

The Bantering Boys and the making of a programme for 10Radio

ON a blustery late July afternoon, the Bantering Boys, with your subdued correspondent in tow, arrived at Exmouth.

Our visit to the estuary had its genesis back in March when the Flying Pussy, in a moment of unwonted extravagance, had purchased a session with the Bantering Boys at an auction in aid of the Jim Laker Fund.

The purpose of the trip was to record a programme for 10Radio. The terms of the purchase were to take part in the programme and to choose the setting for it.

Richard White kindly agreed to allow his boat Pelican to be used as a 'studio' for the purpose of recording the show. We were hoping to do the business while under sail.

The 'Boys', all resident within the 10 parishes, were (as indeed, they still are), in alphabetical order - Mike Fairfax, our soundman, Leo Hartas, our caterer, and Chris Howe, our driver and academic.

At the appointed hour we pulled into the car park near the Exmouth docks, where Sundial Richard and his crewperson Molly (aka 'Ballast', a soubriquet at odds with reality), were waiting for us.

We made a diversion to load Leo's baggie with Eccles cakes and pasties, and were then escorted to the quayside for a conveyance out to the Wivey Ship, Pelican.

On boarding the water-taxi we suffered the incongruous attentions of an elderly basset hound (probably sniffing the pasties). The animal's legs seemed to be mere stumps, and its teeth exuded a miasma of halitosis. But it was friendly enough ...

The owner of the hound navigated his vessel skilfully over untroubled waters to the desired mooring.

On arrival, the Pelican's crew leapt aboard to remove the weather cover; they were followed by the four passengers who clambered from the taxi with varying degrees of nonchalance.

It is appropriate to note that the FP's deputy, namely me, has a history of falling from boats. The Thames at Chertsey witnessed an embarrassing plunge, as did the slack water near Sydney Harbour Bridge; the Brisbane River is an old familiar...

Accordingly, with due concern for the safety of the wine, I boarded the trim-looking Pelican with some trepidation, and hardly any nonchalance.

The vessel is of 25 feet; it has a dignity and maturity about it that repels any thought of metrication. Its cabin is small but comfortable.

Leo, being a mite peckish, immediately suggested that luncheon be taken. The food was distributed, and, as the skipper and crew prepared to set the sails, we visitors began to chew on our pasties with varying degrees of success.

Mike then displayed and tested the recording device. I was astonished to discover that it was the about size of a squashed pack of ciggies. How could this mere trinket possibly cope with four manly baritones?

In the presence of such gadgets, I am, and will always remain, steadfastly antimicrochiptian.

In the event, the electronic morsel worked surprisingly well...

As time went by, and the unscripted banter commenced, we became aware that the sandbank to starboard was becoming huge as the tide ebbed away. The wind began to gust to force 5, and the skipper wisely decided to furl his sails; sea room was insufficient for wind driven manoeuvres.

We would travel up the estuary under propeller power.

Accompanied by the chug-a-chug of the Honda as it battled against wind and tide, the banter became seriously light-hearted.

The skipper put the helm over and we headed north at a steady two and a half knots.

We had no destination except the pleasure of moving through water beside a changing landscape.

The hour that was available to us for the programme seemed to pass very quickly. The badinage captured on the hard drive, or whatever it's called, is to be kept under wraps until broadcast.

Late afternoon approached, as did the rain clouds from the west. We turned to head back to our mooring. It was at this stage



Leo Hartas and Mike Fairfax

that I was invited to take the helm, and was given landmarks to aim for - but no instruction as to which side of the channel to use. I chose the left, and our boat immediately became a hazard to all shipping.

Changing course to the right side, at the skipper's command, the Pelican was confronted by a narrow passage between two moored vessels.

The helmsman, namely me, while skilfully balancing the effects of wind and tide, guided the boat past the portside obstacle, carefully missing it by a very narrow margin.

The skipper, hurrying to the stern with his hair standing on end, due to the wind, and his face rather paler than I remembered, suggested that he now take the helm as we were nearing the Pelican's buoy.

Some time later, with Ballast's skilful assistance, our mooring line was secured at the first attempt.

The crewperson then made coffee for all hands, which was much appreciated as we waited for the floating kennel to come and return us to the shore.

If the quality of the programme we recorded gets close to matching the quality of the afternoon we all enjoyed aboard the Pelican, then it will prove to be one of the best broadcasts on this year's 10Radio.

Our warm thanks must go to Molly 'Ballast' Meakins, and to the skipper, Richard White.

Simon Turnbull

Note to Messenger readers: The programme in question is to be broadcast on evening of Friday 13th October 8pm-10pm.



Simon "Salty Dog" Turnbull

DIARY DATES

October
Tues Oct 10th: Wivey Folk Dance, 8pm, Community Centre
Wed Oct 18th: Rugby Club Bingo, 7.30pm
Sun Oct 22nd: Cinema Obscura, Night of Truth (18), 7.30pm
Tues Oct 24th: Wivey Folk Dance, 8pm, Community Centre
November
Tues Nov 14th: Wivey Folk Dance, 8pm, Community Centre
Wed Nov 15th: Rugby Club Bingo, 7.30pm
Sun Nov 19th: Cinema Obscura, Hidden (15), 7.30pm
Tues Nov 28th: Wivey Folk Dance, 8pm Community Centre
December
Sat Dec 9th: Beach Boys Inc, 8pm, Rugby Club. Tickets £8 from 01984 624191 or £10 on the door

Festival of Silent Cinema delayed until November

THE dates for Wiveliscombe's First Silent Film Festival have changed from late September to late November.

This is a result of the delays by Awards for All in giving us a decision on funding help, and we are very sorry if this might inconvenience all those hundreds of people who we know are going to attend what is going to be a great Silent Film experience!

However, with funding in place, detailed arrangements can now proceed, and the festival is expected to take place on 17th -19th November. Programmes will be distributed from late September so look out for them at libraries, cafes, galleries and shops. All screenings will be taking place at Wiveliscombe Primary School.

A real coup for Wiveliscombe will be the music by Reflektor, aka Jan Kopinski and Steve Iliffe, from the great jazz band Pinski Zoo.

Jan and Steve will be accompanying two of the shows, so the Festival will appeal to a range of people who like both film and music.

Once again, apologies for the date-change - but it's going to be worth waiting for!

More information from Barry Witherden on 01984 629114 or Pauline Homeshaw on 01984 624564.

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