



TSCC



**Thames Scout Cruising Club Newsletter No. 122**  
**July 2023**

## Chairman's Log



Since the March newsletter we have enjoyed five events, these being:

Sounds of the 60s Live with Tony Blackburn at the New Victoria Theatre, Woking Tues 28th March and Dinner at Bacaro restaurant. Feedback on the show was that it was well presented by Tony Blackburn and the two singers gave a very good performance of all those '60s tunes.

The Fitting Out Lunch at Glenmore House on 2<sup>nd</sup> April was enjoyed by 35 club members and 12 guests. The buffet food was excellent and a convivial time was had by all.

Fourteen of us enjoyed an interesting visit to "The Spike", being the Guildford Union Workhouse and this is the letter of thanks sent to our host, John Redpath:

*"Thank you for the excellent and comprehensive guided tour that you conducted for 13 of our members yesterday. A special thank you as well for kindly walking four of the "early birds" around the site of the original workhouse. It was particularly interesting to see some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings that remain to this day. All our members who came on the tour agreed that it was a very enjoyable worthwhile and enlightening visit. "*

On 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June twenty-six of us spent a very pleasant three days and two nights based at Heythrop House, a rather grand country house/stately home in the Cotswolds. Many visits were made to the nearby picturesque and charming villages and the two evenings were capped off with Ed Sheeran and Annie Lennox tribute singers.

Then on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June we had the Jazz Brunch at Mark and Jackie's, Little Compton when we were blessed with a lovely sunny day and cooling breeze. There were 50 of us and it was nice that Gordon was able to join us assisted to the venue by Wendy and Ian. It was also good to see Dusty and Mary whom we hadn't seen since before Covid. Our thanks to Wendy and Ian, also to David and Jo for giving Dusty and Mary a lift home to the far reaches of Sussex. This event doesn't take place without considerable effort and so more thanks are due to Jackie and Mark who were assisted by their guest William and to Janet for the setting up and taking down and to all those who stayed to help in the taking down all of which made for a smooth operation overall.

We are now looking forward to The Thames Cruise starting at Windsor on 10<sup>th</sup> July and finishing at Hurley on 13<sup>th</sup>. We are anticipating that 6 boats will take part for some or all of the cruise.

In recent years we have been supporting the 1<sup>st</sup> Stanwell Scout Group with our fundraising and in June Janet and I visited their Scout Hut during an open afternoon and were shown round the premises and adjacent grassed area by Alexia, a very polite and enthusiastic Young Leader. The Scout Group had set up some tents and pioneering lashings and poles to demonstrate some of the activities that they do. Their GSL Gary Rixon thanked TSCC for our continuing support which he said means a lot to them.

Sadly, on 27<sup>th</sup> March this year Jessie English passed away following a short illness. Her funeral at the South West Middlesex Crematorium was well attended by her friends from TSCC and Weybridge Mariners. Jessie was a popular member of TSCC and spent many happy times with her husband Gordon on their lovely boat, "GorJess". Our thoughts are with Gordon.

Finally, a reminder to take photos on the subject "Happy Holidays, 2023" for the Photographic Competition for display at the Annual Dinner.

*George Barber*



**On 28<sup>th</sup> March, great fun was had at the 60's concert with Tony Blackburn.**

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**TSCC is affiliated to the ATYC and the River Thames Society.**

**Cover Photo: Bourton-on-the-Water (photo PS)**

# The Guildford Union Workhouse (The Spike)

On 15<sup>th</sup> May thirteen TSCC members navigated the back streets of Guildford to meet at the Guildford Union Workhouse to learn about history of the relief of the poor and destitute and to see the conditions under which they were accommodated. Our very knowledgeable guide, John told us, that until the Reformation in 1538 the responsibility for the relief of the poor and those too old to work was one of the Christian works



of mercy exercised by virtually all of the Religious Houses. Payment was normally in food, 'doled out' to those who needed it via a special hatch in the door or wall of the religious house. This is the origin of the expression 'being on the dole'. With the closure of the religious houses it was often left to wealthy families to help the local poor, for example by setting up almshouses. In 1601, in the closing years of Elizabeth's reign, the Poor Relief Act (43 Eliz c.2) was passed. Under this, each parish was responsible for the relief of the

poor who could prove that they had 'settlement' in the parish. The money to pay for this poor relief was raised as a Poor Rate paid by the householders of the parish and supervised by the parish Overseers of the Poor. You can imagine that if there was the slightest question about a person's settlement status, support would be refused and many appeals were made to the magistrates over this.

Economies of scale seemed attractive and the 'settlement' requirement stifled local movement of labour. In 1834 the Poor Law (Amendment) Act (4 & 5 Will IV c.76) was passed which required villages in an area to form Unions and combine their Poor Rates and provision for their poor. These Unions were run by Boards of Guardians. The Guildford Union was set up in 1838 and covered 13 parishes. A 4-acre site was bought for the Union Workhouse and seven



separate wards were built for Infants (aged under 7), boys and girls aged 8 - 15, men and women aged 16 - 59, and men and women aged 60 and over. If a family went into a workhouse they were separated according to their gender and age. Those aged under 15 had compulsory schooling with the intention of teaching each of them a trade so they could leave the workhouse and make an independent living. The adults were given compulsory work to do; for men this was likely to be stone breaking for road repairs or sawing and chopping kindling wood for local sale. Work for women was likely to be unpicking lengths of old rope in order to make a fibrous mass of hemp that could be sold for use with tar for caulking timber ships. Hence the expression 'money for old rope'. The tool for doing this is called a 'spike'; hence 'the Spike' was the local name for the workhouse. Families

frequently entered the workhouse when jobs were scarce in the winter and left it during the spring and summer months when casual agricultural work was available.

The great problem was the itinerants or vagrants who called at the workhouse wanting a bed for the night. They had to be kept separate from the regular residents because of the likelihood of them bringing a contagious disease into the workhouse. In 1906 a separate Casuals Ward was built well away from the other workhouse buildings to accommodate itinerants and it was in this building that we met for coffee and biscuits before the introductory explanation given by John, our very knowledgeable guide for the tour. The other workhouse buildings are now demolished and the area has been redeveloped.

We were told that the main door of the Casuals Ward was opened daily at 6.00pm and the first 16 men and four women were allowed in and the women were immediately separated from the men. The men were seen by a doctor to establish that they were not carriers of an infectious disease. They had to undress and their clothes were taken for fumigation either by sulphur smoke or, more commonly by heat (above 60°C). The men then had a compulsory bath and dressed in a nightshirt, they were led to their rooms or cells (*photo*). These each measured 8ft x 4ft 6in and had a hinge-down bed and mattress along the long wall (*photo*) and a bucket. There was no heating or artificial lighting in the building. The Casuals were locked in and in the morning they had to work to pay for their night's accommodation by breaking stones or sawing and chopping kindling wood. The women had to unpick old rope. This was done within the confines of their cell (*photo*) and the broken stone was fed out through a chute in the wall. Only when the required weight of stone had been broken was the cell door unlocked and the Casual sent on their way.



Part way through our guided tour of the building we were seated to watch an excellent video that lasted about 15 minutes. It featured the backgrounds of two men who were in the Casuals Ward for the night. One man had a very unfortunately set of circumstances not of his making, both financial and personal and he was on his way to get a new job in a distant town and make a new start in life. The other was a habitual rascal, a permanent itinerant or tramp, who had no intention of seeking work.

The Guildford Union Workhouse continued until the Local Government Act of 1929 (19 & 20 Geo V c.17) dissolved Boards of Guardians and transferred responsibility for the poor to the Local Authority. In Guildford this was Surrey County Council and the workhouse was closed. The site was gradually re-developed and the Casuals Ward was due for demolition, but was emergency listed as Grade II due to it being a rare surviving example of this type of building.

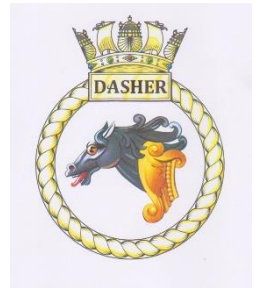
We left 'the Spike' after our two-hour visit and drove the few miles to the University of Surrey Lakeside Restaurant, which is part of their International Hospitality Management Department. There we had an excellent meal. Due to a mis-understanding of our scheduled times, the restaurant was almost closed when we arrived and so our eating was to a very carefully managed timetable.

All of us agreed that we had a wonderful day and we thanked Mark, Jackie, George and Janet for organising it for TSCC.

*Tony Scott (photos Irene Burroughs)*

## Sea Scouts - Ardrossan, Scotland

TSCC supports many aspects of all forms of scouting, but we recently had a memorable family trip to Scotland to attend a three day **80<sup>th</sup> WW2 Anniversary Remembrance Service for HMS Dasher** in the village of Ardrossan south of Glasgow.



It has always been known that the family “Uncle George” was on an aircraft carrier that sank off the coast of Scotland, but not a lot more as nothing was ever talked about. We were to learn a lot more. When The Dasher sank on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1943 in just eight minutes with the loss of 379 lives

On arrival at the village for the beginning of all the activities we were greeted very warmly by many other relatives, looked at the display of photographs and everybody explaining their connections.

The first of the two main memorial days began with an early start on the



Ardrossan to Arran ferry in the Firth of Clyde. Although with one of the ferries out operation meaning a very tight schedule and many additional people it all went with amazing precision. The ferry stopped over the wreck of The Dasher at the time of the sinking. A very moving ceremony was held by the local Canon who had led the service for more than 20 years. Whilst a lone piper played lament, the sea scouts assisted people to throw floral tributes into the water on behalf of relatives and organisations.

As the journey continued to Arran quite eerily the weather changed from sunshine to grey skies and drizzle. At shoreside further tributes were laid with sea scouts piping every part of the service. There was then a very quick rush to get back on board the ferry which was a very funny sight after the seriousness of the day!

Once back in Ardrossan we drove to the cemetery. The sea scouts lined the path where the graves of 11 crew of The Dasher are remembered and cared for the War Graves Commission.

Our final day began with all relatives and supporters meeting for a march around Ardrossan Bay with the salute being taken by the Lord Lieutenant. All services including all the sea scouts who were incredibly smart and dedicated and watched by over 100 people during the march to The Dasher memorial monument. The final service and blessing held in the Dasher Memorial Gardens had everything from a bugler, bag pipes and hearty singing

After the service the tea and cakes in the local church were promptly dispatched, especially by very hungry young people. We came away from our trip feeling immensely proud of everything we had learnt about Uncle George and to be very proud of the small involvement of the sea scouts and their dedication over a very full weekend.

*Clive and Judy*

## **Paris to London**

As most of you will be aware, Dave and Brenda Gray's son Mike was going to ride a penny farthing bicycle from Paris to London, a distance of 250 miles, to raise funds for the Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund, something that is very close to all their hearts.

Mike finished the ride on 30<sup>th</sup> June at Tower Bridge. He has raised £2732 so far on the 'just giving' page but he does have approximately another £100 to pay-in from donations along-the-way.

He sends his thanks to everyone who has donated, it is all going to a worthy cause.

[www.justgiving.com/page/michael-gray-1673093682730](http://www.justgiving.com/page/michael-gray-1673093682730)



# Fitting Out Lunch at Glenmore House

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023



Forty-one members met in the very pleasant surroundings of Glenmore House. We had a most enjoyable lunch along with the marvellous TSCC company. Our thanks to Mark Marriott for his excellent organisation and for the super slide-show he put together of the past years' events.







# HEYTHROP PARK

7-9 June 2023



Irene Burroughs

Twenty-eight of us enjoyed a very pleasant stay at Heythrop Park in the Cotswolds.



Mike Fowler

It was a relaxed and informal two days where everyone met-up for breakfast and dinner but the rest of the time people did their own thing. There is so much to see in the Cotswold area with numerous beautiful Cotswold towns and villages and many houses and gardens to visit. The weather was very kind to us and ensured that we were able to fully appreciate everything the Cotswolds has to offer especially the trees, plants, and flowers.

The hotel itself is nearly new, so all of the rooms were fresh and well appointed. The restaurant was buffet style with plenty of choice and most people seemed to find something to their liking. On the whole the service was good and friendly. The hotel was set in extensive grounds with beautiful views over the Cotswold landscape. In the evening there were shows in the Theatre and the Late Lounge.



Kiftsgate Court - PS

The most popular show seemed to be the tribute to Queen where, among their many hits that were performed, there was a very good rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody with five singers.

Among the many places visited by members were Chastleton House (17<sup>th</sup> Century country house – N.T.), Hidcote Manor (arts and crafts-inspired garden – N.T.), Kiftsgate Court Gardens (one of England's best loved gardens) and Diddly Squat Farm (Jeremy Clarkson).



Group photos: Joy Bell

Our thanks to Jackie for organising this trip which was a most enjoyable break.

## Now that's what I call a LOCK!

Wendy & I have just returned from a river cruise on the lower Danube. The lower Danube extends for more than 600 miles. We joined in Budapest sailing all the way to the Black Sea. The lower Danube along much of its way forms the boundary between several former Soviet countries and at this point is immensely wide. Our final location was only a bit over a hundred miles from Ukraine. Some people on our boat even briefly got 'welcome to Ukraine' on their mobiles!



While interesting to visit countries from the former Soviet Union this is not a travel story about our journey along the river. It is about a feature that may be of interest to the many members familiar with the Thames and some near continental rivers.

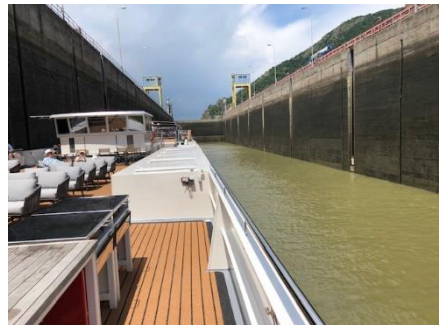


There is a point where the Danube passes through a narrow gorge, known as the Iron Gates. Here back in the 60's and 70's where the river marked the boundary between Romania and what was then Yugoslavia a hydro-electric installation was built to provide power to the surrounding area. A dam was built, locks constructed and a large lake was formed, several villages were submerged forever, some history dating

back to Roman times and earlier was also lost.

This is about that lock that we passed through that interested me and which I would like to tell you about. There are other locks around the world bigger, both longer or wider or both but very few so deep.

As well as the River Thames, quite a few members will have traversed locks on the Continent notably some of the deeper locks in France. All of those other locks pale to



insignificance beside the lower Danube locks for depth. Going through was an experience readers may find of interest. Our ship was about 35 feet wide, another of the same width could have been accommodated alongside with ease (Mr Google tells me the main lock is 310m long and 34m wide). The striking feature though is the depth. This is a two-stage lock, total rise and fall of the first stage is 115 feet, the second being a mere 50 feet.



Those of us familiar with the average Thames lock may think throwing a mooring rope over a bollard on such a lock a bit of a challenge. There is a clever solution to that problem: the securing points move with the ship. Each lock side has several recesses built into the wall, which can be seen in the photo, on which to secure mooring ropes. The securing point which is powered then goes up and down with the water level meaning the ropes once secured can be left alone. Our captain was extremely skilled in bringing the ship ever so gently alongside the lock wall enabling a crew member to simply lean over and put a rope over the 'bollard', tie back onto the ship – job done for the time it takes the lock to empty, around an hour.

Entry and exit from the lock is unusual. Instead of conventional opening gates as might be expected full width shutters rise and fall above and below the water level, an unusual sight. The accompanying photographs show these arrangements. Total transit through the lock was in excess of an hour, as can be imagined with a fall of well over 100 feet large volumes of water have to be moved in each transit.



Our farthest extent was to the Danube Delta where the river empties into the Black Sea. Here we saw much waterborne wild life via an, at times, fast & hair-raising speedboat trip. Our holiday finally finished in Bucharest where the vast parliament building, a vanity project of the Communist President Ceausescu has to be seen to be believed.

*Ian Hardie*

# JAZZ BRUNCH

At Little Compton 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023



What a fabulous afternoon! Great food, great company, great weather, and great jazz. Our thanks to Jackie, Mark, Will and all the helpers.



## Jessie English



Jessie and Gordon joined TSCC over 20 years ago and they were very active members, joining-in most of our events. Sadly, Jessie passed away on the 27<sup>th</sup> March this year.

Jessie was a bright, quick thinker and she was a very practical person with many talents including dress making, and mending and altering garments for many others. She was also involved in fixing bicycles, decorating houses, repairing furniture, boat upholstery, and painting the underside of boats.

Jessie's uniform life started in the 1940's as a Brownie and then as a Sea Ranger. She became an Akela and earned a long service award.

Jessie and her devoted husband, Gordon, owned a number of boats over the years, which they called "Gorjess". Their boat was moored on the Thames about 50 metres from their home. They took their boat across the English Channel to Dunkirk as well as cruising the English waterways.

Adventurous to the end, Gordon and Jessie went on many cruise-ship holidays and visited family and friends across the world.

Her daughter, Penny, believed that Jessie, on balance, had a good life well lived and will be remembered as a smiling, happy, bundle of energy.

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**Gordon and family kindly asked for donations to be made either to Thames Scout Cruising Club or to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/helpplouislovell> for Jessie's great grandson who has the life limiting Krabbe's Disease.**

**The donations to TSCC amounted to £245 and we plan to give this to 1<sup>st</sup> Stanwell Scouts for the purchase of pioneering equipment. We feel that as Jessie was a traditional, practical Scouter she would much approve of this proposal.**

# TSCC 2023 Programme of Events

All dates and events are subject to change

Thames Cruise	Mon 10 <sup>th</sup> – Thurs 13 <sup>th</sup> July
Open Air Theatre at Hatchlands Park	Sun 30 <sup>th</sup> July
Guided Tour of Clandon Park Restoration	Sat 2 <sup>nd</sup> September
Norfolk Broads Cruise	Tues 12 <sup>th</sup> – Tues 19 <sup>th</sup> Sept
Autumn Getaway to Cardiff	Tues 24 <sup>th</sup> – Thurs 26 <sup>th</sup> October
Annual Dinner at The Drift Golf Club	Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> November
Christmas Festive Tea at Hinchley Wood Scouts	Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> December

**Don't forget – the subject for this years' photo  
competition is**

**“Happy Holidays 2023”**

## 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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Visit our Website: [www.tsc.org.uk](http://www.tsc.org.uk)

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