

TSCC



Thames Scout Cruising Club Newsletter No.117

August 2021

Chairman's Log



Finally, we can meet again and indeed we have! Over the past couple of months, we have taken full advantage of our new-found freedoms. We have enjoyed a Post Lockdown Reunion Picnic at Runnymede, a Guided Tour of Painshill Park, our annual Thames Cruise and, most recently, a Summer Barbeque in Cobham.

We have laughed, chatted, bumped elbows and sometimes even hugged – almost like none of this had ever happened!

We have however battled against the elements in this new world of global warming with its extremes of temperature and unpredictable rainfall. At Runnymede, and on the Thames, we escaped the rain and, with suitable clothing, it was warm enough for comfort. Most recently, our Summer Barbeque was beset by heavy showers, but we were more or less protected from the elements by a cluster of tents and gazebos. In fact, it all added to the atmosphere and for years to come the 50 members who attended will no doubt still be talking about the day we watched waterfalls of rain cascading down the open sides of our protective shelters.

As fate would have it, immediately after our Thames Cruise, those of us who continued upstream had to contend with record temperatures that made a shady mooring a near necessity.

But this is England where the weather is our favourite topic of conversation, so I guess global warming has given us a little more to talk about.

As things begin to open up, one disappointment has been the difficult decision to postpone our Canal du Midi Cruise to the same week next year. Luckily, Le Boat have offered us unchanged pricing despite a general 15 – 20% increase in

their tariffs. Hopefully by then Covid restrictions will be a distant memory and we will be able to enjoy the trip to the maximum.

Our next event is Sunday Afternoon Jazz at Painshill Park on 29th August. We have exclusive use of a buggy shuttle to transport TSCC members between the car park and the amphitheatre so no need to walk and no problem carrying chairs and picnics. If you are not yet signed up, then why not join us for a fun afternoon in great company?

We are expecting our annual skittles evening with Weybridge Mariners and Byfleet Boat Club to take place at Weybridge Mariners in early October. Look out for an announcement.

And finally, we are in go mode for our rescheduled getaway in Bath and Bristol later in October. We have a few remaining places on the coach so if you have not yet signed up there's still time to join us for the fun.

A few days ago, leading epidemiologist Professor Neil Ferguson predicted that the Covid-19 pandemic in Britain will largely be over within three months. Let's keep our fingers and our toes very firmly crossed.

Whatever you are planning for the remainder of the summer, here's wishing you a wonderful time.

Mark

IN THIS ISSUE:

Chairman's Challenge.

Painshill guided walk.

Runnymede Reunion Picnic

Margaret Meineck

2021 Thames Cruise

Summer Barbeque

TSCC is affiliated to the ATYC and the River Thames Society.

Cover Photo: PAINSHILL LANDSCAPE GARDEN -TSCC GUIDED WALK

Chairman's Challenge



Our thanks to everyone who wrote an article for the Chairman's Lockdown Challenge in the April Newsletter. It was interesting to see the variety of things that people had been doing to maintain their sanity during the lockdowns and there were some excellent articles and pictures.

The Winner was Rosie Sowter for the obvious joy that it gave her to look after the birds in her garden during the lockdown, not to mention the daily therapy derived from the need to replenish so many bird feeders. And finally, Rosie was not the only beneficiary – the birds benefited from the assured supply of food and Rosie's occasional visitors were also able to enjoy the sight of so many birds revelling in their daily banquet.



The Runner-up was Barbara Long. Who could not be amused by her little crocheted sheep which clearly kept her happily occupied for many solitary lockdown hours? And keeping your sense of humour during such a lengthy period of isolation is far from easy but Barbara managed it as her witty ode confirms.

Mark presented Barbara with her prize at the Runnymede picnic.

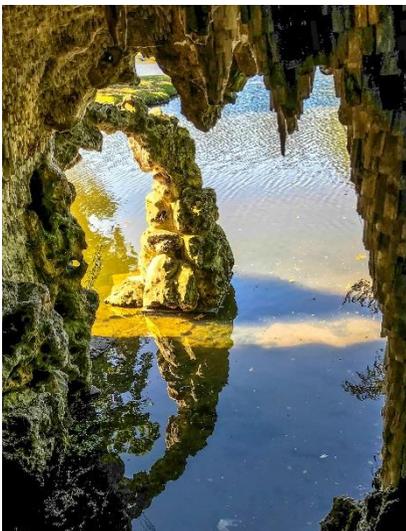
Painshill Landscape Gardens

A guided tour of Painshill Park was recently enjoyed by twenty members of the Club. Located in Cobham, Painshill is a large and spectacular landscape garden created in the 18th century by Charles Hamilton as a 'living painting'. At its centre is a stunning serpentine lake with interconnected islands accessible via bridges which themselves form features of the park.

But the undoubted star attractions are the numerous elaborate follies, designed to astonish and surprise. These include the Gothic Temple perched high above the lake. Its imposing arches provide a dramatic framing for the



magnificent views over the lake and landscaped grounds beyond. Perhaps most spectacular amongst these follies is the Crystal Grotto which is buried in a hillside at the water's edge. The ceilings of its caverns are bedecked with 10,000 individual crystals which glint and sparkle as they reflect the ripples from the lake.



In addition to the man-made marvels of which these are just a few, there is an immense collection of plants and trees. These include the Great Cedar which is the largest multi-stemmed example in Europe, and the 450-year-old ancient oak which stands majestically beside the lake.

Painshill is run by a charitable trust which, over the past 30 years, has restored the park from an abandoned wilderness to



something approaching its former glory when it was visited by the rich and famous who came to marvel at its sights. These included John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the 2nd and 3rd Presidents of the USA, as well as Queen Victoria and Prince Alfred when they stayed at nearby Claremont Park.

Our group was divided into two – those happy to undertake the two-hour tour on foot and those who chose to view the sights by buggy. Both tours were guided by knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers. The walking tour was whisked along by Norma who at times took interesting shortcuts that involved hopping over rope barriers and passing through a knee-high natural meadow. Norma is apparently a modest 84 years of age – clear proof that mental and physical exercise can prolong active life.



After the tour, we all came together in an open-sided marquee overlooking the park where we enjoyed 'bottomless' tea together with scones, jam and cream. It



was a great opportunity to catch up with friends, many of whom we had not seen for many months.

Our tour of Painshill Park was just an introduction. There is far more to see than time permitted, including the breath-taking Temple of Bacchus and the exotic Turkish Tent. If this account has whetted your appetite, Painshill Park is very easy to access – just five minutes off the M25 at the A3 junction.

Mark Marriott



REUNION PICNIC - RUNNYMEDE

25 May 2021. Our post lockdown (partial relaxation of rules) Reunion Picnic was another great success. This, our second picnic at Runnymede, was enjoyed in fair weather (our last picnic here was in July 2020). It was the Club's first face-to-face get-together since the picnic at Claremont Landscape Gardens in September 2020. Jackie Marriott made us a scrumptious cake to celebrate our reunion and this was cut by our newest members Su and Chris Knight.



MARGARET MEINECK 1937 – 2021

One of our original TSCC members, Margaret Meineck sadly passed away on 2nd April this year. Within the TSCC context, one can never think of Margaret without recalling her late husband Dave who died in 2010. Until that date they had a 40ft steel cabin cruiser, *M V Saluki* and on Dave's death this was bought by our current TSCC Secretary, George Barber and his wife Janet, and is still used by them.



Dave Meineck was one of the founders of TSCC in January 1992 together with Paul Richardson, Neil Winckless and the late John Donaldson. Before TSCC was formed, Margaret and Dave were members of Weybridge Mariners Club. Rita and I first met Margaret and Dave when we joined TSCC later

that year and well remember the social events that Margaret and he organised in the early years of the Club in the 1st Hook Scout HQ and the Hersham Village Hall.

In its early years, the Officer posts in TSCC were rotated every three years and Margaret was the Club Secretary for the three years 1996, 1997 and 1998 and then again in 2002, 2003 and 2004. During the break in Secretary's duties Margaret was the Club Membership Secretary for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

Margaret and Dave organised excellent coach trips for TSCC members to Rheims and the champagne area; Ostend; Deauville and the Normandy beaches; Arnhem and Nijmegen in the Netherlands; Antwerp; and on another occasion, Brussels and the 1st World War battlefields of Ypres and Passchendaele. Margaret and Dave also organised, on different years, trips to

the Christmas markets of Valkenburg and Lille, and UK trips to Bletchley Park, Cadbury World and lunch on a fort in the Solent.

We have so many happy memories of these trips. One that is relevant here was dinner with members of the Antwerp Rotary Club organised by Margaret. She was very active in Surbiton Rotary Club and they had some kind of international liaison with Antwerp.

Margaret and Dave were great supporters of the RNLI and for many years both of them, via the Surbiton Rotary Club, organised the RNLI Annual Rally on Queens Promenade, Surbiton. Margaret looked after the stalls and Dave was in charge of the moorings and the water-based activities. TSCC members always played an active part in the RNLI Rally both as spectators and as active organising assistants, and TSCC boats always took part in the illuminated sail-past.

Margaret and Dave lived in Hersham. Margaret was a schoolteacher and had worked at a school in the London Borough of Merton before being appointed Headteacher of Bell Farm Primary School in Walton-on-Thames, a post that she held until retirement from teaching. Margaret was also a magistrate and a member of the Staines Bench. This was a role that she seemed to enjoy and one that she held until she reached the retirement age for JPs.

Margaret was a good organiser and an enthusiastic worker whose activities were almost invariably marked with success. She was a determined woman who had an opinion on many matters and would tell you so.

After Dave's death in 2010 and the sale of *M V Saluki*, Margaret seemed to drift away from TSCC and did not continue her membership. Rita and I have met and spoken with her on only a few occasions since then, principally at band concerts of the 1st Hook Scout Group.

Margaret is survived by two sons and a daughter.

Tony Scott.

The 2021 Thames Cruise

Will we? Won't we? The repeated question of so many planned events these past 18 months. Happily, the answer was 'yes' to the annual TSCC Thames Cruise. On July 12th around two dozen members left in eight boats up the river with planned stops, meals and events to be made along the way over the next five or six days. Most were in their own boats but Wendy & I with our chairman Mark and Jackie departed from Kris Cruisers in the Lady Nicole. KC are a very reputable company so the boat was clean and well equipped for us to depart on schedule.



Our first stop was in Maidenhead with a walk in to town and afternoon teas at the Coppa Club tea room within a new residential / retail development. While sitting enjoying a break from the just developing hot spell, we noted plaques on the walls nearby & a model toucan apparently commemorating a famous restaurant, The Toucan, on the site in the '50's and opened by Diana Dors, a local resident at that time.

Through Boulter's lock, which I learnt is the 3rd deepest on the river, to our first overnight stop at Boveney for an informal buffet meal to which all contributed. Over the next couple of days, we had an evening barbecue at Cookham Island and an evening pub meal in Hurley. The Rising Sun pub in Hurley has been a



popular choice for the club in recent times, as ever an enjoyable meal was had but with the unhappy news that this was to be the last such occasion as the pub is closing imminently.



Unfortunately, from Hurley, Peter & Pauline Simpson sadly had to miss the trip to the Coppa Club dinner, afflicted by the 'pingdemic' apparently having unknowingly been near a Covid

carrier. Thankfully all was well and both were present at the TSCC barbecue a couple of weeks later.

Before departure from the area there followed on Thursday afternoon surely one of the more eagerly anticipated sporting events this year - the Hurley Games? Aply conducted by George Barber & assisted by Ray Mears who introduced the unique 'Mears Rules' for some events. Included were horseshoe throwing, skittles and boules. All members participated in all events with varying degrees of skill with winners being Ann Fowler in boules, Clive Bowles for skittles & Andrew Cotter in horseshoe throwing. A good & amusing time was had by all concluding with an afternoon tea so well prepared by Jackie Marriott.

The final event of the cruise was dinner at the Coppa Club in Sonning. By now the heat wave was established so the meal was enjoyed in the garden outside the pub overlooking the river.



From Sonning, most returned home but some of us continued in an ad hoc manner further up-stream sometimes meeting up in the evenings for meals or a barbecue. In Pangbourne we encountered the Swan Uppers conducting their annual census of the swans on the Thames.



The farthest point for the Lady Nicole was Abingdon, an attractive town with a long-recorded history, claiming to be the oldest town in England, a visit to the local museum is worthwhile. There are pleasant moorings under the trees alongside a grassed area in sight of the old bridge where one evening six of us enjoyed a barbecue. We spent two nights there, the other evening we all visited a Mexican restaurant much recommended on online review sites. Certainly different, the picture shows us all wearing traditional hats that were hanging on the wall by the tables. Made of leather they were remarkably heavy but certainly prompted us to get in suitable Mexican mode with the accompaniment of Mexican music during which some of the more inebriated attempted to sing along to. A good evening enjoyed by all.

Most locks were blessed with a lock keeper with only a few self-service. I have never operated a lock before so this was a new experience which I eventually tried. All seemed to go well. However, towards the end of the operation the lock keeper appeared, whether by chance or concern for his lock I shall never know!

Almost our last lock, though, proved a serious delay. Apparently, a mechanical failure had rendered the lock manual only pending engineers attending. On a Sunday afternoon this resulted in a considerable build-up of boats including a large pleasure steamer. With all available hands winding the sluices and gates passing through it took us about 90 minutes.

Eventually we reached our last stop in Windsor & an excellent meal at the Cote restaurant on the Eton side. The following morning the Lady Nicole was handed back to Kris Cruisers & we all made our separate ways satisfied at the end of an enjoyable Thames cruise.

Ian Hardie.

SUMMER BARBEQUE

At Little Compton

A fun day of

SUNSHINE and SHOWERS



Mark and Jackie organised another fabulous BBQ. What a great way to have around fifty members back together to enjoy each other's company following the restrictions of Covid. And, it was Bob's Birthday! The food was fab – especially Jackie's deserts – Mm-mm

TSSC PROGRAMME OF EVENTS for 2021/22

All dates and events are subject to change

Splash Day at Ajax - Cream Tea, Wheelyboat and other Boating Opportunities	Sunday 22nd August
Jazz & Picnic at Painshill Gardens	Sun 28th August
Possible Skittles Match	October - TBC
Bath and Bristol Getaway	Monday 18th – Wed 20th October
TSSC Annual Dinner at Leatherhead Golf Club	Monday 8th November
Christmas Celebration Event	Sunday 5th December
Cruise to Rotterdam & Bulb Fields	Fri 29th April – Tues 3rd May 2022
Canal du Midi Cruise	Fri 23rd Sept – Fri 30th Sept 2022



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.

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