



ODCC Waterlog

April 2023



The journal of the Oxford Ditch Cruising Club

Welcome to the Spring issue of Waterlog. We are now looking ahead to the new season when the boats will be relaunched and we are able to enjoy some warmer weather after the rain of the past few weeks.

Commodore's Log:

As many of you will be aware, our Rear Commodore Derek Farrow has been anxiously awaiting a kidney transplant for a number of years now.

The phone call from the hospital finally came at 3am one morning and by the same evening he'd had the long awaited surgery and was quietly recovering. This all took place just prior to our 70th anniversary lunch at the Maybush Inn, so he was unable to attend.

We are happy to report that following his recuperation over the intervening weeks, he is up and about once more and was able to join us for our informal lunch at the Kings Arms in Sandford.

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On 11th February, four members attended the ATYC Spring Ball at the Runnymede Hotel. This was a first for us personally and also for Wayne and Pauline Vallance.

There were 140 attendees from the various member clubs and it was a splendid opportunity to meet up with some old friends and to make some new ones.

The evening started with pre-dinner drinks from 6pm, which gave everyone chance to circulate and catch up with the latest news.

At 7pm we were called into the dining room for an excellent three-course dinner including complimentary wine. Everyone on our table was very friendly and chatty.



Dinner was followed by a talk on the history of the Eel Pie Island area from the 18th century to the present day. This was given by an extremely entertaining presenter who currently lives on the island. She had many interesting facts to impart, which greatly enlivened the presentation.



Pauline had brought along a batch of the Club's new business cards and during the evening we managed to hand a few to some prospective new members.



Interestingly, later in the evening, someone from the ATYC committee sought us out, specifically enquiring for the Oxford Ditch members. We had a short chat, and they seemed to be impressed with our roundup of what the ODCC were currently up to and obviously pleased to see the club represented at the event.

We finally retired at about midnight after a most memorable evening. This was the first time the club had been represented at this function for a number of years and we are already thinking of attending again in 2024.

Stuart Francis

ATYC Spring Ball

It was a pleasure for myself, Wayne, Stuart and Sue to represent our club at the annual ATYC Spring Ball on Saturday 11 February. The event was held at The Runnymede Hotel adjacent to the River Thames and holds an AA 4 star rating.

The ATYC hosted the evening, extending thanks to the attendance of over 100 boating club representatives. Our table of "new" attendees included 4 people from Starcraft Owners Club and 2 people from Harleyford Motor Yacht Club.

This thriving hotel, did itself proud, greeting us with a glass of Prosecco and followed by a delicious evening meal, with super waiting staff. The ATYC also organised an inspiring and fun speech by Selia Holman, who runs the Eel Pie Island Museum. Her talk focused on the stretch of The Arcadian Thames between Twickenham and Richmond.

This informal evening was extremely friendly and enabled networking. As a result, Stuart is hoping for a couple of new members to join our club. I would certainly recommend attendance at future events.

Pauline Vallance

Oxford Ditch 70th Anniversary Lunch

On 5th March the club celebrated its 70th birthday at the Maybush Public House at Newbridge Oxfordshire. There was a good turnout of members although several were unable to attend due to different issues.

The report on the food was Excellent and everyone enjoyed the occasion.



The Maybush was the Pub where the Oxford Ditch Cruising Club was formed in 1953, and by mid-season there were 26 members.

To understand why the Maybush was chosen, one needs to go to Newbridge and see how things are. At the Maybush, the main A415 Abingdon to Witney road, crosses the River Thames/Isis and with only 4 locks between Newbridge and Oxford, it would have made a good cruising part of the River with a lot of countryside and a lot of space for staying over.

Also in the 1950's we need to look at the type of cruisers available. The main cruisers that comes to mind are the Freeman 21' and the slipper launch. The Punt could have been used to cruise, either 'camping on board' or by tent.



Going further back, Newbridge was a main crossing point of the Thames/Isis. It was built in the 13th Century by the monks on the orders of King John, to improve the communications between the wool towns of the south with the Farmers of the Cotswolds. It was called the "New Bridge" because at the time, 3 bridges were being built over the Thames at Radcot bridge, Lechlade Bridge and New bridge this one being the youngest of the three.

New bridge was originally 51 arches long, 726 yards compares with today, only 12 arches. In 1644, during the civil war, the "Battle of Newbridge" was fought on the banks of the Thames. The Parliamentarian, William Waller attempted to cross over in order to surround Oxford and capture King Charles, but was defeated. At the present time, the northern span is Grade I listed and the southern span is Grade II listed.

Back to the present times, the Maybush has been extended and the following pictures will show the extensions.



Derek Farrow

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As you all know the club went along to the MAYBUSH at New Bridge Kingston Bagpuize to celebrate the start of the Oxford Ditch Cruising Club.

Along with myself Daughter Elaine and her partner Lee Henty we arrived in good time for lunch, met Barbara and Phillip Sachse and Ann Seeney in the Car park and had a swift look round outside.

Lee took some very good Photos of the outside on instructions from Derek, who by the way, was not able to be there due to him having a Kidney Transplant a few days prior to the lunch.



We made our way into the pub and round to the room where we were having lunch, a room to ourselves. We were pleasantly surprised to find John and Sue Palmer, Pauline and Wayne Vallance and also two of our new members

already seated and partaking in liquid refreshments.

After it was established how we were going to pay for our drinks A very nice young lady was introduced as our waitress, who would look after us throughout the meal. We had a short delay as Andy and Chrissie had not yet arrived.

However, the meal was served with starters first to those who had ordered them, the rest of us waited patiently for the mains.

These were served in the order of what people had chosen, The Pork came along, then the Chicken, Beef etc. and a very good selection of Veg. For those who had chosen to have dessert it was hard as we were quite full after such a lovely lunch.



We were very impressed with the Maybush, very friendly staff and excellent food. In fact it was suggested that we visit again as a club sometime during the year.

Marion Farrow

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