



TIDEWAY ADVENTURERS

NARROWBOAT PROJECT

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1026388

www.tidewaynarrowboats.com

admin@tidewaynarrowboats.com

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 18 June 2009

2 Meadow Close

Lower Sydenham

SE6 3NW

The meeting commenced at 8.15pm

Attendance:

Andy Steel (ASt), Mike Simmons (MS), Tom Manser (TS), Will Davies (WD), Izzy West (IW), Dan Murray (DM), Steven Byford (SB), Emma Kelly (EK), Ken Parsons (KP), Ashley Scoates (ASc). Andy Masson (AM) joined the meeting at 8.30pm

A. Apologies

Thomas Turnham, Cate Lamb, Libby Bradshaw, Lesley Pride, Hannah Sanford, Ari Moretuzzo and Ross Sutherland

B. Minutes from Last Meeting

The minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting were distributed to the attendees by the Chairman, who asked for questions. There were no questions.

C. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

D. Agenda

1. Chairman's Report

The Chairman read his report to the attendees. Please see Appendix 1 for the full report.

Amongst the successes, MS indicated that there may be an opportunity for the boats to be used in the television programme, 'Lewis', in the future. There had been some enquiries by



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the programme's location manager to use Denham, and the Ian at the cafe had passed on the Group's details as there was a possibility they may want to use two boats. MS also revealed that the programme may need some extras!

MS also advised that we needed to retrieve the stills from the 'Runaway' film shoot to use for the website.

IW proposed the report and DM seconded it. The report was passed unanimously.

2. Treasurer's Report

EK and KP read the report to the attendees.

Overall, bookings were up on last year, however grants had gone down.

In terms of costs, it was worth noting that Merlin's mooring fees had yet to be paid. The new and improved website had also come at a cost and Aaron Wheeler had to be paid his remaining fee from his previous work on the website. The report also stated that fundraising costs were down.

MS agreed with the report, advising that bookings were looking healthy but that we wouldn't get the grants we received last year. There were significant extra costs this year to consider, including new health and safety regulations. For example, lifejackets had recently been upgraded (costing over £1000), the rope ladders needed to be replaced and there would be ongoing maintenance on both boats.

One such maintenance issue was on Theo, where the heads needed attention. It was agreed that the Group had to come up with a quick fix solution for this, particularly with the high season approaching and the boat being in constant use.

MS believed that we could not be complacent about the financial situation within the Group. It was the first year we have run two boats and to break even this next year would be an achievement.



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He also added that we needed to accrue enough bookings during the summer months so that between October and March, when the boats are virtually unused, we can afford the moorings.

ASt proposed the report and AM seconded it. The report was passed unanimously.

3. Maintenance Report

ASt gave the maintenance report for the year. Please see Appendix 2.

MS stated that the heads had been fixed on Theo and that some new smoke alarms were imminently being fitted.

It was discussed that Merlin should come out of the water soon as it had been some time.

The gas alarm on Merlin will be fixed as it keeps bleeping at present, due to a faulty connection with the alternator, DM mentioned. MS said that this was getting fixed.

WD proposed the maintenance report and IW seconded it. The report was passed unanimously.

4. Fundraising Report

SB gave his report to the attendees.

He disclosed that £1200 had been made through fundraising activities over the past year. This was not just through the jumble sales but also included the selling of the saxophone.

It was decided that the Group no longer proceed with jumble sales as they were considered to be very time consuming and required a great deal of man power. The last one was held in December 2008.



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SB suggested some new fundraising ideas. These included promoting Learning Afloat at other IWA festivals, a book sale, a rope stand, a sponsored walk and a Christmas dinner with raffle.

MS agreed to speak to Alan Egby from the IWA about holding a book stall/rope stand at future IWA festivals.

EK proposed the report and ASc seconded it. The report was passed unanimously.

5. Project Co-ordinator's Report

MS distributed the report to the attendees. Please see Appendix 3.

There were no questions raised.

ASt proposed the report and AM seconded it. The report was passed unanimously.

6. Election of Officers

All officers stood for re-election and AM gave a vote of thanks to all their hard work over the past year.

The officers were all re-elected unanimously and unopposed.

7. AOB

It was decided to set the dates of the next two management meetings. These are:

– Tuesday 28 July

– Tuesday 24 November

The venue is to be confirmed.

ASt proposed that a date was set for the sponsored walk. TM advised this was on the agenda of the next management meeting, however, after much debate, the date was set at 10th – 11th October 2009.

MS discussed with the attendees that the logistics needed careful exploration in terms of the time required to get the boats up the canal in time. TM, AM and DM will set up a sub-committee to manage the walk.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Chairman’s report

The first full year of the new ‘Tideway Adventurers Narrowboat Project’ has, as always for Tideways, been 12 months of ups and downs. The ups have clearly outweighed the downs, however; and I’m just going to recap on some of them right now.

A big decision early on in the year was to bring Theo back closer to London, mainly for logistical reasons. Bradford on Avon was a lovely new place but it was a long drive!

With both Merlin and Theo back in Uxbridge, there was twice the potential for youth and community organisations from our local area, to experience the waterways. It also meant that when I went along to Lewisham Town Hall with the Youth Afloat application for the Youth Opportunities Fund, we had twice as much to offer. The funding the project has received from YOF has been of enormous help, and clearly it has meant twice as many local young people have able to get out on the waterways for nothing.

Another ‘big hit’ over the past 12 months has been the website and marketing. Looking back over last year’s AGM notes, this was a big issue, and I’m glad to say that the project has now cracked it! Simon and Keith’s work has been invaluable in showing interested organisations what we have to offer. For Dennis, who continues to tirelessly work away at grant applications, it too has been a great benefit as a tool to demonstrate to trusts what we are all about.

Learning Afloat, the project’s new programme launched in tandem with the IWA has had slow start, but I think over time this will be a great source of income for the project. Andys Masson and Steel both did a great job selling the lessons at Cavalcade in May.

Canalway Cavalcade was in itself also a big success this year. This, I think everyone here will agree, was down to some very detailed planning and getting as many volunteers on board in advance in time for the three day slog. I’d like to add that Steve and Emma did a sterling job running our stall, taking in a healthy profit.

The only other highlight that I can think of was an extended booking from the BBC for a children’s programme. I’m fairly sure Ross told me Theo came out looking her best.

Other than that, it’s great to see the booking forms for both boats looking very full going into the summer. The very fact that young people and community groups are getting out there on the waterways is the whole point we exists really, so it’s great to see it going on. This of course could not really happen without all the volunteer skippers and crew, many of whom are here. So I’ll shut up now and finish by saying thank you to everyone for all the help in 2008/09. Let’s hope there are bigger and better things for the next 12 months.

Tom Manser – June 2009
Chairman



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Appendix 2 – Maintenance Report

Introduction

Over the last year there has been a considerable amount of work done to both boats, both in general maintenance and repairs and also in improvements.

I have listed all the work done below:

Theo

The first service has been done on the new engine.

A new exhaust has been fitted.

Two extra domestic batteries and new isolators have been fitted.

Theo passed its Boat Safety Certification in autumn 2008. This now lasts for 5 years.

Complete repaint of the boat above the waterline. Extra sign writing to incorporate our website address.

The back cabin doors are finished.

A new swan's neck has been welded in place subsequent to the boat sustaining damage.

New tiller, boat hook and boat pole; replaced after items were lost!

A cleet for the bow line has been welded in place subsequent to the boat sustaining damage.

New shower pump fitted.

Two areas of floor have been repaired. One by the fridge/bunk area and one by the back head/skipper's cabin area.

Merlin

The front door has been repaired and painted.

The roof and handrails have been painted.

Sign writing to incorporate our website address.

General comments

Both boats are currently running well.

Both engines are using only a little oil and water at present and are not smoking. Both engines, I believe, will require servicing at the end of the season.

Merlin's gas central heating, in spite of my initial thoughts, is operating well. Generally, however, the industry seems not to be in favour of gas fired heating.

In the medium term, I believe, we should be looking towards (in no particular order):

- 1) Maintenance of Merlin's hull (some welding is required).
- 2) Merlin's paintwork.
- 3) Theo's currently proposed internal refit.

Andy Steel – June 2009
Maintenance Officer



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Appendix 3- Project Coordinator's Report

At the end of May 08 we moved 'Theo' from London to Bradford on Avon on the Kennet and Avon canal. The purpose was to discover a different navigable area and attract new clients to the project. The plan was also to undertake major structural repairs to the boat have a new engine fitted, replace the windows and complete a repaint of the exterior. We certainly discovered a stunning stretch of canal between Bradford on Avon and Bath and some of our groups from London had memorable visits to the City of Bath. Regrettably the work schedule overran resulting in a loss of bookings and that due to a few other 'local' difficulties persuaded us to move the boat back to Uxbridge on the Grand Union Canal in October 2008.

We had by this time acquired a second 70' eleven berth community boat called 'Merlin' which carried out a few bookings in 2008 although we had decided not to promote it seriously until 2009 as there was work to be completed to bring it up to operational standard.

Whilst we had undertaken a good number of bookings on both boats to date we were soon to enter the 'dark' period November to March where community boats continue being expensive to run but with little or no income though bookings. There was also some anxiety as to whether we could sustain running two boats from the same location in 09/10. So in January we launched a marketing campaign which included the ongoing development of our new website and a huge mail out to a wide range of organisations. Community Boat projects are often labelled as 'Youth Activities' whilst they do make up a large part of the market we should not put all of our eggs in one basket. There are a lot of adult / commercial organisations out there and very often they are more cost effective as they make fewer demands on the boat.

Also in January we started to plan the launch of 'Learning Afloat'. This would be in conjunction with the South London Branch of the Inland Waterways Association and be launched at the Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice in May. As members of the National Community Boats Association we are already a training base for the Certificate in Community Boat Management and through this new initiative it would enable us to expand our training portfolio both to adults and young people. This would include applying to the Royal Yachting Association to become a training school for the Inland Helmsman's Course and the Diesel Engine Course. At the time of writing this report I am pleased to report that we have now had the inspection and been registered as such.

So the dark winter hibernation period came and went. There were some memorable trips though when the hardier amongst us decided to 'break the ice' literally and venture out on to the canal. In February we took both boats to Little Venice for a film and stills shoot for our website. The BBC were also visiting to view the boat as a location for a children's television programme called the 'Runaway'

The night before as we were moored in the Paddington Basin a mini blizzard attacked us which didn't bode well for the filming the next day? But in the morning whilst being crisp and cold the sun shone and presented the photographers and film makers with perfect conditions. This short promotional film of the journey from Little Venice to Camden can be seen on our website as can many of the picture's taken that day.

Returning to the 'Runaway'. We got the contract and spent four days with the crew filming. To say the inside of the boat was unrecognisable would be an understatement as it was piled high with junk, sorry props that the character who lived on board had accumulated on his travels over the years. We had good fun and it also helped to boost our rapidly shrinking winter bank balance.

In March both boats were moored at the Denham Yacht Station. 'Merlin' had been 'mothballed' at the Maple Lodge Basin, alight the 'Stink Hole' during the winter and there was some consideration given to keeping it there certainly from the cost point of view. This however would prove operationally difficult so it joined 'Theo' at Denham. By March bookings were trickling in then in April the sun shone and our marketing paid off as the bookings calendar started filling up. This was



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further boosted by the Lewisham Youth Opportunity Fund buying eight bookings throughout the 09/10 year.

So to date the year is looking good although we are not complacent in planning and managing our future strategy. Like any small charity / business we walk a fine line. We continue to invest heavily in the boats particularly in regards to the health and safety of our users and we respond immediately to any faults or repairs using professionals in their field to undertake the work. Gone are the days when you can rely on or expect the goodwill of volunteers to maintain the boats. Having said that we do have a large team of volunteers who undertake a range of tasks within the project and without whom it would not exist. So to them and our expanding number of adult members I say a huge thank you for your efforts throughout the last year.

Unfortunately we said goodbye to our youth section 'Youth Afloat' Tideway Adventurers has had youth members since it started over fifteen years ago. Interestingly many of our present management committee members and skippers are ex youth members. The face of the waterways is changing, not always for the good. Community boating is very often the only way that people on low incomes and young people from inner city areas have of experiencing going afloat on the inland waterways and being able to appreciate the alternate world the runs alongside and very often beneath and above the rush, tear and aggression of modern life. So we need to protect it and the skills and traditions that go with it. Young people are the future and it is them that we need to get involved at all levels.

Mike Simmons - June 2009
Project Coordinator