

TSCC



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POLICE HORSES



Thames Scout Cruising Club Newsletter No 92 April 2013

Chairman's Log



I am pleased that in my last year as your chairman, the TSCC has had a positive start to 2013 so I will outline some of the highlights we have enjoyed.

In January we were made most welcome on visiting the **Metropolitan Police Horse Training Establishment** at Imber Court for a tour and Lunch. Ray purloined a box of horse shoes, so there is no prize for guessing what he has up his sleeve for Hurley. In the middle of the month many of us attended a terrific **Burns Night Supper**, organised by Derek Dale, at the Weybridge Mariners' Club. I saw a number of hip flasks being waved over the haggis and it was amazing how the Scots accents improved as the night went on.

During February we attended a fascinating talk on **Colditz Castle**, followed by dinner at the Union Jack Club. It was interesting to hear how well the prisoners were treated by the German guards. Having dined at Jayne's Upstairs, we came 3rd in the **Annual Skittles Match** at the Byfleet Boat Club, but as a result of dual membership we were able to make up most of the Weybridge Mariners team who came 2nd. Unfortunately we had to surrender the cup to WMC.

Three teams were fielded by us in early March for the **Quiz and Fish & Chip Supper** at Hinchley Wood. We did not do that well but had great fun and plenty of laughs (Dr.

Scott you were greatly missed). After extensive negotiations to overcome a number of hurdles, the "**Fitting out Lunch**" at HMS President proved a success. It was great to be joined by so many friends from Byfleet Boat Club, Penton Hook Yacht Club, Royal Society of St George Yachting Association and Weybridge Mariners Club. A grand total of 86 of us sat down for a meal in the Royal Naval Reserve Wardroom, which must have one of the best views of the river Thames.

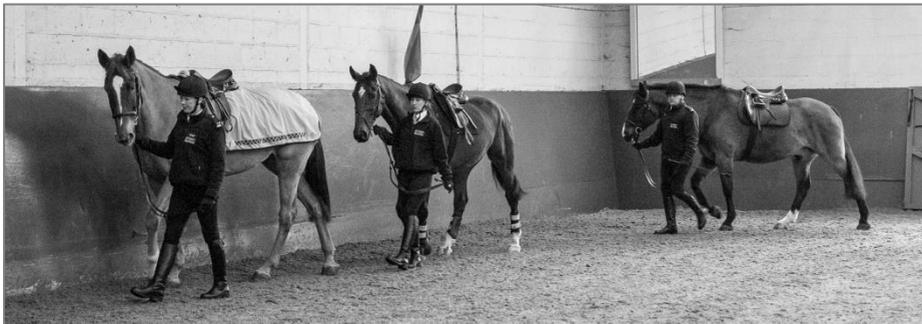
As a Scout Active Support Unit, one of the aims of the TSCC is to provide grants to deserving Scout and Guide causes. **If you would like to further support this aim please add a voluntary donation to your membership renewal payment.** Although our funds are limited, we still do want to receive written requests for financial help that will benefit Scouts and Guides.

For those of you who haven't looked at our website lately, please do so at: **www.ThamesScoutCruisingClub.org.uk**. It has been revamped and took several weeks to complete. It looks exciting and is much easier to navigate thanks to Peter, who incidentally is still looking for anyone who may be interested in advertising in this newsletter, or on the website.

Having drafted this log on the coldest April day for 20 years, I feel confident that we will have good weather for our up-river and two down-river cruises later in the year. Please keep everything crossed.

David

VISIT TO METROPOLITAN POLICE MOUNTED BRANCH



One bright but bitterly cold January morning a group of us met at the **Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch Training Establishment at Imber Court**. We were met by **Natasha**, one of the grooms, who was to act as our guide for the tour.

We first visited the mounting and inspection quadrangle and from there entered the stables where there were a number of horses in residence. We were advised which ones we could stroke, and one which we definitely could not as he was very bad tempered. We were even allowed to feed them sugar lumps which one of our party had brought along in case! We were shown some containers of food which is given to the horses three times a day and Natasha explained that a great deal of her time is spent mixing up the food to get it just right. Outside we were shown an electric exercise carousel where a number of horses can be exercised at a time without a rider. We then proceeded to an indoor training arena where all sorts of obstacles can be simulated, e.g. traffic and

crowd noise. On our way to our next stop, the Museum, we passed the veterinary area which houses sick horses and that day there were two sticking their noses out, one with a bad back and one with sore hooves!

The Mounted Branch had its beginnings in 1760 and was originally formed to combat the highwayman. Within a year highway robbery was virtually wiped out and so after about eighteen months it was decided to disband it. But, guess what, almost immediately highway robbery became prolific again and so it was decided to form a permanent mounted police force which was the beginning of the Metropolitan Police Mounted section as we know it today. The Met currently has 98 horses which are spread around the division to be used for ceremonial duties, in riot situations, for football matches and some for other occasions such as the Notting Hill Carnival. The museum was very interesting and housed books,

photos, ceremonial uniforms,

and equipment, from sabres and cutlasses in the early days through to the present day body armour, batons and helmets with radios, including many safety features like leather reins now reinforced with wire because in the past they had been known to be cut in a riot situation.

We went to see young horses that were undergoing basic training



ready for assessment, before deciding whether they should be purchased. We had our photos taken with the smallest young horse

weapons

that was less than 14 hands and was apparently an ex-French racehorse.

Our final stop on the tour was to visit the farrier who at one time had his own business and also taught at a technical college, but is now fully employed by the Met to make horseshoes. Every shoe is individually made with mild steel to fit each horse, the front edge is reinforced with tungsten and tungsten studs are inserted into the back edge to stop slipping and to lessen the wear on the mild steel from the concrete roads. Even so, the shoes need to be renewed approximately every four weeks.

That was the end of our tour and after we had given our thanks to Natasha we proceeded to the Cafeteria of the Police Sports Club for lunch and for a welcome hot drink to thaw out our numbed fingers and toes! Members came from far and wide and it was lovely to see Graham and Iris Bucknell who were down from Norfolk to visit friends and family and were therefore able to join us on this visit. We all spent a very pleasant hour or so warming up and chatting before going our separate ways.

Many thanks must be given to David Sowter for organising what proved to be a very interesting visit.

Diana Breeze

Max's Memories.....

"the police grounds had literally been part of Max's childhood"

When it was first announced that we were invited to a tour of the **Imber Court Police Stables** I just knew Max would be thrilled. You see the police grounds had literally been part of Max's childhood, a place where he could run free and meet friends like Ray Mears! Yes they have known each other since they were small boys. The advantage for Max was that his family home is the house right opposite the gates to Imber Court - just across the road. His eldest sister told me that if ever they could not find Max the first place everyone looked was in the stables but he was very good at hiding behind the biggest horse in the darkest stable. Max spent so many hours helping to groom the wonderful police horses and muck out the stables that as a reward he was allowed to ride certain ones, no health and safety kill-joys then, the most special and memorable one was the famous Winston. In fact when Winston died Max was given a silvered horse shoe to remember him by. (Just in case it's not widely known, Winston was the police horse that was favoured by two

monarchs when they rode in the Trooping the Colour. King George VI and our present Queen Elizabeth).

The stables were a very informal area in those days with chickens and lots of cats and kittens running about. In fact one of the present grooms when talking to Max looked quite wistful at this bygone era.

A certain Sgt Smith who lived on site in a now demolished cottage (the car park area now) is someone both Ray and Max spoke fondly of. On the other hand there was an 'in charge' person that they stayed well clear of. I asked Max his name and he said 'no idea, we just stayed well clear of him'.

When Max needed a change of pace he loved to visit the dog area which sadly is no longer there. They had roughly 20/30 dogs at any one time and this is where they were trained. They would be trained to sit in the big field whilst their trainers popped inside for a beer. They were being watched all the time from the big bar windows by the trainers and Max watched from

the fence not having been invited for a beer!

Also, they had a rifle range and Max has just told me how he used to go over and search for bullets that had not fired properly, then take them home to his father's garage, hit them with a hammer and if he was lucky - they fired! Max says on one occasion he was deaf for a week after a success.

He stresses that I must say nobody was ever hurt during these experiments and it was in the very late 40's early 50's. I also know that it was here that Ray and Max used to spend hours watching the police teams play football and this is where the trip down memory lane will end for now happy days!

Linda Grundy

CALAMITOUS CRUISING!

“.....the cruise came to an abrupt end in Valencia”

I have been asked by Rosie and David to write about some of our experiences aboard our last two cruises.

The first one was in April 2012 on Saga Sapphire's inaugural cruise to the Mediterranean; it was originally booked as a 23 day cruise to the Mediterranean and Adriatic coast but one week before the departure date we had a phone call from Saga to say the ship would not be ready as it was still in Italy due to a strike by the Italian workers. So, the cruise would now only be 16 days and would not be going to the Adriatic and would depart one week later. We did have the option to cancel and have our money back but we decided to still go, as we knew we wouldn't be able to book another cruise at such short notice and it was over Easter. The first thing that went wrong was that we were due to depart at 5.00pm and we didn't in fact depart Southampton until 1.5 days

later due to the ship still being inspected to get its certificate to sail! Saga laid on tours to Winchester or the Isle of Wight. We eventually set sail and the first couple of days seemed to go well, although there were some problems on the ship itself e.g. heating and air conditioning and plumbing problems. But, the ship itself - food, staff etc., were excellent.

From then on the ship had engine problems and the Itinerary didn't resemble where we should be going, as it went to places to try to get the engine sorted out. Saga did everything they could to make up for it by giving all drinks free, free excursions and, to be fair, we did go to some lovely places. The weather was very good as well. To cut a long story short, the cruise came to an abrupt end in Valencia, Spain when the ship broke down completely and we were flown home by two chartered planes with first class treatment.

On our return, we received a cheque for the full refund of our cruise and a discount off of another cruise to be booked by the end of 2012. We did have a very nice time despite not going to where we should have, but Saga were very fair in doing everything they could for us. Hence, we booked up for our next cruise in January 2013.....

Colours of the Canaries - 15 days.

“.....fridges were flying across cabins”

Well, this time the Saga Sapphire departed on time and everything was wonderful on board - weather, calm seas, the ship was sorted-out with everything running smoothly until we reached Lisbon - our final port of call (or should have been). On leaving Lisbon the Captain announced that the forecast was up to a Force 8 so everybody to take extra care around the ship. This was approx., 6pm and during the evening the sea was getting rougher and rougher. By the time we went to bed it was so bad that you couldn't sleep. From then on all you could hear was crashing and banging. Fridges were flying across cabins and you couldn't stand up.

At 5am we decided to try and get dressed as the sea was even worse. At 7am the Captain announced that the ship was doing well and that everyone had to stay in their cabins; the weather had deteriorated and we were now in a gale force 12 going-on 13!!! The Captain said he was trying to get clearance to go into Vigo, Spain (on the Atlantic Coast just North of the border

with Portugal) to try and shelter from the storm. By this time nobody had had any sleep and were quite worried. They tried to serve breakfast in the cabin but the sea was so rough that the tray, complete with teapot, milk, orange juice etc., all got thrown up in the air and across the cabin, turned upside down and crashed, smashing everything to pieces. We eventually left our cabin at 3pm to see the extent of the damage to the ship. The Gift Shop was smashed to pieces – glass everywhere; the same with the Duty Free Shop. The Salon, the Bars and Restaurant china and glasses were smashed. We eventually arrived in Vigo at 5pm. Here we learnt that four balconies had been ripped off. At one point I looked out of the cabin window to see a wave the height of a tower block of flats heading towards the ship. We heard later that the waves were over 30 feet high. We were very pleased to get onto dry land in Spain.

The next day we set sail again hoping for a smoother cruise to Southampton. I can't say it was the calmest trip until we got into the English Channel. When things were much better. We got home a day late, shaken if not stirred. Apart from the last two days we had had a marvellous time and once again the staff, food, entertainment were excellent. It has not put us off of cruising. I don't know if we are mad but we have booked our next cruise on 8th November 2013, again with Saga but this time on the Saga Ruby. Watch this space!

Sally Holdaway



TSCC held its Fitting-Out Lunch at HMS President and it was attended by a record 86 guests. Lunch was enjoyed while overlooking dramatic views of the river and Tower Bridge. We were pleased to be able to join in the celebrations of two Golden Wedding anniversaries and our congratulations go to Brian and Doreen and Mary and Dusty (pictured below)





It's a big year for TSCC members as three more anniversaries were celebrated at the HMS President lunch and we were delighted to congratulate Elaina and Ray, Diana and Bob and Janet and George on their Sapphire Anniversaries.



Trefoil Guild trip to Adelboden with a visit to the World Guide Centre “Our Chalet”

We left Heathrow to fly to Zurich. 42 of us, 12 from Surrey West and 10 from Surrey East. We were met by a coach and travelled the 120 miles to Hotel Alpina in Adelboden. Our room had a balcony where we could sit out.

Monday 15th. We left hotel at 8am to travel to La Maison Caillier, the Swiss Chocote factory at Broc this was French speaking country. We had a tour of the visitor centre, everything is automatic. We finally went through the sampling room; we couldn't eat any more so we all had goody bags. Afterwards we left for Gruyere. We had lunch in the village, we were able to sit outside and enjoy our rolls. We left for the Cheese factory. We watched the cheese being made and finally being drawn into cauldrons to set and be pressed. I found the cheese very dry. We arrived back at our hotel to sit on the balcony before dinner.

Monday 17th. Most of us hiked to the Woodcarver's workshop. It took us over 2 hours. We didn't use the main road but travelled across the opposite valley, we passed the falls at Cholerenschlucht, as there hadn't been much rain there wasn't much water running over. At the Woodcarvers I bought a wooden trefoil badge where he carved my name and Surrey West on a woggle. Some of us caught the taxi to Adelboden where we bought a roll and sat in the village square. After we saw there was a ski lift behind us. It cost us

15 Swiss francs. Going up, we had lovely views of the village below. At the top we walked to a view point. We could see different mountain ranges with snow on the top, before having an ice-cream in the cafe. Back in the village 3 of us decided to walk back to our hotel while the rest waited for the bus. I didn't realise we had a 1 in 4 hill to walk up for about a mile. I was puffing a lot; when we got to the top we then had a flat path for half a mile.

Tuesday 18th. Our visit to Italy. We left the hotel at 7.45am. We passed the large International Scout camp site at Kanderstein. At 8.50am our coach joined the train, it was open like the lorry trains on Euro tunnel. It was very narrow, we were not fastened down. This was the Lotschberg tunnel. We drove to the Simplon mountain pass for a 20min stop. To get to Stressa we had to go into many tunnels. Some of them were open on one side; this was to protect the road from snow in the winter. We arrived in Stressa 12.30pm, an hour late. In the lake were Islands we had hoped to visit. Our English speaking guide was supposed to guide us to the ferry. She just disappeared. We found our way to the booking office, to book seats to the Islands, the lady wasn't very helpful, she suddenly put a notice on the window back 1.15pm. We decided to find something to eat. We left 2 on a seat and found a cafe that made us rolls. The 3 of us decided to look round the town while

the 2 not so able, walked to the Town train. When we got back they were sitting on the train. We decided to join them. It took right us up into the town along the coast. We had delicious Italian ice-cream. We just watched the boats coming in before our coach arrived .We arrived back at our hotel 7.30pm. A long day.

Wed 19th. Raining heavily we couldn't see the mountains. We caught a minibus taxi into Adelboden. We looked at a few shops and the little church. My friend suddenly realised the sole of her walking boots was hanging off. The Information bureau gave her some elastic bands. She went looking for a shoe repairer. Early closing! She managed to buy a new pair in a sports shop. We all had lunch of soup in a cafe. Earlier we could hear cow bells in the hills, as we came out of the cafe a herd of cows came through the street, some of their bells were very big. They had come down from the mountain for the winter. We found the Co-op and bought more chocolates. We decided to see what was on in the Leisure Centre. We were hoping to play Boccia but it is played outside. We watched them playing 10 pin bowling. We were able to catch the 4.30 bus back to our hotel. We had camp songs in the dining room after dinner.

Thursday 20th. Another free day. We got talking to the receptionist, he suggested a visit to another valley with a cable car with a lovely lake up the top. 6 of us bought a pass for 15frcs. It was very frosty outside. We caught the 8.30am bus to Oey. We just walked

round the corner to another bus stop. We caught the bus to Fruitigen, at the railway station it changed to Kanderstein. The driver dropped us off just before the town. We walked to the cable car. It was running continuously. At the top we had some lovely views. We all warmed up with a cup of coffee. We walked to the lake, all downhill, it was so blue, and some people were on it in rowing boats. We sat in the sun, coats off, enjoying a bowl of soup. It was harder walking back up hill. We arrived back down 2.50pm. Some of us walked ahead to catch the 3pm bus, to hold it up for the others. We caught it ok and were back in Adelboden by 4.05. We waited for the 4.30pm bus back to our hotel. We were able to sit on our balcony before dinner. We did everything with our pass for 15frcs! Some of our party used their passes to go to Interlaken, they caught the train at Fruitigen.

Friday 21st. Our visit to Our Chalet. Most of us walked, it took us about 30mins. We started with a photo call for Surrey West members on the stairs. Then we joined in the flag and pinning ceremony. One of the leaders was from Walton-on-Thames and had been a Hersham Brownie. We had a guided tour of the buildings. Later we had craft. We burnt our names on a peg and also did paper craft. Time for lunch, this was alpine macaroni cheese with salad with a mousse for sweet. We were able to look around the shop. The 6 of us had decided to make the most of our last day. We had bought another day pass in the morning. We went buy taxi to Oey, walked to the

cable car. It took us over 20 mins to get to the top, halfway up the doors half opened and we turned a corner, no one wanted to get off. It was very windy up top. You could go down the mountain on little sledges in channels. We got down just in time to catch the no7 bus to Alpina, Sat.22nd We travelled back to Zurich. We caught the 3.30 plane to Heathrow

arriving at 4.15. Diane was waiting for us.

In October, 35 from Surrey West went to Foxlease our Regions training centre. It was a very wet week except for the day we had an outing to Bucklers Hard. We couldn't go walking in the forest because of the rain, but we did lots of craft, quizzes and there were 3 1000 piece jigsaws on the go. The food was very good.

Betty Gosling

SCOUT SERVICE AWARDS

At this year's TSCC AGM, we were pleased to welcome **Mary Osborn**, Surrey County Scout Active Support Unit Manager, together with her husband Alan. Mrs Osborn presented the Chief Scout's **Five-year Service Awards** as Scout Active Support members to:

Peter Simpson, David Sowter, Jessie English, Raymond Mears, and Derek (Skipper) White.

Derek (Dusty) Miller received the award on behalf of Skipper who was absent.



TSCC CHRISTMAS CRUISE

On 8th December 2012, twenty-four members embarked on the P&O cruise



ship OCEANA for a two-night party cruise to Belgium. Docking at Zeebrugge, the guests had the opportunity to visit two destinations famous for their chocolate - the charming city of Bruges or medieval Ghent.



Everyone had a great time including Jackie - seen here thinking, like everyone else, that it's not the time of year for the ship's pool; and Max, who looks ready for one of Sally's Saga cruises!

Skittles Challenge



This years' Skittles Challenge at **Byfleet Boat Club** was most enjoyable as always. The winners were a team from BBC and the runner's-up were a team from Weybridge Mariners. **Our thanks to BBC for their wonderful hospitality and organisation – they really do make this event special.** Pictured is Kathryn Dodington, Commodore BBC, presenting Les Holdaway with the runner's-up cup.

This is How to Explain 'How We Came to Be'

The New Generation would never believe the 'Old Fashioned' way. A little boy goes to his father and asks 'Daddy, how was I born?' The father answers, 'Well, son, I guess one day you will need to find out anyway! Your Mom and I first got together in a chat room on Yahoo. Then I set up a date via e-mail with your Mom and we met at a cyber-cafe. We sneaked into a secluded room, and Googled each other.

There your mother agreed to a download from my hard drive. As soon as I was ready to upload, we discovered that neither one of us had used a firewall, and since it was too late to hit the delete button, nine months later a little Pop-Up appeared that said: 'You Got Male'!

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Ray Andrew's Trophy 2013

This year's subject, chosen by the 2012 winner Diana Breeze, is:

"The Tranquillity of the Thames"

The Trophy is presented annually for the best photograph taken by club members.

Photos, before judging, will be on show at the Club Annual Dinner.

Please either post or give your photos to a Committee Member before the Annual Dinner.

Photographs can be colour or black and white and any size. They should be printed and may be unmounted, mounted on card, or framed.

Attached to the back of each photo should be a note of:

- Who took it
- Where it was taken
- When it was taken

Entries will be limited to one per individual member (in this instance, a member includes partners and crew). Thus, for example, husband and wife can each submit one entry.

All members are eligible to take part except the judge(s).



The ATYC Rally returns to London this year and will take place between Sat. 24th and Tues. 27th August.

West India Dock makes a great setting as can be seen in this picture taken at the last Rally there in August 2011.

There will be an opportunity for TSCC boats to stay in Limehouse the night before and for a couple of days after.

TSCC Programme for 2013

All dates and events are subject to change

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| April 13 Sat. | Royal Marines Massed Bands at Albert Hall |
| April 18 Thurs | Hearing Dogs for deaf people |
| May 9 Thurs. | Denbies Wine Estate |
| June 5-9 Wed-Sun. | Down River Cruise to Limehouse |
| June 6 Thurs. | Wapping Police Station Museum |
| June 7 Fri. | Tour of Lincoln's Inn |
| June 8 Sat. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry |
| June 12 Wed. | TSCC Committee |
| June 15 Sat. | RSSt.G Charity Ball – Effingham Park Hotel |
| July 24-28 Wed-Tues | Up River Cruise to Hurley |
| Aug. 24-27 Sat-Tues. | ATYC Rally West India Dock |
| Sept. 21- 22 Sat-Sun. | RNLI Rally Kingston |
| Sept. 27-29 Fri-Sun. | RNLI College Poole |
| October 2 Wed. | TSCC Committee |
| October 24 Thurs. | Lunch-National Shooting Centre Bisley |
| November 7 Thurs. | TSCC Annual Dinner Surbiton |
| December 6-9 Fri-Mon. | Sinah Warren Hotel–Syd Lawrence Orch'stra |
| December 11 Wed. | TSCC Committee |
| December 12 Thurs. | Lunch at VSC and Winter Wonderland |



Christmas Cruise - Linda, Jackie, Max and Mark enjoying Bruges

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE: Thamescoutcruisingclub.org.uk