

ATYC NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2024

This is the ATYC Newsletter which will be sent out to Clubs on a regular basis for onward publication to all club members. It can be used as an ATYC Club Noticeboard and can carry such items as a Club's major event or a short news story. Contributions should be sent to me. Happy reading and stay safe.

Mike Chambers

CHAIRMEN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

To all the members of all the Association clubs

We would like to thank all those of you who have supported the Association this year. The Dinner Dance was a great success with more than 140 people enjoying the event, the raffle prizes, the silent auction and so on. Then came a really superb rally at old favourite West India Docks where 40 boats and their crews enjoyed a bit of a social whirl and some great boating.

The changes we have made to the open meetings by inviting guest speakers, meeting in hospitable venues and serving "nibbles", tea and coffee seems to be a new formula worth following - attendance and the number of represented clubs has increased and we have been treated to some really informative talks.

So as 2024 steps back into the history books let's hope those successes are continued and expanded through 2025 and, maybe beyond.....

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy 2025 with a long summer of normal river levels and flows and lots of boating opportunities.

Andrew Bernstein & Chris Turner

ATYC Joint Chairmen.

Islanders forced to leave beloved Island. Families have been told to dismantle their rented plots on a river island in Shiplake which they have used for decades. Shiplake Lock Island, which has been home to a number of seasonal plot-holders since Edwardian times, is to be leased out by the Environment Agency. The campsite was closed by the agency in March 2023, just weeks before the camping season began, and since then there has been much speculation about the future of the island, which is in the middle of the River Thames off Mill Lane. Many of the plot-holders, or "islanders" as they are known locally, have raised concerns that the site will be turned into a commercial campsite.

River Restriction Notice around Temple Bridge. The Environment Agency has issued a river restriction notice after Temple Bridge has exceeded its design life and is no longer safe to use. In a statement released they said: *"We recognise that the uniqueness and complexity of the bridge's design make it an iconic feature on the Thames and one very much worth retaining in its current form, if possible. These same characteristics make establishing the best, affordable option for this a complex task. As part of our ongoing work, we are carefully removing the central section of the bridge, both to remove any risks to our Navigation customers, but also to allow further examination of it. River users will not be able to use the Navigation beneath this central section until it has been removed, which we aim to complete as soon as possible. We understand this may cause some inconvenience to river users, for which we apologise"*.

Thames Tideway Tunnel already having an impact. Although it is not fully operational, the Thames Tideway Tunnel is already helping to reduce the amount of sewage being discharged into the river. During heavy rainfall that took place on 27 November, nearly 850,000 tonnes of sewage was captured in one day on the network of tunnels which has 12 out of 21 sewer connection points live. At its peak, the entire system was over half full, containing nearly one million tonnes of storm sewage. The new super sewer is designed to 'intercept' spill points in the river wall and improve the health of the River Thames.

'Orbit Clipper' bringing pure electric power to the Thames London operator Uber Boat by Thames Clippers has announced that it will launch its first all-electric cross-river passenger ferry, *Orbit Clipper*, in March 2025. The zero-emissions catamaran will connect Canary Wharf, on the north side of the Thames, with Rotherhithe, on the south, seven days a week, making crossings every 10 minutes on weekdays and every 15 minutes at weekends. The aluminium vessel, which has been vaunted as London's (if not the UK's) first pure-electric ferry, is currently under construction at Wight Shipyard Co in East Cowes, on the Isle of Wight. This yard has built six vessels for Uber Boat by Thames Clippers to date, including the operator's three 40m, hybrid-electric passenger ferries *Earth Clipper*, *Celestial Clipper* and *Mars Clipper*, which were delivered between September 2023 and August 2024. The three sisters have since been credited with reducing emissions by 90% apiece.

Popular bathing spot receives 'poor' water rating One of the popular swimming area for families on the banks of the Thames has been rated as having "poor" water quality. Wallingford Beach in Oxfordshire which was made a designated bathing water, external site in May last year has been monitored by the Environment Agency by testing the beauty spot's water quality to protect people's health. Spikes of bacteria, external in two of the 19 samples taken caused the negative rating, according to local authorities. South Oxfordshire District Council said it was "obviously disappointed" at the results, which were published on 26th November. The authority's leader David Rouane and River Thames champion Jo Robb said they had wanted to ensure the water was regularly tested, allowing people to make informed choices about where they swam. *"Rivers and streams are struggling to cope due to water pollution, including in the Thames," they said in a joint statement. "While we knew bathing water status would not immediately solve that issue, it should mean Thames Water would be legally required to treat waste outflows to a much higher standard."*