

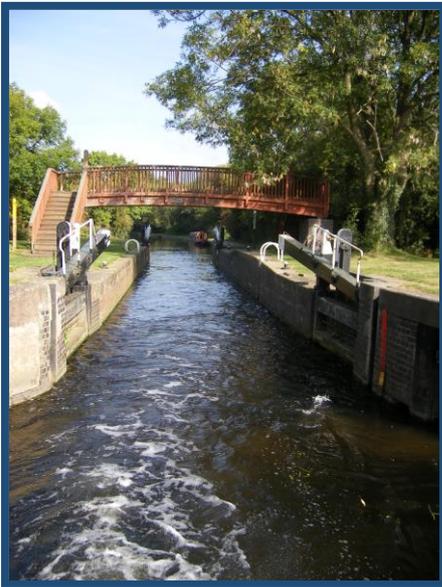
# Peter Le Marchant Trust

# Serenade's Journey

## MOUNTSORREL



The Peter Le Marchant Trust was established over 35 years ago as a result of a bequest by Peter Le Marchant to his sister, Clare. Clare wished to enable all groups of disabled people and those who are seriously ill to enjoy the peace and beauty of the countryside in a leisurely way. Inland waterways proved to be the answer. The Trust now operates three boats from its base in Loughborough. Symphony and Serenade, can both carry up to 26 passengers on day trips, and Serenade also takes 10 people on 4 night holidays; while Melody is an eight-berth narrowboat for family hire. All are fully fitted with lifts, and other aids for disabled living. Serenade carries a skipper and an experienced crew, and tea or coffee and biscuits are served on both the outward and return journeys.



Leaving Pillings Flood Lock  
entering the River Soar

Serenade's journey today is along what is now the River Soar Section of the Grand Union Canal. The Soar is a tributary of the River Trent and is approximately 40 miles long, and from 1776 was used to bring goods down, first to Loughborough and then to Leicester, bringing great prosperity to the area, carrying large amounts of coal as well as other goods and raw materials. However, like many others, the canal suffered from railway competition and although trade revived when the Grand Union Canal purchased the Loughborough and Leicester Navigations in 1931 the improvement proved temporary and regular carrying has now disappeared. But this pretty, rural river remains busy, and carrying has been replaced by an increasing number of people on pleasure craft.

We start from the Trust's base and moorings and follow the canal through peaceful countryside down to Pillings Lock where the River Soar takes a wide loop around the back of Loughborough to rejoin the Loughborough Navigation for the final nine miles to the River Trent.

We pass through water meadows where cattle and sheep come down to drink, under 'accommodation' bridges which are almost 250 years old and so low that passengers on deck must not stand up. Just before Pillings Lock a large new Marina has been carved out.



Here scores of pleasure boats are moored and meals and light refreshments are available. We now rejoin the Soar for the river proper, past fields where horses graze, and on through a superb wooded stretch, round a bend to Barrow upon Soar and arrive at Barrow Deep Lock, which lifts the boat up more than 12 feet and back into the canal.



The Navigation Inn at  
Barrow upon Soar



This is lined on the right by moored boats and on the right by riverside houses, and then the boat passes under another bridge to Barrow Boating, a popular base where craft can be hired by the hour. Opposite is the Navigation Inn, then comes a long stretch with well kept gardens and riverside homes on the left bank and fields on the right. Where the river bends to the right is another marina on the corner, and then the river winds on the attractive



**Symphony passing Barrow upon Soar**

stretch leading up to Mountsorrel, with cattle and horses in the fields on either side.



**The 1860 Bridge**

On the way we pass under two major bridges: the first carries the busy A6 from Leicester to Loughborough; the second is an older arched brick structure with a huge '1860' picked out in the bricks. This marks the date it was built to cross the river bearing a light railway. This was used to transport granite from the Mountsorrel Quarry to the concrete works in Barrow-upon-Soar.

This is still today the largest excavation in Europe and can easily be seen from outer space.



Today the bridge carries the granite chippings on a conveyor belt but it remains an unforgettable landmark on the approach to Mountsorrel. The lock here is very much a waterside showpiece and the extensive moorings and the Waterside Inn make it a busy one. The Waterside is a popular lunch venue for many of Serenade's

passengers, with a wide choice of full meals and snacks, and excellent facilities for the elderly or disabled.



**The start of return journey from Mountsorrel**

**PATRON  
H.R.H. Princess of Hanover**



Her Royal Highness became our patron following a request from her former nanny, Mrs Maureen Wood, a long serving Volunteer and a member of our Thursday crew.

