the far-off country that most of the passengers left many years ago. Nearly all of them are chatting now, and look as if they wish the trip would not end. They smile and nod their thanks as they are helped ashore.

After they have gone, the Volunteers stack the chairs, wash the deck, Hoover inside, lock up the lifebelts and poles, close the windows and return the boat to itself, ready for the group the following day to make it their home...

Moored up for lunch
at the "Navigation" at Barrow



A big thank you...

We charge £5 per person per day for the two big boats; we calculate that it costs about £24 each on top of this to cover all our expenses, and these have to be met from grants and donations. As always, we are very grateful for all the donations, large and small. It would be impossible to list them all here, but donations of £1,000 or more have been received from the following between January and August this year:-

Beach Capital Asset Management. Ltd.
Executors of the late Mrs. R.D. Plunket
The Thomas Farr Charity
Lloyds-TSB Foundation
Boots D85 Warehouse, Beeston
The Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

Freemasons' Grand Charity
Mr. Nicholas Baring CBE
David Solomons Trust
Harry Dunn Charitable Trust
R.M. Burton Charitable Trust
The Rayne Foundation
The Baring Foundation

There were several other donors in this category who prefer to remain anonymous, as well as many who have given smaller sums. A very big thank you to you all for your generosity.

Back page Round-up

Peter Le Marchant Trust

All enquiries to:

**Canalside Moorings,
Beeches Road,
Loughborough LE11 2NS
Tel: 01509 265590**



Gary Beharrell, Regional Manager for Lloyds-TSB Foundation (left) presents a cheque for £4,880 to Volunteer Skipper Colin Ferguson whilst General Manager Charles Grace looks on. This generous grant provided trips for 200 people on "Symphony" during the season. *Picture courtesy "Loughborough Echo".*

Boots D85 Warehouse at Beeston presented us with a wonderful £3,500. Their enthusiasm was not dampened by the wet March day and our Administrator, Lynn Smith (left) gave them a warm welcome and showed them round.



Fleet Support Services made us a badly-needed new bow fender for "Serenade". The team who made it was under the direction of Burt Madgewick seen here with the fender and Skipper Rod Foreman's car.



..and here it is proudly attached to "Serenade"!



We are most grateful to Fleet Support Services for their generosity and Burt Madgewick and his team for the great care which was put into making it.



We have had groups for the four day trip on "Serenade" from the Royal Star & Garter Home in Richmond every year for a long time. Here they are, together with Skipper, Rod Foreman (left) on deck at the end of this year's trip.

"The best helmsman I've ever had!" was Rod Foreman's comment on John Hill (right) from the Star & Garter Home.

