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## Events This Year

I had hoped to find a number of events to start the Waterways Events feature again this month but found that organisers weren't yet committing themselves to firm dates. Maybe next month and the easing of Covid restrictions may improve matters.

*Peter Oates*

## Towpath Mowing

CRT are beginning a six month trial looking at the benefits of changing the mowing regime along their towpaths.

The trial, which starts in April, seeks to balance the needs of boaters, anglers and others accessing the water, with the benefits to wildlife and biodiversity that a change in mowing frequency will bring. A different mowing regime could save the Trust money which it can use elsewhere on important maintenance.

CRT currently spends over £2 million a year mowing over 2,000 miles of towpath every four to six weeks between April and October, leaving nearly 50 percent uncut at the water's edge or back of the path. There is one 'hedge to water's edge' cut in the winter to remove encroaching bushes and woody vegetation.

More details including the options to be examined on the [Canal & River Trust news pages](#).

## Chairman's Column

Well we may be seeing the end of the tunnel! But I think we will be looking for a long time.

Good news though, Chilworth Hall is re-opening from April but because of other happenings in the country Aelred has booked the hall for our first meeting in October.

Obviously we will not have booked a speaker at this time so we thought that we would have a get together and meet up again. We will have the use of the kitchen so at least a cup of tea and maybe a glass of wine with cheese and biscuits (and maybe cake).

Once we have ascertained what following we will have, a decision will be made about speakers for the future. We could do with some feedback and suggestions from you, our members. As yet we have not had any since our last meeting in March last year, which has been a little disappointing.

Trust you will all have a slightly different summer this year than the last one. We are planning some boating including the IWA Festival of Water at Worcester in August unless changes happen.

Keep safe

*Alan Rose*

## Red diesel U-turn

THE decision to keep the use of red diesel for both private and commercial boats has been described as fantastic news for the inland waterways.

Campaigners including the IWA (Inland Waterways Association), the CBOA (Commercial Boat Operators Association) and the RYA (Royal Yachting Association) have been lobbying the Government about this issue in recent years.

The decision, announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the Budget, overturns the announcement from HMRC last July, which stated that privately owned pleasure craft would not be able to use red diesel from April 2022.

Boat owners will welcome this change of plan, along with boatyards and boat-based fuel suppliers who would have had to invest in new equipment if the ban had gone ahead.

The only disappointment, according to the IWA, is that the Budget has not so far recognised the significance of alternative fuels with any form of tax break.

Alison Smedley, IWA campaigns and public affairs manager, said: "This is a successful outcome of our campaigning for many years around red diesel, and what we were asking for in our consultation response.

"We are delighted to see the Government pay attention to boaters' views and hope it paves the way for more sustainable fuels in the future – without all the unnecessary expense of moving over to white diesel in the meantime."

The Budget coincided with the publication of the conclusion of last year's Treasury consultation into the use of red diesel. It confirms that the current arrangement for private boat owners will continue. This means boaters can use red diesel and pay their fuel supplier the difference between the red diesel and white diesel rates on the proportion they intend to use for propulsion.

## Barge revival

Freight operators also warmly welcomed the Government's decision not to impose stringent fuel duty increases on Britain's water freight industry.

CBOA chairman David Lowe commented: "We are very pleased that the Government has listened to our case that increasing fuel duty would risk materially adversely affecting the industry and risk forcing goods traffic on to congested, polluted roads.

"At a time when we are seeing signs of a revival in barge use – more construction-related traffic in London and a new Hull/Leeds service taking sea-dredged aggregates – this was not the time to hit the industry with extra costs.

"The proposed fuel duty increase would have been from 11p a litre to 58p a litre for the duty alone, an increase of over 400%. The impact on operating costs varies per vessel but would have been between 5-15%. In an industry with low profit margins, these costs would have had to be passed on. This could well have resulted in customers deciding to move to road – which would be a classic example of the 'law of unintended consequences'.

Mr Lowe continued: "Some of our members are fitting more efficient engines and using hydrogen treated vegetable oil (Green D+) as a replacement for red diesel. This reduces overall emissions by about 86% and much reduces the carbon output per litre of fuel used. One of our members has just started a special Green D+ tanker barge service on the Thames to enable tugs and barges to use more environmentally friendly fuel.

"The CBOA was particularly concerned about the potential impact on the operators of narrowboats in the Midlands (and elsewhere) who supply domestic fuel and other products to those living

*(Continued on page 3)*

# All in a day's boating! (or 'That's the trouble on these narrow canals and no winding holes!')

WORLD

## Traffic jam



Bulbous bow has impaled the canal shore



Ever Given's position

Dots represent number of other ships now unable to pass

Image from Vessel Finder showing position of Ever Given



### Ever Given

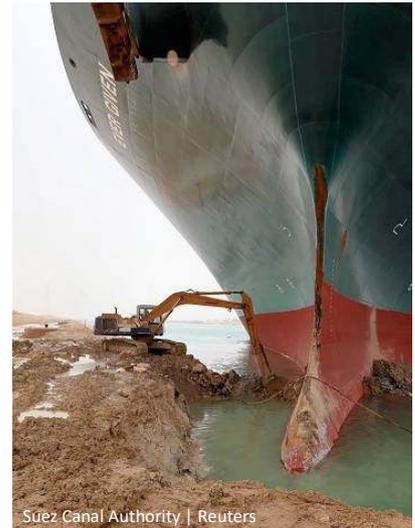
**Operator** Evergreen Marine (Taiwan), sails under flag of Panama  
**Built** 2018 by Imabari Shipbuilding, Japan  
**Length** 400m

**Width** 59m  
**Gross tonnage** 217,612 tons  
**Capacity** 20,000 20ft containers  
**Route** China to Rotterdam, Netherlands



STR/EPA-EEF/Shutterstock

On 23rd March, she went firmly aground fore and aft



Suez Canal Authority | Reuters

Dwarfed, a digger digging mud from around the bow



© Suez Canal Authority/AFP/Getty

Monday am, bow still aground but aft swung across canal

### Suez Canal

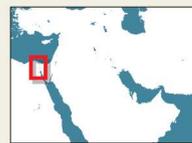
Shortest sea link between Asia and Europe  
**Opened** 17 November 1869  
**Length** 120 miles  
**Width** 313m  
**Depth** 24m  
**Navigation channel** 200-210m  
**Maximum boat beam** 77.5m  
**Transit time** 12-16 hours  
**Distance saved\*** 6,000 miles  
**Time saved\*** From 20 days to 13 hours  
 \*Compared with circumnavigation of Africa  
**10%** of global trade passes through the Suez Canal

### 19,000

Number of ships that passed through Suez in 2020

### 51.5

Average number of ships that pass through per day

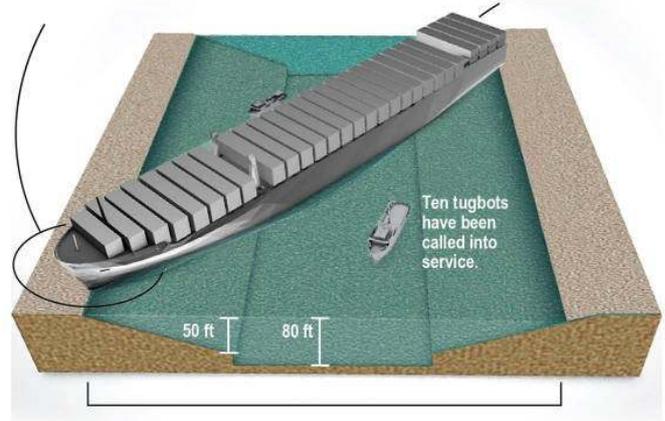


### Container ship wedged in single-lane stretch of Suez Canal

At over 1,300 feet long the Ever Given container ship is longer than the canal is wide at this point. The central channel of the canal is about 80 feet deep in this single-lane stretch.

The vessel is wedged in sandy clay, on the eastern wall of the canal.

The rear of the ship is not embedded into the western side of the canal and can be tugged loose.



Ten tugboats have been called into service.

The Suez Canal is approximately 900 ft wide at this point

Source: Suez Canal Authority



Suez Canal Authority/AP

Afloat again, the Ever Given under tow on Monday 29th

## The World's first ship tunnel

After two years of study and analysis, government approval has been given for the building of what is claimed to be the World's first ship tunnel.

The vast project will link two protected stretches of water on the west coast of Norway and allow for safer winter passage-making along this wild coastline. The tunnel will be about 110 miles north of Bergen.



Concept image of one of the tunnel's portals.

The approval came in the allocation letter from Norway's Ministry of Transport and Communications to the Norwegian Coastal Administration, defining the tasks that are to be initiated. "We will now start the processes of acquisition of properties in the area where the ship tunnel will be located, as well as put in place a project organisation, and then initiate and prepare a tender," said Terje Andreassen, the project's temporary manager for the Stad Ship Tunnel.

The project is estimated to cost NOK 2.8 billion (£236 million) and NOK 75 million of this sum has been allocated for start up funding. The aim is to sign up a contractor during 2021, which will allow construction to start in 2022 and the project has a construction period of three to four years. "If everything goes according to plan, the world's first full-scale ship tunnel will be completed in 2025/2026," said Andreassen.

## Red diesel U-turn (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

on boats or near a waterway.

They faced an increase in fuel costs of 85% with the threatened extra fuel duty added. "Happily," said Mr Lowe, "this threat has now gone."

Irish difficulties

In Northern Ireland however, recreational boaters will no longer be able to use red diesel for propelling their craft. This is to ensure the UK meets its international obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol of the Withdrawal Agreement.

It will also align with fuel used by private pleasure craft in the Republic of Ireland, which the Government believes will make it simpler for private pleasure craft users to access the fuel they need if they sail between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

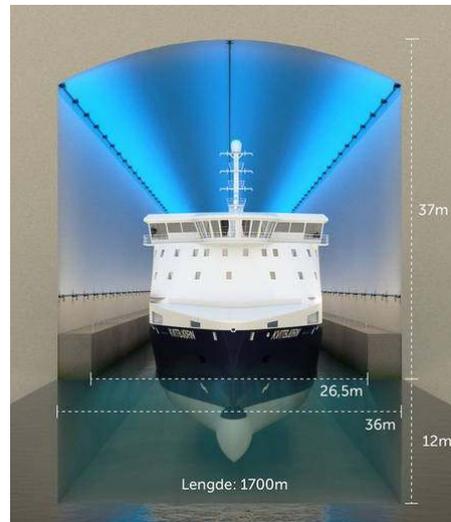
The RYA, together with British Marine and the Cruising Association, has met with representatives from HM Revenue and Customs and HM Treasury to discuss these difficulties.

Howard Pridding, RYA director of external affairs, said: "We will continue to work with our colleagues in RYA Northern Ireland to talk to Government about the practical difficulties that these issues present and work constructively with HM Treasury and HMRC officials to develop guidance that will inform boaters about the new fuel situation in Northern Ireland."

It is proposed that this change will take effect by June this year. The RYA has stressed the difficulties presented by this short time scale and

The construction of the tunnel will allow ships to bypass the exposed and dangerous waters of the Stadthavet Sea which is one of the most challenging areas along the Norwegian coast thus allowing shipping to stay in sheltered waters.

The tunnel will be 1700 metres long and its construction will require



the removal of 3 million cubic metres of rock using blasting and drilling techniques. The completed tunnel will have a height of 25 metres above the water level and a water depth of 12 metres. [The picture on the left has an error in the height above water level - 37 metres is air draught + water depth.] The overall width will be 36 metres but an integrated fendering barrier on each side will reduce

the shipping width to 26.5 metres. The proposed size of the tunnel has been largely dictated by the size of the Hurtigruten ferry ships that operate along the Norwegian coast but other users are expected to be cargo and fishing ships.

In addition to the tunnelling the project envisages alongside waiting areas at each entrance and there is also the possibility of establishing a commercial area at the tunnel and the prospect of making the tunnel a tourist attraction with the construction of a walkway through it.

*Maritime Journal* - 16 March 2021

For further information search on Google for 'Stad Ship Tunnel'

requested a longer period to address the white diesel supply issues that the decision presents. Once implemented, private pleasure craft users in Northern Ireland will have to use white diesel for propulsion instead of red diesel.

Private pleasure craft users in Northern Ireland with only one fuel tank on board for propulsion and non-propulsion will not have to pay a higher rate of duty on their non-propulsion use of diesel than they would otherwise have to pay.

The Government is intending to introduce a new relief scheme in Northern Ireland which will become effective from the date that users become obliged to use white diesel.

The RYA is concerned that the volume of sales of diesel to private pleasure craft is not great enough for suppliers to justify the expense of providing a second pump at the waterside, which is going to cause significant supply problems.

HMRC has confirmed that once the change does take effect, it would be illegal to buy red diesel for private pleasure craft propulsion in Northern Ireland, but fuel already present in tanks could be used without penalty.

Private pleasure craft from Northern Ireland that fill up in Great Britain (GB) in future could do so under the Istanbul Convention which will allow red diesel legitimately purchased in GB to be taken back to Northern Ireland in the main fuel tanks of a boat.

*Towpath Talk* - April 2021

## 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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## Repair plan announced for Toddbrook Reservoir

*A permanent repair plan for restoring Toddbrook Reservoir in Whaley Bridge, was announced by CRT on 23 March:*

We are planning to build a new side channel weir, 'tumble bay', spillway channel and stilling basin on the northern, sailing club side of the dam, at an estimated cost of between £12 - £16 million. The auxiliary spillway, damaged in summer 2019, will be de-commissioned and the dam slope grassed. Subject to planning permission, work is likely to start at the end of 2021 and take around two years to complete.

The reservoir, which supplies water to the [Peak Forest](#) and [Macclesfield canals](#), has been out of action and near empty of water since the spillway was damaged. Ahead of the permanent repair, the Trust and its contractors Kier, have carried out a major project to make safe the damaged spillway and add a protective waterproof nib to the dam crest.

### Public consultations

The long-term repair design was informed by feedback from residents who took part in the public consultation last September, when two different options were put forward from an initial 13 potential proposals which had been considered by the design team.

Working with specialist engineering design consultants Arup, our project team has carried out extensive technical investigations and design work, listened to all feedback and tried to accommodate the best engineering option within the landscape. They continue to develop the details of their proposals to ensure the most effective design solution is adopted.

A second public consultation into the proposed plan will be organised for later in the spring, probably online, in advance of a planning application to High Peak Borough Council this summer.

### A huge engineering challenge

Daniel Greenhalgh, Canal & River Trust north west director, said: "Repairing the reservoir is a huge engineering challenge and public safety is our top priority. The permanent repair design has been shaped by local feedback and guided by modern engineering best practice.

"The proposed work will also require some changes to the northern area of the park. The play area will have to be re-positioned, and we will carry out landscaping works to ensure that when finished, the park remains an enjoyable and open public space. We are working to develop our plans to ensure this happens as sensitively as possible.

"During the construction phase, part of the park will unfortunately have to be closed, but we hope to be able to move some of the play equipment to an alternative location so it can continue to be available."

Subject to planning permission, the Canal & River Trust is hoping to start work on site at the end 2021 and for the reservoir to be re-opened to the public in early 2024. High volume pumps will remain in the reservoir to manage water levels until the end of the restoration project."

Find out more about this major project at:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/restoring-toddbrook-reservoir>

*[Canal & River Trust News](#) - 23 March 2021*



Stanton & Purton above Buckby Lock 10 going to Foxton 2014



Society Chairman and Secretary watch how it's done at Braunston 2013