



PRESS RELEASE

Monday, 23 January 2012

“Henley Whalers” are confirmed to take part in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant

The afternoon of Sunday 3rd June will see a thousand boats gather on the river Thames in celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. It will be the largest flotilla in modern times on the river with rowing boats, working **craft** and pleasure vessels of all shapes and sizes beautifully dressed with streamers and Union Jacks, stretching for an estimated twelve and a half miles.

It has proved extremely popular with three boats applying for every place. The pageant organisers and representatives from the river community were involved in the selection process which included considering safety, fitness-for-purpose and range of vessel type as well as exploring whether the vessel was of historical significance or had an interesting story to tell. At the end of 2011, organisers confirmed to applicants the lucky boats who will take part in this historic event.

“Henley Whalers”, crew of local whaleboat “Molly” owned by Geoff Probert, are delighted to have been selected to take part in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. **“Molly”** is one of **around 250 rowed boats** which **anticipate** travelling in **the leading section of** the flotilla.

Molly is a fine replica of the type of working craft which were formerly used for catching whales in the days of square-rigged sailing ships. Built in 2003, and finished at “Henwood and Dean” in Henley, she is seaworthy, rugged and safe, yet modern materials make her light enough to be fast under the power of 10 rowers or her impressive mainsail. Henley Standard readers may have seen her at weekends sailed by students under the guidance of Paul Waterman and other “Whalers”. Molly is rowed locally, at least once a week year-round, and participates in sail-and-oar events throughout Europe, from Sweden to Italy, always gaining accolades, and often winning prizes.

Henley Whalers are examining the practicality of rowing Molly from Henley to the Pageant, and are already preparing her for this once in a lifetime occasion.

-ENDS-

Further information for journalists:

For information about whaleboat “Molly”: www.henleywhalers.org.uk and whalep@tiscali.co.uk

For information about the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant:

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Journalists can find media information and downloadable photographs on the media centre pages at:

www.thamesdiamondjubileepageant.org