

The Bruce Trust Newsletter

Holidays for disabled, disadvantaged and elderly people

2008 Season:

Despite being one of the wettest summers ever, our nineteenth season was very busy with all our holidaymakers enjoying their week afloat. There were 79 weekly bookings, 67% of which were repeat bookings. 72% of the people who have so far booked for 2009 are repeat bookings!

Statistics:

Since 1990, when we first started with just one boat, 9,710 people with special needs, together with their families, friends and carers, have enjoyed holidays with us.

This year:

20% had learning disabilities

37% had physical disabilities

7% had both physical and learning disabilities

11% were elderly/infirm

16% were young people with disabilities

9% were disadvantaged youth

73% were family groups

19% were from Day Centres

8% were from Residential Homes



Diana passing Crofton Pumping Station

People:

We now have over 70 Voluntary Helpers who enthusiastically help to prepare the boats for our customers on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Roy has continued to deal with maintenance and improvements to ensure call-outs are minimised with Danese and Gill in the office and Valerie helping with specific fundraising events.

Fundraising:

We launched a fundraising campaign in January 2008 and are most grateful to organisations such as Greenham

Common Trust, Zurich Openwork, the Grand Charity of Freemasons and many others for their support which has enabled building work on a purpose-built, wide beam, 6 berth boat to commence.

Various fundraising events have also taken place this year – full details on our website, www.bruce-trust.org.uk – but the most amazing was once again the 7-in-a-Bar singers who cruised from Newbury to Great Bedwyn raising an incredible £10,000 for the Trust.



7 in a Bar commence their fundraising trip

Day Trips

Over 560 people from local care homes and day centres have enjoyed day trips on the canal. 29% were elderly residents of nursing homes.

Training

We ran training courses during March and April for 38 trainees in order to enable 19 new hirers to bring their groups of disabled people.

Equipment:

All our boats are purpose built with wide access ramps, hydraulic lifts, grab rails etc., and we can also provide transfer hoists, commode or shower chair, cot sides etc. Our boats can also generally be helmed by a wheelchair user.

2009 Season:

We will be operating Rachel and, from July, the new boat on a Friday to Friday basis from Great Bedwyn. Hannah and Rebecca from Saturday to Saturday at Great Bedwyn, with Diana operating from Lower Foxhangers from Sunday to Sunday.

If you would like to have a canal holiday but don't wish to book a whole boat then Gloucestershire DART are organising seven holidays on our boats for people with special needs – contact us for details or see our website.

We continue to pride ourselves on our tight control of costs and have not had to increase our hire charges for the past 5 years. However, largely due to the increased cost of diesel fuel that has been made worse by a very substantial increase in duty (from which HM Treasury has refused to grant an exemption permitted by the EEC to charities), we have no alternative, regrettably, other than to pass on these costs to our customers.

Hannah or Diana: £750-850 per week

Rebecca: £700-750 per week

Rachel: £550-700 per week

Web:

Please remember that you can check if a week is available on our web page www.bruce-trust.org.uk. If you enjoyed a holiday with us this year and have any good photos, please let us have them for inclusion on our web.



Keith Pemberton steering Rebecca

STOP PRESS

NEW BOAT APPEAL:

Details of events planned during 2008/9 are on our website – together with progress on how much money has been raised towards the £150,000 needed to design and build a new wide-beam, 6 berth boat for families and small community groups, in time for the 2009 season. This new boat will have wide access

**ramps, hydraulic lifts, specially
fitted bathroom areas and be able to
be helped from a wheelchair.**