

TSCC



In this issue: Horse Racing, Rouen Armada, Hurley, St Patrick's Day, John Oakley



Thames Scout Cruising Club Newsletter No.111

July 2019

Chairman's Log



To celebrate the start of the new boating season, 41 TSCC members gathered in April for our annual Fitting Out Supper. This year it was held at Topo Gigio Ristorante in Ewell, a great-value venue with excellent food and friendly, efficient service. It was a terrific evening and I have no doubt we will return there some time in the future. A big thank-you to George and Jan who led the organisation.

The following month, 30 of us ventured up to town for a convivial lunch in Covent Garden followed by a matinee performance of the hit musical '9 to 5'. With a star-studded cast headed by Brian Conley, Louise Redknapp and Bonnie Langford, the show was filled with fun, frivolity and some great music – plus an underlying message that is no less relevant today than it was 40 years ago when the original film was first released. Many thanks to Jackie for organising.

Our first big event of the year was a D-Day cruise aboard the MV Marco Polo attended by 29 members and friends. It was supposed to kick off with a D-Day dinner to mark the 75th anniversary of that pivotal event, but unfortunately the ship was stuck elsewhere because of storms. But no worries, we all got a refund and joined the ship the following morning! The Marco Polo is over 50 years old and here and there its age begins to show. However, any minor niggles are easily forgiven because of all the positives: a fantastic crew who truly care about the passengers and the ship; top notch food and service; and outstanding evening entertainment. And, because the ship only accommodates 650 passengers there is a real feeling of intimacy. All in all, a fantastic week. Our thanks to George for pulling it together.

Somewhat breathlessly, the following week we arrived at Hurley for our annual gathering on the Thames. The event was attended by 17 members aboard seven craft plus a further nine staying at the Old Bell in the village. In addition, it was great to welcome Rosie who organised our Hungerford outing, as well as Mary and Dusty Miller and Chris and Les Easterling who drove up for the fun day. This major event was again led by George with help from Rosie and from

TSCC is affiliated to: ATYC, River Thames Society, and River Thames Alliance.

Cover photo – TSCC's visit to Rouen to see the Tall Ships

Andy Vine who organised our outing to West Wickham. A big thank-you to all three and to Janet for the invaluable support she gives to George.

We were deeply saddened by the untimely death of John Oakley with whom we have shared many happy times. Our thoughts go out to his entire family and above all to his wife Lesley who has been a rock at his side throughout his long and difficult illness. It was Rosie and David who brought John and Lesley into the Club and later in this Newsletter you can read a personal tribute penned by Rosie.

If you have not yet had a chance, please check out the new-look TSCC website www.tsc.org.uk. A big thanks to Alex McNeill for all his help in getting it set up. We hope you like it and would welcome your feedback. This is also a good moment for me to express our thanks to Peter Simpson who is both our webmaster and the editor of this outstanding newsletter. Thanks a million Peter!

For me, a key aim of the Club is to raise money for deserving Scouting causes whilst at the same time having fun.

Recently I visited **Addlestone Canoe Club** which is an important boating base for **Scouts in the Runnymede District**.

The clubhouse is in need of urgent upgrade and the necessary fundraising is in full swing. However,



the Scouts also have some more basic needs including buoyancy aids and canoe paddles suitable for Beavers, as well as some additional spray decks. Having received a request to help, we were delighted to oblige. The adjacent picture shows some happy Beavers showing off their new equipment. We wish them lots of fun afloat. **If you know of a deserving Scouting cause that could benefit from a small grant from the TSCC please let George Barber know.**

Here's hoping you're having a cracking summer, whether afloat or ashore or a bit of both.

Mark

HORSE RACING EVENING



In March this 'new boy' attended his first TSCC social event. Introduced to the club by my partner and member Wendy Hurrell we both attended the horse racing evening. Having been to similar events over past years I expected to see a

screen ready for the races to be shown. Looking around my eyes soon alighted on the marvellous handmade race course set up in the middle of the room. Very soon we were in conversation with Phyllis learning that the course with horse & jockeys were the labours of her late husband. I was extremely impressed at the workmanship & detail in the six wooden figures representing each of the competing horses & riders for the evenings racing. I, of course, did not know Phyllis' late husband known to the club as Buster whose creation this racecourse was but silently congratulated him on the most impressive workmanship which we were all to enjoy later that evening.

To the racing: before each race, racegoers were invited to back their fancied horse, identified by a number, from 1 to 6. Stakes of 50p or £1 were placed on chosen runners. Betting complete the first race started. Progress was measured by each of the spectators in turn throwing dice, whichever



number was shown moved that horse one place forward along the course, marked in stages from start to finish. This arrangement provided much greater variation in the fortunes of the individual horses compared with the usual films in which inevitably an outsider always comes from the back to win. Not so with this method where random throws of the dice can change the course of the

race several times in each race. Unsurprisingly this engendered much vocal, even shouting, support for each horse for with this way of running the race no horse can ever be an outsider till one passes the finish line.

During the mid-evening break for tasty fish & chip supper organised by the Committee for which our thanks, Ray said a few words about Buster. Buster was a long-term member & active supporter of TSCC. He was not a carpenter but model making was a hobby of his, at which he was clearly highly skilled and patient as evidenced by the workmanship before our eyes. Ray's tribute to Buster enabled those of us who never knew him to appreciate & give thanks to his dedication and support to the club.

The evening had seven races. By some inexplicable stroke of luck Wendy & I managed to choose the race winners five times. So, not only an enjoyable evening but one in which we came home with more money than when we arrived! Thank you TSCC for my first social evening, I look forward to more to come.



Ian Hardie

TSCC GRANTS

RECENT GRANTS:

December 2018

1st Stanwell Scout Group £500

Richmond/World Jamboree £500

Runnymede Scouts equipment £523.80

April 2019

Girlguiding/Paxmead £500

Rouen Armada & River Seine Experience

.....a cruise on the Marco Polo

After the disappointment of our “D Day Dinner” being cancelled due to stormy weather and the ship not being able to return to Portsmouth in time, we looked forward to the ongoing cruise to Rouen.

SCILLY ISLES

We dropped anchor on Monday morning. It was pouring with rain so we all donned our wet weather gear to board the open topped tenders. Some of us went to Tresco Gardens and others went to explore St Mary's. The gardens were beautiful even in the rain. They have a temperate climate which enables sub-tropical plants to grow outdoors. The afternoon was spent on board sunbathing! A welcome change from the morning weather.



DUBLIN

Overnight to Dublin where we all went off on different excursions. A lot of people just caught the shuttle bus into Dublin to explore. Peter, Tania and I went on a panoramic tour of County Wicklow which took us through the scenic County Wicklow Mountains National Park and on to Glendalough, an important monastic site where the early Christian settlement was founded by St Kevin in the 6th Century and where we saw some of the surviving buildings and ruins.

Built between 900-1200AD this 100ft high Round Tower was used to summon the monks to prayer.

RINGASKIDDY IRELAND

The following day remained chilly and showery. Several excursions were available, a visit to Kinsale, the Blarney Castle or West Cork Town. We took the one to the Blarney Castle although when we arrived there was about a 2 hour wait to kiss the Blarney stone and so we just walked the grounds and went to the pub for our free Irish Coffee.



ROUEN (FRANCE)

We arrived the next morning to sunshine and a bit of warmth ready to catch the shuttle to Rouen and the river Seine where the tall ships were moored. We walked the length of the moorings taking in the atmosphere and looking at all the different types of Tall Ships which had arrived from countries all over the world. It took us about one-and-three-quarter hours to walk it and then we walked back. By then we were exhausted so opted to relax on board and go into Rouen town center on day two.



On our second day, many of us explored the wonderful town of Rouen, the capital of Normandy. There was plenty to see, the highlights being the magnificent Gothic Cathedral of Notre-Dame, the Rue du-Gros-Horloge lined with timber-framed old houses and the fine Renaissance arched clock-tower. We also visited the Place du Vieux Marche (the site of Joan of Arc's pyre) with the modern church of St Joan of Arc. The evening ended with a spectacular firework display which we viewed from the ship.



Above: The Tall Ships at night.

Right: Inside the spectacular church of St Joan of Arc.



LE HAVRE & HONFLEUR



From Le Havre several of us spent the day visiting the pretty town of Honfleur. On return to the ship we sailed out to the estuary to see the Tall Ship flotilla leave the river Seine. We were all disappointed, expecting this to be a highlight, but the sea was so calm that they sailed under power without sail!

We enjoyed the cruise very much and especially the fun we had with our TSCC friends.

Pauline Simpson

MARCO POLO – EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

After a lovely day finding out all about the Marco Polo and a marvellous evening meal, we were off to the show lounge to see our first night of entertainment. All cast members, whether main singers or dancers, were truly amazing and utterly professional. Speaking to one of the cast members afterwards, I was told that the selection process to join was very arduous, but seeing all the different destinations made all their work worth it. As well as the show singers and dancers there was the show orchestra who were also exceptionally talented especially the violinist who performed some fantastic solos. The welcome show was a true taste of what was to come.

By the second night one of our members had sussed-out that to get the best seats at the front of the Theatre one needed to get there early after dinner and save places. I hope he didn't suffer too much from indigestion, rushing!

As a memory reminder we had a marvellous night of "Musicals". We all have our favourites and the songs from Les Misérables were just as poignant as in the West End production. There were so many favourites and the speed of the costume changes were amazing, but the clever and inventive ways one costume was used for other songs was first class.

As well as musical entertainment each evening, we also had two shows by comedian Al Brown. As we had visited Dublin and Cork this Irish comedian was very amusing. Unlike some modern TV shows his repartee, based more on observational comedic stories of life, was very amusing. Lovely light relief at the end of the day.

At the show about "Anchors Aweigh", we all expected the obvious Gene Kelly classic, which we got with gusto, and the show contained many more numbers about the sea. The water references were particularly relevant to TSCC and yet again we were all stunned by the entire casts' ability. We only watched for enjoyment but were truly exhausted by the time they finished!

On the "Rock and Roll" evening the stage had the added extra of a very clever backdrop, depicting the 1950's. Even staunch non-movers in the audience could not fail to tap their feet at the very least. An exceptionally fun feel good evening of entertainment bringing back many memories for everybody with the pleasure of the fact that memories are all retained in the words of songs bringing back special times. (Cont. after centre spread)





(Cont.) For the “Around the World” show the content was amazing taking everybody back to holidays of the past. Again, with all the costume changes we were amazed with so many countries that were covered, even Israel. When they were covering Greece, plates would have been smashed (had any been available!)

Our final show depicted as “The End of the Pier” show was so very cheerful. Granted some of the songs were very old but showed again how talented they were to cover everyone’s taste and at least we all knew the words. A perfect way for every cast member and the orchestra members to be introduced again by our Cruise Director and for us to show our huge respect for all their hard work during our marvellous cruise. Quite a sad feeling that it was over but in a few days we would be at Hurley, not to mention trips to Amsterdam and Liverpool to follow.

Marvellous, as with other evenings – off to the bar!

Judy Bowles

Things you probably did not know

This year as we commemorate the D-Day landings, we were especially interested to read this piece at the Isles of Scilly museum. We had no idea that the isles of Scilly were involved in anything to do with the D-Day landings. We thought members might be interested to read about some of their involvements.

April 1942

A base for a secret Navel flotilla was set up at Tresco in a Special Forces operation. Its vessels disguised as French fishing boats, penetrated deep into enemy waters off the Brittany coast to contact the ‘Confrerie-Notre-Dame’, the most productive of the intelligence networks in German occupied France. In June its head and his family were brought safely to Tresco with a plan of the coastal defences that the Germans were constructing along the Normandy coast. This vital material became the basis of the 1944 D-Day landings ensuring minimal loss of men and materials. Missions to France from Tresco continued in that year.

How incredibly brave these people must have been.

Elaina & Ray

Hurley - Visit to West Wycombe



On day two of the Hurley Event, Andy Vine kindly arranged another outing for us – this time to West Wycombe. The village of West Wycombe was once owned by the Dashwood family. It was an important coaching stop on the main road between London and Oxford and, in 1767, there were 17 public houses in the tiny village. In 1929 the village was bought by the Royal Society of Arts as part of its' campaign for the preservation of

ancient cottages. The National Trust has maintained the village since 1934. There are many buildings of architectural value built between the 16th and 18th centuries but, sadly for some, only three pubs remain. At the top end of the Village are the Hellfire Caves which TSCC visited in 2016 (doesn't time fly?). In the village there is a very cosy tea shop with seating both inside and out - in a cottage garden – most of us visited here two, or even three, times during the day.

Immediately off the High Street is the entrance to West Wycombe Park, home to West Wycombe House. This Palladian gem has been the home of the Dashwood family for over 300 years. Set in 45 acres of landscaped park, the house as we see it today is the 18th-century creation of Sir Francis Dashwood, the 2nd baronet, founder of the Dilettantti Society and the Hell-Fire Club.

Andy had arranged a guided tour for us and although we were split into two groups - both groups had really excellent guides who brought the house to life. The house encapsulates the entire progression of British 18th-century architecture from early idiosyncratic Palladian to the Neoclassical, although anomalies in its design make it architecturally unique. The mansion is set within an 18th-century landscaped park containing many small temples and follies, which act as satellites to the greater temple, the house. The house was conceived as a pleasure palace for the 18th-century libertine and dilettante Sir

Francis Dashwood. 'Fay ce que voudras' is roughly translated as 'Do as you wish'; this motto inspired many of the controversial activities of the famous Hell-Fire Club. Many stories exist, invariably sensational and frequently inaccurate, but they provide just one facet of the intriguing history of West Wycombe Park and the Dashwood family. From earliest times the manor of West Wycombe belonged to the Bishops of Winchester and it is listed as theirs in the Domesday Book. However, no bishop ever resided at the property and it was let to the Dormer family.



Robert Dormer, created Earl of Caernarvon by Charles I in 1628 supported the King during the Civil War but was killed in an ambush shortly after the Battle of Newbury. His son, the 2nd Earl, deeply in debt, sold the estate to Thomas Lewis, a merchant and alderman of the City of London. Lewis married Elizabeth, the daughter of his friend and fellow alderman, Francis Dashwood.

As part of a family settlement drawn up in 1698, Lewis transferred the property to his wife's two brothers, Samuel and Francis Dashwood. Francis was knighted in 1702 and in 1707 he acquired a baronetcy, the first granted by the crown after the union of England and Scotland - hence the Dashwood's title as the premier baronets of Great Britain.

Today, while the structure is owned by the National Trust, the house is still the home of the Dashwood family (Sir Edward John Francis Dashwood, Twelfth Baronet). The house is open to the public during the summer months and is a venue for civil weddings and corporate entertainment and filming, which help to fund its maintenance and upkeep.

This was a fascinating and engrossing visit – many thanks Andy.

Peter

Hurley - Visit to Crofton Beam Engines and Rose of Hungerford.



After a rather wild and windy night-at least for those on boats-Thursday dawned fair and warm, if still a little breezy. The mini-bus left promptly at 10.00 AM, with a full complement, while others went by car.

The journey was rather long, and made more so by road works on the M4, but good company on board made a pleasant trip. On arrival at Crofton Beam Engines we were met by the car travellers as well as the Manager of the Beam Engines who was full of enthusiasm and bursting to tell us all about his engines.

The first stop was at the top of a very windy hill with marvellous views over the surrounding countryside, with the Kennet and Avon and the railway line below us, and glorious fields of poppies across the valley.

It was explained that Crofton is home to the World's Oldest Beam Engine in its original setting and still able to perform the job that it was built for. The Georgian Grade 1 listed pumping station houses the 1812 Boulton and Watt, and 1846 Harvey of Hale, Beam Engines. Built to pump water uphill to keep the highest point of the Kennet and Avon canal in water.

Inside to see the coal fired boilers-we had already noted the great piles of coal outside. Then up and down countless ladders and across gangways, with the manager enthusing all the time about his wonderful engines. The actual beams were absolutely enormous and all installed by hand using ropes and pulleys. Eventually we were back where we started after a really interesting tour.

Water is pumped by electricity now, but on certain weekends the engines are used, run by a dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers from the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust. Apparently, it is possible to spend a day actually taking part in a 'Steam Experience' helping the volunteers' man the engines.

It would be worth a return visit, particularly to have time to explore the area and go down to the canal side, but the mini bus was waiting to take us to the next part of our day out. We were dropped in Hungerford with time to explore

and a welcome cup of tea, with strict instructions to be back by the canal wharf at 3.00 sharp!

Hungerford is a pleasant little town with many antique shops, cafes and bars as well as the normal run of shops. The group split up here and everybody did their own thing. Apparently good lunches were enjoyed, but after a quick trip around the town and a short visit to a couple of antique shops, our group opted to sit in the sun with glass in hand, rejecting lunch, as we were mindful of the cream tea ahead!



Three o'clock saw everybody boarding The Rose of Hungerford, a purpose-built canal boat also run by the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust volunteers. We were soon underway, travelling east along the canal under Hungerford Town Bridge then under Station Road bridge, neither of them looking high enough to go under. The first lock was Dun Mill. After even the smallest locks on the Thames this felt very narrow with the boat nearly touching both sides. and it seemed a long way down. There is a world war 2 pill box on the hill above the lock. By the time we reached the turning point further downstream the cream



tea provided by the Tutti Pole café in Hungerford was being served and somehow it was much quieter on board! Back through the lock-upstream this time, and it was time for cake. By the time the boat docked everybody was feeling very comfortable and rather sleepy, after a very well organised, enjoyable and interesting day out - **thank you Rosie!**

After saying goodbye to the friends who were leaving for home it was back on board the mini bus for the trip back to Hurley, again slow due to road works, and also the time of day. But it didn't matter as many people were very soon asleep!

Colin had kindly organised a Thai meal in the Rising sun which many attended. A good meal at the end of a good day!

Celia

Hurley Winners



Another great fun day at Hurley – Many thanks to George, Janet and Ray for organising the games and the Pimms – a good time was had by all.



**St Patrick's Day at Weybridge
Mariners**



*The Maria O'Conner
Irish Dancers*



The Commodore's Meet and Greet at Weybridge Mariners



John Oakley

A Personal Appreciation by Rosie Sowter

As you will have seen, our dear friend John Oakley sadly passed away on 8th July after a long and difficult illness.

David and I first met John and Lesley on holiday in South Africa in 2007. This was to be the beginning of a wonderful friendship with many memorable holidays spent together. The following year we went to Africa again. This time John's suitcase didn't arrive on time so David lent him socks and underpants to tide him over. John was too much of a gentleman to complain about the difference in size!



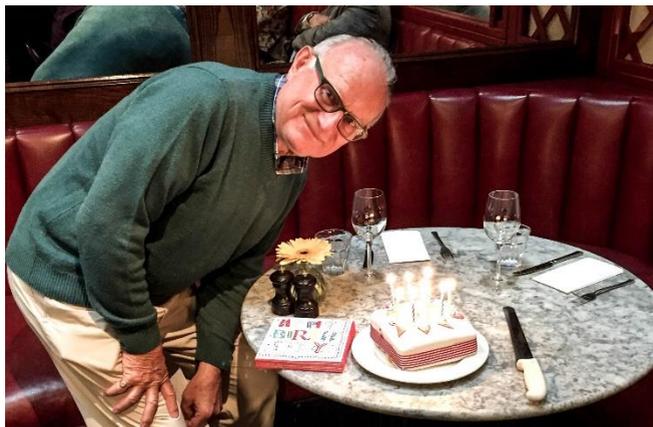
It wasn't long before David had talked John into joining the TSCC despite the fact he didn't have a boat! John and Lesley enthusiastically joined us at many Club events including hire boat holidays on the Norfolk Broads. John was a lovely, affable and caring man who got along with everyone so it wasn't very long before he followed David into the Royal Society of St George where he was soon involved in organising events and later became a member of their main council. David also introduced John to his IDC (invisible dining club) where a core of six "old boys" would meet and put the world to rights while enjoying good food and drink.

David had such a full career that he never had time to develop many social friendships until his retirement. This particular friendship was very important to him. Last year, at his 50th wedding anniversary, John paid a wonderful tribute to David saying how much that chance meeting in 2007 had enriched his retirement. Now Lesley and I will be able to comfort one another by remembering so many happy days when there were four of us together.

TSCC Programme of Events for 2019

All dates and events are subject to change

Summer Barbeque at Little Compton	Sunday 28 July at 12.30 for 1.00pm
Visit to Buckingham Palace	Tuesday 17 th September
Amsterdam Cruise on Cunard's Queen Elizabeth	Friday 4 to Tuesday 8 October
Autumn Getaway to Liverpool	Sunday 27 to Tuesday 29 October
TSCC Annual Dinner at Ristorante Sorrento, Tolworth	Monday 18 November 7.00 for 7.30pm
Christmas with TSCC at Ajax WAC	Sunday 8 th December at 3.00 pm



Go on George –
BLOW.....

I hope that's not
one candle for
every 10 years!

Thames Scout Cruising Club Grants

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SCOUTS/GUIDES

TSCC is always looking for Scouting/Guiding projects which need financial support. If your local Group is in need of funds for specific projects ask them to write a letter to our Secretary giving full details.

Our Committee will be pleased to consider all requests.

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