

# By The Wey

## Issue no 93: December 2020



The Magazine of Byfleet Boat Club



I was recently reminded that *Paper Moon* has been at Walsham for 20 years. Recalling a traumatic New Year trip down from our previous mooring at Stoke Lock, we were stuck for 6 weeks at Papercourt due to flooding. Trevor kindly offered to keep an eye on her until we could continue our journey.

It got me thinking about past times on the river and on the Grand Union at Harefield where everyone could hear our old one-cylinder Yanmar engine! Back in the 1980s when we first bought *Paper Moon* (*Ruskin* as she was then called) Michael Hall's dad was fitting out his new shell outside BBC. (see *Michael's last episode on page 22*) Michael commented that the mid eighties was a difficult time for the Club as narrowboats started to come onto the river. Imagine being used to nipping about in a cruiser or powered dinghy and discovering your favourite mooring being occupied by a 40, 50 or even 60 foot metal monster! Of course we now have the next generation of 'widebeams' causing mayhem on the main system! As the saying goes "the only constant in life is change" so in these troubled times

what changes are we seeing and how do we deal with them? It is clear that there is a new enthusiasm for the water based activities of canoeing and paddleboarding driven by the need to maintain social distancing as well as government advice to exercise outdoors. Outside our club and on NT noticeboards there are instructions to paddleboarders on how to obtain a licence, and it seems our club has become a popular spot for launching both inflatables and solid boards, much to the annoyance of some members! It seems that the wheel has turned full circle as small craft are returning to the waters.

We welcomed the Weyfarers rowing quads to our club early this year ( see **page 8**) and that relationship is continuing and growing with new, younger membership.

What lies ahead? Perhaps we could be welcoming and grow our membership in different ways by providing more storage facilities for canoes and lockable bays for paddleboards. This might displace some of the older craft occupying our compound but perhaps its time to review how our members use the area.

Who knows, today's paddleboarders could be tomorrow's narrowboaters?

***Finally, a big THANK YOU to all the contributors who made this edition possible.***

Cover: Photo by Claire Clarke (*M'Lady*) taken on their return from the Thames this summer. Claire records that she was very glad to be back home on the beautiful River Wey.

# Navigation Update

*(Robert Miles)*



*Robert Miles*

Last time I put fingers to keyboard for By The Wey I talked of weir repairs in Guildford and signed off with a wish to raise a glass of something cold with you in a toast to the full reopening of our glorious navigation.

Who would have thought that by the time you read this follow up we will all be hoping to drink something warming to steel ourselves for the winter ahead, and locking down once more to protect each other. What an extraordinary year 2020 has been, and certainly not what I expected when I walked into the offices of Dapdune Wharf to start my new job on the 2nd January this year. I knew there would be challenges ahead, but the world has changed completely.

You may have read in the press about the cutbacks we have had to implement

across the National Trust in response to the loss of income due to the virus. Forty per-cent of these are from spending efficiencies, but the rest needs to come from salaries, and the River Wey will unfortunately therefore see some redundancies.

Our Lengthsmen and Maintenance team are of course needed to keep our living breathing corridor of nature in a navigable condition, our unique National Trust property cannot be locked up for a few months like many of the mansion houses. The savings need to be made in administration, and so we will shortly be looking to digitise the licensing and mooring processes on the River Wey, in line with many other navigation authorities.

Whilst keen to implement a solution that will be of benefit to everyone, I am very sad to be losing members of the team who have been with the navigations for decades, and whose knowledge and experience is irreplaceable. It is another example of the cruelty inflicted by this virus that goes beyond everyday health and wealth, and the team wish our colleagues who have bravely volunteered to stand down in December all the very best for the future. We will need your help to overcome their loss and to move forward into a new era of

administration by consent and collaboration.

I am still deeply disappointed that I have not enjoyed your hospitality at BBC yet, and got to meet you all face to face. But I continue to hope that we can soon return to some form of normal, where our relationship can flourish and the mutual interest in our waterway can be celebrated and strategised.

There is a new vision required for the navigations, and BBC members are major stakeholders in creating those plans.

I hope we can soon come together in these challenging times to design the best way to balance the joy of navigation with the promotion and protection of the natural world, which is at the heart of our shared passion for the waterway.

The team send thanks for your understanding at this challenging time and look forward to making 2021 something special for us all.

Stay safe.

*Robert*

## Lockdown Ode

**Valerie Wardlaw** (Hazell Nut)

A short little ode  
In lockdown mode ,  
Not sure if the mago is on .

So much has been stopped ,  
Not been out to 'shop '  
My wardrobe is definitely worn !

With "Guildford" not on,  
And before sun has gone ,  
we've ventured the length of the  
Thames .

Took all my old gear ,  
had for many a year,  
On return the lot goes in the bin !

Missed ,many a thing ,  
that most years would bring ,  
Like afternoon tea at the club .

Keep safe and well ,  
Only time will tell  
If we did the right thing  
through it all .

**Its ok Rod,  
no paddle-  
boarders  
ahead!**



# News from WACT: Latest Restoration project

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust has begun work on a major restoration project in Surrey as the charity's bid to resurrect the abandoned canal moves up a gear.

In what will be a two- to three-year project largely carried out by volunteers, a new canal cut and two bridges will be built at Tickner's Heath in Alfold, near Cranleigh.

The route of the canal is blocked by the causeway which carries Dunsfold Road. Originally, a brick arch bridge built in the 1810s carried the road over the canal but by 1913 the original bridge had been demolished and the road realigned onto an earth causeway. The Trust looked at several options before deciding that the best solution was to avoid the obstruction altogether and so in an ambitious project volunteers will construct a new length of canal, approximately 180m long, to divert around the causeway and create a new road bridge at a point where Dunsfold Road is straight.

A short length of temporary road will be built to take traffic around the bridge site during construction and a separate, parallel bridge will be built for the use of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, along with a new footpath.

With both bridges in place and the road re-opened to traffic, the new canal cut will be excavated. The last 100 yards of the existing canal will be



***Barrier construction at Tickner's Heath***

partially filled and landscaped with areas of wetland and replacement tree planting. Volunteer working parties operating several times a week have so far built a compound area on an adjacent agricultural field, created culverts and ditching, erected fencing and constructed a base for power connections. Contractors will be employed for piling, but volunteers will carry out a significant proportion of the construction and landscaping work.

***Gill Davies***

## Farewell Iona



*Iona prepares to leave Godalming Wharf (Picture: Mel Cambridge)*

Many of you will remember seeing the newspaper reports in many National papers of Jenny Roberts' sad decision to close her horse drawn boat business at Godalming due to problems with other canal and towpath users. Iona is now at the Tiverton Canal Company. We wish Jenny and her horses a peaceful retirement.

## Technical Notes

A recent Boat safety scheme examination on Paper Moon showed that the LPG hoses in the gas locker were cracking and needed to be replaced. It proved impossible to use standard 8mm hose as the old hose and fittings were obsolete. After a long search on the internet we decided to replace the pigtails and install a new regulator. (A "Continental") The most convenient and economical way of doing this was to buy an integrated unit which happens to have an auto switching device. So if one cylinder becomes empty it automatically switches supply to the second cylinder. (IES supplied the 3/8" Wade fitting and TLC the new pipework.)

*Paper Moon is now legal again! (Ed)*





**Introduction:** *David's boat Miffy which is 12 years old with a 35 hp Isuzu engine had an intermittent squeak which has been ongoing for about 4 years. This featured in the September 2019 edition of BTW. Tony writes:*

About a year ago I answered a question about a squeak on *NB Miffy*. The owner gave a lot of information about the stern gland, shaft, and work done on the gearbox. He did say he thought it might be coming from the control station. I did my best to give a constructive answer based on the information I had. Luckily my last sentence was "I fear this is going to take a lot of careful inspection to solve." It seems that during the summer it got worse after a fast run up the Thames and when the owner lifted the instrument panel cover he could see the oil light was glowing. So the problem is now well on the way to being solved. The squeak seems to be the audible warning buzzer that is found on most modern engine panels, which typically monitor charging, oil pressure and temperature. Unfortunately I do not normally expect the buzz from the sounder or the short chirps it can make when pulsed to be called squeaking so I

decided an oil pressure fault was less likely. The thing to learn from all this is that it is vital to find out where any noise is coming from. If you don't any diagnosis is just guesswork. In this case the fact that with electrical gauge and/or warning lamp systems the most unreliable part is the sender unit. Unless you have an infra-red thermometer or a mechanical pressure test gauge the main suspect after checking electrical connections, including the multi-plug in the main engine harness, should be the sender unit. Only if that fails to cure the problem should you worry about anything else. However a professional should check the oil pressure at idle and about 1500rpm both hot and cold so a more detailed diagnosis can be made and thus save fitting parts that may not be faulty.

I have every hope that a new sender will cure the noise and as the owner has asked that it be repaired he should expect to be told the four oil pressures (I bet he wont be). As long as the oil has the correct viscosity then low oil pressure at idle and at speed when hot indicates the engine bearings and/or oil pump is worn. If the oil pressures are OK when cold but the hot idle oil pressure is low then the oil pressure relief valve has probably jammed open. This is unlikely on an Isuzu but perfectly possible on BMC 1.x engines.

# Weyfarers Rowing Club

## GREETINGS AND THANK YOU FROM WEYFARERS ROWING CLUB



*At Weyfarers pontoon (Frances Reeve)*

We thought you might be interested to find out a little more about

Weyfarers and what we get up to in more normal times! As a recreational club we're organised to cater for as much variety as possible with longer or shorter outings, a gentle paddle or a fitness workout, improvers or experienced rowers, men and women, young(er) and old(er). In other words, all sorts.

Some of you might have seen our feature in 'Your Elmbridge'

magazine (October) which talked about recreational rowing.

A belated THANK YOU so much to BBC for your hospitality and welcome to Weyfarers Rowing Club back in January, February and March. Letting us park a couple of our Quads, and use your lovely facilities was hugely appreciated. With the Thames on red boards for so long we wouldn't have been able to row at all for those 3 months. Who knew back then that just as the Thames was ready to welcome us back, we were plunged into lockdown and didn't finally get back to our crew sessions until mid August. It really was a lifeline for us to spend time at BBC and we thoroughly enjoyed your pretty stretch of water. It certainly improved our coxing skills too with various boat repairs being necessary as you might imagine! All good fun.



*At BBC January 2020 (Frances Reeve)*

# Weyfarers cont'd

Go to <http://bit.ly/YEOct2020> page 14 if you want to take a look.

It occurred to us that there may be BBC members who used to row boats like ours with sliding seats, either sculling with 2 oars, or sweep with 1 oar. We'd love to reciprocate your hospitality and would welcome 'rowers' to come down for a session or two with us at Weyfarers.

Red boards permitting, we do row throughout the winter, and maybe that would be a time to try out a different way of boating whilst you're perhaps less busy at BBC. We'd love to continue building a good relationship between our clubs. Unfortunately with COVID we can't offer our Learn to Row courses until next Spring, but we're always happy to welcome people who already know how to row (most of you I expect) to visit us in Weybridge for an outing.

A few Weyfarers have become members of BBC and we were pleased to respond to the invitation to contribute to the magazine.

Frances Reeve (associate BBC member) & David Reeve (Weyfarers Captain)

<http://www.weyfarers.org.uk/pages/BackToRowing.php>

## Cathy's Quiz

1. Disreputable weir on the Wey?
2. What is the deepest canal lock in the UK?
3. Name the disused canal that linked the rivers Thames and Medway?
4. Bats are in this closed canal tunnel?
5. Which river does Iron Bridge span?
6. What is the name of the traditional boats used on the Norfolk Broads?
7. What is the longest aqueduct in the UK?
8. These canals meet where ?  
Worcester and Birmingham Canal and Birmingham Canal Navigations Main Line
9. Where does the river Thames end?
10. This canal is also a race course?

*Thanks to Cathy Wooden (Miffy)*

### Answers in next Edition

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#### **From last issue:**

*Where are these Wey barges moored?*



**Answer:** *The Port of London – somewhere near the Prospect of Whitby pub in 1952*

## Pub and Café guide to a Covid-19 Secure Thames Holiday” Cathy Wooden (*Miffy*)



### ***Miffy at Cookham (Cathy Wooden)***

We spent over 3 lovely lazy sunny weeks on the Thames. We set off in September, assuming that the river wouldn't be busy, as the children had gone back to school. How wrong we were, for the first couple of weeks moorings weren't that easy to find as everyone had the same idea.

Our first stop was Runnymede where we got the last mooring space, unfortunately under the trees in which the parrots roosted. As usual we had a meal at the Italian Concept, good food and friendly and Covid-19 secure service.

Our next stop was Windsor for the weekend. We didn't enjoy it much as it was crowded and people didn't seem bothered about social distancing. We went to the George and sat outside as we felt safer in

the open. The food was good but the menu restricted. Sunday lunch at the Boatman was good but there was a wasp problem, and we spent most of the time waving our arms to keep the wasps off our lunch. Afterwards, we walked along the Brocas Field. We were surprised to see notices directing people to the nearest loos in Windsor, evidently people had been using the woods for you know what.

We decided to move on to Cookham early on the Monday, getting there before lunch, there were no suitable moorings so we found a nice spot on Clivedon Reach. The walk through the woods to Clivedon House was nice, we explored the grounds but were very disappointed with the café as it was taken away with pre-packed food.

The weather was so nice we ended up staying at Cookham for a week and mostly sitting out on the bank.

Surprisingly, we did not run out of walks

# Thames Pub and Café guide



**The Teapot**

and found a few new ones. Also there were no crowds, except at the Bounty. Of course, we had to try out all of the pubs and cafes. We decided to have a change and went out to breakfast and lunch, more often than we usually do. In general people socially distanced and the pubs and cafés we visited were Covid Secure.

We tried breakfast at The Crown, Pizza Dreams Café and the Teapot Tea Shop. Breakfast was good in all of them. The Teapot café has a small enclosed sunny garden and the Crown plenty of tables outside. Dreams Café has a few tables outside but were close to the pavement. Breakfast was best value here as for £8.50 you got a full breakfast and a tea or coffee. The Ferry doesn't do breakfast but we couldn't leave it out, so we had a nice meal there but had to go inside as it was full outside. We even tried the café at the Flowerland Garden Centre,

good for looking around on a rainy day but the café was disappointing. There was slight drawback with mooring for so long at Cookham, after a few days we needed the lock facilities, so had to get up very early to use them and return before we lost our mooring.

We moved on to Hurley as Marlow was full, and stayed at the moorings behind the lock for a few days. It was very quiet, with plenty of moorings. We didn't have to pay, as the Environment Agency hadn't got its act together for charging for anything at the locks. Many boaters did not know that you had to phone the Environment Agency and pay for a licence before setting out. This was not well publicised. We wondered how much income was lost. When we asked, the issue was that the Lock Keepers huts were too small for socially distanced transactions. Have they never heard of gazebos, assuming their card machines work with wi-fi?

Anyway, back to Hurley. The Old Bell looked very sorry for itself, closed for refurbishment and also because it's primarily a wedding venue.

The Rising Sun had a warm welcome and a nice sunny socially distanced garden. We lunched there a couple of times. Again, more long walks and lots of photogenic scenery.

## Thames Pub and Café guide



We were going to go on to Henley but there were problems with Hambledon Lock due to vandalism, so we spent another night at Hurley and went to Marlow for the weekend. Higginson Park was nice but a bit busy, as was the town with little social distancing. Marlow doesn't have any pubs on the river, apart from the Compleat Angler which was heaving. Again, "obligatory" long walks, although those around Marlow aren't that picturesque. Still, it stopped us spending too much time in the pub! Many of the Thames locks were not manned until 10.00 and some not at all, there were concerns at the deeper locks such as Marlow and Boulters. At one time that there were 14 boats waiting to go through Boulters and no Lock Keeper. On our return journey we went back to Cookham for a few days having breakfast and lunch at the same pubs, although on this occasion we walked to the Spade Oak for lunch, again this was Covid Secure, and like the other pubs had a one-way system. I don't think we were

disappointed with any of the meals we had in Cookham, although the breakfast at Pizza Dreams was too big! Again, we found a couple of new walks, one over the back of DB Marine but we were unable to complete a circle so had to come back the same way and back to the Ferry, for a much needed drink.

We stopped at Windsor again on the way back, by this time the weather was a lot cooler and Windsor empty, so no issues about social distancing. The pubs and restaurants were mostly empty and they didn't want to serve outside even though they had areas under cover. By this time most of the pubs and shops had ceased opening their doors for ventilation which is recommended for inside areas. We had a drink at the George inside, there was plenty of space between tables but it was not very busy.

Our last stop was Runnymede but we didn't go too far as it was raining. We returned to our mooring the day after which was very windy making locking a bit difficult as none of the locks were manned.



# Club News: Maintenance report

Steve Martindale (*Polo*)

It was noticed in the late summer that the boards that cover our slipway had advanced into a rather concerning state of rot. It's quite a few years since many of the timbers were replaced. The wear and tear on the boards in the main pathway is considerable. The main effect is believed to be from cyclists; when some of them hit the little concrete ramp and land on the boards the bending movement these timbers experience acts as a sort of sponge which sucks water up into the ends via the phenomenon known as capillary attraction. To combat this for the long term we are discussing with the National Trust methods of slowing bikers down especially as some increase speed going past the club forecourt so that they have enough momentum to get up the ramp to the road.

We looked at a number of ways of replacing the boarding with other materials such as composite plastic, aluminium and steel.

The manufacturers of the plastic boards made it clear that they couldn't span the gap and they told us that plastic boards would bend and break. We worked out that the steel option would mean the boards (girders!) would be too heavy for two people to lift, and the

aluminium box section boards would work but would be very expensive and would be very susceptible to being stolen!

Once the decision was made that we needed to change the boards for timber we went through a number of options. Quotes obtained in October last year just for supply of new timbers had trebled when we got new quotes. The reason for which was given as ...yes you guessed.... "Covid". We have a long-term relationship with Rob Locattelli at River and Canal Services which proves that it's good to be loyal and Rob came in with a reasonable and very considerate quote which was for both supply and fitting and was accepted by the committee resulting in the work getting done in late September (see photo below).



*(photo: SM)*

# Maintenance report (cont'd)

Steve Martindale (*Polo*)

We need to try to preserve these timbers so that they last as long as possible and to that end whenever we get back to normality and twice a year maintenance day's, we will need to remove two boards at a time and soak the ends in a preservative liquid. I have sourced a tank to make this possible as well as retaining some of the old boards that were in a reasonably re-usable state to temporarily stand in when we soak the new timbers.

On top of all this Tina and I have been discussing the problem of fast cyclists with the National Trust and it is possible that in the future we may have an 'offset gate' (similar to the one at the top of the ramp) put at the bottom of the ramp which will hopefully stop cyclists taking a run at the incline....watch this space!! I know that this is something that past committee members have tried to get done so fingers crossed.

Whilst writing it's worth letting you know that in December, we will be engaging a crew to repair an area of the concrete banking which has been undermined as well as getting some of the boarding on the steel piling area of our banking replaced with a suitable and sustainable hardwood. I anticipate that this will be done before Christmas, Covid conditions allowing.

I know that many of you enjoyed the camaraderie, the tea, coffee, sandwiches, biscuits and cake that came with the maintenance weekends and it's my sincere hope we will get back to them soon. Meanwhile we will carry on trying to keep the club in reasonable order so that it's there and ready for us when the restrictions are lifted to a sufficient level.

I very much look forward to giving you more information about some of the things that we plan to do to improve the club facilities in the not-too-distant future.

## Bits and pieces

\* Ken Price has an ATCO cylinder mower in good working order looking for a new home. Ken will deliver. If you are interested call him on 01306 730047

\* Greetings from Scott Retallick who sent this picture of Stourport lock



# Are We Real Narrowboaters Now?

Brian and Claire Clarke (*M'Lady*)

## The Thames Ring 2020

We have owned our narrowboat *M'Lady* for 6 years, but due to work commitments 2 weeks was the longest continuous time that we had managed on board. Brian retired towards the end of 2019 and we planned a trip around the Thames Ring for June 2020. Assuming that you haven't been able to escape to a galaxy far far away, you will understand that we



### ***Leaving Cartridge***

had to reschedule for September. On Wednesday 2nd September we left Cartridge Marina just after midday and surprisingly there was no fanfare! Before heading out onto the Thames, our Thursday morning started with an online Pilates class undertaken on the boat, just don't ask! (*Top right*). We really enjoy the Thames and so we decided to make

a few stops, including Marlow to visit the market, Henley where we happened upon a drive in Party in the Park where we enjoyed the music (for free) from the river



[Picture 3] , and Abingdon. (*Below*) Abingdon saw our first real boater adventure, a trip to the Launderette! Friday 11th September took us into hitherto uncharted waters as we turned right off the Thames and into Sheepwash channel. [Picture 5] That was a big shock as we didn't see any signs and it looked



## Thames Ring: Brian and Claire Clarke (*M'Lady*)



like a disused channel. We continued and found ISIS lock and the Oxford Canal. (*Left*) The Oxford canal was an education with the narrow locks

but we made it to Kidlington and its market. This was the first of our pre-arranged rendezvous with Claire's sister, with whom we spent a lovely day. We returned to *M'Lady* late in the evening to find our boat almost adrift and another boat crew pulling her back alongside as the pins had loosened! We bought chains for mooring at the first opportunity.

We set off on the next day to Lower Heyford and our next rendezvous with some friends on their camper van trip. We had a very pleasant socially distanced lunch on the canal bank and then decided to have a lazy afternoon in the sun. Next morning we had an early start to set off for Banbury. However en route we discovered the "Pig Place" and were tempted enough to stop for a drink and food and were amused by the sofas and fire pits dotted across the field and hence the Banbury destination was forgotten. Next day we did make Banbury, where there was a lot of building work being

undertaken with seemingly only a small nod to its canal history with an indoor market called Lock 29 and a very small Tooleys Boat yard and museum.

Our 31st anniversary was spent on an unplanned stop in Banbury due to a broken lock. We followed the canal through some beautiful Oxfordshire countryside, we hadn't realised that Oxfordshire was so rural! Unfortunately HS2 is in the process of bulldozing through some of the tranquillity. Saturday 19th September saw us traverse the nine Napton Locks and then celebrate with lunch at The Folly Inn, one of the places we had been recommended to stop, cleverly accommodating diners in outside decorated marquees .

Six years ago, when we were looking to buy a narrowboat, we spent many



***The Folly Inn, Napton***

## Thames Ring: Brian and Claire Clarke (*M'Lady*)



weekends driving up the M1 to various marinas to see possible boats and many were at Braunston Marina. As a result, Braunston has become a bit of a mystic place and so arriving at Braunston on a beautiful sunny morning we felt like we had become real narrowboaters! In celebration, breakfast was consumed from the “*Gongoozlers Rest*” café boat. (*above*) Then came the Braunston tunnel which is the first real canal tunnel through which we have navigated. Lots of nervous energy burnt going through the tunnel but we didn’t meet anyone coming the other way! So we left the Oxford canal behind and were on the Grand Union at last. Braunston to Nether Heyford was very sunny and warm and the evening showed us a new moon, the

space station and Jupiter and Saturn in the sky. We were very fortunate that before we set off on our trip, we had arranged to meet up with Kathryn Dodington, TV star, ex commodore of BBC and still an active member, in Stoke Bruerne. Having navigated the Blisworth tunnel, where we did meet boats coming the other way, we arrived in Stoke Bruerne. (*below*)

Katherine showed us around her beautiful cottage and provided us some insight into the history of the



place and canals generally since the museum was closed. An amazing lady, a wonderful story teller and definitely a member of canal royalty. Leaving the countryside behind, we passed through Milton Keynes, Leighton Buzzard, Berkhamsted,

## Thames Ring: Brian and Claire Clarke (*M'Lady*)

Hemel Hempsted, Rickmansworth and Denham, which we were pleasantly surprised by, finding some good walks and cafes. On Friday 2nd October we transitioned from holiday to adventure as the weather turned. We had planned to be home this weekend, and perhaps we should have been! Saturday 3rd October saw us coming down the Hanwell flight towards Brentford. If the date doesn't mean anything, it was Storm Vera and the wettest day on record! The *M'Lady* crew came down the Hanwell flight getting very wet but quite happily, however this changed with no warning as we left the final lock. Just after this lock, the River Brent joins the Grand Union Canal and it was flooded and flowing fast, very fast, very very fast. Unfortunately we only saw this once we were underway and from then it was more akin to surfing or whitewater rafting than boating. With a lot of help from some very friendly boaters we managed to get *M'Lady* against the bank and someone cleverly put the centre rope around a tree which brought us to a halt when the four people holding our lines couldn't. Two days later the river levels dropped and we saw that the canal is supposed to be 18 inches below the bank and not overflowing it, the green grass and the towpath had magically

reappeared. We subsequently learnt that the local boaters had called the CRT and had been told that the monitors didn't show any problems but later admitted that the Brent reservoir was overflowing and they had diverted all the water along the Brent River into the canal to avert Wembley flooding and then they closed the Hanwell Flight! Despite the amount of water around us we were short of drinking water and "facilities", luckily a passing sister delivered a porta potti and some 5 litre water bottles! After a few days waiting for the river flow to drop and watching / helping salvage other un-pinned boats, we were allowed to proceed to



***The weir after the storm***

## Thames Ring: Brian and Claire Clarke (*M'Lady*)

Brentford and the very welcome sight of a working pump out and water!

A quick chat with the CRT Brentford Thames Lock keeper told us that we



**Brentford Dock**

would be waiting another few days until the River Thames was navigable for us. We discovered a web site that showed the River Thames Flow at Kingston which was running at 205 cumecs (Cubic Meters per second) and the normal rate is around 100 and learned that it takes about a week for the levels to settle in that area.

On Thursday 8th October with the flow rate at about 150 cumecs we made our way to Teddington, but once again were delayed by Red Boards. Once the river flow decreased

and the red boards were replaced by yellow warnings we made it to Shepperton and the River Wey. Since this was against the current we managed just over 2 mph despite having the throttle at our normal 4 mph setting.

Shepperton was a melting pot of diverse currents, but the River Wey was as usual, calm and beautiful as we made our way back to Cartbridge, once again we were disappointed at the lack of a fanfare. We felt that there should have been something to celebrate our transition from wannabe boaters to real narrowboaters!

Our trip can be summarised as 260 miles, 187 locks, 142 hours motoring and 136 litres of fuel. This means that we did an average of 2 mph for an average of 3.7 hours per day. But really it was a 4 week holiday and a 1 week adventure during which we learned that we really enjoy being on the boat, that boaters are a great group of people who are helpful and friendly, that we know how to use a launderette, weekly markets are a good aid to navigation, that trips always take longer than any plan says, that Claire insists that in future we will always carry a spare porta potti, and finally that we will be planning another trip next year...

***(Ed: You are definitely real narrowboaters now!)***

# New Committee members

We welcome three new Committee members who joined at the AGM: Mark Pantling, Andrew Williamson and Steve Price. Please say Hi when you see them!



## Mark Pantling

Hello to you all. I have my Grandad to thank for introducing me to the Boat club over 45 years ago and I still love the place through the many changes I have seen. Our current boat for the last 18 years has been *Journeyman* moored at New Haw. After a 12 year break from the committee I now have a bit more time on my hands to help steer our club through these challenging times until we are able to return to whatever "normality" is ahead. Stay safe and hopefully see you out there soon

Hi we are **Andrew Williamson** and Cathy du Plessis, both born and raised in South Africa, moving to England in 2016 with two of our four children, Duncan and Bethany.

Our first house here was on the Basingstoke Canal and Andrew was really enamoured of the locks and narrowboats, often taking a bicycle ride up the towpath in the hope of seeing a boat. We enjoyed a couple of narrowboat holidays, and then bought the cruiser *Ayresome*, an Atlanta 24, which was about the smallest boat we could find with a shower and hot water, and that was Cathy's minimum standard! She was delivered just before the first lockdown so when it ended (according to TLC) we virtually wore out the Navigation until the end of October! Since we joined the Club earlier this year we've had to learn quite a lot. Club members have been really amazing and shared so much information, help and advice. We are really glad we joined and hope to continue as members for many years to come.



I'm **Steve Price** the owner of *Finan's Folly*, a Freeman 22 Mk2 moored at New Haw. I am married to Caroline and have two daughters, Ruby

(9) and Amber (7) with whom I enjoy as many nights aboard as we can manage. As a child I remember navigating Swanage Bay in an inflatable dingy! My first boat project did not go well and three years ago I took on *Finan's Folly*, another 'project' (will I ever learn), but one year later we set out on our first voyage and haven't looked back since. I was only introduced to the boat club after most of the hard work had been completed but was immediately taken by the atmosphere and members, not to mention the abundance of advice and tea!

Outside of boating I manage the services department of a global audio visual solutions provider. Although this keeps me desk bound my other passions are motorcycling, as well as outdoor pursuits like hiking and camping.

I look forward to a time when we can all return to the clubhouse and refresh ourselves of how important it is to our members - who would have thought it would be possible to miss those working parties!

## Byfleet Boat Club AGM 2020

Byfleet Boat Club came well and truly into the 21st century in November with the Annual General Meeting being held via zoom call at 3pm on Sunday 1st November. We had 43 members in attendance on the call from their armchairs and dining tables. Tina managed a well structured meeting which started by ratifying the lateness of the AGM caused by Covid 19 and the minor rule changes to allow zoom to be used if needed in future.

The usual reports from the various officers of the club were combined into a series of slides that outlined the strong financial position the club is in, the increasing membership after a couple of years where it had declined and some of the achievements in the 18 months since the last AGM.

The achievements include the winning of the inter-club skittles competition, the introduction of a new club website, the changes to the refuse collection and electricity supply to reduce costs and £10,000 grant from Woking Council in recognition of the fact that we were unable to provide rowing boat hire services this year. Topics under discussion in the committee included winch and other safety processes, attracting new members, reviewing communications with the membership  
**(go to page 27)**

## **An English Boating Life - Across the Pond to the Big Rideau**

**A trip down memory lane by Michael Hall, a BBC member from 1971-1992 now boating on the Rideau system in Ontario Canada.**

### **Part 5: off to Canada**

In 2007 we emigrated to Ottawa Ontario Canada (My wife is Canadian). I am now carving my own family's boating memories on the Rideau River which is a far different style of boating that has taken some real getting used to.

In 2009 with our Daughter Anya being a mere 6 months, we spent our first night on the St Lawrence River (Seaway) having just purchased a Larson 270 (27' x 8'6") sports cruiser. A real baptism of fire that year was! Scared the pants off myself a few times as not used to such raw power and a massive waterway. So 2010 season we found ourselves on the Historic Rideau River which was built by the British and designed and managed by Colonel By following an Inuit canoe route. The system was built to avoid shell fire from the USA army on the St Lawrence when moving ammunition during the civil war. Hundreds of British men perished in the making and many a memorial stands to their memory and sacrifice. The system was never used for military as the war concluded before Colonel By finished it. He was hauled back to answer to



Queen Victoria for its delays and sadly died before seeing its finish. Alas my wife could not get settled and we sold "Spoiled rotten Brat" (no I did not name her). In the late summer of 2010 we invested the funds into a large in ground swimming pool for our back garden! (Well it was still water) But water flows through my veins and in 2013 when we moved living directly opposite the Rideau River, I found a Rinker 300 (32 x 10'6) express Cruiser Twin Engine and the boating dream continued, but this time Liz found the front berth too small for her ample 36" long legs! (A man cannot win can he?) So later in the year we purchased a 2005 Rinker 360!

This was a bigger still cruiser at 39'6" x 12'6 and two huge great engines (Petrol Volvo Penta V8, 8.1L 475HP each) from there we moved our boating onto the Big Rideau Lakes which is the summit of the Rideau system.

I have always wanted to name a Boat "Hall Of Dreams" as our family name is Hall so we completed a full Nautical re naming ceremony and my wife was not overly impressed seeing a fine bottle of Champers go over the bow! We added a Tender called

Little Hall Of Dreams and have continued to live the boating dream albeit a long way

removed from what I grew up with. North American Cruisers are very much modelled on miniature Ocean going power Yachts. Typically equipped with two large Petrol V8's either Mercruiser or Volvo Penta, all come with mod cons including built in AC power generators, air conditioning, heat, showers, fridges and Ice makers. Our boat also has a bow thruster for lazy mooring. The boats are like corks on water so are affected by wind so a bow thruster is a gel coat saviour.

The seasons are short. If we are lucky the boat can be launched in late April when the ice clears but is hauled and winterized which includes either dry



**40' (Nearly) of Hall Of Dreams breathing some air at 43 Knots.**

indoor storage or shrink wrapping by late October. So we all utilize as many weekends and holidays as we can, either meeting at locks where you will find AC shore power for your boats electrical needs or going "off hook" and anchoring in a bay. I installed 400w of solar to the roof of the canopy which allowed for the 6 large batteries to be maintained instead of running the generator which we saved for the air conditioner and hot water before bed.

Locks are all manned by staff, the Rideau is very historic for Canada and its history maintained. The river



the age of 11 will have her very own first boat just as I did! And with that I hope her own passion will be ignited just as mine was all those years ago. If anyone is interested in boating in Canada I am happy to receive emails\* and will gladly share all I know.

Michael

\*sales@aqua-digital.com

runs from the capital Ottawa down to Kingston Ontario where it meets Lake Ontario about 2 hours north of Toronto.

To conclude, I am still adjusting to boating life in Canada having spent so many years pottering about at 4mph on small rivers and being able to dock pretty much anywhere you chose, and now cruising at 30mph+ on plane and spending weekends at historical locks stations where 30amp shore power is available or in amazing secluded bays! But at the same time making great new friends and sharing more than a drink or 3.

We are experiencing our own dreams and life adventures as a family and we hope to have many years ahead exploring the Rideau system and maybe beyond.

Next year I hope my own daughter at

### ***Editor's note:***

*Thank you Michael for providing us with your memories over the last 5 editions. I can't believe we have reached the end and will really miss your contributions. It is well worth remembering the history of our Club and knowing that previous generations endured hardships and enjoyed good times just like us.*

*Let's hope you have inspired other members to dig into their family records and follow your example!*

# Committee page

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	Steve Price ( <i>Finan's Folly</i> )	
	Melvyn Wayne ( <i>Lady Jennifer</i> )	
	Andrew Williamson ( <i>Ayresome</i> )	
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# Club Programme 2021

Programme subject to change due to Government regulations re Covid19 (check Member site for updates)

## 3rd Fridays via Zoom until we are able safely to resume meetings at the Club

Day	Date	Time	BBC Programme 2021
<b>Jan</b>			
Mon	18	19.30	BBC Committee Meeting
Fri	22	19	3rd Friday - Bingo & Club Catch Up via Zoom
<b>Feb</b>			
Mon	15	19.30	BBC Committee Meeting
Fri	19	19.00	3rd Friday - talk by Wey & Arun Canal Trust via Zoom
<b>Mar</b>			
Mon	15	19.30	BBC Committee Meeting
Fri	19	19.00	3rd Friday - talk on the Lancaster Canal via Zoom
<b>Apr</b>			
Fri	2-5	tba	Cruise Basingstoke Canal to Brookwood Country Park
Fri	2-12	tba	Cruise Basingstoke Canal to Top Level
Sun	11		BBC AGM
Fri	16	19.00	3rd Friday - Club Catch Up
Mon	19	19.30	BBC Committee Meeting
<b>May</b>			
Mon	17	19.30	BBC Committee Meeting
Fri	21	19.00	3rd Friday – Quiz & Club Catch Up

Welcome to our recent new members: We look forward to meeting you!

Luke Randall *Kayak*  
 Richard Woods *NAUTI C'S*  
 Robert & Georgie Doig:  
*Le Grand Fromage*  
*see opposite*

Paul Haslett *GREY MIST*  
 Wendy Dodson *Weyfarers*  
 Martin Jacobs *canoe*  
 Graham Mills *POLO (shared with Steve Martindale)*  
 Anthony Harsum *canoe (plus narrowboat being built)*



**(AGM continued from p21)** recognizing differing needs and running a survey to better understand what our members want from the club.

Three new committee members were voted in Andrew Williamson, Steve Price and Mark Pantling. The existing officers, Tina Osborn as Commodore, Brian Clarke as Vice Commodore, Cathy Wooden as Hon. Treasurer and James Osborn as Hon. Secretary, were re-elected to serve.

There were no new motions raised and the meeting closed at about 3.50 with a screen full of smiling faces (p28). Thank you to everyone who made the effort to attend, to James Osborn who ensured that all the appropriate paperwork was issued in accordance with our rules and finally to Tina Osborn who will go down in history as the first commodore of Byfleet Boat Club to chair a virtual AGM!

**Brian Clarke** (*M'Lady*)



**Rob Doig's family in their 4.5m Admiral Mariner 'Le Grand Fromage'**

## Stern View

**An unforgettable 2020** – what a very different year it has been for Byfleet Boat Club and for all of us.

Wonderful news about vaccinations against Covid 19 being possible over the next few months. At last we can hope to be back to boating, boat hire and enjoying life on UK waterways during 2021. A relief especially to those members who have been living through a long lockdown.

Our full BBC Events Programme for 2020 became virtual, via Zoom, from April – for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, all our Committee Meetings and our successful AGM, with 43 people attending, on 1<sup>st</sup> November. At our AGM, we voted to change BBC's Memorandum & Articles to allow virtual meetings and sending notices by email. "Thank you's" were said for members keeping to 'the rules' when using the workshop etc, mowing the lawn (Adrian), keeping an eye on the club (Julia) and editing our award-winning By The Wey magazine (Mike). For full details see AGM Commodore's report and Officers' slides presented by Brian. Also, thanks to the committed Committee (see brackets below) who worked hard during 2020 to:

# Stern View Tina Osborne (*Tristan III*)



- Develop BBC's new website and Intranet for 'Members only' access (**Phil**)
- Reduce BBC costs (**Phil & Cathy**)
- Clear clubhouse due to Covid, move tender, remove pennywort (**Steve K, Steve M**)
- Repair the slipway, repaint doors, clean gutters (**Steve M**)
- Negotiate extra days at Warren Farm moorings for bank holidays (**James**)
- Produce cash flows, forecasts, budget and accounts (**Brian & Cathy**)



*The AGM on Zoom (B.Clarke)*

Together, we have all ensured the Club is in a healthy condition on finances and maintenance for 2021.

As a result, at our Financial Planning Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October, in recognition of 2020 being a difficult year and that 2021 may not be ideal, we agreed a one-off saving for members. Mooring Fees will stay the same as 2020, even if the National Trust raise their fees to BBC, as will other charges.

All members renewing in December 2020, will pay half the membership fee (which also remains as at 2020) for 2021.

Over summer 2020, several members managed boat trips, from May onwards, to enjoy the beauty of our rivers and canals and from the photos on Facebook, all life was there, and many adventures ensued.

Do ask to join our **Byfleet Boat Club (private group) on Facebook** to see club news and photos quickly .

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/82741723771>

We enjoyed excellent Zoom 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays - John Webster (Swingbridge), John Axtell (Astronomy), and Roger Cansdale (Heroes & Villains of the Basingstoke Canal), as well as meeting old friends and new members.

**Join us for our next Zoom 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 1900 – Quick Festive Quiz & Catch Up** – to raise a glass together at Christmas, with raffle and Quiz prize. For Zoom link, ID, Password – see email as usual. The Events Programme for the first six months of 2021 is mainly Zoom and booked cruises (as we wait to see the course of Covid, lockdown and vaccines). From July 2021, our Events will take account of all the ideas gathered in our telephone chats with all Members, so look out for the Events in our next magazine. Meanwhile, I wish you a Joyous Christmas and a Very Happy New Year.

Best wishes

Tina Osborne, Commodore  
**The Byfleet Boat Club**