

By The Way

Issue no 105: October 2025



The Magazine of Byfleet Boat Club

Editorial

Mike Chamberlain (*Paper Moon*)



In the latest edition of *Waterways World* there is an article on the River Wey. Well worth reading if you want to feel good about where we are. In a mostly positive review, Andrew Denny recorded a few close shaves with swimmers and paddleboarders : Welcome to our world Andrew!

In this edition we welcome three new members who have joined this year and one who has recently rejoined. Its good to have you.

Tristan has provided a comprehensive review of the year with news about planned work on the Navigation.

Congratulations to the Wey Navy Raft team on completing their 20 mile stint in about 14 hours!

A new contributor James Taylor gives news from the Basingstoke canal. Our 'Wandering Stars' the Clarkes are heading back home after nearly two years away! The story of their visit to Foxton is on page 9.

Greg and friends have produced a really interesting account of their trip on the Waverley Steamer.

Our cover page shows one of our favourite moorings. Do let me know if you have a favourite place and send me a picture for the next edition

Happy cruising! *Mike*

Welcome New Members

Wayne & Clare Armstrong (*NB Titan*)

Andrew & Tanya Brown (*Erma*)

Greg & Stacey Prout (*Proutys Princess*)

Terry and Chris Simmonds (*Barley Twist*)



Wayne and Clare Armstrong thank everyone for being so welcoming

Cover picture: Mike Chamberlain (Paper Moon)

One of our favourite moorings on the Thames, Wallingford has a lot to offer the visiting boater.

The Wey River Festival always signals coming to the end of the boating season, and what a celebration it was. We welcomed a record breaking 5,065 people to the event this year (nearly a 1,000 more than our previous record!) The turnout and support from our boating community was fantastic to see and the Illuminated Pageant was captivating as always and a real draw for the local community. Having the privilege of being on the lead boat with the steel band is a highlight of my year, seeing the smiling faces and pure joy that this brings to people. Coming round the last corner and being greeted by thousands of cheering people at Dapdune is always a sight...especially in contrast to usual quiet, calm spot that it is. Thank you to everyone that took part.

This year as always has had its successes and challenges. From having to remind a variety of external organisations of their historical obligations from the 1653 and 1760 Navigations Acts, to continuing to work with the Environment Agency to restart the dredging programme, assets getting broken and trees falling, it is events such as the festival that remind us of why we all put so much in to the care of this waterway and are reminded of what it means to everyone. With the glorious sunshine we had all through the summer (at one point I was even hoping for rain for the first time

since taking this job) it was great to see so many boats out and enjoying the waterway. I have put below a summary of the works that have been done along the river as well as a look at what is planned over the winter months.

Current/Completed Work

Reactive Repairs

Ensuring that we keep the Navigation open and react quickly to breakages is something that we pride ourselves on. This year the team have continued to do a fantastic job of working tirelessly at all times of the day and night to ensure that our boaters can continue to use the Waterway. Just some examples follow of the works that the teams have to react to that pull them away from the day to day management of the waterway.

The breach near Triggs Lock at the beginning of the year. The maintenance team were out through the evening into the dark in freezing



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conditions securing the bank to avoid a full breach. Through the night, the Lengthsperson's team carefully managed the water levels to avoid putting excess pressure on the bank and were ready to react should the worst happen. The next morning stone and materials were transported down the river and by the end of the day the bank had been reinforced and the towpath rebuilt. Within 48hrs, the Navigation was open again.



The sluice gate on New Haw Lock gates was damaged beyond repair. Within 24hrs, we had a contractor on site who lifted the lock gates so that our team could manufacture and fit the replacement parts and the lock was reopened.

We have had multiple lifted lock gates which on average were back in place and working within a matter of hours. One incident at Unstead Lock, where the gates were badly damaged when they were lifted required bespoke metal work to be manufactured by our team at Send to ensure that the gates would see out the season before being replaced in our winter works programme. Once again, this work was completed in under 24hrs.

Fallen trees many of which are owned by third parties involve getting external contractors out to clear the bulk of the larger ones. The team have been on site and clearing a path through to limit the impact to our boaters.

Addlestone Mooring Line

The first half of the staging at Addlestone has been replaced with the team driving scaffold poles in for reinforcement every 500mm. This has been a huge effort from our team with the poles being cut by hand and the piles being driven deeper than usual. This area will enable secure moorings for wide beams as many of our other

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mooring sites are not able to accommodate the extra weight. We always try to get the best value for money when doing these works and so where possible materials have been reused.



Pennywort – Action Group

Our ongoing battle against Pennywort continues. This year we were working more closely with other groups such as The Environment Agency, South East Rivers Trust, Paddle UK, The Basingstoke Canal, Wey Kayak Club, Angling Trust and Surrey Wildlife Trust to try and work across organisations to increase our impact. A number of our staff have been trained in spraying so that we can move between different methods of removal. Ultimately this does end up with the manual lifting of the rafts which for anyone who has been involved in it, is back breaking work, but left unchecked, and with a growth rate of up to 20cm per day, this can cause real issues for the Navigation.

Removal of Abandoned Boats



We continue to fund the removal of abandoned boats on the Navigation, which is both frustrating and costly.

These vessels, often left with contaminants, pose risks of asset damage and

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pollution. The process involves not only physical removal but also tracking down owners and handling abandoned goods.

Planting of a Hazel Coppice. Earlier in the year we received the generous donation of 150 hazel trees from Surrey County Council to start our hazel coppice at Send. This wood will be used for the creation of hazel weave hurdles for soft bank repairs along the Navigation. We have also just found out that another 150 hazels are being kindly donated.

Visitor Mooring at Triggs

In our continued effort to improve the facilities for boaters, this year a new visitor mooring near Triggs was created and it has been great to hear the positive feedback and see it being so well used.

Papercourt Piling

The piling at Papercourt has been completed with 150m of steel sheet being used to reinforce and repair the banks. On the towpath side the bank has been raised by approximately 6 inches prior to backfilling in the next few months

Reprofiling

At the start of the season, post high water levels, the team took our



floating excavator the length of the Navigation moving sand bars and shoals to keep the channel clear. This is then an ongoing and reactive job throughout the season. Whether that is trying to keep the channel clear at Town Lock in Weybridge whilst we wait for the Environment Agency to dredge or simply clearing mooring spaces for boaters our team work to keep the waterway navigable.

Shalford Mill weir repairs

Our team also maintains Shalford Mill along the Wey Navigations. This year, we replaced degraded boards on the crested weir beneath the building, which was challenging due to limited access caused by the mill's structure. Working quickly in tight conditions, we completed the board replacement, protecting both local water levels and the mill.

Events and spreading the word

We continue to promote our waterway through various successful events at

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Dapdune Wharf and along the river, including hosting the Steam Boaters Association, a record-breaking Wey River Festival podcast recordings (<https://ntpodcasts.org/WT13>), filming activities, and engaging with Waterways World. These efforts aim to raise awareness, draw more visitors, and increase moorings. Our Lengthsperson team also built and paddled a raft down the Navigation, supporting the launch of a conservation fund to enhance nature and accessibility along the route.

Filming

We are looking forward to seeing Bowers Lock feature in an upcoming TV show. Filming happened over a two-day period last month. I would like to thank our boaters for working with us on this as I appreciate that there was some disruption to the use of the locks during filming. The fees paid by the production company go directly back into the care and management of the waterway.

Proposed Winter/Spring Works

- **Pyrford Steel Sheet Piling**
Contractors will be fitting 124m of Steel Sheet Piling on the lower lock landing bay
- **Bowers Steel Sheet Piling:** The last of our piling works this year will see 33m of the lower lock landing bay at Bowers being replaced.
- **Unstead Lock Gate Replacement**

- **Walsham Flood Gate Replacement**
- **Thames Lock minor bank repair**
The team will be working to slow the undercutting of the bank on the lower section of Thames Lock by adding limestone baffles to slow the flow of water that is eddying at the edge of the wall.
- **Byfleet Boat Club bank repair**
Our maintenance team will be working with Byfleet Boat Club to assist in the repairs to the bank upstream of the club.
- **Improvements to walking surface at Thames Lock footbridge**

It has been a very busy year, and it was fantastic to see so many of you out on the waterway enjoying what was a glorious summer. As the river slowly quietens down, I wish you all a very happy end to the season.

Thank you for your continued support

Tristan

General Manager – Wey Navigations

*(*Note: Some sections have been edited/abbreviated: Ed)*

Basingstoke Canal News

Despite our long-standing challenges with water supply, the Basingstoke Canal has fared better this year than in 2022 and is in a stronger position than many canals in the Midlands and North of England.

While the Deepcut Locks—historically our most vulnerable stretch—have been closed since July due to low water levels, we're pleased to report that the Surrey section from Woodham to Brookwood, along with the Mytchett and Hampshire Pounds, remain in water and open for use.

We're currently experiencing a temporary staffing shortage following the departure of several experienced team members. Recruitment is underway, and we're optimistic about welcoming new Rangers and Assistant Rangers by mid-autumn. In the meantime, lock flights at Woodham and St Johns are available for pre-booked passage on Tuesdays and Thursdays only.

Looking ahead, we're excited to be delivering an ambitious programme of winter works, including lock gate replacements, culvert repairs, bank protection, and a major towpath improvement project in the Deepcut area. These works, funded by developer contributions, will be managed by our small project team



Canal Visitor Centre

and carried out by contractors. Please note that towpath and navigation closures may be necessary during this period, some works may be dependent on water levels.

For the latest updates, visit our website at www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk, subscribe to our "Navigation Update" email service, or follow us on Facebook @basingstoke canal (shared with the Canal Visitor Centre at Mytchett).

James Taylor

Strategic Manager – Basingstoke Canal

IWA Harborough 75 Festival (Clarke Family)

The IWA Harborough 75 Festival was held at Foxton Locks on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June 2025.

The IWA (Inland Waterways Association) was founded in the wake of WWII, when many canals and navigable rivers were falling into disrepair, threatened by neglect, abandonment, or development.

This festival was held to commemorate 75 years since the original Festival of Boats & Arts in Market Harborough in 1950. The original festival, held in Market Harborough, was the brain child of Robert Aikman and Tom Rolt, it lasted a whole week and attracted about 120 boats and an estimated 50,000 visitors.

This year's event was hosted by the Leicestershire branch of IWA in partnership with Canal & River Trust, Foxton Museum, Harborough District Council and others.



Foxton Locks is a picturesque venue and has more space due to development in Market Harborough itself. It is one of Britain's most important canal heritage sites: a Grade II listed staircase of locks, and

the remains of the extraordinary Foxton Inclined Boat Lift, itself a Scheduled Ancient Monument, opened in 1900 and closed in 1911.



Foxton Lock flight

Harborough 75



Foxton Inclined Boat Lift

At the festival were a number of floating traders including food, boat equipment, artwork, handmade textiles, artisanal preserves, canal themed prints, eco friendly crafts and canal ware.

There were also a large number of beautifully restored working boats and butties all with their own stories to tell, which participated in the parade to Market Harborough. Boats included Sculptor (from Stoke Bruerne), Nutfield & Raymond from Braunston, Oxford One (an ice breaker from WWII) and Brighton owned by the Narrowboat Trust Ltd.



Floating Traders

Harborough 75



Working Boats

Though the main base of the festival was at Foxton Locks, there was a symbolic “cavalcade” of boats on Saturday from Foxton down to Market Harborough basin, in the pouring rain!

There was a “main field” for the festival which included more traders, a dog show, entertainment and the inevitable bar. Those who have visited Little Venice recently would recognise the Saturday evening “open mic” with a very familiar red and purple bearded bowler hat wearing gentleman, Mark!

M’Lady and crew, including the four paw member thoroughly enjoyed the weekend, despite it being one of the few summer weekends of unsettled weather.

Brian and Claire Clarke



M’Lady (Claire Clarke)

From the Archives:

By The Way 25 years ago:

New Commodore:

Rodney Wardlaw (*Hazelnut*) was replaced as Commodore by Graham Thick (*Herbie*)

New members:

Michael and Suzanne Wilson on *King's Fisher*

Weyside2000 Festival:

The Festival and open day was held outside the Club. The Best Dressed Couple competition was won by Sue and



John Webster (*Barley Twist*) while Hazel and James Bell came second.

A Fishing Competition was run by Dick Dolton. Robin Nicholson won with a fish weight of 3lb 6.5oz

The Christmas Dinner at the Club cost £12 per head

Fun Boat Names

(Collected by Val and M.C.)

Rosie & Gin

Lock & Roll

Slim line tonic (NB)

Notayot

Frayed Knot

Hard Lock Cafe

Wine Not Whine

Knot in a Hurry

M.T. Pockets

Backward Circles

Ship Happens

Argey Bargey

HYGGE (HUE-guh)

Down The Hatch

Great Escape

Hey Babe

Flubs (*Fantastic life unless the boat sinks*)



My fave! Ed



Club News and Events



The mayor enjoying a trip around parish day (Nigel Prior)



Newly refurbished Tanya lives again launched using the new slipway set-up (Joanne Prior)



Wey River Festival

By all accounts the Festival got off to a good start on Friday night. The Club supported the Boaters barbeque event and organised the fundraising raffle which raised over £400 for the Wey conservation fund. One item, a decorative boathook, even sold for £100.

There were 60 boats present, 9 of which were from Byfleet Boat Club.



22 boats took part in the illuminated parade, including Tros yr Afon, the winner in this year's Cavalcade. . A crowd of many hundreds watched the illuminated parade from Dapdune wharf.

Wey River Festival: Awards



Peter and Anita Johnson received gifts to thank them for all the sponsorship they have given to the festival over the years...supplying the brass band for the light parade and evening entertainment for Friday night.

(Photos: Will Lloyd-Williams NT)

Rodney and Valerie Wardlaw (see below) also received gifts to thank them for all their hard work in organising the boats and light parade and also Valerie's amazing raffles



Boaters BBQ



Waverley Trip (Greg Beardsall)

Introduction from Greg

I have been taking trips on the PS Waverley since the 1980s, usually doing two trips a year, one on the South Coast and one on the Thames. This year I arranged a BBC trip from Southampton to the Jurassic coast and thirteen people attended. Traditionally, we disembark at Swanage to explore the town and enjoy a ride on the Swanage Railway. However, this year, most chose the full round trip, and I joined them. Four members spent time in Swanage before rejoining the Waverley for its return journey.

Here are accounts from some of the travellers:

Cheryl Corney

My day began early aboard Basil, Helen's Wilderness Boat. There's something peaceful about early mornings at the boat club; stretching my legs and sipping coffee as the club wakes up. Once Greg arrived at 7.00, we all gathered and climbed aboard the minibus, which Greg drove through Send and onwards to Southampton. From the station, a shuttle bus whisked us to the Waverley—the world's last passenger-carrying paddle steamer. Built in 1946 and meticulously restored to her 1947 glory, the Waverley offers passenger



excursions around the British coast. I'd previously sailed on her through Tower Bridge with Helen's choir. The ship is impressively well maintained—everything gleaming and spotless, with all the brass work highly polished. It was



Steve&Vikki, Helen&Cheryl, Andrew &Catherine

Waverley Trip

a treat to visit the engine room. We enjoyed bacon rolls for breakfast and drinks in the Front Bar on the return journey.

Helen and I chose to leave the boat at Swanage, where we spent time walking around town and enjoying lunch. Swanage, a Victorian seaside resort, is lovely for a stroll along its historic pier. On our journey home, we were treated to beautiful crepuscular views. The camaraderie in the Byfleet Boat Club made the minibus ride feel like a gathering of friends. We ended the day singing “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow” in Greg’s honour—a well-deserved tribute.

Steve & Vikki Kennedy

We were blessed with wonderful weather—a sunny day with a gentle breeze, nothing a few layers couldn’t handle. Shortly after boarding, we were underway. The Waverley’s speed was impressive, gliding along at around 15 knots. It was fascinating to consider how these ships once rivalled the sailing



vessels of their era, representing the very cutting edge of Victorian technology.

The open engine room, with its viewing gallery, was a highlight—especially for engineering enthusiasts. The engine, about 25 feet across with three huge pistons, is a sight to behold.

Our route took us down the Solent into Southampton Water, stopping at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, before heading to Swanage. Vikki and I remained on board as the Waverley continued along the stunning Jurassic Coast to Durdle Door, where we turned for the return journey.

The afternoon was thoroughly enjoyable, with drinks in the bar before returning to Southampton around 20:00. Greg got us all safely back to the club by 22:00, rounding off a wonderful day.

Eileen & Raz

What a fantastic trip it was. Though a motorway diversion took us through the Hampshire countryside, the sight



Waverley trip



of turning leaves and colourful fruits added to the day's charm.

Sunshine greeted us as we boarded the Waverley, and calm seas made the crossing smooth and pleasant. The ship's cleanliness and comfort were remarkable, and the engine room did not disappoint. It was perhaps the smoothest crossing we've ever experienced. Along the way, we passed beautiful beaches, the Alum sands, the Needles, and numerous other scenic spots.

We're already looking forward to joining the Waverley again next year for the Medway trip. Our thanks to Greg for both driving us and organising such a wonderful outing; we hope he'll do the same for the Medway adventure!

Rhys & Mel Beynon

When our alarm sounded at 05:45, we were tempted to skip the trip altogether, but thankfully reason prevailed. We joined the rest of the group at the club on time, climbing into Greg's minibus for a cheerful journey reminiscent of childhood Sunday school outings—minus the flasks of tea and communal singing.

Despite a dramatic motorway closure, we arrived with time to

spare. The Waverley was spacious and comfortable, offering plenty of room for everyone to enjoy the voyage as they pleased. The sun shone and the sea was calm, making for a truly uplifting experience. We were the only two to opt for the Swanage Railway, giving us time to explore the town before our train ride. The carriages reserved for Waverley passengers evoked nostalgia, and the engine driver's enthusiastic use of steam and whistles made for a memorable journey. The well-kept stations and vintage details added to the charm. A brisk walk got us back to the boat with 25 minutes to spare before departure. The return voyage was equally delightful, capped off with a stunning sunset as we sailed back into Southampton. It was the perfect end to a wonderful day.



Greg says: I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would gladly do it again next year, should there be interest.

Events Diary Oct25-Feb26

Subject to change: please check Noticeboards or Facebook

Day	Date	Time	Activity	Contact
Oct-25				
Fri	17	19:00	3rd Friday Social - (Knots)	Andrew Williamson
Sat	18	19.00	Winter Barbeque (sign up for meat or veg)	Andrew Williamson
Sat	18	10:00	Autumn Working Day - Maintenance	Mick & Suzanne Wilson
Sun	19	10:00	Autumn Working Day - Maintenance	Mick & Suzanne Wilson
Sat	25	-	Cruise to Ripley Bonfire	Rodney Wardlaw
Nov-25				
Sat	15	10:00	Leaf Clearing, Gardening & Illuminated Setup	Mick & Suzanne Wilson
Fri	21	19:00	3rd Friday – Xmas Decorations in the Club	-
Fri	21	19:00	Tristan Brown NT Gen Manager, state of union and Q and A session	Rodney Wardlaw
Sat	22	17:30	BBC Illuminated Parade	Brian & Claire Clarke
Dec-25				
Sat	6	19:00	BBC Christmas Party	Eileen Searle & Raz Brooks
Fri	12	19:00	Carol Singing	Stephen & Victoria Kennedy
Jan-26				
Fri	16	19:00	Third Friday	-
Feb-26				
Fri	20	19:00	Third Friday	-
Sat	21	19:00	Annual Three Club Skittles Match	Stephen & Victoria Kennedy

Christmas Party: book now

All Members and their partners are welcome. Please send your menu choices to Eileen* and book by 17th OCTOBER.

Payment may be made by bank transfer using reference XMAS and your surname

*Contact: eileenjsearle@gmail.com



Christmas Party

Saturday 06 December 7:30pm

£55-00 per head

Canapés on arrival

A) Roast Turkey with all the trimmings
B) Slow Roast Lamb in Red Wine Jus, Carrots and Mushrooms
C) Winter Vegetable Christmas Pie

Roast Potatoes
Dauphinoise Potatoes
Vegetable Selection
Tomato Salad
Rustic Bread

Chef's Dessert Table with Cheese and Christmas Pudding

Choice of a glass of red or white wine or soft drink.
Please feel free to bring your own drinks.

Please make your choices of main course and drink and send to
Eileen Searle or complete hard copy on notice board.

We have limited spaces so please book early - First come; First served.
To be paid before 17th October to confirm numbers. Your booking
will only be confirmed when payment is received.

Committee page

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Mooring Manners

Mooring Manners

When using the bankside moorings outside the Clubhouse, please remember these key guidelines.



The Wey Navigation classifies these as "temporary moorings", so strictly speaking there is a 48 hour time limit and no craft should be left unattended overnight. However, the Club has quite a good relationship with the staff of the Wey Navigation and there is some latitude granted to us.

For Club members, unattended mooring for one or two nights is allowed, provided that details are emailed ahead of time to fiona.exall@nationaltrust.org.uk

This should include the name of the boat, name of the skipper, and an emergency contact number.

Informing the Wey Navigation is very important, because they need to be fully aware of the situation in case there is a report from the public or property owners.

Finally, as a courtesy to other members, please do not leave a boat on a bankside mooring if you are not on boat hire duty or actively working on it. If you do need to leave your boat out overnight, please return to it early the following morning. It is highly inconsiderate to other members to block a mooring space that they might need to repair or maintain their own boat.



*The summer wanes with leaves of
crimson fire,
A final blaze before the cooling air;
They drift like dreams, as if the trees
conspire*

*To paint the path where boats in
silence fare.*

*Along the Wey, the water softly
gleams,*

*Reflecting skies of amber, gold, and
blue;*

*Each cruise a whisper of September
dreams,*

*Where nature bids her warmest fond
adieu.*

*The breeze grows crisp, a gentle,
welcome guest,*

*That stirs the soul and scents the
fading green;*

*While autumn wraps the world in
quiet rest,*

*And crafts a calm where summer once
has been.*

*Now winter calls: It's time with tender
care*

*Your cabins and hulls to clean and
repair.*

This summer has been a busy and glorious one. Looking ahead, Autumn and Winter will be just as full of activity, to which we can all look forward to enthusiastically.

Several Club members took the opportunity to cruise not only the River Wey but also ventured further afield. Some of these trips were successful, while others faced more challenges. Drought conditions in parts of the country left some waterways dry, stranding boats and complicating journeys. Damage to locks and infrastructure added to the difficulties. These experiences serve as powerful reminders of the urgent need to protect the public benefit and natural capital of our waterways.

Byfleet Boat Club is proud to be part of the coalition campaigning for national and local government to Fund Britain's Waterways. The progress of the awareness-raising flotilla was shared via the Club's member email system, and many members have signed the petition in their personal capacities at <https://waterways.org.uk/waterways/sites/fund-britains-waterways-overview>. A big thank-you to all who supported this important cause.

On a lighter note, the Club once again made excellent use of our private weekend moorings at

Warren Farm. Following the Club Outing in May, I made several return visits — some to mow the grass, and others simply to unwind. At times, the bankside was filled to our five-boat capacity; at others, it was just one boat, the birds, and the cows at Newark Priory. All were equally delightful.

The rowing boat hire season was one of the busiest in recent memory. There were many days when every boat was out, and even a few when queues formed on the foreshore. Pyrford continues to be the more popular direction—perhaps due to the better pub, or maybe just because of the easier return journey. In support of our community we ran evening rowing for Scouts and supported charity fundraising. These are meaningful ways we can contribute and the Committee is keen to do more. If you have ideas, please share them!

We also enjoyed several successful social events, including big-screen sporting events, barbecues, and our informal Third Friday gatherings. The Club hosted the Boaters' Barbecue at the Wey River Festival in late September, which was another great success. After a few of those Third Fridays, I took the opportunity to overnight on

board; something I thoroughly enjoyed. A few others have done the same. It's a membership privilege well worth using; do give it a try.

Of course, boating isn't all cruises and socials. Maintenance and repairs are an essential part of the experience, and members have been hard at work. There's been plenty of drilling, sanding, painting, sewing, rewiring, and mechanical tinkering in the workshop, the compound, and outside the clubhouse. In a fantastic development, several boats that had been out of action since the Covid years have now been restored and returned to service. Congratulations to those responsible, and sincere thanks to the maintenance team for keeping our facilities in top shape and accessible to all. We truly are a year-round Club. So even if summer has left you a little weary, I hope you'll join in the activities planned for the festive season ahead

Andrew