



Chiswick Pier Trust newsletter - November 2018

Hello!

As most of you will know by now, it was announced on the day that the new Lord Mayor was elected that there would be no fireworks this year, and so we have had to cancel our (fully booked!) firework cruise. We are so sorry, because we know this is a very popular event, and are extremely disappointed by this decision. We are in the process of calling and emailing everybody to refund the tickets. If you have any questions, or haven't been contacted please do email trust@chiswickpier.org.uk.

This November we are looking forward to our Annual General Meeting which will take place on the 20th November at 7.30 pm. CPT members have been sent papers and we hope there will be a good attendance.

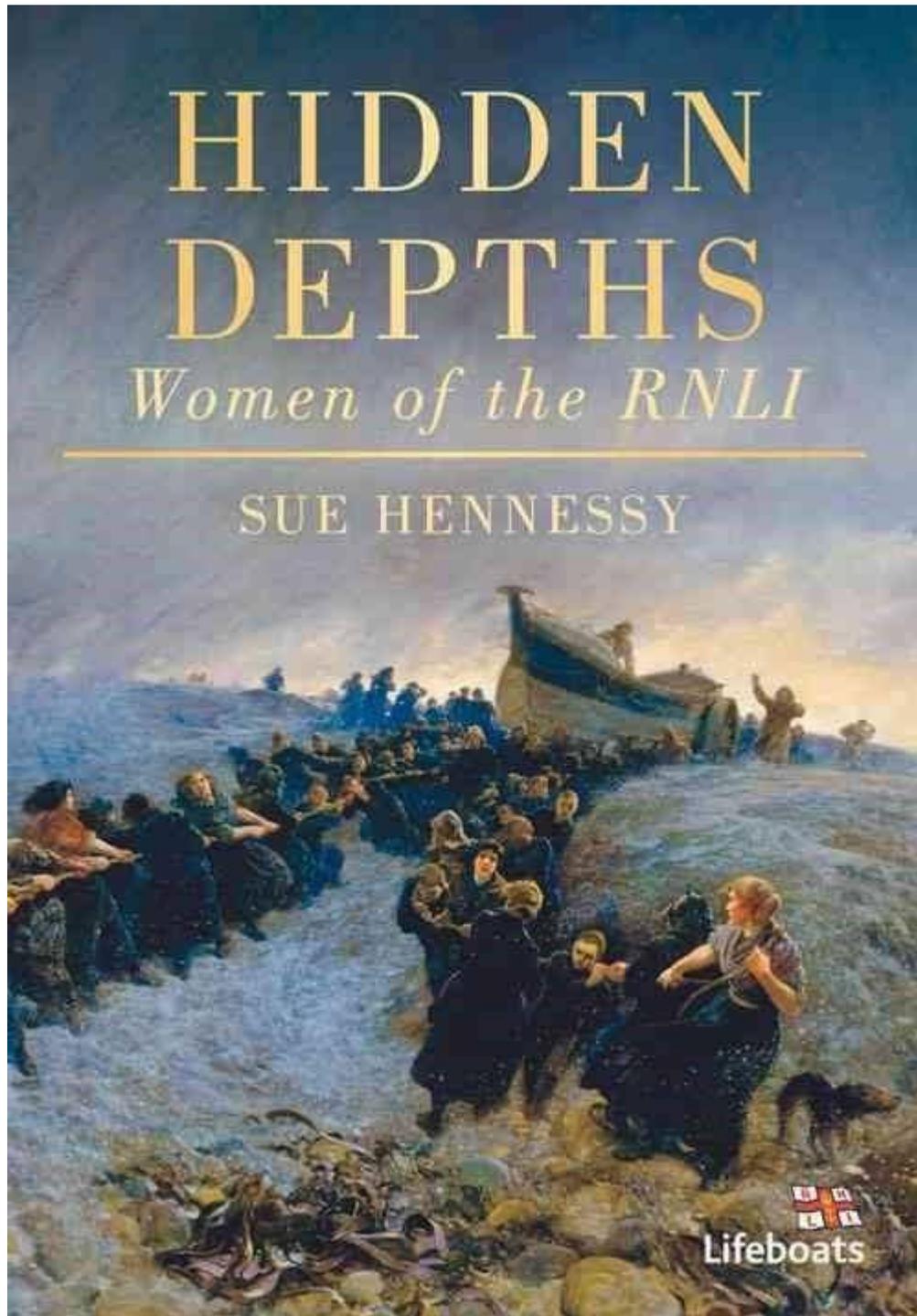
Diary Dates

**Tuesday 20th November,
7.30pm**
CPT AGM

**Tuesday 27th November,
7.30pm**
[Talk by Sue Hennessy, exploring
the role of women in the RNL](#)

**Wednesday 5th December,
10am to 3pm**
[Julia Cassels' Art Workshop](#)

Tuesday 29th January, 7.30pm
[Mudlarker Jason Sandy talks
about his finds](#)



Upcoming events

Talks by the Thames - Hidden Depths; the Role of Women in the RNLI

A talk by Sue Hennessy on Tuesday 27 November 7.30 pm at Chiswick Pier Trust

We are delighted that our Talk by the Thames this November is about the history of women in the RNLI. As most of you know, England's second most active branch of the RNLI is based in

our building – and if you’ve ever wondered what the clumping noises above are during our talks it is RNLI staff changing shifts, or going on a shout.

Sue Hennessy - the founder Principal of the Life Boat College where crew volunteers are trained – will be talking about the history of women in the RNLI. For over 180 years images of strong, selfless males have populated the reports and literature of the lifeboat service. What has not been so well documented or recognised are the roles that, right from the very beginning, women have played in working to save lives at sea. As you can see from our image, women used to pull the lifeboats across the beaches to launch them, a feat requiring huge strength. It’s a far cry from the stereotypical image of women waiting by the hearth for their men to return!

In fact, women have always been at the heart of the lifeboat operation, undertaking a wide range of tasks which draw upon their distinctive skills, talents and physical strength. From Victorian times right through to the twenty-first century, women have been ‘strong to save’.

The RNLI is alive with outstanding women working alongside equally exceptional men, ensuring that as many people as possible who find themselves in trouble, either on or by the sea, live rather than drown. The talk will illuminate some of the feats of strength and teamwork these courageous and dedicated women have performed and still do.

Sue Hennessy had a distinguished career with the RNLI which culminated in being the founder Principal of the Lifeboat college, opened in 2004, where crew volunteers are trained. Aware that the contribution made by women had never been documented, she wrote Hidden Depths: Women of the RNLI. Sue has long-standing connection with the RNLI as her great-grandfather, 100 years previously, was a coxswain of the Hythe Lifeboat.

Tuesday, 27 November 2018 at Chiswick Pier Trust, The Pier House, Corney Reach Way, W4 2UG. £3 for non-members, FREE for members. Doors open at 7pm for 7.30 pm.

Paint A Christmas Present?

Watercolour Workshop with Julia Cassels on 5 December

Why not join the watercolour workshop by artist Julia Cassels and make somebody a very special Christmas present? After the success of her summer course, ‘Loose and Lively’, Julia is doing a workshop focusing on warmer tones. The workshop is suitable for beginners to advanced water colourists, and the pictures produced by those who attended her summer course were fantastic.

On Wednesday 5 December between 10am until 3pm at Chiswick Pier Trust. £30 for non-members, £27 for members

Call 020 8742 2713 or 07594 596729 to book tickets.

Chiswick Pier Trust, The Pier House, Corney Reach Way, W4 2UG



Past events

Agent Provocateur Di Murrell brings waterway history to life with her talk about working on the River

'You know you had to suffer living on a boat, know your water was going to freeze and your gas was going to freeze...' so waterways campaigner Di Murrell opened her talk about living on the river at Brentford gas works, when the working Thames was a busy hub populated by bargemen, boatmen and lightermen. She talked about her career on the river that began with a submerged canal boat, and finished with her and her husband taking on the might of Waterman's Hall and the Transport and General Works Union.

Di and her husband, Tam, bought their first canal boat, called *Progress*, for £50 from British Waterways. It was cheap because it was submerged in water. The couple acted on the advice of a George, a boatman who recommended the barge, even though it was under water. The transaction was duly completed and the very next day they were served notice by British Waterways to move the sunken barge. Panic? No problem. George took the lid off the mudbox, put a pump on it and refloated the barge in a jiffy. It turned out he'd sunk it in the first place. Di's talk was full of funny stories and history, including describing their little garden at a mooring where they grew cabbages...and cannabis.

Progress was soon put to work, and Di and Tam joined the established families who worked on the river. It was a business that required at least two people, as the boats usually travelled in pairs. Children were useful too, pushing off, and going ahead to open up the locks. If there was an accident, and one of the parents died or drowned, boating people tended to remarry quickly to keep their businesses going. Di brought to life the lingo of the boatmen, with images of them on the river, and at the Brewery Tap pub at Brentford, when they'd step dance when in their cups.

Over the years Di and Tam ran two barges carrying lime juice the 12 hours up to Hemel Hempsted (full) from Brentford, and 10 hours back (empty). They could maneuver big boats in little spaces, cut through ice, and boat through fog so thick they had to steer by the tops of the trees. They carried 50 tons of house coal up to the Midlands, delivering to all the lock keepers. They worked for Cox's Mill in Shepperton when they would load grain from Canada at Tilbury docks and bring it up to the Mill.

Gradually, transporting commodities by river became less attractive with the advent of roads like the M25 and finally she and Tam were 'blacked' by the Transport and General Works and the Waterman's Hall as they were accused of doing dockwork. Then followed a three year court case, which they won. But the trade on the river was really over, and Di and Tam retired to France where she became a food writer for *Petit Propos Culinaires*, winning the Sophie Coe prize for an essay on provisioning on canal boats, and her book *Barges and Bread* was the 2018 UK winner of the World Gourmand Cookbook Awards.

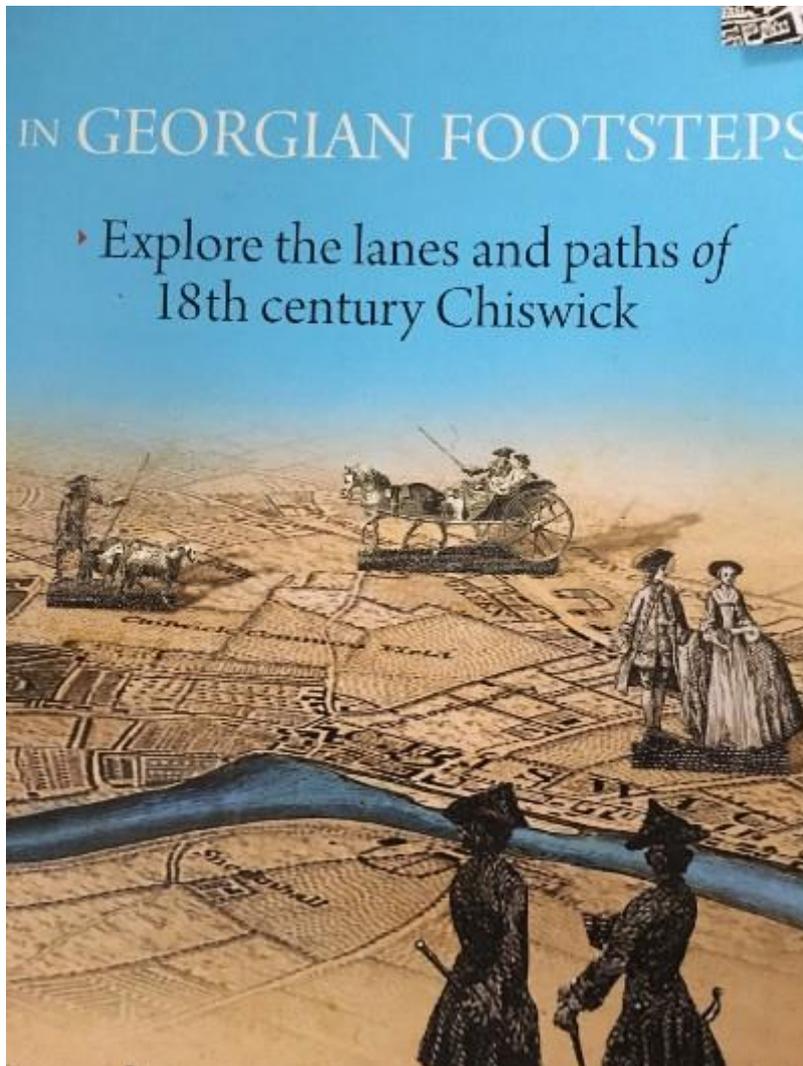
So far, so glamorous. But with characteristic understatement, when asked what she was doing now she said 'living in a hovel in Burgundy.'

This was a jointly badged talk with the River Thames Society

And finally....

Look out for *In Georgian Footsteps*, a free booklet about the lanes and paths of 18 century Chiswick. This beautifully illustrated history shows a circular walk starting at Chiswick House,

going along Burlington Lane then Powell's walk. There's a visit to the Hogarth family tomb at St Nicholas' graveyard and a stretch along the riverbank, by way of the evocatively named Sluts Hole. There is also the option of visiting Hogarth's House on the walk. The booklet is produced by William Hogarth Trust, Chiswick House and Gardens and the Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society, and we have some copies available in the foyer of Chiswick Pier Trust.



FREE TICKETS for CHISWICK PIER TRUST MEMBERS



Available **THIS WEEK ONLY** (from 5 November). Chiswick Pier Trust members have been offered free tickets to **Soldier On**, a fabulously unlikely comedy about soldiers, Amateur Dramatics and PTSD which has had terrific reviews. On a first come, first serve basis: email jonathanguylewis@gmail.com for information.
