

UTMYC weekend at Ashmount House as guests of Oxford Ditch Cruising Club

ODCC is renowned for its hospitality: Byron and Eileen Alexander, especially, with Ashmount House's great moorings. We used to hold a boat handling competition each year with ODCC, so it's good to meet up with old friends again.

This year ODCC's Commodore, Derek Farrow asked us to join them for an informal weekend get-together. I counted 14 boats on Byron's moorings for the duration, although Derek doesn't actually have one - just a steam traction engine which is his pride and joy.



Several UTMYC members helped put up the marquee and catering tent the day before, and admired the mobile ODCC Tardis clubhouse.

More boats and cars turned up on Saturday to start the programme with a short silence to remember the tragedy in Nice. Appropriate flags were hoisted.



Then afternoon tea appeared, with Liz organising everyone's cakes into a serious competitor to "tea at the Ritz"! She and others had done a marvellous mini bake-off.

We chatted with our many friends while Derek cajoled us to compete in a rope handling competition involving human bobbins (we now have a new trophy for the cabinet and a challenge to find a good competition for next year). He then called us to order for the Commodore's reception - wine flowed of course.

The evening buffet was lavish - freshly prepared by two very hard-working ladies, Lyn and Ann (Seeney) and their helpers.



We were pressed into a short, but challenging quiz while we waited our turns to be served, and Peter Hicks (Nin) rounded the evening off very pleasantly with his own country-style songs.

Next day began with bacon rolls followed by a variety of diversions, not least of which was juggling tuition by ODCC's Stuart. He showed us how it should be done and then asked for volunteers from the audience to have a



go. Our Commodore hid at the back, but was persuaded after Stan, Cyn, Liz and Jeannie mastered keeping 3 balls aloft.

Stuart then taught us how to make balloon creations, some of which looked rather like what he intended!

It was lovely to see Ann Seeney and Carole Geale joining in again, with Brenda Shalless and Margaret Rennie bringing Wight Panther up river.

The weather was good, boats spick and span, catering superb, hospitality 5-star and the *craic* fun, so what more could we want?

Neil Blake