



St. Pancras Cruising Club

## THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE PAGEANT

### NARROWBOAT NEWS – ISSUE NUMBER 1, DATED SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2012.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. I'm Andrew Phasey, Commodore of St. Pancras Cruising Club. Dr. Roger Squires, our Vice President, and I are members of the Pageant's Recreational sub-Working Group, which has been engaged in the planning process since December 2010. With many other boating chums, we have also conducted tideway trials and rehearsals since Easter 2011.
2. Working closely with the Pageant Master and Chief Harbour Master, we have one simple aim; to make our group's participation in the Pageant a safe, joyous and memorable occasion.
3. I am the designated principal point of contact for all Pageant matters concerning the 40 narrowboat and widebeam steel boats invited to participate. I may be contacted, at any time, by email at: [theoldmainline@fastmail.fm](mailto:theoldmainline@fastmail.fm) or my mobile 'phone on 07850 753 633.
4. The purpose of this, the first of a regular series of briefing notes, is to bring you up to date with current plans, including scheduled rehearsals, mustering arrangements prior to the Pageant, dispersal arrangements post-Pageant, and remaining work in progress.

#### Plan A

5. Though not yet in the public domain, the decision has been made for the Pageant to process with the Thames Flood Barrier in defence. This means that the Pageant will be held on a depth of water between 3.5 and 5 metres, with an ebb current of .5 to 1 knot.

#### Plan B

6. If, for any reason, the Barrier is not in defence, the Pageant will process on an ebb tide; running at 2 knots +/-, the height of tide is predicted at 6.9 metres. The Chief Harbour Master is clear that all vessels and crews should be able to navigate effectively, no matter the position of the Barrier. It is for this reason that safety briefings and rehearsals are considered such an important element.

#### Rehearsals

7. I appreciate the severe difficulties faced by some of you in attending any rehearsal. With boats travelling from all areas of the Kingdom, and with work and other commitments to take into account, it will be difficult to achieve. I'll explain what is arranged, and together we can work on the art of the possible. Please let me know if you intend to join any, or all, of these rehearsals.

#### Rehearsal dates and events

8. Fri 06 – Mon 09 Apr  
SPCC Easter Cruise from Limehouse to Brentford, attending the annual beer festival at The Fox, very close to the bottom of the Hanwell flight. Returning to Limehouse on Sun and/or Mon. Ideal for boaters wishing to gain tideway experience in the company of others. We shall cover the route of the Pageant, in both directions. Bring your boat, or yourself, and a lifejacket.



9. Fri 11, 18 & 25 May

Rendezvous in the Cruising Association bar, [www.cruising.org.uk](http://www.cruising.org.uk) adjacent to Limehouse Lock, at 1900, for the safety brief and supper.

10. Sat 12 & 26 May

Depart Limehouse Lock for the Thames Barrier on the ebb. Pass through the Barrier, and by the Woolwich Ferry. Continue downstream to Margaret Ness, a distance of 8 miles. Turn across the fairway to the north bank and hold station against the ebb until the tide turns. Pass through the Barrier again, on the first of the flood, and continue upstream to Chiswick Ait, above Hammersmith Bridge, a distance of 19 miles. Practice the take-up of buoy moorings for a short while (as we shall on the Pageant). Continue upstream to Thames Lock, Brentford and exit the tideway, a distance of 4 miles.

11. Sun 13 & 27 May

Depart Thames Lock Brentford for Chiswick Ait, and practice the take-up of buoy moorings, at close to high water. Thirty minutes after high water, slip the moorings and assume Pageant formation. Execute synchronised narrowboating and practice emergency procedures, on the ebb tide, returning to Limehouse Basin, a distance of 14 miles.

12. Sat 19 May

Depart Limehouse Lock for Chiswick Ait, on the flood, and practice the take-up of buoy moorings. Thirty minutes after high water, slip the moorings and assume Pageant formation. Execute synchronised narrowboating and practice emergency procedures, on the ebb tide, returning to Limehouse Basin, a distance of 20 miles.

### **Pageant mustering**

13. The majority of Pageant vessels will muster in West India Dock. This will include Dunkirk Little Ships, Dutch Barges, other historic vessels and river cruisers. The West India Dock Lock is booked for our 40 boats at 1100 on Fri 01 Jun, close to high water North Woolwich. To achieve this, I'm working with British Waterways to ensure that there is sufficient lock capacity available to discharge us onto the river, from various locations, to meet this timing.

14. In outline, we will rendezvous in the Cruising Association at 1900 on Thu 31 May for the safety briefing and supper. The following day, we will divide into groups, each with two experienced leaders, with local knowledge. They will ensure safe and timely arrival at West India Dock. At a time to be determined on Fri, there will be a briefing by Pageant and Harbour Master's staff. Sat 02 Jun is set aside for the scrutinising process, of which more later, and boat decoration.

15. If you are joining the tideway at Teddington or Brentford en route to Limehouse Basin for rehearsals or the Pageant muster, please let me know. There are favourable tides for downstream transits on several days. We are able to provide local knowledge and competent crew assistance if required. We can bring our boats to an agreed rendezvous and escort you, or we can bring ourselves, our lifejackets and VHF radios and join your crew for the passage.



St. Pancras Cruising Club

**Pageant – Sun 03 Jun**

16. Slick drills and accurate timekeeping are critical factors in the Pageant's success, and we must play our part. Here are the agreed timings, as far as they are known.

- a. 0730 Load West India Dock Lock.
- b. 0830 Depart Lock, head upstream on the flood tide.
- c. 1030 Thames Flood Barrier in defence.
- d. 1100 Arrive Chiswick Ait and take-up buoy moorings, distance 14 miles.
- e. 1500+/- on instructions join the Pageant.
- f. 1630 onwards, all vessels return to West India Dock. Possibly 3 lockings, with a 90 minute turnaround time.

17. Please note; there will be no opportunity to land in the period between departure from and return to West India Dock.

**Dispersal – Mon 04 Jun**

18. West India Dock Lock is booked for our departure at 1030. We shall begin loading at about 0930. In time, I'll establish each vessel's exit point from the tideway and ensure there is sufficient lock capacity available.

**Work in progress**

19. There is much work in progress. Not least are:
- a. BW locking arrangements to get us safely on and off the tideway.
  - b. Port of London Authority Pageant River Marshalls to be trained.
  - c. Desk-top exercises and briefings with the security and rescue authorities.
  - d. Temporary moorings in Limehouse Basin, in the periods between rehearsals.

**Vessel, crew and passenger preparation**

20. As responsible owners and skippers you will already have considered your courses of action on dealing with collision, explosion, fire, and sudden illness etc. Please also ensure you have practiced an orderly evacuation of your vessel.

**Future briefing notes**

21. Future notes will include:
- a. Navigational safety issues, including lights, anchors, lifejackets, alcohol etc.
  - b. Additional Pageant information.
  - c. Access requirements for boarding and disembarking passengers and crew.
  - d. Weather condition limits for your vessel. (Go/no go limits of wind and waves.)

**Queries**

22. If this briefing note raises questions, it can only be a good thing. Please contact me, and I'll do my best to provide answers.

Kind regards,  
Andrew