



# WATERMAN HOY

The Newsletter of The Company of Watermen and Lightermen of The River Thames

## Volume 4 – Issue 7 A Message from The Clerk

Our new Master, Simon McCarthy has now chaired his first Court. At Court, Derek Mann gave his Declaration and became a Court Assistant. Darren Knight was appointed an Honorary Court Assistant. We hope we will see as many of you as possible at one of our Christmas Freeman Luncheons. However, for those not able to come, can we all here at Watermen's Hall wish all Freeman, the warmest compliments of the season.

## Forthcoming Events

### OCTOBER 2017

- 13th River Thames Lunch Club
- 15th Thomas Martyn Foundation Annual Service
- 18th Freeman's Luncheon
- 21st Apprentices Thames Barge Driving Event

### NOVEMBER 2017

- 10th River Thames Lunch Club
- 11th Lord Mayor's Flotilla & Show
- 14th Freeman's Luncheon

### DECEMBER 2017

- 12th Company Carol Service and Master's Christmas Reception
- 15th River Thames Lunch Club
- 19th, 20th, 21st Freeman's Christmas Luncheon

### JANUARY 2018

- 10th Quarterly Court and Luncheon
- 12th River Thames Lunch Club
- 23rd Burns' Night Celebrations
- 26th Court of Bindings
- 29th Doggett's Emblem and Rowing Awards

Colin C. Middlemiss

October 2017

## Obituary: George Leonard Saunders – 20th November 1937 to 2nd September 2017

*Craft Owning and Journeyman Freeman* **George Leonard Saunders** passed away on 2nd September 2017, aged 79 years having spent his entire working life involved in activities on the River Thames.

George was born on 20th November 1937 and left school at Erith aged 15 years to become an apprentice Waterman and Lighterman, to master the art of navigating tugs, barges and passenger craft along the Thames from Gravesend to Teddington and all the navigable waterways and docks along the way. George was bound on 13th January 1953; his master was George Saunders. He gained his Freedom on 13th January 1959.

At the end of his 6-year apprenticeship George rowed in the Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager from London Bridge to Chelsea, which has been held annually since 1715, in which he was the 1959 winner. Rowing was a big part of George's life and after winning Doggett's in single sculls he went on to row in "Fours" and "Eights" for some of the big Putney and River Lea rowing clubs achieving many successes including Gold Medals in the Rowing World Championships.

The professional river men will best remember George as the apprentice training officer at Watermen's Hall which was responsible for training and, at that time, licensing watermen and lightermen working on the River Thames. As the training officer, he was the first point of contact for the 100 plus apprentices learning their trade as George had done at the start of his career. George organised the annual training camp for apprentices held at Cambridge over 2 weekends where new recruits were introduced to single scull rowing and the older apprentices were given coaching to improve their rowing skills to enable them to enter for the Doggett's race.

George was also appointed a Waterman to Her Majesty The Queen, which involved land and river based duties. With the Queen's Bargemaster and 23 other royal watermen they attended on board vessels carrying Her Majesty and other senior members of the royal family and attending as postilion on the royal horse drawn coaches for visiting heads of state and transporting the Crown and other symbols of state from Buckingham Palace to the Houses of Parliament for the annual State Opening.

George's early career included some acting as a film extra in the all-time cinema great "A Man for All Seasons". Together with 30 other watermen, George spent two weeks on the Beaulieu River in Hampshire reliving Henry VIII and his entourage being rowed by his watermen from Westminster to the Palace at Hampton Court.

After a period in the Merchant Navy in the 1960's, George moved from Erith to Dulwich with his lifelong partner Jeanette Gregory where they shared a long and happy life together. No doubt others will have stories to recall of their enjoyable association with George Saunders as he will be long remembered by everyone who knew him.

George's funeral at Eltham Crematorium on 20th September 2017 featured a guard of honour including the Watermen's and Fishmonger's Bargemasters and more than a dozen other Doggett's winners.



Past Master David Allen 10.09.2017

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### **Thomas Martyn Foundation Annual Service – 15th October 2017**

Today this Foundation makes financial grants to children of Licensed Watermen and Lightermen. In 1718 Thomas Martyn established a Watermen's School at Putney for the children of Putney Watermen. The School continued until 1911 when it was closed. This Annual service commemorates Thomas Martyn's gift. Its Annual Service of Thanksgiving takes place at 16:00 hours at St. Mary's Church, Putney Bridge. All Freemen are welcome.

### **Freemen's Luncheon – 18th October 2017**

This luncheon is open to all Freemen and their business guests. Dress is lounge suits. Lunch is £79 per person, including VAT.

### **Apprentices Thames Barge Driving Event – 21st October 2017**

Apprentices will drive Barges, including the *Apprentice Lighterman*, from Greenwich for the John Potter Cup. There is a following boat, *Princess Pocahontas* that will board at Greenwich from 1015 hrs. Freemen are invited to join the boat to watch the race for which there is no charge but Honorary Court Assistant John Potter needs to know how many are coming, phone him on 07831-300148 if you want to watch.

### **Lord Mayor's Flotilla and Show – 11th November 2017**

Although the Company is not participating with a float this year, the Show is a great spectacle to watch from the Lord Mayor's arrival by water at HMS President from Westminster Pier starting at 0830hrs. Watermen's Hall will not be open but there are plenty of places in the City open especially for this event for refreshments.

### **Freemen's Luncheon – 14th November 2017**

This luncheon is open to all Freemen and their business guests. Dress is lounge suits. Lunch is £79 per person, including VAT. This lunch will celebrate those benefactors who have so generously helped the Company in times past.

### **Ladies Christmas Luncheon – 11th December 2017**

This lunch is fully booked – please contact Carol if you want to be placed on the waiting list.

### **Company Carol Service – 12th December 2017**

Jointly with the Bakers' Company followed by the Master's Christmas Reception back at Watermen's Hall. Tickets at £49.00 for the reception can be booked with Martin Laws, Company Events Manager.

### **Freemen's Christmas Lunches – 19th, 20th & 21st December 2017**

Tickets are priced at £79.00 – book your places with Martin Laws, Company Events Manager.

## BML Chartwork Examination at Watermen's Hall – 30th August 2017



A hundred percent pass rate for our apprentices and trainees. Pictured with Thames Clipper's Derek Mann, are our Training Officer Alex Hickman, the MCA's Adam Stratford and the Clerk Colin Middlemiss are the successful candidates: James Archer, Lucas Britton, Rive Britton, Charlie Eldridge, George Gilbert, Richie Gilbey, Leanne Kendall-Corps, Greg Ketchell, Tom Kinghan, Joe McCarthy, Warren Miller, Edwin Stapleton and Daniel Watkins.



## Lighterage Committee Thames Stone to Stone Cycle Challenge Saturday, 2nd September 2017

Seven riders took part on the 60-mile ride between the Watermen's stones at Teddington and Lower Hope Point, taking 9 hours.

Pictured are the Training Officer, Alex Hickman, the Master, Simon McCarthy, and Chairman of the Lighterage Committee, Ben McCann, at the finish point. As you can see the stone has a definite lean on it and remedial work is required to stabilise it. Anyone interested in assisting in a work party, please contact Alex.



## Apprentices Down River Training Trip to Southend - Friday, 8th September 2017

Many thanks to John Potter and the crew of the Princess Pocahontas for hosting this training trip for apprentices, who enjoyed a most interesting and informative voyage on a part of the River many had not seen before. A lunch stop in Southend, including a ride on the pier train, made for a most varied experience. Photo shows the approach to Thames Gateway container port.

*Photo: Alex Hickman*



## Great River Race – Saturday, 9th September 2017 – Apprentices Crew in “Jim Holt”



Bargemaster Robbie Coleman (cox) assembled a crew of apprentices to row in this annual event: Jimmy Anderson, Lucas Bennett, Jack Croucher, Max Eldridge and Joe Thompson, with Bev Reid from Poplar Rowing Club kindly making up the numbers. The passenger was Sarah Eldridge.

## Watermen's Apprentices Sculling Weekend at Henley – 22-24th September 2017

It was a dry weekend for those watching but less dry for the apprentices who found navigating a single scull difficult to balance. The Company was able to use the facilities at Upper Thames Rowing Club and to borrow a double and a quad from Phyllis



Court Rowing Club in which Philip Foster and Chris Gooderidge offered to coach. There was a delightful dinner at Leander Club on the Saturday night with Assistant Rowing Officer Dominic Coughlin encouraging apprentices to join a rowing club.

Joe Thompson won the Ben Woollacott Memorial Sculls. His name will be engraved on the trophy held at Watermen's Hall and he will receive a medal at the Doggett's Emblem and Rowing Awards evening on Monday, 29th January 2018.

Max Carter-Miller was the most improved apprentice and his name will be engraved on the 1959 Doggett's winner's cup given to the Company by the family of the winner, George Leonard Saunders (see Obituary).

## Watermen's Shop

New for Christmas, great stocking filler, 16GB USB sticks based on the Company's new barge "Apprentice Lighterman".



£12.00 each, orders now being taken.

Contact Susan at the Hall. [admin@watermenshall.org](mailto:admin@watermenshall.org)

Red Freeman's Ties are now in stock, price unchanged at £21.00.

## Hatches, Matches & Dispatches

*Journeyman Freeman Robert George Smith* passed away 9th August 2017 aged 90 years. Robert was born on 21st August 1926 and bound on 9th December 1941. His master was John Pearce and he gained his Freedom on 9th December 1947.

A memorial service will be held for the late *Craft Owing Freeman Di Ellis* at Henley Church on 26th October 2017 at 1.00pm.

*Craft Owing Freeman John S Anderson TD* passed away 4th September 2017.

*Journeyman Freeman Peter Jeremiah McCarthy* passed away 16th September 2017 aged 83 years. Peter was born on 21st August 1934 in Stepney and bound to his master Francis Leonard Wilson on 12th June 1951, gaining his Freedom on 12th June 1956. Peter came from a long line of watermen, two of his sons and three of his grandchildren are watermen. His son Simon is the current Master of the Company.



The Newsletter of The Company of Watermen and Lightermen of The River Thames

## Contacting the Hall

**Colin Middlemiss**  
(Clerk)  
020 7929 7451  
[clerk@watermenshall.org](mailto:clerk@watermenshall.org)

**Carol Ratcliffe**  
(Assistant Clerk)  
020 7929 7456  
[carol@watermenshall.org](mailto:carol@watermenshall.org)

**Martin Laws**  
(Hall Manager and Company Events)  
020 7929 7453  
[martin@watermenshall.org](mailto:martin@watermenshall.org)

**Susan Fenwick**  
(Administrator)  
020 7929 7455  
[admin@watermenshall.org](mailto:admin@watermenshall.org)

**Alex Hickman**  
(Training Officer)  
07956 341482  
[alexhickman52@aol.com](mailto:alexhickman52@aol.com)

**Simon McCarthy**  
(Rowing Officer)  
07968 593842  
[simon@simonmccarthy.com](mailto:simon@simonmccarthy.com)

**Robert Coleman**  
(Bargemaster)  
07710 466040  
[robbie@silverfleet.co.uk](mailto:robbie@silverfleet.co.uk)

*Watermen's Hall*  
16 St. Mary-at-Hill  
London EC3R 8EF  
Tel: 020 7283 2373  
Fax: 020 7283 0477  
[www.watermenscompany.com](http://www.watermenscompany.com)