

TSCC



In this Issue: A Memory of the River from 1965; Laverstoke Mill/Bombay Sapphire; The Vyne; Hurley; Salute to the 40s/Chatham Historic Dockyard; Murder Mystery; The Ray Andrews Trophy.



Chairman's Log



With Christmas almost upon us, I am reaching the end of my first twelve months as Chairman – and how the year has flown!

And what an action-packed year it has been: A visit to the Royal Courts of Justice and the Sky Garden; an afternoon at the theatre to see the acclaimed musical *Wicked*; our annual skittles match at the BBC; a cheese and wine evening with CPR and defibrillator training (there's an interesting mix!); our 'very British' silver jubilee tea party; an amazing escorted tour of Paris; our annual cruise to Hurley; a 40s event at Chatham Dockyard; and a murder mystery evening in Thames Ditton. Wow! A big thank-you to all those variously responsible for the organisation of so many fantastic events.

Most recently it was wonderful to welcome 57 members and guests to Ristorante Sorrento in Tolworth for our annual laying-up supper. The venue was ideal with ample space for members to gather and circulate for pre-dinner drinks – and to continue mingling throughout the evening. The food was excellent and the service was efficient and professional. A huge thank-you to George and Jan for organising, and to Elaina, Linda and Rosie for their help and support.

Congratulations to Peter Simpson on once again winning the Ray Andrews photographic competition and commiserations that he was not able to be there to collect it. This year there were 14 entries and these were impartially judged by two of our guests so Peter's victory was beyond dispute! Let's have lots more entries in 2018 – and it's clear that some of us need to be a bit more artistic and creative if we are to be serious contenders!

The TSCC year is of course far from over with our pre-Christmas Suffolk getaway still to look forward to. And it promises to be an outstanding weekend with a first class hotel, some great entertainment and the chance to explore some truly delightful locations.

This is our last newsletter of the year so here's wishing you and your family a wonderful Christmas and a happy, healthy 2018. Our thanks as ever to Peter Simpson for all the hard work and creativity that goes into the production of this excellent newsletter.

Mark

TSCC is affiliated to: ATYC, River Thames Society, and River Thames Alliance.

Cover photos - Front: The Glass House at Laverstoke Mill; Back: Hurley Fun Day

A MEMORY OF THE RIVER FROM 1965

By Ray Churchill



When I was eleven, my parents and I holidayed on the Thames for the first time. We hired “Mis’Nomer” from Weybridge Marine and I fell in love with the River.

After several hire boat holidays, and by the time I was 15, my father decided we should own a boat. Funds weren’t plentiful so we researched a marine ply kit boat designed by P W Blandford for the Light Craft magazine. Anyone else remember that publication?

We bought the kit from Chamberlains of Birmingham, but compromised by buying it with the hull constructed, reasonably taking the view we were less likely to sink that way. That hull became Winstrel, an 18ft marine ply outboard cruiser which we moored at Peter Freebody’s Hurley yard. Peter had just taken over the yard from his father, and his reputation with traditional craft was still before him.



Time passed, as the best novels say, and at 19 I was about to leave Surbiton County Grammar School for the last time. In a moment showing unusual lack of judgement, the Headmaster had appointed me school vice captain, the other vice captain being Derek Bostridge, and the school captain, Bill Gover.

As the end of the school year approached Bill, Derek and I thought we should do something significant to mark this Passage of Life occasion. We needed a plan. Meetings were called. They were generally held in The Railway Tavern, just behind the school, whilst downing both Watney’s Best and the bar billiard balls. I don’t think we were missed during the school Private Study periods.

The plan became a week on the river.

Winstrel was a small vessel for three substantial blokes, even smaller once the necessary victuals had been loaded and departure was interesting. Relying on two novices in a small boat that bounced around a great deal and Hurley lock being within a few yards of the mooring thus giving no time for familiarisation, crash course took on a literal meaning.

We did however make Henley in the afternoon. We moored and then started to make inroads into the liquid cargo. We sat in the cockpit, enjoying the warm summer sun and discussing trivial issues such as the meaning of life and why is the sky blue.

What next? We had finally left school and were about to embark on our adult lives. We had become men. What is a manly thing to do? Smoke a pipe of course.

So, off to find a friendly neighbourhood tobacconist. Much time and debate was devoted to selecting the most appropriate pipe style. Were they to be straight, curly like Sherlock Holmes, or those new fangled things with thin metal tubes to cool the smoke? Decisions like this are testing, sixth form General Studies hadn't prepared us for such matters.

After selecting the pipes came the decision as to what to put in them. You will have realised we were not experts on this topic. The only tobacco we had heard of was St Bruno, so St Bruno it was.

The following day we cruised to Sonning, mooring above the lock. Inevitably, The Bull proved too strong a magnet to resist, and a really enjoyable evening followed, sinking many pints and tearing to shreds the reputations of many teachers who were almost certainly nice blokes, good to their mothers.

The unsteady late evening walk back to the boat through the churchyard was a tortuous one. The cooling appearance of the water finally proved irresistible and an imprudent late swim followed.

Once back on Winstrel and dried off, the time came to exercise our new manhood. The pipes were unwrapped, the St Bruno packet breached and a few more celebratory beers sunk.

Watching my uncle light his pipe had made it seem so simple. In the hands of the less experienced, it proved something of a challenge. After light tamping of tobacco, then heavy tamping of tobacco and a boxful of spent matches, sustained glow was finally achieved.

We puffed away happily for half an hour or so, striking poses that Jerome K Jerome would applaud.

As further time passed, the inevitable discomfort followed. Now. I don't know if people do actually go green around the gills, but if they do, we had. Nausea took over and three, now less manly, youths leant over the gunwales and let nature take its spectacular course, adding colour and texture to the serene waters below.

The following morning, three rather forlorn and chastened former pupils stood in the cockpit, each grasping a pipe in his right hand. On a count of three, three pipes were launched as far across the river as possible, distant splashes marking their unseen demise.

I have never smoked since.



LAVERSTOKE MILL

On our day out from Hurley, I am sure most of our group thought that we were simply going for a tour of a gin distillery but the interest went far beyond that. Before we were to learn anything about gin making, our guide explained the fascinating history of the mill itself.

Laverstoke Mill was a large, multi-phase paper mill near Whitchurch, north Hampshire. It operated as a paper mill between 1719 and 1963, when Laverstoke was the principal mill of the Portal family, who from 1724, held the sole contract for the manufacture of **Bank of England banknote paper**. The complex, which contains three grade 2 listed buildings, is in an exceptional landscape setting which includes Laverstoke Park, the Mill Pond and the River Test.

Going back in time, c903 Laverstoke Manor was in the possession of the Abbey of St Peter, Winchester. In 1086 two (corn) mills were recorded in the Domesday Book. The Manor was acquired by Henry VIII in 1538. In 1718 Henry Portal (from a French Huguenot family) leased the Mill to expand his papermaking enterprise. In 1861 there was a banknote paper robbery at the Mill as a result of which a police constable took up residence on the site. After the Mill closed in 1963, there were a number of owners before the Bombay Spirits Company purchased the site in 2010.

Bombay Sapphire Distillery opened its doors to the public in 2014.





In renovating Laverstoke Mill into a state-of-the-art distillery, Bombay Sapphire has taken the utmost care of the ecology, natural environment and the historic buildings of this important site. Every effort has been made to protect and significantly enhance the site where possible. You would have to say they are doing an excellent job and they won the BREEAM Award for Industrial Design in 2014, and a Gold Award at the VisitEngland Awards in 2016.

After this very interesting historical tour, we were introduced to the art of making premium gin. This started with an insight into all of the botanicals used to flavour the gin. We were invited to smell all of the herbs and spices and mark on a card those we preferred. These cards were then handed to a barman who made-up a cocktail based on our individual tastes. The resulting cocktails were extremely well received!!

The unique glass houses contained, for display purposes, 10 plants from which the botanicals are extracted – juniper, lemon peel, grains of paradise, coriander, cubeb berries, orris root, almonds, cassia bark, liquorice, and angelica.





That tastes rather good!

Hold on! Is this yours or mine?



Andy Vine, who organised the trip to Laverstoke Mill and the Vyne, takes some well earned refreshment.

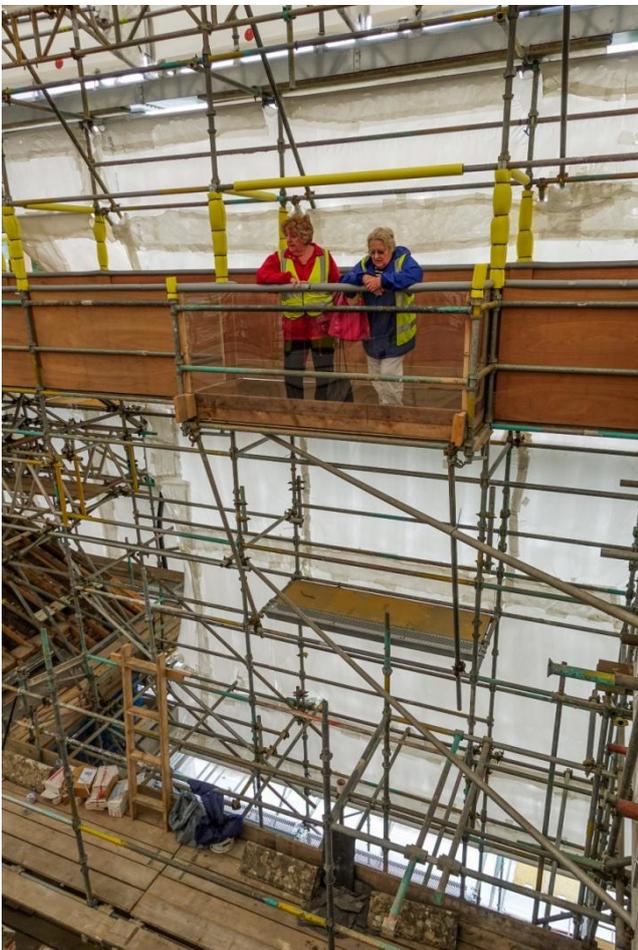
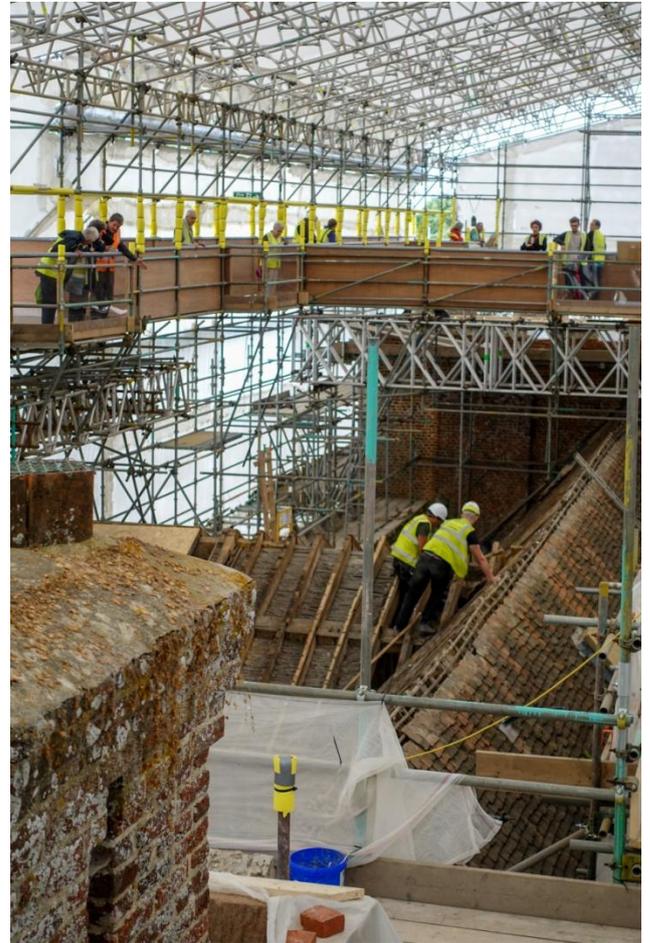
Cheers Andy!

The Vyne

Following the tour of Laverstoke Mill we visited a National Trust property – The Vyne. This is an intimate family home from Tudor times and is currently undergoing a major roof project. Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn visited here in 1535.

We were able to ascend in a lift to the rooftop walkway to see a unique bird's eye view of the roof as it undergoes expert renovation by talented craftsmen.

This was an intriguing way to see just how a Tudor roof was constructed and how some modern materials, such as fire proofing, are now being used to prolong the life of this wonderful building.



Are you sure that platform is safe?

The Vyne without the scaffolding.



By Kabads at the English language Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7517503>

HURLEY FUN DAY



Stand and Deliver!

Throwing Ping-Pong balls into glass jars was not easy..... but some did go in!



Copious Strawberries and Cream and a welcome cup of Pimms were all part of a most enjoyable afternoon.



Ray organised the popular horseshoe competition and darts. There was also an excellent quiz organised by George and Janet - it really was great fun especially at the end when it turned out that nearly every group had the same score (no, not zero!)





Les Holdaway and Ray were joint winners of the games. Les won the play-off and Jessie was runner-up. (Sorry Les, I was having a camera malfunction when you received your prize).



Our thanks to everyone who helped to make this a really good **fun** day.



On our way back home from a very successful week at Hurley, as we approached Marlow lock we were surrounded by group of amphibious vehicles (does anyone know the collective noun for a gathering of amphibious vehicles? All answers to our Editor). They were from the European Amphibious Car Group which has held its annual gathering in the UK this year, spending a week on the Thames. A collection of 62 water-going cars travelled through Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The group of car owners have been meeting across Europe since 1987

I was very impressed with the condition of the vehicles some quite old and a few new ones. As you can imagine it took quite a while to get them all organised but no one was really fussed about the holdup. We followed many of them into the lock and as they proceeded down river we were quite happy to fall-in behind them. When they eventually arrived at Cookham, it was prearranged for them to leave the Thames at the Ferry Inn, which has a very convenient slipway next to the pub. I have to say at this point I was very impressed in the way they exited from the river, it was quite a sight. The last time we sighted them was when we were leaving Boulter's lock when they were speeding along the road, all waving, moving on to their next port of call.

Ray Mears

THE HISTORIC DOCKYARD CHATHAM



Salute to the 40s was the theme for this excellent visit to the Historic Dockyard.

The trip was organised by Rosie who is pictured with her grandsons and son-in-law standing in front of The Destroyer Memorial together with Pauline.

There is a real sense of history here which was enhanced by the large number of visitors who came dressed in outfits typical of the 40s.

In the Second World War 94 high explosive bombs hit the dockyard killing 15 and injuring a further 107.

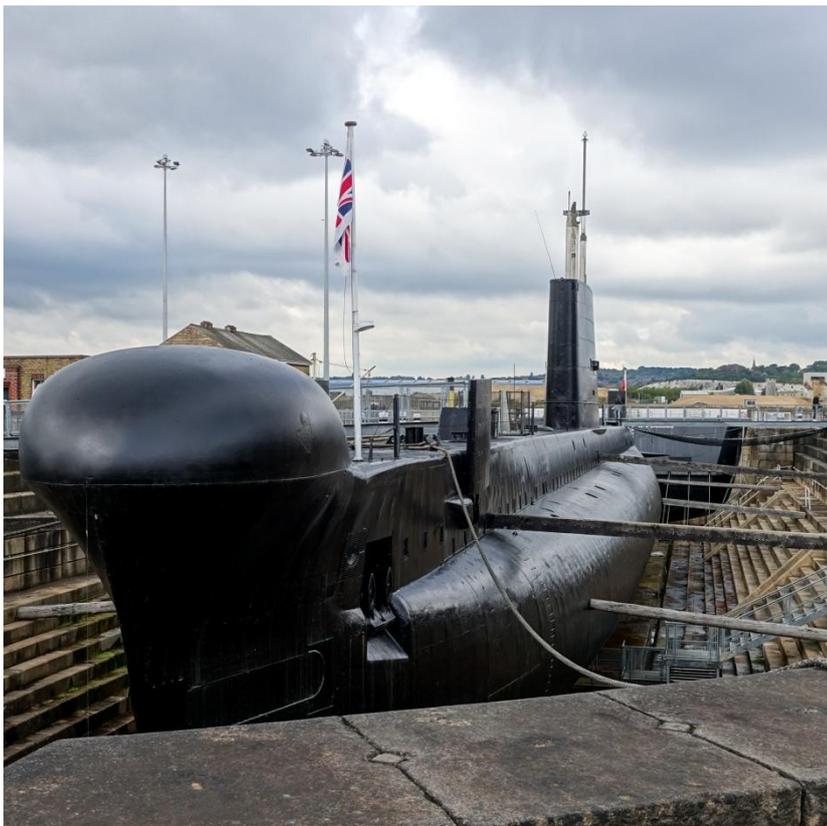


This is HMS Cavalier, built in 1944 and once known as the fastest ship in the fleet. Today she is preserved as the 'National Destroyer Memorial' commemorating the 11,000 lives and 142 Royal Navy Destroyers lost during the Second World War. She resides in the No 2 Dry Dock on the site where the most famous Chatham built ship HMS Victory was constructed.



There was a great assortment of entertainment including the Glen Miller Orchestra, The Polka Dot Dolls, The Dolly Girls, The Hotsie Totsies and, pictured above, the Medway Lindy Hoppers.

On top of all that were motor vehicles from the 40s, steam locomotives, an Air Raid Experience and a parade of vintage fashion. No time to be bored then!!



Another fascinating exhibit is HM Submarine Ocelot. Launched in 1962 she was the last warship to be built at Chatham for the Royal Navy. It is preserved to commemorate the Dockyard's 20th century role as a builder of submarines. Between 1907 and 1966 57 submarines were constructed here and many more repaired and refitted.

Ocelot served as a patrol submarine during the Cold War until 1991 when she was decommissioned.

Today, visitors can go on board and get a feeling of what life was like as a submariner.

Conditions were very cramped and claustrophobic. Bunk space for the ratings was very tight – a bit better for the officers. There were no showers and, by all accounts, it was pretty smelly.

I was left full of admiration for the brave men who served on these vessels.

Thanks Rosie for organising this superb visit.



The Murder Mystery evening was great fun. A number of very good actors set the scene - giving us information about themselves, their relationships with the other suspects and what they were doing at the time of the murder. It was then up to us to try to recognise the clues and work out who was the guilty party. We wrote down our conclusions and awaited the results. Clive achieved some notoriety by naming the detective as the murderer but the real villain was identified by Tania.

Elaina and her helpers did a terrific job decorating the tables and providing goodies such as popcorn and choc ices. Thank you so much Elaina for organising such an enjoyable evening.

WELCOME ABOARD!

TSCC extends a warm welcome to new members:

Colin and Daphne Wilford

And

Margarette Donaldson

Margarette is a returning member. She served as Club Treasurer between 1995 and 1999.

THE RAY ANDREWS TROPHY

Judging for the Ray Andrews Trophy took place at the Annual Dinner and the Trophy was awarded to Peter Simpson for his picture taken when TSCC visited Chatham Historic Dockyard. We had a bumper entry in our Jubilee year – many thanks to all those who entered.



Salute to the 40s

Environment Agency Update (from RUG 7): Volunteers

This is the seventh year of volunteering; in 2017 we have 246 active volunteers. Up to the end of August 2017 of the 253 volunteers last season, 213 returned to their allocated locks this year, showing a fantastic commitment and must reflect the enjoyment the volunteers have with the river users and the public on the river. Together they have contributed over 28,000 days since 2011. A truly amazing figure.

26th October 2017 was a Volunteer Recognition Day on a local passenger boat with over 100 confirmed attendees.

TSCC PROGRAMME FOR 2018

All dates and Events are Subject to Change

AGM at Ajax Water Activities Centre	Sunday 28 January 2.45 for 3.00 pm
Skittles Match TSCC – WMC & BBC at Ajax	Saturday 3 February at 7.00 pm
ATYC Dinner Dance	Saturday 3 March
“Crazy for You” at Wimbledon Theatre	Wednesday 7 March at 2.30 pm
Fitting Out Supper at The Mitre, Hampton Court	Tuesday 10 April TBC
Norfolk Broads Cruise	Thursday 10 – Thursday 17 May
Cruise to Hurley Lock Island	Monday 25 – Friday 29 June
Strawberry Tea at Little Compton	Saturday 21 July
ATYC Rally, Queens Promenade, Kingston	25 - 27 August
Visit to Buckingham Palace State Apartments/ Royal Mews	Tuesday 11 September
Visit to London Postal Museum, Phoenix Place, WC1X 0DA	Tuesday 16 October
TSCC Annual Dinner venue TBA	Monday 19 th November TBC
Pre-Christmas Getaway TBA	Date TBA



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