

The official Newsletter of the
International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians in Great Britain and Ireland

Rotafleet News



The International Fellowship of Rotarians is a group of Rotarians dedicated to the promotion of yachting and other boating activities as an opportunity for friendship and service. This fellowship operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency nor controlled by Rotary International.

Autumn/Winter2016

Commodore's Report



I am glad to report that the IYFR in Great Britain is still alive and well. We have lost members but gained some new ones. Sadly, the attrition rate is not being met by the replacements, but we are still about 250 strong.

I have resolved to try to emulate my predecessor's feat of visiting every fleet at least once during my term in office, and I am very grateful for the many invitations I have received from the fleets to attend their meetings.

My year started well with the handover between Rodney and myself at Ipswich. I had a very enjoyable time with the Thames Barge trip and an interesting after dinner speaker. Hearing about the life on board a trading barge was fascinating, especially when you realise that it was within my lifetime.

The Sussex Fleet's handover meeting was an excellent barbeque despite the strong winds. John and Marilyn were generous hosts as ever, and although the fleet is reduced in numbers it is still lively and its bridge still full of ideas.

I could not avoid attending the East Coast Fleet Handover, as Rosemary (my wife) was taking over as Commodore from Bob Francis. It was good to see a turnout of 25 members, some who had managed a sail before returning to Alan Paterson's home for a cream tea (with wine). Sadly, Alan could not take part in the sailing as he had sustained damage to the spreader on his mast whilst rafted up to watch the Clacton Air Show. The new commodore has lots of ideas to keep the fleet (and me) occupied.

At the end of September, we were kindly invited to the Cowes Rotary club for a charity lunch in aid of the Ellen McArthur Trust. This is an excellent cause in which young people recovering from severe disease are taken out on boats to help them regain their confidence and self-esteem.

The British contingent went to Potsdam near Berlin to support our Area Commodore, Bob Burns, and some 25 people travelled to the home of the Zeppelin, the Kaiser's palaces, and the site of the Potsdam conference at the end of World War Two.

I was delighted to meet up with members of the Suffolk fleet for their AGM in Kirby-le-Soken. We had a very entertaining and interesting evening. The guest

speaker was talking on the development of a phone app to assist blind sailors. This can connect with the instruments on board a boat to produce audio instructions about course and heading, as well as wind speed and depth. It is still in the experimental stage but it looks very interesting.

I visited the South West Fleet, where sadly a few members have not renewed their subscriptions. However they remain a buoyant and lively fleet. Given that they are spread over a large area, they do manage to meet regularly and have an active social calendar. They are involved with a local group which enables visually impaired enthusiasts to join in sailing activities and they made use of a grant from IYFR to organise a weekend of sailing for that group.

The weekend on Hayling Island was fun. We visited the newly revamped Mary Rose exhibition. I found this a surprisingly emotional visit as they have presented the finds so they relate to individual members of the crew, including their skeletons. This somehow made the artefacts a lot more personal compared to the usual museum display of pieces.

The fellowship is still alive and kicking. Sadly, our average age is increasing, as is that of Rotary itself, but it is encouraging that we are seeing new faces appearing, and the enthusiasm of the fellowship is not diminishing. I cannot over emphasise that the purpose of the fellowship is to enjoy ourselves in the company of friends who enjoy messing about in boats.

Our most effective recruiting sergeant is to show other people that we are having fun. Nothing puts people off more than doom and gloom about the diminishing numbers and increasing age of our fleet, rather look to the positive side. We are still the second largest fellowship in the UK (second only to the wine tasting), we have 250 members, and are part of an active and enthusiastic international organisation.

Which brings me to 2017 and the Area One meeting. The plan is to hold it in Alicante for the start of the Volvo race which will be in October. Area Commodore Bob Burns is working with the Spanish fleets to produce an interesting programme. The Spanish are very enthusiastic and as there are large numbers of Brits who have retired to this area, we are almost on home turf. If you fancy an autumn break with the prospect of Sun, Sangria and Sailing, why not mark it in your diaries and come and join us for some true international fellowship.

Meanwhile Rosemary and I are looking forward to meeting up with many of you as we try to go around all the fleets, so may I wish you all an enjoyable and fun packed New Year.

Robin Sudlow

Ufford Park Handover

The Commodores' handover from Rodney to Robin in June at the Ufford Park Golf Complex gave the wider membership an opportunity to explore the hidden gems of the East Coast. Ufford Park is ideally situated close to Sutton Hoo, Woodbridge, Aldeburgh, and other historic sites.



One of the highlights of the weekend was a trip on the Thames barge, the *Thistle*, which was boarded outside the historic Customs House in Ipswich Marina. This allowed everyone to experience a traditional navigation of the Orwell River towards Harwich and Felixstowe.



A light wind tempted us to raise more sails and turn the engine off, and so allowed us to go back in time to when it didn't matter when you arrived, just to be happy if you did! This theme was later elaborated by the after-dinner



speaker, Jimmy Lawrence, who was an old time barge skipper. He recounted many fascinating tales of life around the East Coast and on the Thames from a bygone age. Sadly some members could remember those days, but fortunately only as infants!



Meanwhile the barge was accompanied by a small flotilla made up of boats from the East Coast and Suffolk Fleets. They accompanied us through the lock

and under the Orwell Bridge, and so provided an honour escort for the new Commodore. We sailed passed the historic pin Mill before turning around and proceeding back to Ipswich Marina.



Predictably the weather deteriorated, but being hardy sailors we all sat on the deck braving the elements until someone discovered that there was a bar below decks! Most decided to retreat and weather out the storm, although those that remained observed the brief spectacle of a waterspout accompanied by lightning (photographic evidence does exist!). Robin was delighted that so many people were able to join him for a very memorable weekend and he is now looking forward to the next two years.



Falmouth to Finistère, Brest and Lorient

Estelle and I finally made the decision to cross the channel! No big deal from Dover to Calais on a ferry, but a totally different proposition in *Annabelle*, our 24-foot Cornish Yawl (cover photo). In the event it took us seven weeks, there and back, across the wide wild west end of the Atlantic from Falmouth to the Golfe du Morbihan. We were finally persuaded to go after attending a cross-channel winter seminar at the Cruising Association Clubhouse in Limehouse.

We were also encouraged to go in 2016 because the four-yearly *Brest Festival of the Sea* was taking place, and this was also linking up with the *Temps Fête Festival Maritime* in Douarnenez, and, as an added bonus, with the *Festival Inter-Celtique* in Lorient. The latter is a ten day party for all the Celtic nations, which of course includes Cornwall! The French for Cornwall is Cornouaille, and we were surprised to find that there is also a 'county' of the same name in the Finistère region.

Wisely, Estelle did not fancy the long channel crossing (she has had a lot of back problems) and she opted for the Plymouth-Roscoff ferry. Never having done the crossing in my own boat before (and only once as part of a crew of fourteen in a Challenger'72 to Tenerife), I was lucky enough to get the services of Francis, an ex-tall ship skipper. We each managed to get a few hours' sleep each overnight whilst the other stood solo watch. Fortunately the traffic was quite light and we arrived at the Chenal Du Four in 25 hours. We then went straight on for Brest, making a total passage time of about 30 hours. Well done, Francis!

Having made it we were welcomed into the outer harbour by a black RIB with men in black with guns. I think they must have been recruits on their first patrol around the perimeter of the military sector. They seemed a bit bemused to find a Brit invasion underway. We moored up with the other UK Gaffers in the "English Village", which is usually used as the fishing boat harbour.

Brest was busy, noisy, fascinating and very, very hot. There were several Parades of Sail and the first was in the dark when we hardly knew the harbour layout. However most of the sailing comprised going out in the afternoon with hundreds of other boats to promenade back and forth on a beam reach across the Rade de Brest: tall ships mixed in with the smallest boats, just like a Victorian Sunday stroll dressed in all your finery. Wonderful, no competitive

races to wind everybody up, just fascinating sailing. The illuminated Parades of Sail every evening, with accompanying fireworks, were all very popular with the many thousands of visitors. The French public really appreciate a sailing spectacle and paid a lot of money to see the boats (but as we were part of the entertainment we got in for free).

After Brest everybody departs early for another parade of sail to the next festival, *Temps Fête Festival Maritime* in Douarnenez. About a thousand boats were involved in 2016. The big thing about this is the passage from the Goulet de Brest to the Bay of Douarnenez which takes you round the Pointe du Toulinguet and the Pointe de Pen-Hir. This point has a string of very large rocks extending seawards, a bit like the Needles on the Isle of Wight only



much bigger! These rocks are infamous and are known as Les Tas de Pois, and the organisers encouraged everybody to sail through the middle of them at 11.00am. A thousand boats all through a tiny gap at the same time??? The biggest gap is only one cable wide, and there are a hundred power boats waiting on the other side to view any potential disasters, not to mention thousands of sight-seers on the headland, and TV news cameras hovering overhead. So no pressure then!!! We arrived there early at 10.15 and it was

still very exciting. You keep your engine ticking over just in case, as the wind always dies or heads you into the rocks in gaps like that.

Douarnenez *Temps Fête* was another grand celebration of traditional sail, this time with 'organised' races. Perhaps I was too laid back on the vin rouge, or perhaps from fighting non-existent internet and email to deal with business back home. I have to say it all felt a bit casual: "Which class am I in?" "Which start are we?" "Where is the start line?" "Why are we not sailing the arranged number of laps?" "Have we finished, or shall we go around again?" The moorings also seemed rather tight but "That's all right", said the locals, "not a problem". So what, if somebody's bowsprit was trying to make love to our mizzen shrouds? Obviously our fault for having mizzen shrouds!

The shore side facilities were very well organised with a 'goody-bag', a heavily subsidised petit-déjeuner every morning, free drinks to start every evening, and loads of entertainment. There were more 'men with guns' as armed patrols were everywhere in the aftermath of French terrorist attacks. However it was not oppressive and you soon learned to accept it with a Gallic shrug. Above all the mooring was free, so do go to Douarnenez as the festival is held every other year.



After Douarnenez, we went to Bénodet, Concarneau and then on to L'Orient (that's the traditional spelling) for the ten day *Festival Interceltique*. More than half a million people attend this festival, both from Brittany and the greater world-wide Celtic diaspora. It's

a little bit bigger than the Falmouth Shanty Festival! We moored right in the middle of the town before realising that it was the high-decibel music location. Yes, it is possible to sleep (eventually) next to a Guinness tent in full ceilidh

mode. We didn't know there were so many pipe-bands in Brittany: the Bretons are even more dedicated to independence than the Cornish. We had a great time.

We also looked up the Rotary Club of Lorient and eventually made contact at the last minute by email. It turned out that the normal meetings were suspended for the festival and the Club were meeting in the organisers' private lounge. We were issued with invitations and joined our fellow Rotarians in their rather salubrious surroundings (see the postscript).

It was then on to Île de Groix, Belle Île, La Trinité and finally into the Golfe du Morbihan, a beautiful inland sea at the north end of the Bay of Biscay. Talk about sailing through a washing machine! Set on a cold wash with fast spin! There is only a narrow channel into the gulf where there is a lot of water to be displaced by the rise and fall of the tide, so the race at the inlet looks like water boiling.



We stopped at Île-aux-Moines, before going inland up the narrow river to the beautiful town of Vannes. Then back out into the Atlantic Ocean again to L'île de Houat, a tiny fishing port with the most basic facilities (even by French standards). However on the other side of this tiny island they boast the best

beach in Brittany. The pilot book does not tell you it is two miles long with a hundred French yachts anchored off it. Perhaps it's meant to be a secret?

Our normal plan was to spend at least two nights in any one location, longer if possible, and the seven weeks had just flown by. We had been so busy sailing that we did not have time to do a 'blog' or whatever it's called. Anyway, French Wi-Fi is rubbish and we called it Iffy-Wi-Fi: too slow to do anything.

I can see why so many Brits keep their boats in Brittany permanently. We even met British sailors who had never returned home at all! However we now had to return to Kerneval near Lorient because our son and his family were camping nearby, so it was back through the Passage de la Teignouse.

Thereafter Port-la-Forêt had fantastic new facilities, and as it was now 1st September, they reduced their price from €20 to €10/night. Bargain! La Forêt is a base for the Vendée Globe and as we departed we saw a fleet of about 50 Mini Transat 6.50s assembling for the start of a race. It transpired that they were going the same way as us and we were soon joined by the race leaders. We spent the next three hours being slowly overtaken by the rest of the fleet. If they were at all frustrated by how slowly they were passing a gaffer, I hope they realised that we were motor-sailing! We had a tight schedule to keep to and the Beta20 on fast tick-over gives us another two knots and allows us to point ten degrees higher. To paraphrase the old saying, it enables gentlemen to sail to windward!

Back via Audierne, Raz de Sein with more exciting rapids, and then overnight in Camaret, ready for a blast up the Chenal du Four to l'Aberwrac'h, and finally home to Falmouth. We only had a short weather window, so our fourth consecutive day's sailing was overnight and I reckoned on a 24 hour passage. We had to motor-sail because the wind was north-west F3-4 for a northerly close-hauled course, and we needed the extra two knots to point high enough to fill the headsails and mizzen. (*Annabelle* does not need a mainsail in those conditions as she is perfectly happy with jib, staysail and mizzen). The Atlantic swell gave us a quartering sea and a couple of surprise cold showers. No warning, they just crept up from behind the helm's aft shoulder and dumped on you!

Having left l'Aberwrac'h at 1340 French time and doing 5.5 knots we were in danger of approaching the Manacles and Falmouth before dawn, and so had to slow down. The final passage time was just 20 hours and the last three hours,

past the Lizard, were the worst, with F4-5 wind and very choppy seas. So, very relieved to get into Falmouth and go straight to sleep in the middle of the morning, totally exhausted. We survived!

Not bad for a pair of amateurs. It was a difficult call as to whether Estelle would be able to make the crossing back, and even up to a week before the plan had been to drop her back at Roscoff for the ferry. In the event the weather window looked good, and l'Aberwrac'h direct to Falmouth seemed preferable to a three to five or more day passage via Guernsey, Salcombe, Plymouth, etc. We decided to go for it and the plan was that we would take it in turns to doze for a couple of hours each, but all we managed was ten minutes total. There was a constant stream of traffic, including the big *Emma Maersk* E-class container ship, nearly a quarter of a mile long with a 56 metre beam. With its deck lights we couldn't make out the navigation lights although it didn't look like a liner. "What the hell is that??" was the comment at the time and we were on AIS all night long.

As far as we can tell, *Annabelle* was the smallest boat to attend the Brest festivals from the UK. There were a couple of smaller boats there, but they came by lorry and ferry. *Annabelle* did well and looked after us fantastically. A summer expedition to remember for so many reasons!

Brittany Rotary Postscript

Lorient is a Celtic festival, so this includes Cornwall, Brittany, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man and Galicia in NW Spain, never mind a diaspora from all sorts of other countries. Everybody attends, so no wonder they sold 700,000 entry badges last year at €5 each!

We met lots of Rotarians as they were everywhere, from singing on a neighbouring boat, to the various bars, hospitality tents and tourism booths. Two ideas arise. One is an IYFR presence to promote the fellowship, enjoy camaraderie and entertainment, and show what a good crowd we are. Perhaps we could even spawn a new Brittany Fleet for IYFR? The other idea is to initiate an International Rotary Fellowship of Celtic Nations. This could have broad appeal with interested clubs twinning together through their common heritage. Both ideas would promote Rotary, Fellowship, and add members.

What do you think? Meanwhile, check out Lorient Interceltique on the web!

Brian & Estelle Budden, Annabelle CY10

Meeting the Adriatic and Ionian Fleets

Many sailing events take place in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, and a number of them are organized by Rotary Clubs but with no coordination between them. It was therefore decided to appoint a Rotary Coordinator for the Adriatic and Ionian Fleets in order to circulate event details, to encourage Rotarians to unite and participate in them, and maybe even to compete for a Rotary trophy.

Vincenzo Rinaldi of the Italy South East Fleet agreed to be the first appointee and a twinning event was arranged between the Italy South East and Hellenic Ionian Fleets. This was also tied in with the first meeting of the Adriatic and Ionian Fleets, and took place in Budva, Montenegro.



Starting on Friday 22nd May with lunch in the hotel once everyone had arrived, from the late afternoon there was a walking tour of the old town. Sadly, like most other Montenegrin coastal towns, Budva was seriously damaged in the 1979 earthquake. Fortunately, much renovation has since taken place to restore the old town to its former glory, and the area is full of the interesting history of the Venetians, Turks, Slavs and other peoples who fought over it. The town is now known for its sandy beaches and night life, and archaeological evidence suggests that it is amongst the oldest urban settlements on the Adriatic with Greek colonisation from the fifth century BC.

Saturday was the day of meetings and reports from the various fleets in the area. These highlighted how fleets differ, with some less active and some really thriving. In the afternoon the twinning took place and two new squadrons were chartered (the Albania Squadron of the Italy South East Fleet, and the Montenegro Squadron of the Hellenic Ionian Fleet). It will be interesting to see how they develop, and it is hoped they will lead to the formation of two new fleets in countries where there is currently no IYFR presence. In the evening everyone enjoyed a Gala Dinner at which various gifts and banners were exchanged.



Sunday brought the opportunity for a sail in the bay of Boca on a gullet, going ashore for a meal at a quayside restaurant in Perast, another old town on the Bay of Kotor. The weather was initially on the damp side, but brightened up after lunch. A farewell meal at the hotel in the evening brought a most enjoyable weekend, hopefully to be repeated annually, to an end.

Ann and I enjoyed a further two days sightseeing with a wonderful young lady tour guide before finally returning home.

Bob Burns

Holland: A Sailing Holiday with a Difference

Having used Hunter boats from Ludham on the Broads for many years I was interested to see an item in their newsletter offering a holiday in Holland. It turned out to be a fascinating holiday with a difference. There were 15 of us, which was enough to make it economical but not too many to be difficult.

We met in the waiting area at Harwich Harbour: old friends and yet to be friends, embarking on the overnight ferry for Holland. We were surprised at how early dawn came up as we had to get off the boat having had breakfast shortly after 7 am UK (8 am Dutch time).



We were then led the short distance to the local station and boarded our train for Leiden. Disembarking with our luggage, we then walked to our lunch stop, and were almost there when the rain came on. It's was surprising how fast you can move with heavy suitcases! After our first taste of authentic Dutch food a small motor boat took us to an old-fashioned boatyard. At the yard it was explained that it was in fact a new boatyard, but made with old materials to make it look like an old yard. The owner was restoring an ancient Boier yacht

<http://www.historischezeilvaart.co.uk/our-sailingships/ideaal-28-pers/>

As we were all used to the Hunter boatyard which is full of traditional boats, many over 80 years old, we appreciated the quality work that was going on.

Returning to the railway station we continued on to Harlingen and our accommodation. We expected to be staying on an ancient and unique boat, and after walking past several such we found ourselves on a very handsome 100-ft vessel called the *Ideaal*

Having arrived at the boat I gave the skipper my Rotary flag to see if there were any Rotarians around, but it did not receive any comments. Then we got our cabins sorted out, settled down for a meal, and then to bed.



The following morning we set sail and were pleased to see that the other boats were not museum pieces either and they were also setting sail. We had to queue for a bridge to open and then we were on our way to the island of Vlieland. We helped to hoist the sails and enjoyed tacking despite the hard work of dropping and pulling up the leeboards. It was an amazing sight to see so many old yachts tacking and criss-crossing in a stiff wind. We went into the old harbour and our captain and mate moored her beautifully considering there were just the two of them. They moored the 105 ft yacht into a 110 ft space, and we all gave them a round of applause. We went for a stroll and hired bikes, which were available in all shapes and sizes. Back to the boat for more

food and to bed. The next day we decided to go for a bike ride, something that we had not done for a number of years. We were therefore very thankful that Holland is mostly flat although we did encounter one small hill. Having cycled almost to the end of the island, we refreshed ourselves in a café and found that the return journey did not seem to take as long.



Whilst we were out cycling our boat had slipped its moorings to leave space for another boat and had moored off the island. Thankfully our ship came back to pick us up and we were told that the plan was to moor it on a sand bank so that when the tide went down about midnight we could go and walk out on the sand. The only problem was that the skipper didn't want any shoes to be worn because he did not want any salt on the boat, so you had to go barefoot down a steel rung ladder. A few brave souls paddled about in the pitch dark and got their feet nibbled by small crabs. We then realised why these boats had no keels and used leeboards.

In the morning we were sailing again under a F5-6 and making cracking time to Harlingen. During the following two days we used a minibus to visit the local villages and their wonderful museums. An ancient church with some war graves reminded us of the troubled times in Holland during the war.

On Friday, together with a large crowd in dreary weather, we watched the cumbersome-looking but spectacular Skutje boat racing at Earnewald:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ06w5jqcac>

In the evening, we went to Sneek and watched the procession of boats parade past the local Mayor and other dignitaries. All the dinghies were there with



their sails up, but the wind had dropped as it became dark so they had to be towed past in groups. As they went past the saluting base each dinghy dropped its jib in salute. The event was followed by the traditional fireworks.

Next day we went by train to Middelburg (we were now getting very used to getting

bags on and off trains quickly). We were very impressed with the Dutch railways, with lifts on every platform and even special runways alongside the stairs for bikes. The hotel was an easy walk into the town and we were soon getting used to lifting or swinging bridges to get to our destination.

Near the end of our holiday we went sailing on a Hoogaar shrimper, YE36, based in Veere:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TX9tm_WbjE

We were allowed to helm and thoroughly enjoyed the fresh breeze, with time to walk around Veere, a delightful medieval village with many inviting cafes.

At the end our holiday, we went to Arnemuiden, a delightful old fishing port and the base of the CA Meerman boatyard. For an English translation see;

<https://translate.google.co.uk/translate?hl=en&sl=nl&u=http://www.werfarne-muiden.nl/&prev=search>

This is a family owned business of over 200 years and is now a trust restoring and preserving the old boats. Finally another train took us to The Hook and then the ferry home.

If a trip like this appeals to you, please contact Willy Hoedeman ,7 Howe Hill Close, York, YO26 4SN. Tel 07974 867301. willyh@phonecoop.coop.

The dates for 2017 are 17th to 26th June!

Chris Bishop

IFFR/IYFR Jersey Fly-in

This June weekend was organised by Gregory Guida and Charles Strasser both pilots and members of Rotary on Jersey. Gregory is a Connétable, a sort of Special Constable. Charles' story as a Kindertransport child brought to England in 1938, plus his subsequent business and Rotary careers, is fascinating.

At their invitation 10 IYFR members ventured across to Jersey in June to join more than 50 members of the International Federation of Flying Rotarians (IFFR) for their weekend fly-in. Most of the IFFR members flew in their own aeroplanes but we IYFR used scheduled flights or the ferry. Not that flying was without excitement: Brian Lewis had his new trouser belt stolen at Gatwick Security, and Patrick lost his camera bag and photographic kit at Manchester Airport (he spent all weekend looking at the news to see if there had been a controlled explosion in Manchester!)

The weekend officially started on the Friday but we all arrived on Thursday as the ladies planned to hit the shops before meeting up for dinner in the evening at the Royal Yacht Hotel. The formal proceedings started with a buffet lunch in one of the hangars at the Jersey Aeroclub. There we met new friends and renewed old acquaintances from IFFR, whilst also getting very acquainted with the local Jersey beers and wines!



From the Aeroclub we were taken back to the base hotel, the Pomme d'Or, where the liberation of Jersey was proclaimed in May 1945. From there it was

a short walk to the Royal Court and the States Chamber where we were met by the Bailiff of Jersey, William Bailhache, and the Deputy Bailiff, Tim Le Cocq. They escorted us around the building, told us about the history of the Island, and explained its unique legal and democratic parliamentary processes.



After a bright and early start on the Saturday (not easy after all the food on the Friday evening!) it was off to the Eric Young Orchid Foundation and the Jersey Zoo which was set up by Gerald Durrell of the *'My Family and other Animals'* TV series. Patrick and Anne had an escorted tour with Gregory Guida who is a wildlife photographer who works with the Trust, and at lunch Gerald Durrell's second wife spoke about the zoo and its associated wildlife and conservation work.



There was more food on the Saturday evening with a gala dinner at the St Brelade's Bay Hotel, and the final day started with a visit to the Jersey War Tunnels. Returning to the Jersey Aeroclub there was a departure lunch where we thanked Gregory, Charles and the fellowship of Flying and Yachting Rotarians for their immaculate organisation. We then bid our new friends fair winds as they took off to their home airfields across Britain and Europe.

Patrick Tyrell

London Canal Museum

Commodore Tim arranged a visit for the Fenland Fleet/Broads Squadron to the London Canal Museum, with the added bonus of a trip on the canal. The museum is situated beside a basin just off the Regent's Canal, close to Kings Cross station, so everyone travelled by train and met up at the station. The museum is just a short walk from Kings Cross and the building was originally used for ice storage. The highlight was a life sized interior model of a typical barge as was used to import ice from Norway, complete with a model horse to pull it along the towpath. There were numerous other exhibits giving an excellent insight into what life was like for the families living aboard these boats and working the ice trade.



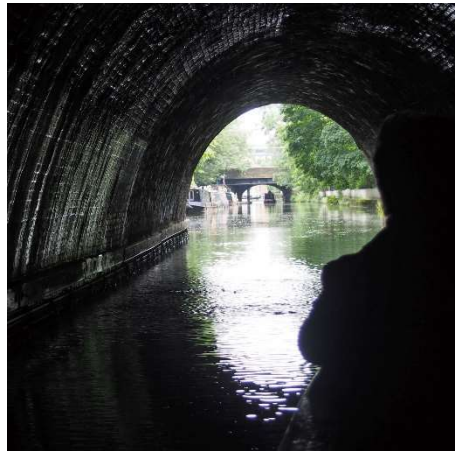
Initially winter ice was gathered from ponds and rivers, and from the canals themselves, to be stored in underground caverns to hopefully last the summer through. Ice began to be imported from Norway in the 1820s to meet a growing demand. It was then necessary to dig large ice storage wells, like the one housing the museum. Luxury items like ice cream had to be made fresh and eaten straight away as there was no mechanical refrigeration until the 1900s. Carlo Gatti (1817-78) was a Swiss Italian who came to England in the 1840s and his speciality was ice cream, although he soon expanded his business to include cafes and restaurants.

Ice was also sold to restaurants, fishmongers and others to keep food chilled, especially when the mass volume import of ice reduced its cost to a point where the manufacture of ice cream for sale to the general public became viable. Ice was last imported from Scandinavia in 1921, by which time mechanical ice production was well established, although the ice wells at 12/13 New Wharf Road (now the Museum) were still in use until at least 1902. Thereafter the first floor of the building was built and used as a stables for the horses needed to pull ice delivery carts, whilst a floor was built over the ice wells which were later used as rubbish dumps. Although some people had visited the museum before, this visit was made far more interesting by having a guide.



After the museum the party boarded a small narrow boat called *Lady Mildmay* and set off from Albert Dock. It was a most interesting and informative passage, scenic in its own right, passing the extensive offices of the Guardian Newspaper and along the Regent's Canal. There was a mix of both the old and the new ways of life along the canal, ranging from an old gasometer to new and expensive apartments; from floating rubbish and graffiti on the walls and bridges to upmarket bars and restaurants. The route went through the long and dark Islington Tunnel, through the deep City Road Lock, then briefly into City Road Basin, before an excellent lunch stop at a super canal side pub, fittingly called "*The Narrowboat*" and opposite Wenlock Basin.

After lunch the cruise continued on the Regent's Canal, and again the local guide made all the difference, pointing out places and things of interest. The boat went through Sturt's Lock, briefly into Kingsland Basin, and then on to Acton's Lock, where Commodore Tim helped operate the lock and turn the heavy handles. Tim also found a convenient shop where he purchased milk and cakes for all to have afternoon tea on board whilst passing Victoria Park in Tower Hamlets. This was constructed by Queen Victoria as a thank you to the residents of the East End.



Meticulous planning by Commodore Tim, aided by good weather, produced an outstanding day. Regular buses were used to get back to Kings Cross, from whence everyone returned home by train.

A District Governor Takes to the Water

Stan Bowes became District 1285 Governor in July 2016 and was immediately persuaded (intimidated?) to take part in the 46th World Tin Bath



Championship in Castletown Harbour which is organised by the Castletown Ale Drinkers Society on the Isle of Man. The championship involves more than 100 intrepid (mad?) competitors from around the world paddling tin baths round Castletown Middle Harbour, often in fancy dress. Assistant Governor and IYFR Rear Commodore Patrick Tyrrell promptly arranged for him to don an IYFR shirt and sport IYFR pennants on his bath in recognition for the support IYFR has had from Foundation for the Porth Erias charity.

The day dawned wet, windy and foggy in the harbour. DG Stan was allocated his tin bath, launched from the quay, and promptly sank. He tried again, and sank again: twice more! At least he did better than the BBC Blue Peter Team, as they sank more than nine times before the BBC got a shot they could use! The DG's efforts were all in a good cause as the following photograph shows.



Please remember to send all your news, photographs and stories in whatever form to the editor by mail or at andre@hawryliw.plus.com as this newsletter will only be as good as you make it.