

# By The Way

Issue no 106: January 2026



The Magazine of Byfleet Boat Club

# Editorial

Mike Chamberlain (*Paper Moon*)



In this issue we cover the annual Boaters meetings with Tristan which were held both at the Club and at Dapdune wharf. A notable change is the proposed timetable for Thames lock opening which may affect casual comings and goings. I am sure it won't be like the nightmare of booking in and out of Brentford lock in May.

Talking of which I am glad that a larger group of boats will be heading to Cavalcade this year. Lets hope the weather improves by April. Our fishing fraternity, Eric and Jack have been busy, see page7.

The sad news about Vanessa prompted me to call Richard who was happy to reminisce about their time on the river. He is now settled in Chaldon. A tribute is on p11.

It will be a busy year for the Basingstoke Canal Society on its 60th anniversary. Incidentally the latest edition of BC News contains a lot of interesting stuff and is well worth reading. Lets hope we can get up there this year!

I apologise for the slight delay in getting this edition printed as Jeanette my envelope filler has been in hospital to have her knee fixed. Incidentally do get in touch if you would prefer to have BTW emailed instead of posted. Happy cruising!



*Did you spot the deliberate mistake? Last Edition's Cover page described this as Wallingford*

*Of course it is Abingdon, another of our favourite mooring places. Hats off to Brian Roberts of the IWA for spotting it!*



*Wallingford moorings*

*Cover picture: The Illuminated parade last year was spectacular. This atmospheric photo was kindly sent by Liz Gathercole*

# Navigation News: Boaters meeting

**Boaters Meeting notes have already been circulated by NT but some parts are reproduced below together with the Editor's notes from the meeting held on 18th November at Dapdune**

- It was interesting to hear that the cost of removing abandoned boats could be £6000 per boat.
- Pennywort Action Group has been formed and spraying at the right time seems to be organised better than in the past.
- There are proposals to motorise some weirs to allow remote control e.g. at St Catherines.
- The Raft Challenge raised about £1600 to fund nature access projects (not as previously reported in BTW)
- The filming at Bowers was for a Dr Who series where different Doctors meet up at the lock. An amusing anecdote was that the film crew arrived at Thames Lock almost in time to witness an altercation between some truculent visiting boaters, police and lock staff !
- It was disturbing to hear that the lack of dredging below town lock was the subject of dispute between NT and EA, the latter having neglected to dredge despite having responsibility for maintaining navigation since 1930. NT rightly refused to dredge at their own cost, particularly as the NT budgets had been cut back. *(I personally witnessed a visiting narrowboat that had been stranded on the sandbank for a couple of days)*
- Walsham Gates will be replaced this year.
- The boaters booklet is still being redesigned.
- Thames lock opening hours have been revised. Existing staff will be retained.
- The table of new opening times is reproduced in this issue on **page 6**

*mc*

# Navigation News: Boaters meeting Q&A

## Questions and answers:

Q: Concern over 9.30am opening time – for those going onto the Thames reduction on the time spent on the Thames and cost of Thames licence. Prefer to get earlier start.

*A: Boaters are asked to give the new hours a trial and to give feedback.*

Q: Visitor mooring frustration –overgrown foliage - Vegetation cutbacks not being done - Offside growth particular frustration – incidences of boaters cutting it themselves to moor. Worst spot below Triggs Lock and Gunsmouth area. Last year, you spoke about getting back to basics – there are 22 listed visitor moorings not all are strimmed – boaters want to see this happen.

*A: Have received various views on cutback from different river users –will review visitor moorings and talk to the team. TR will come back to this point after speaking to the teams.*

Q: Firstly, thank you to the team – Q1 foliage opposite the Rowing club in Guildford on the bend is high – Q2 who do we contact for information or to report a problem?

*A: Q1 – Will speak to teams about the importance of maintaining vegetation cutbacks when it impacts line of sight Q2 - Thames Lock is still the number to contact to report a problem – 01932 843106.*

Q: Will minutes and presentation of the meeting be put onto the Boaters Facebook page /social media.

*A: Minutes will be sent round through Harbour Assist. Limited to what we can put on social media.*

Q: Millmead bollards lock undercut, ropes can get hooked up.

*A: Will ask the team to check asap.*

# Navigation News: Boaters meeting Q&A

Q: Can abandoned boats be classed as fly tipping?

*A: Unfortunately, not, we have a process in place for abandoned boats. Depending on if there is an outstanding debt we can go through our central credit control department, who can do searches and take legal proceedings, which may result in county court judgements. This is a lengthy process. Physical disposal of the boat costs £6,000 But legal fees are on top of that.*

Q: Environment Agency (EA) weir near Thames lock – what’s happening with the sluice gates that aren’t functioning

*A: EA working with their Assets team -. NT constantly flagging and pushing for repairs.*

Q: Is there a replacement for the residential volunteer at Pyrford?

*A: Yes, this has been offered out and awaiting reply – next priority is Addlestone.*

Q: The entrance sign to the Wey – cannot see it very well and looks to point the wrong way.

*A: We do have a new sign which is large – must get permission to install it. We do not own the entrance to the Wey it is the EA.*

Q: Emails from river conditions – seem to be more trees coming down this year, Is that right?

*A: Tree inspections are done yearly but seen an increase this year because of the extended drought weakening the trees. When the rains then came and water was taken up, this led to branches and trees falling. Majority are cleared asap - some are 3rd party trees where we have to contact owners. NT spent additional 20K on tree works. With climate change could get worse.*

Q: Ivy on trees – what are our thoughts – put extra weight on trees. A: TR will check with our Head Lengthsman, Mark Walker. Q: Could signage be put on the Iron bridge arch – stop boaters going the wrong way

*A: TR to look into this*

# Thames Lock Opening Times 2026

Month	Notes	Times Lock Passage Will be available
January	Lock passage will need to be booked 24hrs in advance. The office will not be staffed if no boats are booked in.	Pre-booking only
February	Lock passage will be limited to 2hrs per day with the ability to book a return journey outside of these hours. To be agreed locally with the lock keeper at the point of passage.	10:00-12:00
March	From the 1 <sup>st</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> March the opening hours will be 10:00-12:00 with the above return condition. From the 16 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> March the opening hours will be 09:30-17:30. This is to ensure Easter passage is not impacted with the earliest possible date for Easter being 22 <sup>nd</sup> March.	10:00-12:00 / 09:30 – 17:30 (closed from 13:00-14:00)
April	Full day opening	09:30 – 17:30 (closed from 13:00-14:00)
May	Full day opening	09:30 – 17:30 (closed from 13:00-14:00)
June	Full day opening	09:30 – 17:30 (closed from 13:00-14:00)
July	Full day opening	09:30 – 17:30 (closed from 13:00-14:00)
August	Full day opening	09:30 – 17:30 (closed from 13:00-14:00)
September	Full day opening	09:30 – 17:30 (closed from 13:00-14:00)
October	Lock passage will be limited to 2hrs per day with the exception of half term where it will be open for an extended period.	10:00-12:00 (with the exception of half term)
November	Lock passage will be limited to 2hrs per day with the ability to book a return journey outside of these hours. To be agreed locally with the lock keeper at the point of passage.	10:00-12:00
December	Lock passage will need to be booked 24hrs in advance. The office will not be staffed if no boats are booked in.	Pre-booking only

# Eric and Jack's Angling Page

## Carp fishing with a Method Feeder

Fishing with a method feeder is one of the most popular and effective ways of not only fishing for carp but a wide range of other coarse fish.

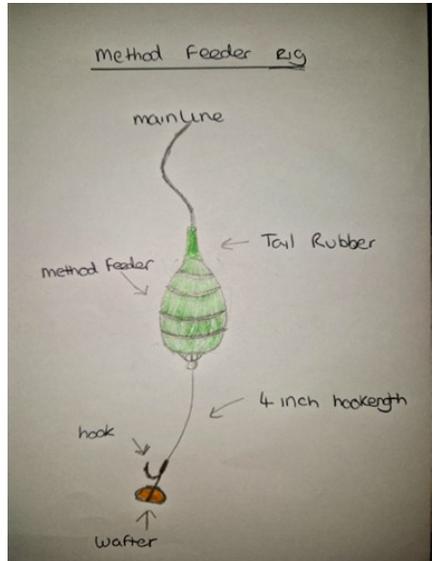
The method feeder rig is a simple and easy rig to set up and is ideal for beginners who are just starting out in fishing and want to have a good chance of getting a bend in the rod and landing some fish on the bank.

The way that it works is in conjunction with either ground bait or small pellets that are soaked down so they can stick to the feeder. You then use a method feeder mould and place your hook bait into the mould. Then add either your ground bait or pellets into the mould and press firmly so that that it sticks to the feeder. You are then ready to cast out your rig.

*10lb common carp caught on a method feeder*

This setup can be used on either a quiver tip rod or alternatively on bite alarms with a rod pod.

You do not need heavy tackle to fish the method feeder. Use 5lb-8lb mainline for other coarse fish and small carp and 8lb-12lb mainline if you want to go for the larger double figure carp and use a slightly lighter hook length than your mainline.



*We apologize for missing the last By the Wey and being unable to fix a match date We will try again in 2026. We are going to sort out a fishing workshop at some time. This will cover the setup of Jack's method feeder. All the best for the new year. See you at the club some time. Tight lines; Eric and Jack*

# Basingstoke Canal Society

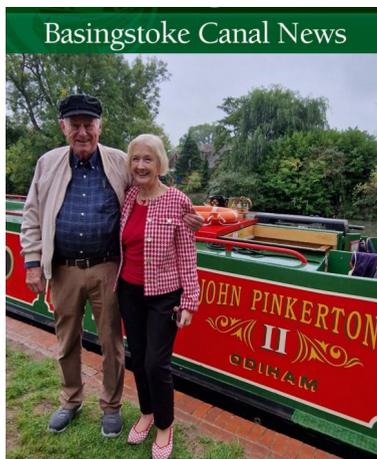


## The Basingstoke Canal Society

2026 is a celebratory year for the Basingstoke Canal society as we spend our year reminiscing and celebrating the past 60 years of the society and look ahead to the next 60 too, of course!

Our celebrations began in January with a special talk about our work, memories and having input from members and supporters on what the Canal, Canal Society and the anniversary mean to them. We also welcomed ideas on what the coming year celebrations should include from their perspective, of course with plenty of memories and photos shared as well.

Later this spring a commemorative booklet will also be released for sale, themed boat trips will run throughout the summer season, a list of 60 things to do on the Basingstoke Canal will be published and much more. Most exciting for all, we will be hosting a special event in Woking on the **18th of April** with entertainment, refreshments, Kitty II on the Canal and exhibitions on the last 60 years. The event will be family friendly and there will be something for all ages!



*This edition's front cover features John and Jan Pinkerton who celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary aboard John Pinkerton II in September*

We invite you all to celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with us, become a member to stay up to date with the latest information and of course the more the merrier at all our celebratory events and out and about on the Canal too!

[www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk](http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk)

Keep an eye on our Facebook for more details on our April event and lots more to come during the course of the year.

<https://www.facebook.com/basingstokecs>

## Rooks Hill:

The brickwork on the abutments has been completed and preparation work on the formwork for the bridge deck is underway. A section of canal bank with an overflow weir and filled gabion baskets has also been completed.

Volunteers at Rooks Hill also made a TV appearance on BBC Morning Live!



*Rooks Hill - Scaffolding ready for bridge deck*

**Rye Farm:** Work on a new towpath north of the Elmbridge Road on Cranleigh is now complete, with the installation of a short fence and the final topping of fine granite chippings being laid as requested by the Surrey

CC officer responsible for public footpaths and rights of way.

When Surrey CC have formally signed off on the diversion, ownership of this stretch of canal will transfer to the Trust.



*Rye Farm - the new towpath nearing completion*

Our Spring members meeting will be held on April 18th at 2pm in Alfold Village Hall. and we are planning an "Open Morning" at Rooks Hill to showcase the progress we are making.

*(\*Ed: Taken from the latest news bulletins)*

# IWA news

## IWA/Towpath Talk Sustainable Boating Awards 2026

The Inland Waterways Association and Towpath Talk are pleased to announce that their Sustainable Boating Awards will be awarded again in 2026.

As before, there will be two categories:

**Commercial:** For a commercial organisation which, in the opinion of the judges, has made the most valuable contribution to sustainable boating on the UK's inland waterways in the previous year.

**Non-commercial:** For an individual or charitable/community organisation that, in the opinion of the judges, has made the most valuable contribution to sustainable boating on the UK's inland waterways in the previous year.

Nominations, which may include up to 6 photographs and should be not more than 1000 words, should be submitted to:

[IWATSustainable.Awards@waterways.org.uk](mailto:IWATSustainable.Awards@waterways.org.uk) by August 29th 2026.

Previous winners are not eligible unless nominated for a different, or significantly enhanced, achievement. Entries will be judged by a panel appointed by the IWA and Towpath Talk, with the results announced not later than 12th September 2026 and the winners being presented with a certificate and trophy (to be held for a year) at the IWA AGM, on Sept 19th 2026.(venue to be confirmed)

### Guidance to Nominators

We welcome nominations for any aspect of boating that advances the cause of sustainability but this year we would particularly welcome nominations that promote or encourage existing craft to be more sustainable, including practical electrical conversions and the use of alternative low carbon fuels.

# Vanessa Lamey



Vanessa with Richard (*Esprise*)

Sadly, Vanessa Lamey passed away on 8th December 2025.

Richard and Vanessa were staunch supporters of the club for many years having joined about 20 years ago.

Even following her stroke in 2021 she was keen to visit the Club and chat to members who knew her. Richard and Vanessa enjoyed the boating life, owning vessels such as *Arctic Tern*, *Brighton Belle* and latterly *Esprise*, a familiar sight with family on the Navigation.

Not widely known was their support for the Wey and Arun Canal Trust where they attended working parties annual walks and organised social events.

Over 100 people attended her funeral at St Mary's Church Headley on 15th January where she has been laid to rest.

As her obituary recorded; she will be remembered for her generosity, her warmth, her sense of fun and her unwavering love for her family and friends. She leaves behind a legacy of kindness and joy that will live on in all who knew her.

# Events Diary Feb26-Dec26

Subject to change: please check Noticeboards or Facebook

## **FEBRUARY**

Friday Feb 6th Committee meeting

3rd Friday Feb 20th Skittles practice at the club

Saturday Feb 21st Inter club Skittles at Thames scouts Cruising Club

## **MARCH**

Friday March 6th Committee meeting

3rd Friday March 20th Club Pub Night

Saturday / Sunday March 21st / 22nd Working party and boat launching

NB SUNDAY MARCH 22nd WE WILL ALSO HOLD OUR AGM

## **APRIL**

Friday Apr 3rd to Mon Apr 6th Easter cruise to Godalming (Organised by RW)

Friday 10th of April Committee meeting

3rd Friday Apr 17th St George's Day barbecue DIY

Sat / Sun Apr 18th / 19th Cruise to Warren Farm (with tidy up for summer)

Apr 29th - May 7th Cruise to the IWA cavalcade at Little Venice (SK)

## **MAY**

Friday May 1st Committee Meeting

Sat May 2nd to Mon 4th Cruise to Warren Farm

Sunday 3rd cruise to Woking Palace on back waters

Apr 29th - May 7th Cruise to the IWA cavalcade at Little Venice (SK)

3rd Friday May 15th Talk on the THE LANCASTER CANAL by John and Caroline Turnbull

Sat / Sun May 16th /17th Boat Handling Skills (TBC)

Sat May 23rd to Mon May 25th Weekend on the Thames.

Small Boat Club / Boveney TBC

## **JUNE**

Friday Jun 5th Committee meeting

3rd Friday June 19th Eric Bailey Talk about fishing Techniques and tackle (EB)

Saturday June 20th Fishing demonstration Eric Bailey (EB)

Saturday 20th evening Warren Farm Cruise

# Events Diary Feb26-Dec26

Subject to change: please check Noticeboards or Facebook

## **JULY**

Friday July 3rd Committee meeting

Sunday July 12th Wimbledon on TV at the club. Men's singles final

3rd Friday July 17th DIY barbecue

## **AUGUST**

3rd Friday August 21st Informal night in Club

29th August - 31st August Warren Farm Bank Holiday Cruise

## **SEPTEMBER**

Friday Sept. 4th Committee Meeting

3rd Friday Sept.18th Member Steve Flagg Guitar Singalong evening

Weekend Sept. 18th 19th BBC Invitation to all boats on the WEY For open weekend (Management Team Required TBA)

## **OCTOBER**

Friday Oct. 2nd Committee meeting

3rd Friday Oct. 16th To be advised

Saturday / Sunday 17th /18th Working party and boats out

Sat October 31st Nov 1st Ripley bonfire trip

## **NOVEMBER**

Friday Nov. 6th Committee meeting

Sat. Nov. 14th Leaf clearing and Christmas decorations put up

3rd Friday Nov 20th Talk about the management of the WEY NAVIGATION by Tristan from the National Trust

Sat. Nov. 21st Illuminated boat parade

## **DECEMBER**

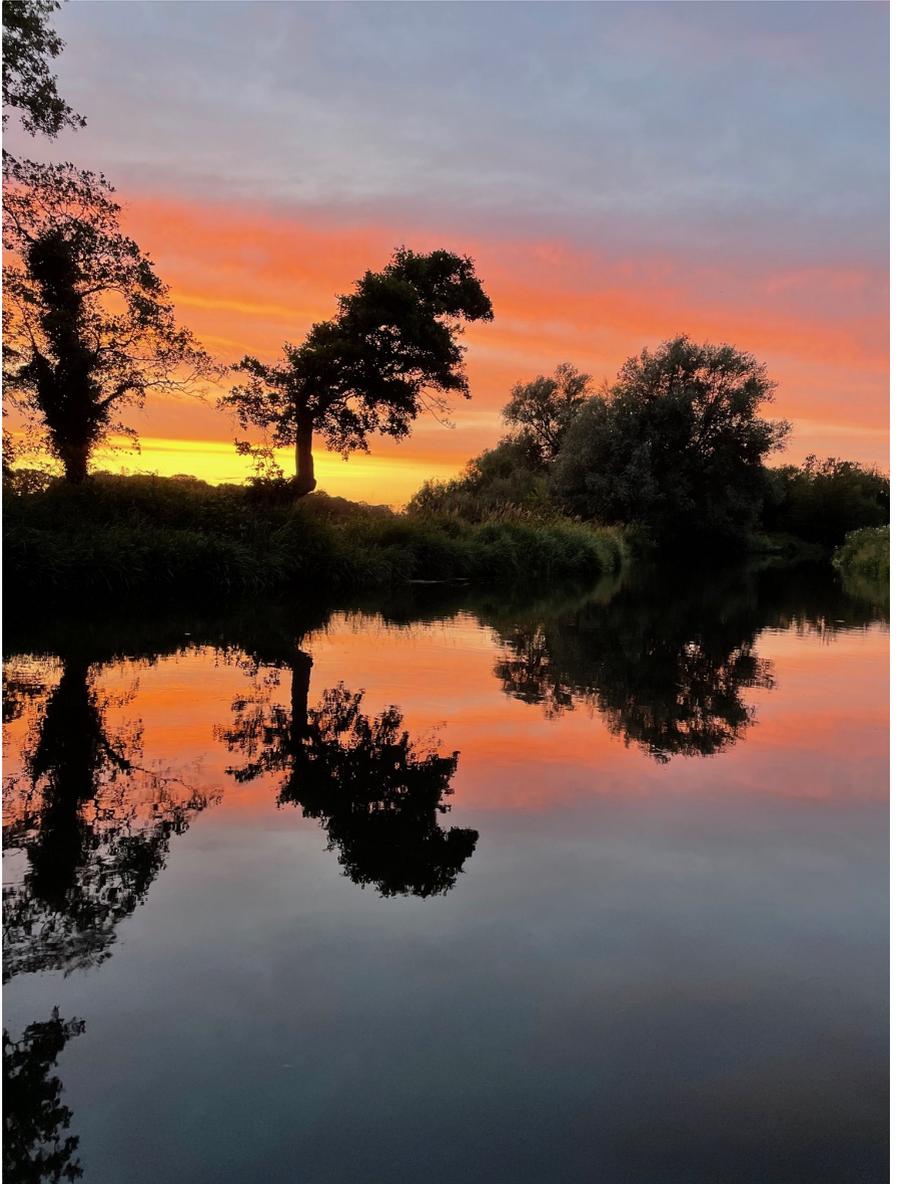
Friday Dec. 4th Committee meeting

Saturday Dec. 5th Christmas dinner

3rd Friday Dec.18th Christmas carols

# Club Photo Competition

Our winner is Claire Clarke with this picture of sunset over the Wey at Send



# Club Photo Competition



My thanks to Brian and Claire Clarke, Liz Gathercole, Jayne Harrison and others who provided the accompanying pictures on the theme of 'Water'. These have been independently judged (*thank you Cathy Wooden*) and the winner will be rewarded appropriately with some liquid refreshment.—*Ed*

*Bembridge (C Clarke)*



*Dubai MC*

# Club Photo Competition



*Coxes lock (Liz G)*

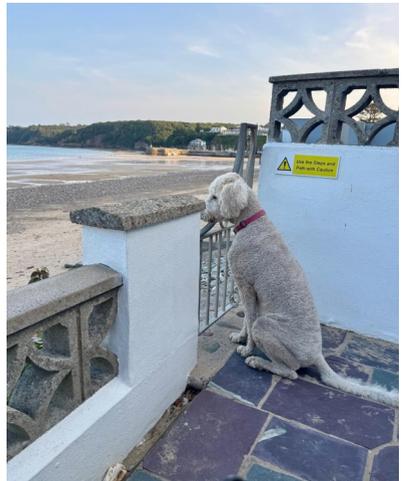
*(below: B Clarke)*



*(below: Jayne H)*



*Appley, Isle of Wight CC*



# Thames Quiz

Can you identify where the following photos were taken?

*Answers in next issue:*



1



2



3



4



5

# BBC illuminated parade

The 2025 Byfleet Boat Club Illuminated Parade was a great spectacle and community event enjoyed by record crowds lining the towpath and bridge. This would not have been possible without a huge team effort from the planners, marshals and catering team not to mention the innovative decorations on the boats. We sold many hot dogs, hot chocolates, teas and coffees. Thank you to each and everyone of you.

This year planning started much the same as usual and I was very grateful to the normal trusted souls for signing up to parade and to help. It then transpired that Rodney Wardlaw and Rachel from Pyrford Marina had invited 6 boats from the marina to join the parade. Checking the noticeboard at the club showed eleven club boats had signed up and I had a slight panic about whether there was enough room both in front of the club and under the M25 bridge for all these boats!

As always life gets in the way and some boats dropped out, but some added their names so we ended up with a list of 17 boats split roughly half and half between narrowboats and cruisers, the most that we have ever had!



*View from Club (C Clarke M'Lady)*



# BBC illuminated parade

In order to minimise the chaos we had the usual mooring plan but also a "cunning" plan for the boats at the M25 starting point including using the far bank as additional waiting area due to the depth issues. The marshalling this year also included pulling ropes to help a couple of narrowboats that struggled with the winding under the M25.



*Thanks to the many helpers*

Again my thanks to everyone who helped and assuming that the newbies and stalwarts are willing we will no doubt do it all again in November this year!

Brian



*(Photos C Clarke)*



*Festive FIZ*

# Club Events



*There was a good turnout for the Christmas Carol singalong (SK; Narnia)*



*The winter Barbeque was also well attended. Only four sausages remained for Eric and Raz to fight over (Facebook)*

# Christmas dinner



*Dominic Beardsall managed the balloon flying competition very well*



*Catering Staff provided a great meal. This was just the dessert buffet .*

*A popular event*



# Coming Events



*We do hope you will join us for the  
Annual Skittles Match between  
The Weybridge Mariners,  
The Byfleet Boat Club, and  
The Thames Scout Cruising Club*



*This year it is hosted by the TSCC on  
Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February*

*at the Hinchley Wood Scout and Guide HQ  
Lynwood Road, Thames Ditton KT7 0DN*

*Arrival 7.30pm – Skittles from 8.00pm  
Ample parking available*

**Cost £8.50 per person**

*Cost covers hall hire, a light finger buffet, and tea / coffee  
There is no licenced bar but you are welcome to BYO*

*To confirm your participation, please email TSCC Chairman  
George Barber ([chairman@tsc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@tsc.org.uk)) as soon as possible  
and transfer £8.50 per person to the TSCC:*

*Payee: TSCC, Sort Code: 40-35-40, A/c Number: 81467212, Reference: Skittles*

***To confirm attendance please email [chairman@tsc.org.uk](mailto:chairman@tsc.org.uk) asap and transfer  
£8.50 per person to: TSCC sort code is 40-35-40 A/C no 81467212 ref  
Skittles...THANKS!***

# Committee page

<b>Commodore</b>	Andrew Williamson ( <i>Ayresome</i> )	07448979653
<b>Vice Commodore</b>	Steve Kennedy ( <i>Narnia</i> )	07808059980
<b>Hon Secretary</b>	Cathy Wooden ( <i>Miffy</i> )	07984453248
<b>Hon Treasurer</b>	Cathy du Plessis ( <i>Ayresome</i> )	07833118286
<b>Chair Maintenance Committee</b>	Mick Wilson ( <i>Cranley</i> )	07876563285
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Eileen Searle ( <i>Babbling Brooks</i> )	
<b>Hire Boat rota AWCC representative</b>	Greg Beardsall ( <i>Ben Gorton</i> )	07901652799
<b>Quartermaster</b>	Rodney Wardlaw ( <i>Hazelnut</i> )	07887552922
	Raz Brooks ( <i>Babbling Brooks</i> )	
	Melvyn Wayne ( <i>Lady Jennifer</i> )	
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*The carols are quiet, the tinsel's been stowed.  
The party's a memory. I wish it had snowed.*

*Underneath a depressing and drizzly sky,  
The Wey's looking chilly; The current is high.*

*But we've licence to hibernate, snug in the cabin,  
With a steaming hot brew and a blanket to wrap in.*

*So till cormorants wake and the towpath is clear,  
Happy "staying-in-bed" for the start of the year!*

After a jam-packed festive season programme, I think many of us were hoping for a slightly slower January. It's been cold, wet and windy, so I'm guessing that not many went cruising. Frozen water pipes, weather warnings, red boards and trees down have certainly been a hint from Mother Nature to focus on indoor activities. There have been lots of those: license renewals, insurances, membership, mooring, year-end accounts, and more. All of this is in preparation for what promises to be another productive year for the Byfleet Boat Club.

Many people made extraordinary contributions in 2025, and I'm hoping that it was just a taster for what's ahead in 2026. So please come to the Annual General Meeting, hear what's happened and what's planned, and participate again this year, as much as you're able. "All hands on deck!"

*Andrew*

## **Stop Press**

**6 club boats have signed up to attend the IWA Cavalcade event at Little Venice on May 2nd – 4th.**

**If you would like to join them please get in touch with Steve Kennedy as soon as possible**

