



SBC

The Small Boat Club Kingston upon Thames

Newsletter: 27th March 2021

Commodore's Message

Hello everyone.

We are about to officially enter Spring, put our clocks forward and would normally be preparing our boats for the new season but not this year. Whilst optimism abounds in respect of controlling Covid, we are still constrained by rules, regulations, and guidelines, and so, to start with, a moan I'm afraid. As a club, we are bound by the Covid measures.

The Trustees and Flag Officers are legally accountable for any breach of these measures and, as we are spending what reserves the Club has on improvements (more of that later), it may well be the Trustees and Flag Officers that the authorities chase for fines! Many of us are pensioners, please look after us!

Everyone knows the dangers of Covid. Some of our members have first-hand experience (thankfully recovered now), many others have relations, friends and/or colleagues that have been affected. The

government tells us that, even following vaccinations, we must adhere to guidelines. We shouldn't take risks with our, or others, health,

Finally, should we have a costly incident on the island, our insurers might look to withhold part or all of claim if we were in breach at the time. So please curb your enthusiasm, read the e-mail that Linda sent this week with the RYA interpretation of rules and regulations, and keep us "clean". Things are opening up soon.



Now, if you really want to get onto the island, there are a host of "Covid safe" working parties coming along. Dom is very much our Project Manager here and has sent some "targeted" emails out for help. There will be more! A quick summary of what has been done so far (and a big thanks to all that have helped!).

- Upgrade to the loo
- Jetty work underway to have an extra mooring spot for a larger tender, grab handles and cover being installed.
- Two new "self-draining" dinghies being investigated and expected in a few months.
- A major piece of work to the grass area around the club house and on the "Surrey leg" under way to smarten and improve drainage. It has been rotavated and twenty tons of topsoil spread and levelled ready for turfing in April (a whole newsletter could be devoted to telling of the logistics involved in getting supplies and equipment to the island!)
- Four new trees have been planted going some way to replacing those damaged last year and before.
- A new watering system installed bringing pumped, filtered (not drinkable!) river water to some strategically placed standpipes.



- Some repair work done on the Clubhouse, fixing window hinges and extending the hand rail to the front door.

And a lot more is planned.....

So, keep an eye out for calls for help, there will be much painting needed and a host of less arduous tasks.

Finally, some of you may have seen on the Facebook page that we have a pair of nesting swans next to the shed. Last year we had a pair nesting in the same spot, but their eggs failed to hatch. On Saturday, during a Covid safe working party, I counted two eggs from the current pair (there may be more by now), so please, if you are on the island, give them space!

Finally, apologies for any repetition of what is covered in the Notes from the Committee, but we have been hard at work in the background and had little time to check for overlaps!

Hopefully it won't be too long before we can meet up again, even socially distanced! Stay safe and be patient!

AJ

A quick reminder of some useful websites:

The Club's website <http://www.smallboatclub.co.uk/>

The Club's Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/SmallBoatClub.co.uk/>

The Boat Safety Scheme's news web site

<https://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/about-us/news-and-press-releases/news-releases/>

The government's web site containing information on the River Thames

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters>

From the Committee

From the Committee:

Whilst we are still operating under Covid restrictions, work has started to refurbish the Island. Thanks to Dom for all the work he has done so far in getting the main area in front of the Clubhouse and Surrey leg rotovated and, last weekend, the soil spread. Dom has done loads of work in sourcing materials and mechanical aids, arranging delivery and coordinating small groups of volunteers so we could go ahead, Covid compliant. Please respond when Dom asks for the next batch of volunteers (10/11 April all being well) for laying the turf. Some new trees have been planted to help replace those we have lost. The daffodils are out. Meanwhile please adhere to the

continuing restrictions – we don't want the club fined for 'unauthorised' gatherings.

I'm thrilled that a pair of swans has chosen the island for their nesting place again this year. James nearly lost his ball of string to the enthusiastic nest building male swan. Please keep your and any guests' dogs under control so the swans are not disturbed. Sadly, a seal was attacked by a dog at Barnes last weekend and has had to be put to sleep because of the severity of its injuries.

River conditions

Thankfully, the flow is practically normal for this time of year. Many of the Environment Agency's winter works will be completed by Easter and the EA is currently surveying the reaches to identify and remove any hazards or mark them appropriately. From 13 April onward, the summer relief lock keepers should be back so most locks will have assisted passage during lock keepers' hours. Teddington Lock should return to 24-hour operation in the latter part of the month. Volunteers will be back at the end of May. There is still some ongoing planned work – replacement of ultrasonic gauges – and always emergency work. So please check with the EA website if you are planning to go further afield. Anyone hoping to go downstream, you are only permitted to go under Hammersmith Bridge on Sundays and you need to book a timed slot in advance via the PLA website. I understand that we may be seeing some of the 'London boats' but they will be running from Kew to Hampton Court only. Please remember; many of the moorings along the river – both EA and private ones (Councils, the Royal Palaces) – will now have conditions enforced by District Enforcement (DE) and I understand that they are likely to start operating once restrictions ease. Please check when you moor up and comply with the conditions on the notices (usually to ring up and register your arrival), even if you are just staying an hour or two.

The Association of Thames Yacht Clubs (ATYC) acts as an umbrella group for 30+ Clubs on the tidal and non-tidal Thames and is one of the groups engaged in formal discussions with the EA. Topics currently under discussion include the Customer Charter (what we can expect), mooring arrangements and, later, a consultation on licence fees for the next few years. ATYC can only be effective if it gets support from the members clubs. There may be a rally over the August Bank Holiday weekend based on Weybridge Mariners Club, by Shepperton Lock. More details later if it can go ahead.

Linda



The Wily Waterman

Hints and Tips passed down

What's not to know about knots?

There are many knots for many different uses. Some we may have learned from cubs, brownies, scouts, guides some for school, some from camping and others from formal nautical training.

There are though, arguably, seven essential knots for sailors and here's a brief description...

The Bowline

The most useful knot aboard a sailboat is the bowline. It forms a fixed noose at the end of a line that cannot run or slip and is commonly used, for example, to secure sheets to the clew of a headsail. Two bowlines can also be used to connect two lines. The great advantage of a bowline is that no matter how tight it becomes after being loaded for a while, it can always be easily untied.



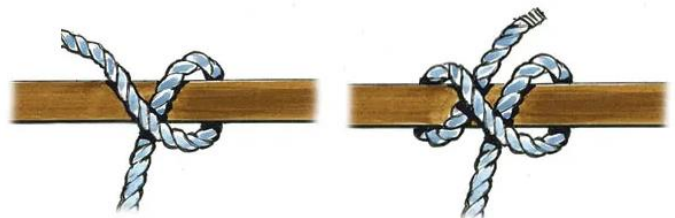
Stopper knot

To keep a line from pulling through a block or rope clutch, a knot should be tied in the end of it. The most secure knot for doing this is the double overhand stopper knot, known as the stopper knot for short. Unlike a simple overhand knot or a figure eight knot, this knot does not come loose easily.



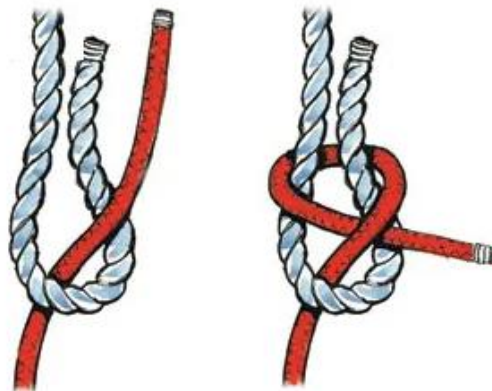
Clove Hitch

This is a handy knot because it can be tied very quickly. On sailboats, its usual use is for securing fender whips to a lifeline, stanchion base or toe rail. It can be easily adjusted to raise or lower a fender as needed. The clove hitch can also be used to temporarily secure a dock line to a piling, but be aware that the hitch can unexpectedly work free as the boat moves around at the dock.



Sheet Bend

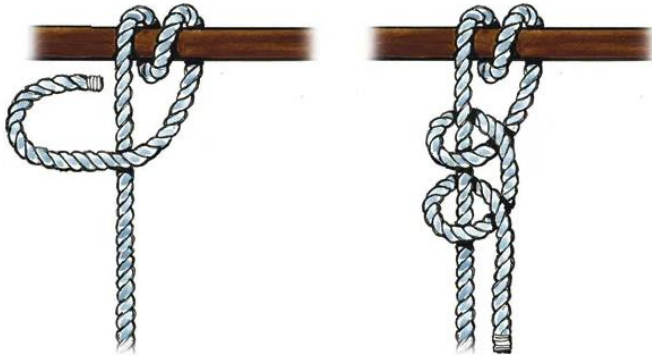
Many sailors use a square knot when tying two lines together, but these often come loose when not under load. The sheet bend is more secure, is easy to untie and works much better when two lines of unequal diameter need to be tied together. As you can see in the illustration, its final form is only slightly different from a square knot, though it is tied quite differently.



Two Half Hitches

This knot has a self-explanatory name: one half hitch, followed by another half hitch. It is easy to tie and forms a running noose that can be made larger or smaller. This is the perfect hitch to use to tie a line tightly around an object. Combined with a round turn,

it is an excellent way to secure a dock line to a piling. Tying two half hitches on top of a clove hitch is also the best way to keep a fender whip from slipping



Rolling Hitch

The rolling hitch comes to the rescue when riding turns jam a line on a winch drum. This hitch is designed not to slip. Use an extra line to tie a rolling hitch on the standing portion of a jammed line, shift the load to the extra line and you can free the jammed line. The rolling hitch will also keep any line secured to a vertical cylindrical object, such as a stanchion, from slipping. It can also be used to form an adjustable noose that doesn't slip under load, which is handy when securing tie-downs for an awning on deck. The Scouts and Guides use the same knot to tension lines secured to tent pegs, only they call it a taut line hitch.



Cleat Hitch

Walk down a dock in any marina and you will see many dock lines improperly secured to cleats. A proper cleat hitch is easy to tie, very effective and it can be released under load without worrying about losing a finger in the process. Any time you make off a line on a cleat, on a dock or on deck, this is the knot to use.

This is an extract from a recent EA notice; it will affect Molesey Lock facilities, which many of our members use.

Notification from the EA: Changes to drinking and bulk water supply points at River Thames lock sites

We are modifying the mains water points at our lock sites and associated camp sites on the non-tidal River Thames. This includes taps for drinking water containers, bulk water supplies, and taps at chemical toilet disposal and sewage pump-out facilities.

Once the necessary modifications are completed, anyone wishing to use our mains water supply points will need to provide their own hose if necessary, with a standard Hozelock-type connector attached. The hose should be 'food grade' quality suitable for freshwater use. These are widely available from chandleries and camping and caravanning supplies outlets. However, the hose should not

- be more than 7 metres long
- be of an expandable type
- have any type of additional fitting attached.

All the above will result in back pressure being created. This will cause water to be vented out of the supply tap before it enters the hose. Clear instructions will be displayed at all supply points.

The backflow prevention devices will considerably reduce the rate at which water is dispensed from the taps. Please allow additional time to fill containers and bulk water holding tanks. Please also expect an increase in the amount of waiting time if the facilities are already in use. We apologise in advance for any inconvenience these necessary changes may cause.

The roll-out of the modifications is already underway and is due to complete in early April.

Please send articles, notices & photos for future Newsletters to:
ianholiday54@gmail.com