

TSCC



After the spring cleaning, we look forward to the new season and summer days on the river.

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Thames Scout Cruising Club Newsletter No 98

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Chairman's Log



Hello to you all,

Spring is well and truly in the air, and we have lots to look forward to with the TSCC. As usual the committee have been hard at work organizing the 2015 programme.

The year started well with the trip to Littlecote House. Well done David for arranging the whole event, it was a great success.

Those members who went to the Pasadena Roof Orchestra had a great time, Ray Churchill did all the bookings for this, and we do appreciate your help, thank you.

I thought the AGM was very enjoyable; we went through the whole agenda without any problems. We had a great suggestion from Gordon and Jessie that we should sponsor a miniature life boat and after an extremely constructive discussion the members agreed on a way forward – please see David's report later in this Newsletter. After the AGM we had one of our gorgeous afternoon teas, thank you to everyone who contributed the goodies and a very special thank you to the people who helped in the kitchen.

The quiz night was once again very enjoyable and you can read about this in Ray Churchill's report.

I am looking forward to seeing lots of our members at the fitting out supper.

Before I finish my log I would once again like to think of members who are having a difficult time some with their own health and some with illness in their family.

Elaine

We are delighted to report that Betty Gosling and her daughter Diane had the bronze award of the 'Trefoil Guild's Voyage Award' presented to them by their Trefoil County Chairman at Camden Lock. Congratulations Betty and Diane.

The Voyage Award is like D of E or Queens Guide. It's made of five sections with so many hours for each. Betty had to take a year but this has now been reduced to 6 months. Betty and Diane have both started on their silver (which is for a year).



WE WON!!!!??

Great fun was had at the annual Skittles Match between Byfleet Boat Club, TSCC and Weybridge Mariners. It was a good turn-out and BBC lived-up to their own high standards in providing warm and generous hospitality. Somehow TSCC managed to win the competition – a rare event, if not unique.

At the AGM, Bob Breeze retired from the Committee which he joined in 2005. Elaina thanked Bob for his valuable contribution over the years.

The Committee was otherwise unchanged for 2015.



Burns Night

We had a great time at the Grand Charity Burns Night Supper organised by Derek Dale. The haggis was piped-in by Pipe Sergeant Ronald Mackenzie Brown and the Burns poem “Address To The Haggis” was stirringly read in English (for a change) by Derek. This was followed by the traditional toasts and the singing of songs by Burns.

DEMOCRACY REIGNS at the TSCC AGM

Under “Any Other Business” at the AGM on the 8th November, the following was put to the meeting by David, our Hon. Secretary, on behalf of Gordon & Jessie English who were unable to attend. Jessie proposed and Gordon seconded:

“That the TSCC pay the entry fee of £250 and enter a miniature lifeboat into the RNLI Alternative Boat Race 2015.”

Elaina, our Chairman, spoke against the motion pointing out that our Constitution clearly states that the first objective of the Club is “Raising charitable funds for the benefit of Scouting”. The motion was put to the meeting and, by a clear majority, defeated to the cries of disagreement from a disappointed few. It was then that Sally pointed out that many of us take our boats down river under the protection of the RNLI. She proposed and George seconded an alternative motion:

“That the members present hold a collection towards raising the required £250 to enter a miniature lifeboat into the RNLI Alternative Boat Race 2015”.

This motion was unanimously carried and George was asked by the Chairman to take the collection.

There was a warm glow of happy satisfaction amongst everyone when the £250 was collected before we had finished our afternoon tea.

Friday 10th April 2015 is a legendary new day in the boating calendar. That’s when 250 miniature lifeboats will set sail down the Thames from Barnes Bridge to Chiswick Bridge the same one-mile final stretch that the Oxford and Cambridge teams will take on the following day. The miniature boats will race for the chance to name one of the RNLI “D” class lifeboats. **Every penny raised will go to the RNLI’s lifesaving work.** The TSCC boat is **No. 248.**



Tower lifeboat station, next to Waterloo Bridge, had their busiest ever year in 2014, having launched 543 times, they rescued 104 people and saved 16 lives on the River Thames. Along with London's two other

lifeboat stations - Chiswick and Teddington - the charity's crews rescued 231 people in 2014.



Win or lose, we will get to keep our boat as a way of remembering this year's race.

The Race is on: FRIDAY 10 APRIL 2015 FROM 3PM TO 10PM

David Sowter

Littlecote House Hotel Weekend

TSCC members had a very enjoyable weekend away at Warner's Littlecote House Hotel near Hungerford, Berkshire, from 2nd to 5th January this year. I am a little bit vague about numbers because although about 40 members and a few guests were originally booked, winter ailments took their toll and the number resident for the whole period was probably a little less.



We had a wonderful weekend of very comfortable accommodation with good food and entertainment in the evenings. There were plenty of sports facilities on site but I believe most members went there for a good rest and relaxation. The estate surrounding the hotel covers 34 hectares (85 acres) of historic parklands and gardens running alongside the River Kennet.

The hotel was built in 1996/7 adjacent to the Grade I listed Littlecote House, which has a very interesting history. The first Littlecote House was built during the 13th century and was owned by the de Calstone family from around 1290. Elizabeth de Calstone married William Darrell in 1415, he inherited the house and his descendants as the Darrell family went on to enlarge the house into a Tudor mansion in the mid-16th century. Henry VIII courted Jane Seymour at the house; her grandmother was Elizabeth Darrell. A third phase of building completed the house in 1592 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Like all historic houses, Littlecote has its share of stories and ghosts and I have tried to use a number of sources, not just Warner's literature, to compile this article and sort out fact from fiction.



The last of the Darrell owners was connected with several scandals and the house's resident ghost story. When William Darrell was a boy, his father died and left the house to his mistress Mary Danyell, but William was able to recover it when he came of age in 1560. He spent lavishly, left his debts unpaid, and went to law with most of his neighbours, acquiring enemies in the process. He had an alleged affair with Anne Hungerford the wife of Sir Walter Hungerford, his neighbour. When Sir Walter sued for divorce, the case was not found and Sir Walter sent to prison, presumably for perjury.

Some years later, Mother Barnes, a local midwife, recalled to the magistrate in Newbury that she was brought blindfold to a large local house in 1575 to the childbed of a lady, with a gentleman standing by who commanded her to save the life of the mother. When the child was born, the gentleman took it and threw it into the fire. Barnes did not name or indicate either Darrell or Littlecote, but William's enemies quickly ascribed this murder to him. There is no



evidence for the popular story that William Darrell was brought to trial for murder, or that he was subsequently acquitted of murder by the good offices of his relative and distinguished lawyer, Sir John Popham. It is said that the bedroom in which the child was delivered is still

haunted by a mother and a newborn baby. The story of William Darrell and the newborn baby was borrowed by Sir Walter Scott, in *Rokeby*, and by Charles Dickens, in *A Tale of Two Cities*.

William Darrell's financial troubles increased, and he mortgaged Littlecote, first to Sir Thomas Bromley, and then to Sir John Popham. He moved to London and spent some time in a debtors' prison, but died in 1589 aged 50 after a riding accident whilst visiting Littlecote. Legend has it that William was out hunting when the ghost of the murdered newborn appeared to him, causing his horse to shy and throw him. Darrell is said to haunt the site of his death, known as Darrell's stile (or Style).

William Darrell died without an heir and Sir John Popham bought Littlecote outright in 1589, and built the present Elizabethan brick mansion onto the existing property. This was completed in 1592. The Popham family, the name changing by marriage in 1762 to Leyborne Popham, retained the house until 1929.



During the English Civil War the Popham family were staunch Puritans and Littlecote House became the garrison headquarters of a strong force of Parliamentary soldiers. They left a lot of evidence of their occupation in

terms of arms and armour. On the walls of the Great Hall there used to be a large display of matchlock pistols and muskets from the Civil War period. A Puritan feature of the house that is still visible is the chapel, said to be unchanged from the Parliamentary period of about 1650. This has a gallery and extends over two floors of the house and one characteristic is that there is no altar, its place being taken by a high wooden pulpit.

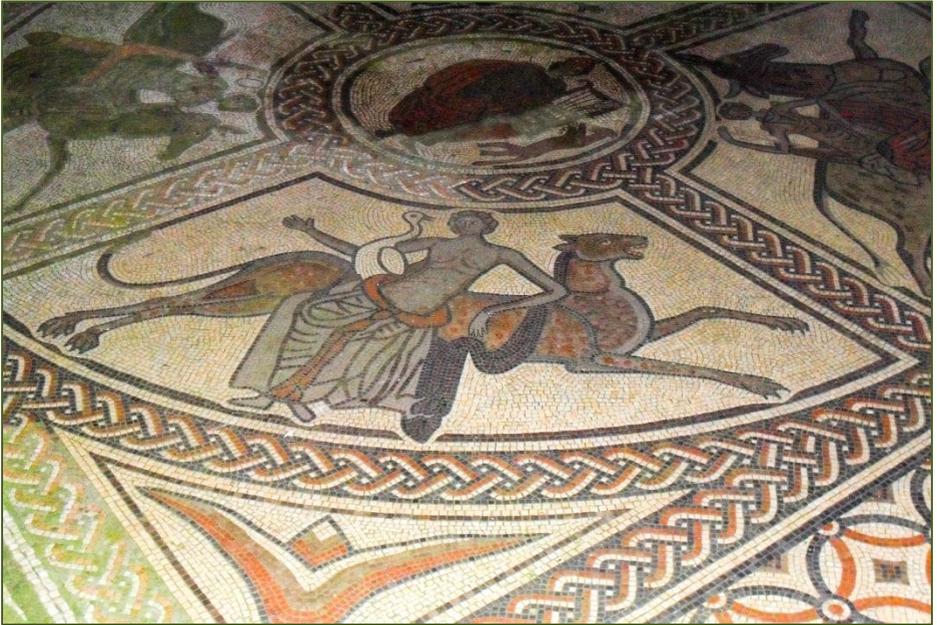
In 1929 Littlecote was sold to Sir Ernest Wills, a member of the famous cigarette and tobacco family. During the Second World War, although

the Wills family continued to live at Littlecote, the house was used for billeting troops and the grounds were used for training. Initially a territorial regiment took up residence, to be replaced successively by several armoured divisions and brigades that left Littlecote to fight in Europe. In 1941-2, the house was the Headquarters of 34th Army Tank Brigade. Then in September 1943 the US 101st Airborne Division requisitioned part of the house, and it became home to regimental staff, the regimental headquarters company, and the headquarters company of the 1st Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Members of the US 101st Airborne Division took off from airfields in this area during the night of 5 June 1944, the eve of D-Day, as part of the invasion of Normandy. Easy Company from the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment has become famous through the book and TV mini-series *Band of Brothers*.

After the war, the owner's younger son, Seton Wills, inherited the estate and he sold the house to the entrepreneur Peter de Savary in 1985 who turned the house and grounds into a "Cromwellian theme park" with staff in appropriate costumes and wax-works models in the major rooms. These models are still retained. It would appear that Peter de Savary met with financial difficulties and the house and park were sold to Warner's in 1996 as a site for a country house hotel.

The fine display of arms and armour went to the Royal Armouries in Leeds where they are on display in a separate 'Littlecote Room'.





Some distance from the house but still within the grounds of Littlecote there are the remains of a Roman villa together with its associated farm. These spread over an area almost as big as a football pitch. In one corner, the floor of the villa containing the Orpheus mosaic has been excavated and is on display. This mosaic is large and is remarkably well preserved and is one of the best examples of its kind in the UK.

Whilst we were at Littlecote House Hotel on the long weekend break I spent part of a morning exploring Littlecote House and taking photographs of the various rooms. Artificial lighting was non-existent in many rooms and I was dependent solely upon daylight through the rather small windows and the camera flash to light up the scene. The outdoor shots, including the Orpheus mosaic, were taken in the early afternoon on cold overcast winter days.

Littlecote House is an excellent location for a country house hotel. The food was good and plentiful and the entertainment in the evening was also very good. If you were not part of the TSCC group that stayed there, you missed out on a lovely weekend.

Tony Scott

Three *Lame Ladies* at Littlecote House Hotel



Our long-time friend Eve came with us on the long weekend at Littlecote House Hotel and as she was awaiting a knee joint replacement, she was unable to walk far without considerable pain. Phyllis and I decided that we would keep her company and stay with her indoors whilst Tony took a number of walks of exploration in the extensive grounds outside.

After a cup of coffee one day we decided to look in on the ballroom where a Cha Cha lesson was taking place. Frank, Heather, Brian and Doreen were taking part and learning the finer points of the dance along with a number of other guests who we did not know. The thought crossed our minds that we could be the judging panel like on *Strictly Come Dancing*, giving them marks out of 10 such as 5 or 7 and having a good laugh in the process. There is no revealing who got



which mark but I can reveal that we were told to be quiet at one point. On other occasions in the coffee lounges we joined in quizzes and even came second in one of them.

In the afternoons some really good old films were shown and in the evenings, after dinner

which was always very good, there was theatrical entertainment, which we really enjoyed.



When we were not busily engaged in all of these strenuous activities, we found the seats in the foyer were particularly comfortable and we sat there reading our novels and watching the visitors coming and going.



Bob is clearly regretting his decision to leave the Committee.

It was a very relaxing weekend and we came home very refreshed and ready for the New Year.

Rita Scott

(Photographs at Littlecote by Clive Bowles and Tony Scott)

Shoe Boxes 2014

Christmas is now a distant memory. But I would like to thank those thoughtful members who gave me items for the shoe boxes.



Raymond and I went along to Guildford last year to a large warehouse [Raymond is now just as keen as I am] where the shoe boxes were to be collected and checked before being sent off in large container lorries.

We started on the 17th November, we had the use of an empty warehouse for three weeks which had been donated courtesy of a generous Landlord. Over that period the volunteers checked and packed nearly ten thousand shoe boxes. Thousands more arrived that had been checked at other warehouses over the South of England, these were sent to us, as we were the depot where the lorries started their journeys to the countries for where they were destined.

We always have to check each shoebox that has been donated, mostly from Schools and Churches, that is because we like to make sure that each child has a fair box. When we check the boxes some might contain



just one or two toys whilst others are beautifully filled. We like to make sure that in the box there is a variety of things that include pencils,

crayons, paper, toys, warm hats, scarves and gloves [if they are going to a cold country] some sweets, also toiletries soap, toothbrush, toothpaste and a flannel.



We have a wonderful selection of goodies that have been donated so that we can top up the boxes - that is where your donations are used.

Thank you once again for your help;

I can assure you that it is very much appreciated by the children. I watched a video at one of our meetings, one little girl was shaking with excitement in anticipation of opening her shoebox, these would probably be the only presents she would receive in her childhood, it made all the hard work well worthwhile.

*Thank you on behalf of the children.
Elaina*

A TESTING QUIZ NIGHT!

Full of misplaced optimism, 27 of us filled three tables at the Annual Quiz Night organised by St George's Lodge.

In previous years we stunned ourselves by rising to the standard of distinctly average. This year there was a different format with a different quizmaster, the previous husband and wife team having retired. In the same way that a bad workman blames his tools, we blame the new regime. The fact that all the other teams faced the same obstacles is wholly irrelevant, clearly they had inside knowledge and were able to train accordingly.

The quiz was undertaken in rounds of ten questions. In one round, two of our teams scored nil point, the third table showed off by getting a question correct. They were quite obnoxious afterwards.



Now TSCC is renowned for its perpetual optimism and positive spirit. There must, therefore, be positives we can take. Answers on a postcard please to the Newsletter Editor, who will publish those deemed suitable in the next edition.

As always with a TSCC supported event, the most enjoyable element of the evening was the convivial company of members, supported by the wide range of grazing nibbles and thirst quenchers they brought.

To be honest, I am not sure in which positions our teams finished, I had lost the will by that time.

Next year we shall bring pressure to bear on the organisers to adopt a format suitable for our intellect. In that event, we shall return triumphant, brandishing yet another trophy to display at the AGM.

Ray Churchill

**PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION
The Ray Andrew's Trophy 2015**

The subject this year is:

“In and around Thames Locks”

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 at or 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).

TSCC Programme - 2015

April 18 Sat	Fitting-out Supper – The Angel
May 3 Sun	Strawberry Tea & Plant Sale - Ajax
May 11-15 Mon-Fri	Down River Cruise – West India Dock
May 12 Tues	Tour of Painter's Hall
May 14 Thurs	Tour of SS Robin
June 3 Wed	Carpet of Flowers – Arundel Cathedral
June 6 Sat	RSSG Charity Ball – Cophthorne Hotel
June 13-15 Sat-Mon	Magna Carta 800 th – River Relay
July 16-21 Thurs-Tues	Up River Cruise – Hurley Lock Island
July 17 Fri	Rom Wasn't Built in a Day- Maidenhead
July 19 Sun	Disraeli's House & Steam Train
July 21 Tues	Lunch at Leander Club
August 15 Sat	Sunbury Regatta Firework Display
August 28-31 Fri-Mon	ATYC Rally - Kingston
September 24 Thurs	Battle of Britain Talk – Union Jack Club
October 17 Sat	Royal Marine's Band – GLive Guildford
November 12 Thurs	TSCC Annual Dinner – Glenmore House
December 18-20 Fri-Sat	Cricket St Thomas Hotel



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