

SBC

The Small Boat Club Kingston upon Thames

Newsletter: 9th April 2022

Commodore's Message

Hello again,

Since the last newsletter much has been happening with the club as it rises from its winter slumbers!

The tree work, and in particular the tidying up, has now been completed. Whilst the initial impact of the work looked a bit brutal, all of the willows are already showing signs of new growth. The work has, of course, made the trees a lot safer for our members and visitors. The apple tree also had a make-over and is now pointing skyward again, plus the grass seems to be making a tentative "green shoots" recovery. The icing on the cake being that we managed to get our landlords to pick up most of the costs.

There is still much to do though. A lot of the fencing was damaged over the winter, some by virtue of age, some being pushed over the edge by the maintenance activity going on. It is being replaced, but we will need volunteers to complete the job. We have a pile of rubbish still to move from the island (although, by the time this goes to print, I hope it will have been cleared). We need to de-winterise our fleet (tenders, day-boat, ferry), spring clean the club house, reinforce the jetty and, I hope, investigate options for improving the surface of the island on the Middlesex and up-stream sections. The delivery of which depends heavily on the effort of our members. So, a massive thank you to all the heroes that have contributed over the last few months (you know who you are, and have been mentioned in WhatsApp and on Facebook posts) and an appeal to everyone else to keep an eye out for requests for help going forward bearing in mind, if the Working Party dates don't suit, we have enough "self-contained" tasks that you can do if you want to choose your own time! And if you

are worried about the work being too physical, we have a lot of fence painting to do!

As well as the Working Parties in March we had the **Fitting-Out Supper** on the 12th. This is considered the opening of the island for the season (although the weather doesn't always pick up this signal!). For personal reasons, I was unable to attend any of these but I have tried to make up for non-attendance in other ways though...honest!). I understand that the Supper was a success so must say thank you to Gavin for organising this. He is now working on the **Fun Day**, scheduled for 19th June and the **Island Party** on 2nd July. Keep an eye out for calls for help to set things up, and please make a note in your diaries to keep those dates clear and come along.

Before all of that, we have the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee Cruise** and get together on 3rd June which Trevor is organising. If you haven't read the WhatsApp messages or seen the email, the plan is for a flotilla of suitably decorated boats to travel up to Hampton Court and back, then have a social gathering on the island. It should be great fun and a good opportunity for those of you without boats to "hitch a ride" on a member's boat and have a go! I have four spaces on *C'Est La Vie* for those feeling brave enough!

A bit of nature news, we have two swans' nests on the island with a number of eggs, a Canadian goose nest down near our canoe rack, a small family of Egyptian geese have been spotted teaching the young ones how to swim, and it looks as though we have a pair of ring-necked parakeets nesting in the tree by the Clubhouse. Please give them all space, look but don't disturb them, and remember that dogs must be kept on a lead.

Some sad news arrived a few weeks back about the passing of one of our former members and Trustees,

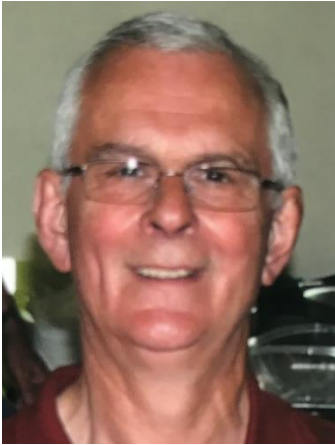
John Croom. John was a big figure in the club for many years and will be missed. Please see Linda's piece about him next in this newsletter.

See you on the island

AJ

John Croom. RIP.

It was with great sadness we heard of the death of our dear friend John Croom on 23rd March.



John had spent much of his life associated with boats and water (particularly the sea). His father had fishing boats on the Kent coast and John spent much of his boyhood around the harbours at Broadstairs and Ramsgate. But he also strayed up the Thames – staying in Barnes and with the then owners of Velma boathouse. John worked for Lloyds Register and that took him to work in Holland for several years. Sue and I were honoured to join John on a trip to Holland and revisit some of his old haunts with him. It was through contacts he visited Israel and met Tali. She moved to UK to join him and they lived in Kent before moving to Blackheath and then to Kingston. By this time John was working for Christie's. John swapped his love of dogs, especially their red setters, for his love of being on the water, joined the SBC and 'Mummy Bear' arrived on the island from Southampton. I believe Gary takes credit for meeting Tali on a late-night bus, through her, John and persuading him to join SBC. John became an active member of the Club, joining the Committee and then becoming a Trustee. He joined Dom as the main negotiators of our current lease with the EA in 2012. It was his friendliness and hospitality that people really remember – Val spoke of arriving on the island with her sister Janet to be greeted by John "Come and have a cup of coffee," long before they got anywhere near *Argo*. John was always willing to

share his knowledge particularly of insurance matters and would give good advice – not always taken! Many of us enjoyed trips up and down river with John including lunches at the Olde Swan and he regularly bought non-boating friends for days out. Sue and I also enjoyed days with him off the boat: a trip to visit his old haunts in Kent, various boat shows and sharing his pleasure in his new BMW. We enjoyed his tales of his extensive travels with Christie's and lively discussions – even if we didn't always see eye-to-eye!

Travel over to the island out of season became more difficult and John found a shoreside mooring just below Kingston Bridge where he enjoyed more facilities, more frequent visits on board from Tali and the 'goings on' outside the back of John Lewis. The move also loosened the ties with SBC; John resigned as a Trustee and eventually his membership. But he kept links with many members.

Although John had had circulatory problems for years it was the diagnosis of cancer after an abdominal operation that led to his untimely death. We are very sad to have lost a good friend. Thanks especially to Ray, Gerry, Sue, Russell and Hilary for their support of John and Tali over the difficult last three months.



The celebration of John's life will be on Friday 29th April 2022. Please contact Gerry, Sue or Linda for more details and to confirm if you will be attending so Tali has an idea of the number of people to expect. Family flowers only please; any donations to Wildlife Aid Foundation.

Linda

[On the River](#)

There are a number of planned restrictions and closures on the Thames that could affect your trip(s). Details are regularly updated and easy to find at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-restrictions-and-closures>

Upcoming Duty Days

10 th April	R Baldwin
17 th April	G&S Gilmour
24 th April	J&M Manthel
1 st May	R&J Fountain
8 th May	S&G Harvey
15 th May	S&S Green
22 nd May	E&M Taylor
29 th May	J Blythe
5 th June	S&J Gilmour



The Whiley Waterman Hints and Tips passed down

Club Burgees

Our beautiful high quality sewn Burgees have arrived. Price £25 (at cost). A great way to smarten up your boat and promote our club. Get one from Andrew Barwick.



“Moaning Myrtle’s Corner”



**Please
Take
Your
Rubbish
Home!!**

Please remember that we do not have a rubbish collection from the island. While we make a special effort after events, please, if you bring food or drink to the island, take your 'empties' home with you – or at least pop them in the bins in the park. Otherwise, another member will have to clear up behind you.

Thank you.



The electric outboard is not new!

As we de-winterise our boats we focus primarily on the mechanical “bits”. One of the major components being the propulsion units. Whilst some of our boats have inboard engines, many have outboards either as the main unit, others as auxiliary, some for both.

As well as the maintenance of these, there is also the cost of running and, as fuel prices continue their upward trend, maybe you are thinking of changing your unit? Maybe the impact on the environment is a concern?

Seeing the GoBoats going up and down the river during the summer months may have turned your thoughts to an electric outboard?

Whilst we are familiar with the common four stroke engines and maybe even the less common (nowadays) two-stroke, did you know that the electric outboard has been around longer?

Some point to the electric outboards of Morton Ray which came about in the early 1970’s but Gustave Trouvé, a French electrical engineer is credited with inventing the first electric outboard 100 years earlier, patenting his design in 1880.



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