

- For immediate release -

## Bateaux London calls for Girl Power on the Thames

Girl Power started over 1500 years ago with St Bridgit of Kildare, allowing women to propose to their menfolk every Leap Year on 29<sup>th</sup> February. Bateaux London is one of the Capital's most popular places to propose with an average of one proposal a week (as well as wedding celebrations and anniversaries) and continues the tradition of Girl Power with a romantic dinner cruise on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 2008.

Legend has it that back in 5<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland St Bridgit complained to St Patrick about the length of time girls had to wait for the men to propose and that they should have a more active role in choosing their husbands. St Patrick then gave permission for the yearning ladies to propose on one day each four years, in February.

And so every four years on Leap Day, 29<sup>th</sup> February, ladies propose to their menfolk.

For 2008 in addition to Valentine's Day, London's leading Thames restaurant cruise Bateaux London is offering a Dinner Dance on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> February with prices from £69. Special touches including flowers, champagne and cakes can be arranged.

St Bridgit (St Bride of Kildare) of Ireland is also Patron Saint of Boatmen making a romantic dinner cruise with Bateaux London the perfect place to mark the 29<sup>th</sup>. You will also have the chance to see the steeple of St Bride's Church Fleet Street – since the 1700s this has been the inspiration for the tiered wedding cake.

## Notes for Editors:

The first documentation of this practice dates back to 1288, when Scotland passed a law that allowed women to propose marriage to the man of their choice in Leap Years. They also made it law that any man who declined a proposal in a Leap Year must pay a fine. The fine could range from a kiss to payment for a silk dress or a pair of gloves.

St Bride died at Kildare on February 1st, 525 and was buried with St Patrick. This date is celebrated as the Feast of St Bride and it is customary to carry on Bride's tradition of sharing one's bounty with the poor. A cake was baked to serve as nourishment for St Bride as she travelled the country – perhaps the origin of the Wedding Cake and sharing it with guests and friends. The Anglo-Saxons called February Sol-monath (Cake Month) because cakes were offered to the gods during this month.

For hundreds of years, the extra day in February had no status in English Law and was “leapt over” hence the name Leap Year.

To work out which years will be Leap Years they must be evenly divisible by 4. However, there are exceptions in century years (those ending 00) which must be divisible by 400.

Bateaux London offers lunch and dinner cruises across the week that take in fine dining and the best views of London including the Houses of Parliament, St Paul's Cathedral, Tate Modern, Canary Wharf and Tower Bridge.

Restaurant cruises are available in a number of packages from set menu lunches to a la carte dinner dances. All menus are freshly prepared in the on board kitchens by a team of talented chefs.

For more information on Bateaux London and to book visit [www.bateauxlondon.com](http://www.bateauxlondon.com) or call 020 7695 1800.

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/00/PostcardLeapYearBeCarefulClara1908.jpg>

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/0d/PostcardLeapYearMaidensAre1908.jpg>

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