

TSCC



Thames Scout Cruising Club Newsletter No.115

November 2020

Chairman's Log



The darkest hour is just before the dawn – or so the saying has it. It certainly feels like a pretty dark moment as the second wave gathers pace and we enter another lockdown. However, there are glimmers of light. Several vaccine trials are looking very positive and there is a real possibility that the vaccination of NHS workers will start before Christmas. And the government already has a stockpile of around 20 million doses to begin a mass rollout in the spring. This will start with the most vulnerable groups and that of course includes most of

us! Fingers crossed the trials conclude positively and the mass vaccinations get underway as soon as possible. Then we will be able cautiously to welcome the first light of a new dawn when life returns to something like normality. We are betting on it – and, as you will see from the 2021 programme on the back page of this newsletter, we are planning accordingly.

We won't be able to meet face to face for our normal AGM and we won't be able to chat together as we enjoy the delicious goodies brought by members, but we will have an AGM, albeit a virtual event through the miracle of Zoom. Did you know by the way that Zoom is now worth more than the world's seven largest airlines put together? If only we'd had the foresight to buy some shares a few short months ago!

We will be following the AGM with two further online sessions. The first will be a CPR and defibrillator refresher to remind us how to save a life if someone has a cardiac arrest. The second will be an update, hopefully an encouraging one, from a man at the forefront in driving improvements on the Thames – Steve Collins, Chair of RUG 8.

In positive anticipation that by the end of May normality will be more than just a hope, we have rescheduled our postponed Bath and Bristol Getaway. More details next year as things continue to evolve.

And beyond that, our comprehensive calendar includes two major events: our annual Thames Cruise in July and our Canal du Midi Cruise in September, as well as a host of other exciting activities to give us lots to look forward to at a moment when we need more than a little Christmas cheer.

On the subject of Christmas cheer, wouldn't it be great if we could all get together for an evening of festive fun? Well yes, we can! Through the wonders of Zoom we are organising a festive quiz on Tuesday 1st December 2020 and we really hope you will come and join us with a mince pie and a glass of wine in hand. Further details very soon.

This is the last newsletter in a year that is mostly best forgotten, so on behalf of your fantastic committee and my wonderful wife, may I wish you, your family and your friends, good health, the best Christmas possible and a return to happier times in the year that is to come.

Mark

Congratulations to Janet and Roger Jones who were judged to have submitted the best lockdown article in July's Newsletter. Their article "What did you do in the War/Lockdown, Daddy" revealed some sterling needlework by Janet in support of frontline services, and that Roger had been "digging for England" for the benefit of various charities.

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RUNNYMEDE PICNIC 28 July 2020



Photos
from
Mark
Marriott



A Walk Round Runnymede with Celia Cotter

Starting from the west end of Runnymede, there is a large car park on the right, and a smaller one on the left behind the tea room. Both are pay and display.

There are no paved foot paths and the ground can be quite muddy.

The two entrance lodges were built by the early 20th century architect Edward Lutyens, as were the stone pillars engraved with the story of Magna Carta. There are matching pillars at the other end of Runnymede. One lodge is a tea room, the other is the National Trust estate office.

From the tow path, across the river is a large stone gothic style house. This is **Magna Carta House**, said to be built from stone from the Ankerwycke priory. It is suggested that Magna Carta was actually sealed in this area, although the record only says 'on an island at Runnymede, in a grove of walnut trees'. There are certainly walnut trees in the grounds.



Crossing the road to the meadows, at the top of the hill to the right is a long low white building. This is the Surrey branch of Battersea dogs' home.



The John F Kennedy Memorial is up the hill on the right, but is difficult to see from the meadow although it is sign posted. It is a large engraved granite stone standing on an acre of land given to the American people by the British people in perpetual remembrance. The path up to it is quite steep, with steep steps at the top.

Further on, in the middle of the meadow is an art work commissioned to commemorate Magna Carta. **'The Jurors'** by Hew Locke is a circle of 12 large bronze chairs representing the 12 members of a jury and each sculpted with scenes relevant to Magna Carta.



Further along, slightly on the side of the hill is the pretty **Magna Carta Memorial** given to the people of Britain by the American Bar Association in 1957. It is a white circular temple-like building and is surrounded by American trees. It is floodlit at night.



At the top of Coopers Hill on the right is the Royal Air Force Memorial. Only the top of the tower can be seen from below. It is a large T shaped building, open on all sides, in lovely gardens. On its walls are inscribed the names of all air force personnel from both world wars who have no known graves. The top of the tower is in direct line with runway one of Heathrow airport from where many of the

planes took off. It is a very long steep climb from below but can easily be reached by car-follow signs to Englefield Green from where it is sign posted.



Below this memorial is a circular brown building, a new artwork opened in 2018. **"Writ in Water"** by Mark Wallinger. Inside is a

circular pool open to the sky with words from article 39 of Magna Carta reflected in it.

" No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land."



Writ in Water won the RIBA National Award in 2019. (Picture to the left is inside – the inscription has to be read from its reflection in the water.)

Crossing back over the road and re-joining the tow path, slightly further along on the other side of the river there is a gap in the trees and a white ruin can be seen. This is all that remains of Ankerwycke Priory where King John stayed the night before sealing Magna Carta in 1215. It fell into disrepair after the dissolution of the monasteries and the stone was gradually taken away and used locally. A large manor house was eventually built in the grounds and the priory was tidied up to

make a romantic ruin -as was fashionable at the time. Ankerwycke House burnt down in the 1970s and the land was eventually taken over by the National Trust. There are plans to restore the area and run a ferry across from Runnymede.

There is a very large Yew tree close to the Priory said to be well over 2000 years old. Henry 8th courted Ann Boleyn under it, and possibly even proposed there!

Following the tow path further there is a large statue of the Queen erected for the Magna Carta 800-year celebrations in 2015. Further along still is a welcome café, and still further is Bell Weir Lock and Runnymede Hotel. The lock keeper's cottage was painted in 2015 to commemorate the 800 years anniversary.

Photos: Peter Simpson - on the day of the TSCC Runnymede Picnic.

THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A BOAT SAFETY SCHEME EXAMINER

BY DAVE GRAY



After chatting with some of the members at the Runnymede Picnic I was asked to share some experiences with everyone as they found them amusing. So here we go... names have been changed to protect the innocent 😊 I will run through in the order of the examination check sheets.

Section 2 inboard engines

Not having the owner on board the boat is always a plus point but sometimes it can go badly wrong. I went onto a Dutch Cruiser and checked the deck filler, all fine and marked as Diesel. From there it went downhill, the filler pipe had a similar consistency to a Tesco carrier bag and I could not get any access to the fuel tank or connection. Not unusual on this make of boat. Unfortunately, when access is not available to the fuel tank it spawns numerous fail points, normally a full page so does not look good on paper. I duly emailed the fail sheets, there were other minor fails, to the owner. His reply was a torrent of abuse about how useless I was and should not be examining boats, he may well have a point. It turned out that he had converted the fuel tank to a black water holding tank and had a new fuel tank installed under the bathing platform. All that was showing was a filler cap under the decking, no label. I did reply that I had omitted to take my crystal ball that day but why was the deck filler marked Diesel and not Pump Out. His reply "why should it be, I know where everything is".

I went onto a Broom that the owner had just purchased. Numerous fails but the two that stood out were that to get to the fuel cocks the Companionway into the cabin had to be removed (5' drop) before the deck could be lifted. In doing so all means of access/egress to the cabin area would be very difficult unless you were extremely active. The check clearly states that this is not acceptable and I suggested to the owner that he cut a hatch under the steps, it was obvious and very easy. The other problem fail was a defective engine mount. There were a lot of other fails but these two seemed to really upset him and he complained to the BSS Office. We had quite a few words over the phone and eventually the BSS Office told me to pass the access to the fuel cock, they always capitulate if the owner shouts loud enough.

I was asked to return and re-examine by his wife and duly turned up to the boat. The reception was not what I was expecting, coffee waiting, biscuits and smiling faces. It

seems that the owner had work done on the engines and had been charged many thousands for a new prop shaft and bearings. He had got fed up and asked Broom to send their engineer to the boat. The engineer had agreed with everything I had said and also said that had he listened to me and renewed the engine mount he would not have been ripped off for the prop shaft because the mount was the cause of the vibrations. His wife then smiled and told me that he had tried to turn off the fuel cock and had nearly knocked himself out when the steps fell on him. There was now a new hatch formed in the deck.

A lady phoned me and said she had just purchased a boat, big old Humber keel, and that it had no engine and was all electric, solar mainly, with shore power back-up. First thing I spotted when I went aboard was the huge wheel. Why would you need one if you had no engine? Obviously to steer it was the reply, but it doesn't go very far before steering is lost. Sooo... let's have a look in the old engine room please, it will be the hatch under the carpet. Don't go down there its dark and probably full of spiders. Never mind I have to look. There sitting in full glory was a huge generator capable of supplying power to a small town. All this plus a Diesel tank of approximately 500 gallons. Electrical controls along one side for 240v, 24v and 12v plus all the Solar control panels but no sign of any batteries anywhere. I pointed out all this equipment and was asked "where did it all come from?". Eventually I found another large deck hatch that had a huge garden planter on to. I managed to shuffle the damn thing to one side and found twin screws directly driven by a couple of hair dryer motors on top of them. Well they certainly weren't much bigger than hair dryer motors. Where these were supplied or controlled from was anyone's guess the owner didn't know anything about the boat. The added complication was that there were a couple of cabins/areas that were locked and I could not have access to, I didn't push this, all I wanted to do was get off and go. Then I found a huge gas locker, again under another planter. There were two large gas bottles and all the flexis and controls but no appliances anywhere in the boat. When I asked about this installation I was met with "Well, those weren't there before". I never cease to be amazed that I can secrete two 13Kg gas bottles in my trouser pockets just so that I can make up fail points. I have never been back to the boat and I know a couple of engineers who have walked off as well.

Section 3 Electrical

I was on a narrow boat and, as usual, all the lockers were full of various detritus. Trying to trace some marginal wiring I moved a load of material and sacking and got one hell of a shock. There, laying amongst the rags was a 13 amp plug that came directly from the inverter and, apparently, the owner plugged into a socket to liven up the circuit when needed. He thought that this solved the problem of a switch over between inverter and shore power.

I was looking at this lady's electrical system on her cruiser and trying to puzzle out the battery, inverter and charger wiring. She was extremely proud of her invention. The inverter was wired to the battery, the battery charger was plugged into the inverter and then connected to the battery. Eureka, she had discovered perpetual motion, always had a fully charged battery. I just smiled and nodded in agreement, sometimes it is the easiest way to go. I am still waiting for this system to appear on eBay.

I have also come across numerous battery master switches not connected to anything. The argument is normally "but the scheme asks for a master switch, there it is". The following check points are then pointed out regarding cable sizes and connections. I will point out that these are normally on the boats that have "dubious" owners trying to pull fast ones to get a certificate.

Section 6 Firefighting and CO

Most owners now know that CO alarms are now mandatory on all boats with accommodation space. I visited a residential houseboat on the canal at Uxbridge. The vessel is large and all electric. It failed on the CO alarm. The owner asked why he needed one as it was all electric and I explained that the problem could be from an external source. He phoned me a couple of days later and said that he had bought one from Argos and as soon as he had activated it, it went off. He took it back as it was defective and got another one. This also went off and then his wife remembered what I had said about external sources. Sure enough, across the cut was a narrow boat running up his engine. Seems he had been there for a couple of weeks doing this and had put quite a lot of CO into the houseboat. Words were had and the boat moved on, whether voluntarily or not was not explained but the houseboat owner works on the doors so not one to argue with.

Owners

Most owners are lovely people, there are of course the exceptions and over 23 odd years I have met a few. Like life, all sorts are to be found as boat owners including many celebrities due to the nature of the beast.

I was asked to look at a Mk1 Freeman in Windsor. It turned out to be moored in Queen Victoria's boat house on the Royal Farm. When you go upstream from Kris Cruisers on the Windsor bank there is a little humped back bridge, this is the entrance to the boathouse. As you can imagine it was a performance to get in and I was escorted to the boat by the Queen's Head Coachman (retired) who looked after it. Apparently used by The Duke for pottering about on the river where no one would recognise him, and if they did suspect they certainly wouldn't expect him to be in that sort of boat. Anyway, I finished the examination and was drinking a cup of coffee with the old fella when he asks if I had ever met the Queen. No, I replied I have only seen her at a

distance. He nods over my shoulder and there is this little lady in a headscarf getting out of a Range Rover. Now, I have no idea what she said because I was too busy curtsying and bowing, both at the same time. And what does this idiot blabber? “Good morning your Highness, Majesty are you alright?” She said something and got back into the car and drove off, me still doing an impression of a demented pigeon



and, I believe, now saluting. I looked at the old fella and just shrugged my shoulders and said “what a bloody idiot I have just made of myself”. He laughed and said that my reaction was typical when the Queen met someone who was not expecting it. She would not have expected anything else he said. She probably went back to the castle and told Philip that she had just met Fred Scuttle. (Mr Google will tell you all about him if you don’t know).

I could go on forever but I won’t bore you anymore. Just finally, when you decide to give your boat a French name please think through the pronunciation.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2020

Please let us have your entries for the Photographic Competition NOW.



The subject is “Watery Wonders” it could be a reflection, a fountain, a waterfall etc. If it looks wonderful and it’s wet – it qualifies!

Fewer opportunities to get out in lockdown? Never mind - look back through your old photographs and choose something “wonderful” from those.

Email your entry to media@tsc.org.uk by Sunday 15th November. Send the original image – don’t reduce its size.

All entries will appear on the TSCC website. The entries will be numbered but the name of the photographer will not be shown.

All members are invited to review the images and select their favourite. Email your choice to media@tsc.org.uk by Sunday 29th November, one vote per member. The winner will be the photograph with the most votes. In the event of a tie, a non-member will be asked to adjudicate.

The winner will be announced at our Christmas event on 1st December.

Thames Cruise 4 -7 August 2020



Group Photos: Joy Bell



Photos:
Mike
Fowler





Photos

Joy Bell



Boulter's Lock, Hurley Lock,

Sonning, and The Rising Sun



Photos

Mike Fowler



Ignorance is bliss when mooring at Sonning

By Mike Fowler

This year we were very fortunate with our up-river cruise moorings. Although we were able to secure moorings at Boveney and Hurley we had to chance Cookham and Sonning. Luckily, we were able to moor all our boats on the town moorings at Cookham.

Arriving at Sonning during the early afternoon it appeared that our luck had run out. Everywhere seemed to have been taken. There were four boats with one arriving later.

Then a boat left and that gave us a mooring with one alongside. Later on, another boat squeezed into a small space and we had two more in.

There was another possible place near the sign advertising “Sonning Moorings” it was right next to some private moorings that had been sold-off but further study suggested that some of the bank had not been allocated yet as there were some signs labelled **“Undecided”** to this effect.

This could be our fifth mooring. The only problem was that the entire bank was packed with youngsters enjoying the sunshine (no social distancing!) I spoke to the some of the youngsters and explained that we wished to moor-up in a while. They were very polite and said they would look after the space for us. A little later I moored my boat there. Everyone now had a mooring for the night.

Soon after we all left next day, we received this from Mark Marriott by e-mail:



Heading upstream towards Sonning!

z O O M

Don't shy away from ZOOM

With the Covid 19 pandemic continuing, we are needing to schedule more virtual meetings using Zoom.

These meetings will help to keep the Club together and keep us all in touch.

Some of these meetings will involve outside speakers and it is important that we provide them with the traditional large and enthusiastic TSCC audience.

Not sure how to use Zoom? We are here to help.

- You do not need to install Zoom to your computer
- There is no cost
- We send you a link by email – you click on that link and it takes you straight to the meeting.

Still not sure? then please email media@tsc.org.uk and Peter will be pleased to set-up a one-to-one Zoom meeting to allow you to see what happens.



Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS)



On Tuesday 6th October, hit by so many enforced cancellations of events due to the Covid pandemic, TSCC started a new activity – a video talk for Club members. It was a really interesting and illuminating talk from Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS). The speaker, Kelvin Bossey is a volunteer with the charity and is one of their regular speakers in addition to being a qualified pilot himself.

KSS is an independent charity and is not part of the NHS. It costs £14 million per year to operate, 89% of which comes from public donations. An advantage of being a charity is that KSS can be innovative and if it comes up with a good idea it only has to satisfy the Trustees of its value to utilise the innovation. If it were part of the NHS there would be a considerable administrative delay before any change could be implemented.

For example, KSS was the first (and is currently the only) 24/7 Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) in the country. The concept was trialed for a year with the helicopter medical team in rapid response vehicles at night and was found to satisfy a demand for life-saving support at night. As a result, the Air Ambulance was upgraded with night vision equipment and an infrared spotlight for illuminating dark landing sites. Only a limited number of Trauma Units in the operational area can accept night flights due primarily to noise considerations.

Prior to last year all of the helicopter flights were to pick up a casualty, stabilise them and take them to a suitable hospital. Last year it was decided that transfer of critically ill patients from a general hospital to a specialist unit was an additional role for KSS.

Kelvin gave an interesting insight into how emergency calls to KSS had changed during the lock-down. There were fewer road traffic accidents but those that did occur were more serious due to higher vehicle speeds on the quiet roads. The number of major assaults decreased substantially. Even during these difficult times the crews from KSS haven't dropped a single shift, and have been fully operational throughout. They have also been supporting the transfer of critically ill Coronavirus patients across our regions, as and when required. The helicopters had to be modified by fitting an airtight screen between the flight deck and the patient area. Additionally, the flight deck is kept at a small positive air pressure relative to the patient area in case the screen is punctured.

KSS has been in operation for 30 years and during that time has attended 30,000 incidents. Kelvin gave some examples of the widely diverse emergencies that KSS have been called to:

- An off-road mountain-biker went over the handlebars at speed and suffered serious head and neck injuries.
- A young woman had a serious heart attack.
- A young child managed to pull a wardrobe over on top of himself, knocking him unconscious and having a fractured skull.

KSS have two Westland AW169 helicopters that are available 24/7. These are large helicopters and were new in 2017. The patient area is of sufficient size so that there is all round access to the patient during the flight and this is obviously of benefit in the patient care, especially if surgical procedures are necessary.

There are two teams available for each 12-hour shift. Each helicopter carries two pilots; apparently this is a requirement for night flights and is also used during the day. The medical team used to comprise two paramedics but there are certain medical procedures, such as anaesthesia, that require administration by a doctor and so about 15 years ago one of the paramedics was replaced by a doctor. Whilst the pilots and paramedics are permanent staff these doctors are seconded to the Trust by the NHS or sometimes an overseas medical facility and the NHS pays their salary. Their secondments usually last about six months. This is the only state aid that the Air Ambulance receives. The doctors are either A&E Consultants or at least Senior Registrars.

For the last six years blood has been carried on each helicopter. It is Group O negative and so can be used on a patient of any blood grouping. It must be refrigerated and is stored at 3°C. When required the blood is passed through a continuous heater to raise its temperature to body heat. The helicopters now also carry blood plasma, which is needed to reduce very serious bleeding.

The procedure is that when a 999 call is received at the NHS Southeast Emergency Control Centre, which received about 3000 calls per day, it is assessed by the Air Ambulance Trust has a controller in the NHS call centre as whether the attendance of an Air Ambulance is necessary. In all cases a road ambulance is sent. The Air Ambulance crews receive about 6 to 8 calls per day.

The main helicopter base is at Redhill Airport, where they also have training facilities including a full-size helicopter simulator. There is also a subsidiary base at Rochester. The helicopter can be dispatched in less than 5 minutes and, although the maximum flying time to a call-out is 25 minutes, the average time is approximately 12 minutes. In reply to a question we were told that Air Ambulance UK represent 21 air ambulance charities. The London Air Ambulance Charity covers the capital.

The excellent presentation concluded with questions, the answers to which I have included in the above summary.

We were all reminded at the end that Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex is an independent charity that costs £14 million per year to operate and that donations would be very gratefully received.

If you would like to donate to this exceptionally worthy local charity please search the following link: <https://www.aakss.org.uk/about-us/> - where you can also find out more about the service.

Tony Scott

PICNIC AT CLAREMONT LANDSCAPE GARDENS

10 September 2020



Congratulations
Michael on your
Chief Scout's 20
years Service
Award



Photos:
Peter
Simpson



A message from a founder member

It was the best part of 30 years ago that I attended the Albany Yacht Club's Annual Dinner and, sitting round the table for our meal were three "scouters" who had boats on the Thames. In our discussions, the idea of a scout cruising club came up and then, mentioning it to the Commodore of the Albany Club (also a scouter), he agreed to the idea and in 1991 agreement was obtained from Scout Headquarters to form the Thames Scout Cruising Club.

Notice was given, and on the 22nd January 1992 a meeting forming the club was officially held. Membership grew with leaders from Scout Districts ranging from Lechlade to Woolwich, all with a great assortment of boats, and the first Annual General Meeting was held on the 11th February 1993 at The Hersham Village Hall.

At that time, I had a Freeman 24, joining in with many river activities, social functions, and visits but, due to a multitude of reasons, in 1997 I sold my boat but continued as a club member hiring a boat for river activities also holidays.

It was good to see a number of friends who had logged-on to the very interesting Zoom talk about Air Ambulance Kent, Surrey, Sussex, as now living in Northamptonshire, 100+ miles away, it is not easy to attend the TSCC functions. We have a local Air Ambulance covering Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire who are very evident at all the local fetes and functions to raise money. We have collected the "leftover" from our scout Jumble Sales for their charity shop in Daventry. Sadly, with the lock down restrictions this is now on hold, but now we have Raffle Tickets to sell.

As a "founder" member of TSCC it is good to see the Club continues to be in action, even with the "lock down" restrictions, and long may it continue.

Paul Richardson.



All Event information can be found on the TSCC website. Try searching for Thames Scout Cruising Club on your Smartphone or PC and then save the website in Favourites.

www.tsc.org.uk

TSSC PROGRAMME OF EVENTS for 2021

All dates and events are subject to change

TSSC AGM (Zoom)	Sunday 24 th January 3.00pm
CPR and Defib. Refresher (Zoom)	Tuesday 23 rd February 7.45pm
Update on EA, RUGs, Kingston Maritime Volunteer Service and Illegal Mooring – Steve Collins, Chair RUG 8 (Zoom)	Tuesday 30 th March 7.45pm
Fitting Out Lunch at Sorrento	Tuesday 4 th May
Bath an Bristol - Late Spring Getaway	Monday 24 th – Wednesday 26 th May
Jazz or Open Air Theatre at Polesden Lacey	June TBC
Visit to McAlpine Steam Museum at Fawley	TBC
Thames Cruise	Monday 12 th – Friday 16 th July
Summer Barbeque at Little Compton	Friday 30 th July
Splash Day at Ajax - Cream Tea, Wheelyboat and other Boating Opportunities	Sunday 22 nd August
Canal du Midi Cruise	Fri 24 th September – Fri 1 st October
Behind the Curtain at Glyndebourne	TBC
Annual Dinner at Leatherhead Golf Club.	Monday 8 th November
Belated VE Day 75 th Anniversary Festive Celebration at Claygate Village Hall	Sunday 5 th December



Thames Scout Cruising Club Grants

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SCOUTS/GUIDES

TSSC is always looking for Scouting/Guiding projects which need financial support. If your local Group is in need of funds for specific projects ask them to write a letter to our Secretary giving full details. Our Committee will be pleased to consider all requests.

Newsletter edited by Peter Simpson – media@tssc.org.uk

Visit our Website: www.tssc.org.uk

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