

Community Projects

2010 Barge Report - 12th June to 9th July

Once again the Rotary Club of Abingdon Vesper can pat itself on the back with the successful and safe conclusion of another year on the barge.

From 12th June to 9th July we gave 283 people (in 28 different groups) the opportunity to experience something different, and for many a unique experience. Whether it was the 8 year or the 82 year old, both in wheelchairs.



Our guest groups ranged from profoundly disabled children to disadvantaged children through to elderly disabled with their carers, helpers, family members or friends. Two groups of children, and their carers, stayed overnight on the Barge which they found exciting and thoroughly enjoyable.



We were onboard the Hannah, which is owned by [The Bruce Trust](#). It is fitted with a "joy stick" steering facility, which our Rotary Club financed a few years ago, to enable those who are not strong enough to use the tiller to steer the Barge. It is also fully equipped for wheelchair users.

Our Rotary Club has also purchased inflatable Life Jackets to ensure those using the barge are both comfortable and safe.

The weather was exceptionally dry and on occasions exceptionally hot this year. The fun and enjoyment was there for all to see and experience. Steering, good and bad (by captains and guests), opening locks and sluices, again both good and bad (by guests and crew).



In all we opened about 1,000 lock gates and bridges in the 233 miles we travelled (that assumes we went in the centre of the canal all the time!)



Some of the comments in the daily log make you realise how much they both enjoy and gain from the time spent on the barge. I do not just mean the active or disabled, but also the parents and carers who accompanied those less fortunate than we are.

To think this started 12 years ago when Andrew, Paddy, and Pete Winfrey rented the boat for 3 days...

Thank you

We could not have achieved all this without the assistance of everyone at the club who helped raise

money at the Dragon Boat raffle and other fundraising events throughout the year, and of course our sponsors:

- Abingdon Bridge Club
- BrookStreet des Roches LLP
- Joe Hughes

Also a huge thank you has to go those crew members who are not members of Vesper, who gave 32 man/woman days crewing, almost 30% of the total. Without their help it would not have been possible. Some are retired but many took part of their annual leave or gave up their week-ends to help out.

Extracts from a few of the many letters we received

"The top of all was the trip on the Canal Boat, Hannah. I can't thank you all enough for that day. It was great from beginning to end and I enjoyed it as much as Stuart. Please pass on our warmest thanks to Abingdon Vespers, to Captain Peter, Mike, Sue and Chris who made it a fantastic day. It wasn't just the fun of being on the boat, it was the way all the crew went the extra mile to talk to all of us and engage the young people in conversation without condescension. We all got teased equally! I really appreciated that. They gave every appearance of enjoying it as much as we did, though they must have been very tired."

"We honestly can't think of any way that the trips could be improved. Everything about it was well organised and perfect for our groups of children!"

"I liked steering the boat and helping to open the locks"

"Thanking you again and your team for the great days out"

"The day was a pleasure as always and the crews were so supportive and kind"

Groups benefiting from the 2010 Barge Trips

- Abingdon Kingfisher School (5)
- Abingdon / Sutton Courtney Family Centre
- Abingdon Disabled Work Group
- Abingdon PHAB
- Abingdon Stroke Club
- Douglas House (3)
- Helen House (2)
- Home Farm Trust (2)
- Priors Court School (3)
- Mabel Prichard School (2)
- South & Vale Carers (2)
- John Masefield Day Centre
- John Masefield Residential
- Mulbery Bush Organisation (2)
- Pegasus School

And Finally...

- [This report is also available in PDF format](#)
- For more information about the Barge trips, please fill in the [contact form](#)