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Subscriptions for 2020/21

Happy New Year! The Society's year starts at the April meeting and subscriptions are due at that point. As agreed at the last AGM, the subscription rate for 2020/21 is unchanged at £16.00 for a single member and £27.00 for joint membership. Since we will not be meeting in April you may want to defer your payment until the next meeting. I would prefer not to receive cheques at this time as I would have to go to the Post Office to pay them in.

*Aelred Derbyshire
Hon Treasurer*

Society website

In view of the effects of the coronavirus, several pages on the Society's website have been updated. In particular these include [Waterway Trips](#) and [Waterway Events](#).

Chairman's Column

Dear Members,

As you will have been notified already, our April Meeting has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus outbreak. It has now been decided that all our meetings are cancelled until further notice. This of course includes the AGM in July.

All our present committee are willing to stand for re-election if the members agree. All the AGM notices will be included in the June newsletter when you will all be asked for your comments and votes as necessary. These can be emailed or sent by pigeon post (aka snail mail) to any of the committee.

I am sure that you understand the necessity for these measures at this worrying time.

Keep safe,

Alan Rose

Canals and the pandemic

The worldwide effects of the coronavirus pandemic have been catastrophic. Whilst not so horrendous as far as the waterways are concerned, the disease has had, and will continue to have for some time to come, a large influence upon them.

From my brief observations (I am trying to stay self isolating) there are far fewer boats moving on the canal here in the Braunston area. Fewer people seem to be walking the towing paths - after all it's not possible to pass people coming the other way and maintain "social distancing" on a path usually less than two metres wide.

The effect upon various events and meetings around the system has been enormous. Some organisations have tried to not commit themselves to cancelling events too far in advance. For example, the opening of Crofton Pumps has not been cancelled beyond the end of April. However, it seems to me likely that the restrictions on gather-

ings will be maintained beyond 1st May. All the 19 events listed on page 2 of this Newsletter have been, or are likely to be, cancelled or postponed.

Many national events have been removed from the calendar. Amongst others, Mikron Theatre will not be touring at all this year, the organisers of the Crick Boat Show (due in May) are considering holding it in the autumn, June's Braunston Historic Boat Rally has been cancelled, the IWA Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice has also been cancelled and the IWA National Trailboat Festival due to be held on the Wey & Arun Canal in May has been postponed until 2021.

No-one knows how long national attempts to contain the disease will last but the ramifications for the nation could be profound. Hopefully, the permanent effects on the waterways system will be minimal - but only time will tell.

Peter Oates

Fenland fees in force

Boat licensing for craft on the formerly free-to-navigate Middle Level Navigations will come into force on 1 April 2020, navigation authority the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) have confirmed.

The introduction follows the passing of an Act of Parliament and the creation of bylaws enabling licensing to be introduced, and also involves a new requirement for insurance and (from next year) for a Boat Safety Scheme certificate. For boats based on the Middle Level, a network of Fenland waterways connecting the Nene and Great Ouse rivers, the annual fee for the first year (1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021) will be set at 75 percent of the Environment Agency registration fees for those

rivers, but will rise to 100 percent for boats not licensed by 1 June.

For the initial year, these boats will also be able to cruise the Nene or Great Ouse systems by purchasing an EA visitor licence from the MLC at a price capped at 25 percent of the full fee. Meanwhile visiting boats holding EA or River Cam registrations or 'Gold' (combined EA and Canal & River Trust) licences will be able to visit the Middle Level without extra payment.

The Commissioners point out that these figures are only for the first year; arrangements for following years may differ as they will need to await the completion of the EA's current review of its charges.

Canal Boat - 27 March 2020

12 month closure

The Calder & Hebble Navigation is likely to remain shut for a year as a result of damage caused by the winter floods - and the repair costs could exceed £2m.

There was damage along various lengths of the Calder & Hebble Navigation and the Rochdale

Canal in the Calder valley, but a damaged lockside at one of the Figure of Three Locks on the Calder & Hebble will be the biggest repair job.

CRT's Sean McGinley said this is "the most damaged single structure on the Trust's entire 2,000 mile network" following the storms.

Canal Boat - 27 March 2020

Waterways Events

The following is a list of waterway events that were due to take place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the correctness of this information, please check with the listed contact who will be glad to confirm and supply further details.

OS grid references and/or postcodes are shown (where known but not guaranteed) to aid location of the event.

If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then please contact the editor.

Date/Time	Organiser	Details	Venue	Contact
Thu 2 Apr 2020 7.45pm	Southampton CS	MEETING CANCELLED - Southern French Waterways. Member Jon Van de Geer will take us on a journey along the Canal du Rhône à Sète, the Petite Rhône, on an excursion to Carcassonne and a trip along the Canal du Midi.	Chilworth Village Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Sat 4 Apr 2020 10.00am-5.00pm	The Claverton Group	Claverton Pumping Station. CLOSED until further notice. Pumping day. Adults: £6.00, Accompanied Children under 16 free, no concessions.	Claverton Pumping Station, Ferry Lane, Claverton, Bath, BA2 7BH (ST790643).	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Web: www.claverton.org
Sat-Mon 11-13 Apr 2020 10.30-4.30pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Crofton Br)	Easter steaming. CANCELLED. Theme: Easter Fun at Crofton. Adults: £8.00 Concessions: £7.00 Children under 16: Free. Further details on website.	Crofton Beam Engines, Crofton, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3DW (SU261623).	Web: www.croftonbeamengines.org
Wed 15 Apr 2020 8.00pm	Basingstoke CS	MEETING CANCELLED - "The Electric Boat Association." Tim Knox is a committee member of the Association. He will tell about it, the advantages of electric propulsion for canal boats and the current state of the technology.	Parish Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, GU24 8AZ (SU974615)	Email: chobham.talks@basingstoke-canal.org.uk Web: www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk
Sat 18 Apr 2020 10.00am-5.00pm	The Claverton Group	Claverton Pumping Station. CLOSED until further notice. Pumping day. Adults: £6.00, Accompanied Children under 16 free, no concessions.	Claverton Pumping Station, Ferry Lane, Claverton, Bath, BA2 7BH (ST790643).	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Web: www.claverton.org
Sun 19 Apr 2020 10.00am	Somersetshire Coal CS	WALK POSTPONED - Combe Hay to Midford - guided walk.	Layby opposite Bridge Farm BA2 7EE (ST745604).	Derrick Hunt: 07986 972984
Tue 21 Apr 2020 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Reading Br)	MEETING CANCELLED - 'Reading to Isleworth Thames short cut - James Brindley' - a talk by Victoria Owens	Grange Free Church Hall, Circuit Lane, Southcote, Reading, RG30 3HD (SU692718).	John Swift: 0118 941 5540 Email: swift.john21@gmail.com Mobile: 07533 886917.
Sat 2 May 2020 10.00am-5.00pm	The Claverton Group	Claverton Pumping Station. CLOSED until further notice. Pumping day. Adults: £6.00, Accompanied Children under 16 free, no concessions.	Claverton Pumping Station, Ferry Lane, Claverton, Bath, BA2 7BH (ST790643).	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Web: www.claverton.org
Thu 7 May 2020	Southampton CS	NO MEETING. As always, there is NO May meeting.		Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Sat-Mon 8-10 May 2020 10.30am-4.30pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Crofton Br)	May Day Bank Holiday steaming. POSSIBLY CANCELLED. Theme: Model Engineering Festival. Adults: £8.00 Concessions: £7.00 Children under 16: Free. Further details on website.	Crofton Beam Engines, Crofton, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3DW (SU261623).	Web: www.croftonbeamengines.org
Sun 10 May 2020 1.00pm-7.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	RALLY CANCELLED - Pulborough to Pallingham Boat Rally. This aims to confirm the right of navigation on the River Arun above Pulborough, reaching the site of the junction with the Wey and Arun then on to the navigable limit at Pallingham Quay. No entry fee, but donations towards costs welcome. Launching and other info on website.	Launching from Pulborough slipway. Adj to The Corn Store, London Road, Pulborough, RH20 2BJ (TQ045184). Map here . Canoes can launch at Stopham Bridge, RH20 1DS (TQ030183). Map here .	Please register for event on website. Further information, please email. Trust Office: 01483 505566 Email: events@weyandarun.co.uk Web: www.weyarun.org.uk
Sat 16 May 2020 10.00am-5.00pm	The Claverton Group	Claverton Pumping Station. CLOSED until further notice. Pumping day. Adults: £6.00, Accompanied Children under 16 free, no concessions.	Claverton Pumping Station, Ferry Lane, Claverton, Bath, BA2 7BH (ST790643).	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Web: www.claverton.org
Tue 19 May 2020 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Reading Br)	Joint meeting with IWA Guildford & Reading Br. POSSIBLY CANCELLED. Speaker: TBA. Entry donation £2.50 (incl K&A members) - to help pay for the meeting.	Grange Free Church Hall, Circuit Lane, Southcote, Reading, RG30 3HD (SU692718).	John Swift: 0118 941 5540 Email: swift.john21@gmail.com Mobile: 07533 886917.
Sat-Mon 23-25 May 2020 0.00am	IWA and Wey & Arun Canal Trust.	IWA National Trailboat Festival. POSTPONED until 2021. Order your earlybird trailboat mooring before 1st March for just £15. Full price moorings cost £25. For further information or to book a festival space for a trailboat, please see website.	Wey & Arun Canal, Alfold / Dunsfold (TQ034360).	Email: support@weyandarun.co.uk Web: weyarun.org.uk/trailboat-festival
Sat-Mon 23-25 May 2020 10.30am-4.30pm	Kennet & Avon CT (Crofton Br)	Spring Bank Holiday steaming. POSSIBLY CANCELLED. Theme: Family Fun Steaming. Adults: £8.00 Concessions: £7.00 Children under 16: Free. Further details on website.	Crofton Beam Engines, Crofton, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3DW (SU261623).	Web: www.croftonbeamengines.org
Sat 30 May 2020 10.00am-5.00pm	The Claverton Group	Claverton Pumping Station. CLOSED until further notice. Pumping day. Adults: £6.00, Accompanied Children under 16 free, no concessions.	Claverton Pumping Station, Ferry Lane, Claverton, Bath, BA2 7BH (ST790643).	Tel: 01225 483001 Email: enquiries@claverton.org Web: www.claverton.org
Thu 4 Jun 2020 7.45pm	Southampton CS	MEETING PROBABLY CANCELLED - "Murder, Mayhem, Pillage & Plunder" - a talk by Cheryl Butler. Check the May Newsletter re cancellation.	Chilworth Village Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Thu 2 Jul 2020 7.45pm	Southampton CS	MEETING PROBABLY CANCELLED - The Society's AGM. Check the June Newsletter re cancellation.	Chilworth Village Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ (SU410184).	Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com
Thu 6 Aug 2020	Southampton CS	NO MEETING. As always, there will be NO August meeting.		Angela Rose: 02380 675312 Email: alanjrose@btinternet.com

CRT's response to coronavirus

Supporting the national effort to keep people safe

- Whilst our towpaths remain open, **use of them should now be limited**
- No fishing until further notice
- Avoid any stretches with boats moored against the towpath
- Strictly observe social distancing **at all times**
- Follow the latest advice from Government



In these unprecedented times, our priority is to support the national effort to keep people safe, following the Government's advice and taking the appropriate action to protect our colleagues and partners, and everyone who visits, or lives on and around, our canals and river navigations.

Update: 8.30am Tuesday 24 March

Whilst our towpaths remain open, use of them should now be limited.

If our canals and rivers are local to you, and you use the towpath for your daily exercise or journey to undertake essential work, please now avoid any stretches with boats moored against the towpath, and strictly observe social distancing at all times, following the latest advice from Government.

We are asking leisure boaters to stop all non-essential travel and not to visit their boats if they do not live aboard permanently. As a result, and to help those who live-aboard (along with those who would need to travel to their boat in order to move it) we are suspending the requirement to move every 14 days. The suspension will be kept under review in line with revised Government guidance, applying initially until 14 April 2020.

Please note that from Monday 30 March, unless there is an emergency or boaters require passage for essential services such as water, pump out or waste, all our employee-operated locks, bridges and tunnels will be closed.

If you are a boat owner please have a look at our latest [FAQ pages](#).

Update: 4.45pm Monday 23 March

Our priority remains to support the national effort to keep people safe and help fight the pandemic, and strictly follow Government advice.

In light of growing concerns, we ask people to please be aware of how busy your local towpaths are, and in particular where boats are moored against the towpath. Where towpaths are likely to be busy, our advice now is to restrict your use, and only to use those towpaths that are local to you, are quiet, and are largely free of moored boats.

Please exercise your judgement and always strictly follow the Government advice on social distancing. We hope that we can all

It's not all doom and gloom

Is coronavirus, social distancing or self isolation getting too much?

Try some of these canal related items on the internet to pass the time and get you in the canal mood:

The Canal & River Trust have a few videos and pictures on their site. Try this page to start with: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/features/escape-to-our-beautiful-canal>

You might wish to see the video blog of David Johns at <https://cruisingthecut.co.uk>. David is a former ITV Meridian reporter who swapped a life on TV for a life on the water and bought a 56 foot long

resume normal use of all our waterways and towpaths once the national crisis is over.

Update: Monday 23 March

Following our message from last week, our response to this unprecedented crisis continues to evolve. Our priority remains to support the national effort to keep people safe and fighting the pandemic, strictly following the Government's advice.

Our 2,000-mile network of canals, towpaths, reservoirs, docks and river navigations remain open, but we strongly encourage people to stay local and strictly observe social distancing measures. As our waterways run through towns and cities across the country, they bring the countryside into urban areas, providing many of us with the opportunity to get outdoors and connect with nature without travelling far from home.

So until advice changes, you may continue to use your local towpath to exercise and get some fresh air, but please observe the latest Government guidance on social distancing – do not congregate, keep moving, allow space for others to pass, and be very mindful of moored boats where people will often be self-isolating.

'Virtual wellbeing'

For the many people who are self-isolating, or who do not live close to a canal or river, you can continue to experience the calm and beauty of the waterways from the comfort of your own home by visiting our [virtual 'escape' page here](#).

Update: Sunday 22 March

There is an increasing awareness of the importance of waterways in supporting our mental health and physical wellbeing. That's why - whilst we closed our museums and visitor centres on Friday 20 March* - our 2,000-mile network of canals, towpaths, and river navigations remain open and available to use, but we strongly encourage people to stay local and observe social distancing measures.

Our green and blue network runs through towns and cities across the country, bringing the countryside into urban areas, providing the opportunity to experience nature and the great outdoors without having to travel far from home.

Whilst our planned programme of active participation events has also had to be suspended, our towpaths remain open and boats can move freely around the network.

* The sites affected are: Anderton Boat Lift Visitor Centre, National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, National Waterways Museum, Gloucester, Pontcysyllte Visitor Centre, Standedge Visitor Centre and Stoke Bruerne Museum and cafe.

The above is a slightly edited version of a notice on the CRT website at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/safety-on-our-waterways/coronavirus> and several associated pages. It is possible to see how the restrictions have evolved over a matter of just a few days.

narrowboat in 2015. Since then, he has put over 200 videos on his website about boating and his journeys around the system.

There are also quite a few videos about the canals on YouTube. Topics range from pleasure boats to working boats, canals all over the country, opinions (good and bad), comic items. In fact, it's almost a case of name it and it's there. Try https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=canals and pick what takes your fancy.

One you might want to watch is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeBY869iCwQ> about a trip for members of the Leighton Buzzard Canal Society on board nb Stanton.

'Poor design and maintenance' highlighted

Two reports into last year's structural failure at Toddbrook Reservoir which led to the precautionary evacuation of 1,500 people from Whaley Bridge have been published – and the upshot is that there will be some large amounts spent on the Canal & River Trust's reservoirs in the coming years to deal with any potential similar issues.

Following the failure of the reservoir dam's auxiliary spillway after exceptionally heavy rain (but well within the range that the spillway was designed to carry), a CRT internal investigation and an external Government study were launched with the aims of uncovering the causes of the failure, finding out why regular external investigations hadn't highlighted the issues, and making recommendations to prevent a recurrence either at Toddbrook or on any other reservoir.

The reports (both written by dam experts external to CRT) have come to the conclusion that the concrete auxiliary spillway (added to the face of the dam in the 1960s after a flood proved too much for the existing main overflow spillway situated at one end of the dam) was inadequately specified and built. Faults included:

- The concrete slabs forming the spillway base were too thin and insufficiently reinforced
- The horizontal joints between the slabs were waterproofed and secured by dowels, but not the joints running up and down the spillway
- There was no 'cut-off' (a waterproof barrier between the spillway base and the earth dam's clay core) to prevent any water from getting underneath the base
- There were inadequate relief holes to let out any water that got underneath
- The spillway narrowed inwards on one side, creating an area where the impact of heavy water flows would be concentrated
- The walls and base were inadequately linked together

As a result, when natural settlement of the dam (which occurs at perhaps 1-2mm per year) resulted in a gap under the spillway crest, water could get under it and wash out soil from underneath, creating voids. As the heavy rain on 31 July - 1 August 2019 overloaded the main spillway and began to flood over the auxiliary spillway, sufficient water penetrated under the base to raise one of the lower concrete slabs – following which there was a progressive failure as material was washed out and more unsupported slabs collapsed into the resulting void.

In addition to the inadequacy of the design, the Government report

highlighted "intermittent maintenance over the years," including failure to repair cracks in the concrete, clear vegetation, seal joints and clear pressure relief holes, which might between them have prevented the damage – although it also says that they wouldn't have enabled the structure to withstand the theoretical worst possible weather.

Meanwhile the CRT report's author felt that the ten-yearly statutory external inspections over the years had failed to identify the problems despite early indications. And the most recent one in 2018, which had finally raised these issues, indicated the work required and given an 18-month deadline for completion, had unfortunately failed to convey its urgency or importance to CRT's engineers – as a result of which it was still on the 'waiting to be done' list.

The Government report makes a list of recommendations, including that the Environment Agency commissions new guidance on spillway inspections and possible failures, that inspectors examine spillways more closely and frequently and should not rely on previous reports, that recommendations should make the seriousness and urgency clear, that dam owners should be made more aware of the vulnerability of spillways to poor maintenance, and that the EA should urgently seek to identify any reservoirs with potentially similar spillway characteristics to those at Toddbrook.

CRT has acknowledged that maintenance of the spillway in some periods "might have been more stringent", albeit the spillway could have failed in an extreme weather event regardless. The Trust has set aside an extra £30m for reservoir work over the next three years (on top of its £25m major works programme), and in the meantime has been reviewing the design features of all its reservoirs to identify which ones need work, while managing water levels to remove risk pending the completion of the reviews, and improving reservoir monitoring and vegetation management.

The Government-commissioned Independent Reservoir Review report by Professor David Balmforth is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872769/toddbrook-reservoir-independent-review-reporta.pdf

The Canal & River Trust's separate independent report by expert reservoir engineer Dr Andrew Hughes is available at:

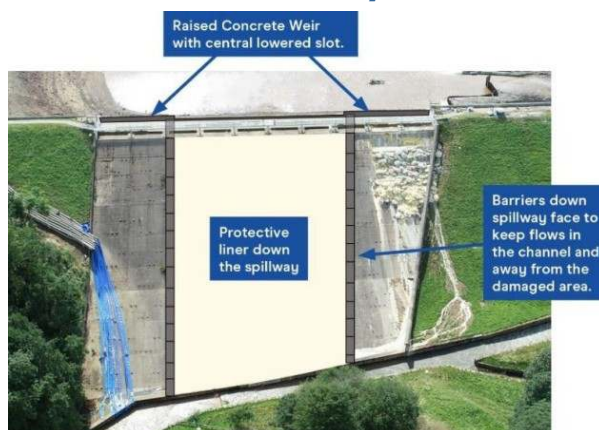
<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/north-west/restoring-toddbrook-reservoir>

Canal Boat - 27 March 2020

Toddbrook Reservoir initial work underway

Even before the reports into the reasons for last summer's failure at the Peak Forest Canal's Toddbrook Reservoir were published, initial works aimed at putting the reservoir back into use were already under way.

In the meantime, a plan has been devised for a temporary repair. The central section (about half of the total width) of the spillway is to be fitted with a new a waterproof liner, and separated by concrete barriers from the remainder of the spillway (including the damaged section). A new 1.5m high concrete raised concrete weir will be built along the top of the dam at the head of the spillway, but with a lower central section to direct any surplus water into the relined central section of the spillway. Work is also planned on the inlet from the Todd Brook, and the bypass channel intended to carry surplus water around the reservoir.



These are interim works to guard against extreme weather in the short term. They will not enable the reservoir to be refilled, and will probably be removed for the permanent repair in 2021. CRT Asset Improvement Director Simon Bamford said: "We are keen to hear the findings of the independent inquiries so we can move forward and decide how best to fix the dam for the long term. Once we know what caused the damage to the dam we will be able to work out a detailed plan for repairs."

Meanwhile, CRT continues to make plans for water resources for the

Cheshire Ring during the rebuilding work, including works to feeder channels to improve the supply from the other reservoirs still supplying the Ring.

Canal Boat - 27 February 2020

SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY

Established 1967

The objectives of the Society are to foster interest in canals and inland waterways, to assist in their preservation, restoration and development, and to give practical help on waterway projects.

Meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.45pm (see Waterways Events in this issue) at Chilworth Village Hall, Chilworth, Southampton, SO16 7JZ. OS Grid Ref: SU410184. Contact the Secretary for further information.

This Newsletter is normally published during the first week of each month in time for the Society's meeting.

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthamptonCanalSociety>

March Meeting

'Happy in Holland' with Rob and Julie Dean

Our March meeting welcomed Rob Dean and his wife Julie for a very interesting talk entitled 'Happy in Holland.' Rob, who is President of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, started his talk with an explanation of the title 'Happy in Holland.'

Rob and Julie had reached that time for another challenge: they decided that they would have a Dutch Barge type of boat built. They settled on a Simon Parker built boat.

However, they noticed a similar boat up for sale in Holland. They hadn't at that time thought of cruising in Holland. They went to have a look at AMPERSTORM and decided that this was the boat for them.

They then had another think as they "Hadn't thought of Holland," (first thought) would they be "Hopeful in Holland" (second choice), but no what about "Hapless in Holland" (third choice), but again no. Then "HAPPY IN HOLLAND" yes this was what it was about.

They then had a survey on AMPERSTORM and it was decided to have some work carried out on the underside of the hull. She was then relaunched and Rob and Julie then motored their soon-to-be boat, to a paint

specialist.

She was then lifted out over a steep bank and transported to the paint workshop a few yards away, after first being shot blasted under the waterline, and given what looked like an excellent five coat paint job underneath. Not the usual slap on of narrowboat blacking that is the norm on our inland waterways.

AMPERSTORM was then relaunched back over the bank, with the cranes overload alarm ringing, looking very resplendent with her new red paint job.

They then motored away through the Dutch Waterways, past oil rigs in repair to their winter moorings at a yacht club. On the way through various lift bridges, they met some very large commercial shipping. This WAS on the Amsterdam / Rhine Canal!

A lot larger than their craft.

I will finish here and continue next month with a few notes and facts about their trip.

Alan Rose

Red diesel announcement

CHANCELLOR Rishi Sunak revealed plans to review the current use of red diesel in the spring Budget. The Government is set to consult with red diesel users to determine whether continued access to the fuel is justifiable. The consultation will be conducted with a view to removing the entitlement to red diesel use, except for agricultural, rail and non-commercial heating purposes, by April 2022.

Commercial boats on open waters, including ferries and fishing boats, will remain entitled to the Marine Voyages Relief so will not face a charge increase if the entitlement to use red diesel is revoked.

This decision has been taken by the Chancellor with the intention to incentivise businesses to improve energy efficiency and to investigate greener alternatives where possible.

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) has responded that while red diesel remains the primary and often only fuel available at the waterside, it should continue to be available to recreational boaters in the UK for the purpose of propelling a private recreational vessel.

HMRC have confirmed there will be a consultation in the spring and the RYA will be working with other significant stakeholders to make a strong representation on behalf of recreational boaters. Although details of the consultation have yet to be set out, the RYA said it remained fully engaged with the debate.

[Towpath Talk](#) - 13 March 2020

Extending expiring BSS certifications

The National Association of Boat Owners (NABO) Council has recently contacted the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) in an effort to request extensions on expiring BSS certifications.

They argue that, in the present circumstances, an extension of three months in the first instance on expiring BSS certifications would be justified.

With many boaters having to self-isolate or commit to social-distancing amid concerns over the spread of coronavirus, NABO suggest that it would be much more difficult for boaters to be present for, or even allow inspections during this time.

Many inspectors request that owners attend inspections, however, this could prove impossible for self-isolating boaters. Also, if the owner is present, it is not certain they would want an inspector on their boats at this time. The same dilemmas could also apply to the inspectors themselves.

There has been no response from BSS so far, but the request for certification extensions has been put forward.

[Towpath Talk](#) - 20 March 2020