



St. Pancras Cruising Club

THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE PAGEANT

NARROWBOAT NEWS – ISSUE NUMBER 2, DATED TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2012.

Introduction

1. Many thanks for your numerous and varied responses to my first briefing note. It's good to learn of your plans for this adventure. Enthusiasm and commitment is evident in abundance.

Site Manager – West India Dock

2. The Pageant has appointed Oliver Brown to be Site Manager in West India Dock, from the initial muster to final disperse. Ollie is a very experienced tideway boater (and deep sea sailor), also a member of St Pancras Cruising Club. We're very lucky that Ollie has accepted this appointment and is able to bring his considerable talents to bear on this mammoth task.

3. Ollie is planning a detailed site visit in the coming days. When he has made his plans, I'm sure he'll be in contact with us all.

Rehearsals

4. As of the time of writing, I've had a good number of responses from you, letting me know which rehearsal(s) you are planning to attend. For those of you still making plans, please let me know as soon as you are able to.

Arrival in London

5. I'm also learning of people's plans for mustering in Limehouse Basin on Thu 31 May. Some of you are joining the Thames at Teddington, and others at Brentford. We already have convoys organised, departing late morning, for the transit to Limehouse. Do let me know if you'd like to join. Several of our club members and other boating chums have taken leave of absence in order to provide escort boats and competent crew.

Moorings

6. Temporary moorings in London can be problematical. The Capital's waterways are busy and very popular, particularly with continuous cruisers. Both the Grand Union Canal and Regent's Canal have a number of canalside supermarkets and pubs with adjacent moorings. In the 15 years we've been cruising these waters, we have made great use of these, together with many other towpath and visitor moorings, without incident. Little Venice and Paddington Basin visitor moorings are always popular, and boats are often rafted out together to make best use of space.

7. For those joining the Thames at Brentford, there are visitor moorings at the bottom of the Hanwell flight, (The Fox is one minute away from the towpath). There are also visitor moorings at Brentford, with good facilities.

8. Limehouse Basin features heavily in our rehearsal schedule and during our mustering. The Marina, operated by BWML, is mostly filled by berth holders' boats, and visiting boats have taken the remaining moorings. There is another area of moorings opposite the marina, known locally as "the wall". These are 24 hr monitored free moorings



St. Pancras Cruising Club

for boats, usually waiting for favourable weather and tides. Once again, we have used these many times without incident. It is “the wall” moorings we will use during our briefings in the Cruising Association and tideway rehearsals. It is not uncommon for 5 or 6 boats to raft together.

9. Access to the shore from “the wall” is a 1 metre step upwards. There are several ladders available and a recently installed pontoon with ramp for those that prefer to use it. Some local negotiation with other moorers should alleviate any access difficulties.

10. BWML has agreed that Pageant boats can overstay the mooring restrictions, during the periods between scheduled rehearsals. They do, however, propose to charge for these moorings. I’ve written to them, asking what facilities will be available for boaters who elect to take up their offer. As soon as I receive a response, I’ll let you know the details.

Tideway experience

11. It’s evident that we have a jolly good mix of boaters for the Pageant. Some have a lifetime of ships and the sea to draw upon, others have great knowledge of working boats and some are still to venture onto the Capital’s rivers. There’s no substitute for experience, and I encourage you to join our rehearsals and to enter London on the River Thames. It’s true to say that the best views of London are from the river, and the boaters I know never tire of the experience.

Pageant newsletter

12. Beginning this week, the Pageant will be emailing a regular newsletter to you all.

To finish...

13. I’ve attached a picture of our last rehearsal in Sep 11, when we formed part of the Mayor of London’s Thames River Festival. Our formation in Jun will be a frontage of five boats, in eight rows, across the width of the river, with approximately 20 metres between each boat and between rows. Synchronised narrowboating may well become an Olympic sport.

14. If I’ve learned just one thing cruising the tidal Thames, it’s this; stay fluid because flexible is too rigid a concept.

Kind regards,
Andrew