



The Consuta Trust

The advancement of education in the history of steam launches, by preservation, maintenance and exhibition of the steam launch **Consuta**

Consuta Trust Newsletter - Summer 2020

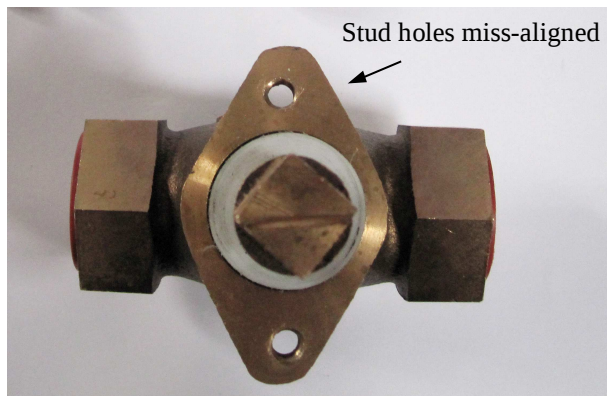
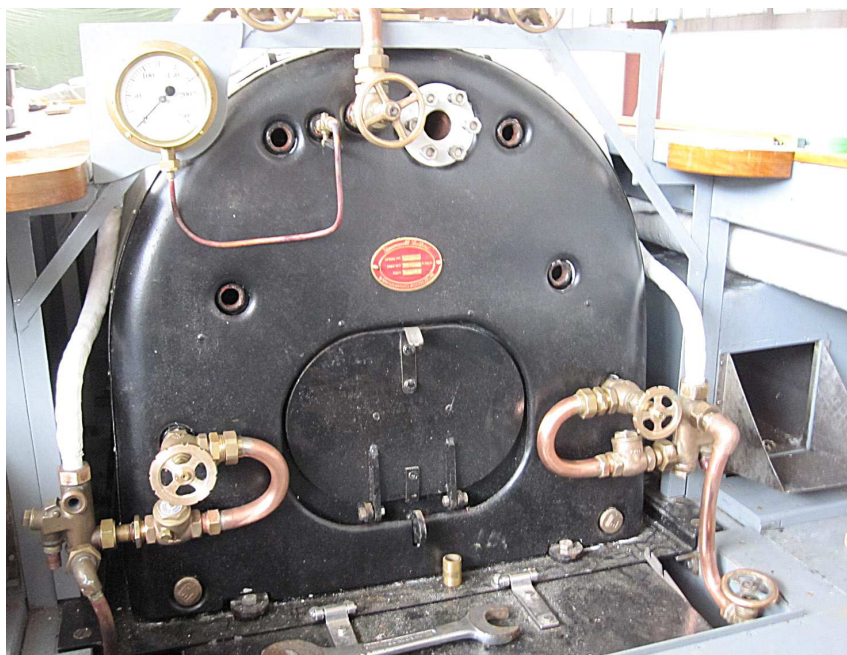
Dear All

I hope you are all keeping well during the lovely weather we've had late spring, it's a pity that we cannot have Consuta afloat to enjoy any boating. I am now resigned to no steam operation for Consuta this year, even though the Thames may be open for limited private pleasure boating, all major events planned for the year have been cancelled and social distancing is still in effect.

Consuta project work

Unfortunately the final completion work on Consuta has stopped at Beale Park since March, however we've been quite busy at home. My own workshop has been in action to provide parts for modifications to the injector new pipe work, this involved making custom style fittings which are not available in modern times.

Also the design of an injector combined check and shutoff cock has moved on still further. Bill Hall has offered to make a casting pattern for an inline variation of the design shown in the Spring newsletter – see the updated drawings on the next page.

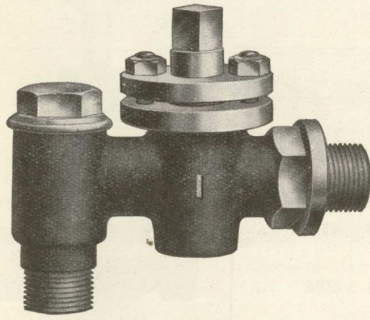


Paul has said he will look at the possibilities of a pattern set for the angled versions.

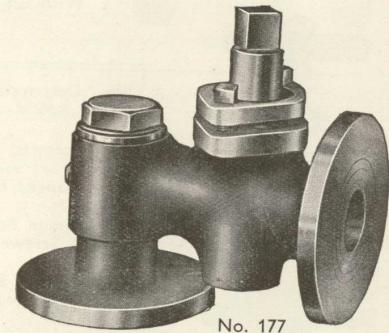
While I was drawing up the various designs, I purchased a modern bronze $\frac{3}{4}$ " BSP straight plug cock valve just to check that my design dimensions were appropriate. This valve was useful for this, but although the casting parts were good, the quality of the machining work was poor. The valve had been sealed with gasket compound to make it leak proof, it should have been ground in properly because in service it would have always leaked – see the photo. I suppose I should have returned it for a refund.

COMBINED COCKS AND CHECK FEED VALVES

GUN METAL



When ordering please state if the Valve is required to be fitted Left, Right or in Front of Cock when facing Boiler.

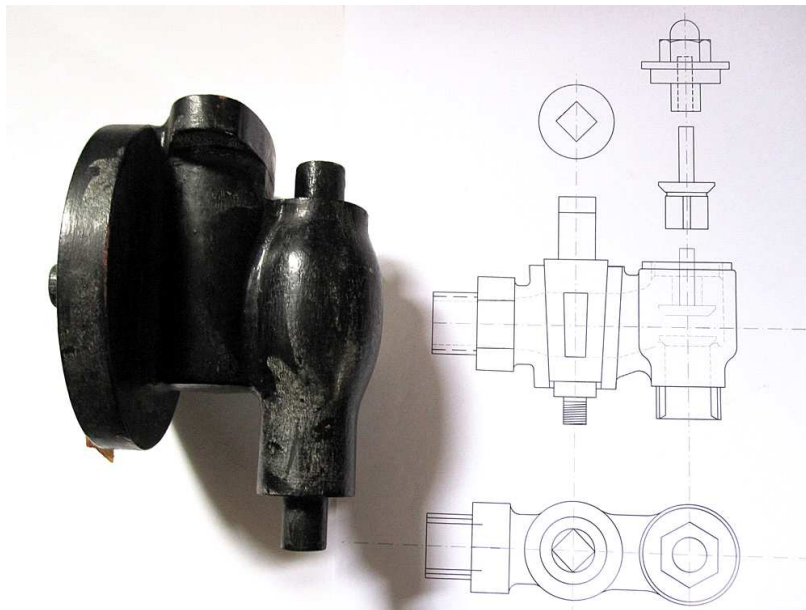


No. 177

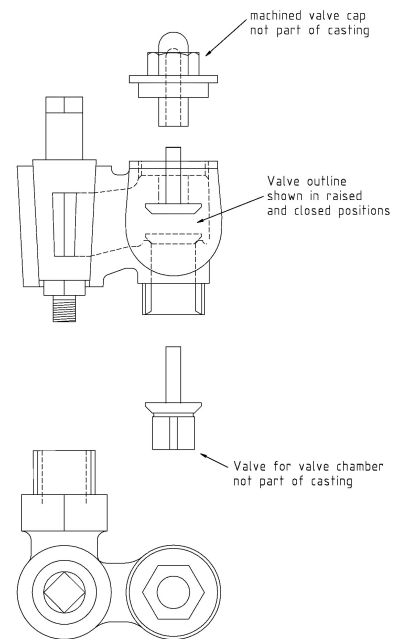
No.		Size	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	1	$1\frac{1}{4}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	2	inches
173	Screwed, Male	...	23/6	30/6	37/6	46/-	55/-	94/-	each
177	Flanged	...	28/-	36/-	46/-	57/6	73/6	116/-	"

Locking Guard and Box Key can be fitted to either pattern at extra cost.

Above an historic advert for the type of combined check and cock valve needed.



The photo above shows a drawing for an inline version check and cock valve. The black item is the pattern for the old Consuta valve to show size – clearly this had a flange joint to the boiler



Above the angle version for a new injector boiler feed valve for Consuta

You might wonder why didn't we use Consuta's old combined check and cock? Well they worked OK but were too large and a bit of an over design using a complicated double gland which was quite unnecessary, also they were flange mounted. Interesting to see that PTFE is now successfully used on many current steam fittings replacing the traditional graphite gland packing. I have wondered if we should also make use of "O" rings to improve the sealing life of the old style tapered plug cocks.

On the right are catch dishes designed for the injector overflow – two sizes shown. These serve to catch any water overflow from each injectors then pipe it into the ash pan.

They have an open top with a curved edge which allows the engineer to see if there is any dribbling.

The turned over top edge is hopefully there to provide anti splash, this will need to be tried out to see how well it works out.



They also need to be cleaned up and polished.

So what work is still needed on Consuta to make her ready for service?

- Fit the new boiler top
- Bolt on the smokebox front plate and it's door.
- Fit the Windermere Kettle – this one is really important to some.
- Fit the injector overflow tun dishes – see photo of current stage, the height sizes need to be checked.
- Seal all the new pipe joints as required, they are only loosely coupled up at present.
- Clean off the hull old anti-foul and renew. Our work on San Toy has prepared us for this.
- Adjust and tighten up all screws on the new fore and aft steering features.



Non Consuta work during the lockdown

I wonder what you were able to do during the Lockdown?

I'm lucky to live by the water, and to have boats to play with during the Lockdown. The photo shows a Salters GRP skiff owned by my son Mark and our steamer San Toy both on the mill stream.

The boiler ticket for San Toy had unfortunately expired, so we decided she should be hauled out for some much needed underwater work, last done six long years ago. The work involved replacing some of the underwater seams fitted with softwood splines some 50 years ago and also work on the underwater part of the stem. Paul asked me if the hull anti foul could be changed from blue to the more traditional red – yes OK, if he scraped it down.

However we had to wait for the Mill stream to abate after those early spring rains, so she was eventually hauled out during the hot weather in late May, and has now been relaunched with no problems at all, following two plus weeks ashore.

Other boating organisations effected by the Covid 19 virus

As you will know most work on Consuta is in pause, fortunately we currently have a reasonably secure fund base but are wondering how other boating organisations are coping especially those that depend on income from the public every year, so may be in need of extra help. Currently there is a request for help to support the historic steam launch Alaska, managed by Peter Green. Thames Steamers (Alaska) have a request for fund donation help on their website. See <http://www.thames-steamers.co.uk/covid19.html>. It is a pity that we don't have our Thames Boats Museum to help support and conserve these important parts of the Thames heritage and have to rely on individual groups for this important duty; so please consider giving a donation towards the continuing operation of Alaska.

Thank you so much for your continuing support, and stay safe.

Best wishes to all,

The Consuta Trustees

July 2020



Our resident swans had eight cygnets this year

San Toy hauled out for some underwater work. Cleaning off the anti-foul was a very messy business, Consuta will need the same work, but on a larger scale.



I've included some interesting material from our Consuta archive collection.

Below is from *The Yachtsman* of 1901 which has a description of Consuta's engine with oil bath lubrication, revs of 550 rpm with 180 psi, so perhaps not Consuta's engine after all? Then an item from *Surrey Mail* 1920 "Swamp the Punt"

On the next two pages are testimonials:-

The first from Col. Frank Willan in 1899 is confirmation that until the use of Consuta the earlier umpire launches did create a lot of wash. Note also the comment about the trial of a Saunders electric launch at the Regatta.

Then from Mr Clutton, the first owner of Consuta, which reveals that Consuta covered 10,000 miles over an eight year period.

The Yachtsman] [Winter Number, 1901

The opening of new works at West Cowes by a syndicate of which Mr. S. E. Saunders is chief, cannot fail to attract the attention of yachtsmen. Mr. Saunders' patent principle of yacht and launch construction is well known to river men, but its advantages should appeal even more forcibly to yachtsmen of all classes. Briefly it is a very perfect system of treble and quadruple 'planking.' The skin of the boats is formed of three (in small boats) and four (in large craft) thicknesses of wood, with a third piece of canvas covered with a slow-setting composition between. Before this is dry the planking is stitched tightly with copper wire from gunwale to gunwale continuously. The result is a very thin skin of enormous strength, which, in the case of dinghies and launches, requires no frames whatever. The boats, if of small size, are built upside down, for the sake of convenience. The system has had a long trial on the river, and has been a pronounced success. Probably every reader will be able to understand the enormous strength of such a skin, in which the grain of the wood runs in every direction, and the whole bound together with absolute rigidity. In the case of a yacht with a heavy lead keel, it would

probably be necessary to provide for the bolts and strains about the rigging and runners, but that is a small matter,

and we may expect to see many racing boats built by the firm. The firm, of course, makes a strong point of its launches, both electric and steam. A fine example of the latter is the well-known river boat *Consuta*, 50 ft., which can travel at over twenty-seven miles an hour. The points of advantage claimed for the engines fitted in the steam launches are lightness, which, of course, has been studied equally with power. The engines are lubricated by an 'oil bath,' which permits them to run smoothly and silently without attention. They are also fitted with a new valve-gear, &c., with 180 lbs. steam pressure, developing 550 revolutions per minute. The electric launches can be charged readily by any steam-yacht generating its own electric light. These are charming craft for the river, but on the sea their use can only be enjoyed by the privileged few—as yet. About the Solent, however, they should become highly popular. Already the firm in its new home has secured an order for a steam pinnace and a gig and sailing cutter for Mr. Lambert's new steam yacht, now building at Ramage and Ferguson's yard at Leith. Another order has been taken from Sir John Denison Pender, for a yacht launch, fitted with an oil motor; and a 50-ft. launch has been sold to the Crown Agents, for the Governor of Gambia, W. Africa.

Surrey Herald, September 3rd, 1920.

Excessive speed in Walton reach.

Summoned at the instance of the Thames Conservancy, Mr. Arthur Howett of Lanadowne-place, Hove, was fined £5 at Kingston County Bench yesterday for navigating the steam launch *Consuta* without special care and caution when passing a punt on the Walton reach of the Thames.

The *Consuta*, a speedy launch has for the past eight years carried the umpires for the varsity boat race.

A Richmond man who was in a punt with friends said they were moored at the bank, when the launch came along at excessive speed, and the wash swamped the punt, drenching the occupants.

Defendant who said he had 39 years experience of the river, said he was in the engine room on this occasion. His son was at the wheel. The steering gear went wrong. The speed was not excessive, and the launch made very little wash.

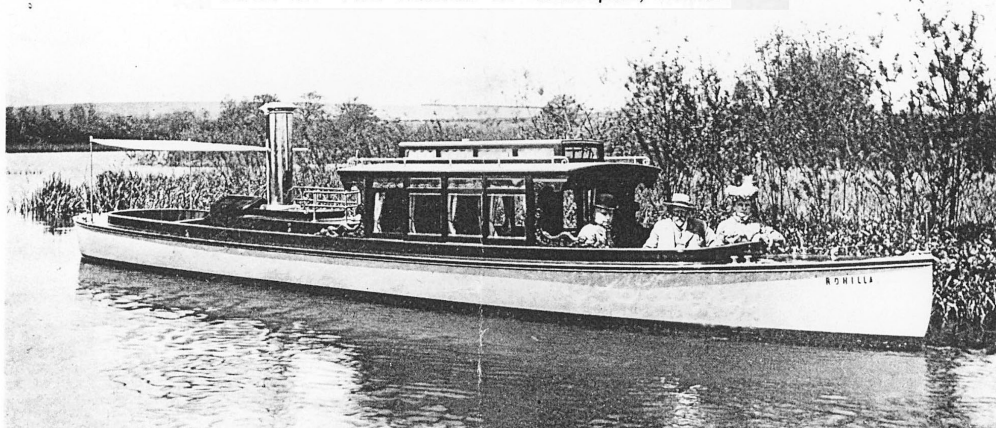
The Bench thought sufficient care was not exercised.

STEAM LAUNCH.

40 feet. Speed 14 miles.
Built for The Nawab of Rhampur, India.

From the Saunders catalogue, an interesting machinery/cabin layout

Fitted with a
30-h.p. Steam
Equipment.
Designed and
Built by us.



Built of
4 Skins of
Teak
on our Patent
System.

TESTIMONIALS.

THORN HILL PARK, BITTERN, HANTS,
August 5th, 1899.

DEAR MR. SAUNDERS,

Now that we are fairly over the rush and tear of Henley Regatta, I am glad to tell you my opinion of the "Consuta" and the Electric Launch you brought down for me to try.

The "Consuta" we have now run there for two years, and I had her also, as you know, to follow the late University Boat Race. With an experience of many years at Henley and Putney, including Umpiring since 1883, I can safely say she is the fastest and most handy boat we have ever had. What she will really show in miles per hour I do not know, as I have never had an opportunity of trying her, but she certainly is very fast, and jumps off from rest at an extraordinary pace. This, no doubt, is chiefly due to her great lightness of construction, combined with rigidity, and the thorough emersion of her propeller, which gets well held at once. The absence of wash, when running at her high-speed, is most remarkable; most high-speed boats squat down aft and run on a great wave, but she draws down very little, and runs along the top of the water on a very even keel. For this reason, especially, she is an excellent boat for our purpose at Henley. Your sewn construction is most ingenious, very light and very rigid. Whether it will last I cannot say, but I can see no reason, with good material and proper treatment, why it should not outlast even thin steel.

The Electric Launch was certainly the fastest Electric boat I have ever seen, and she did the Henley Course, 1 mile 550 yards up stream, starting dead, in 8 min. 7 secs., fast enough to keep up with a good racing four oar. Like the "Consuta," she, too, jumped off at a high rate of speed, and made absolutely no wash.

I trust you may have a great success with this type of boat, and you know I do not give my opinion of them without knowing something practical of the subject, as I have had several of my own, including two built by my old friend, Mr. Thornycroft, and I am not unacquainted with the behaviour of torpedo boats.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

COLONEL FRANK WILLAN.

P.S.—I think it quite possible that your sewn construction might be advantageously employed in the small type of racers.

DEAR SIR,

I was much pleased with the Launch you built for me, and which I saw at Goring on Saturday. She is a beautiful piece of workmanship.

WINCHESTER HOUSE,

OLD BROAD STREET, LONDON.

Yours faithfully,

(SIR) J. DENNISON PENDER.

SIR,

I have great pleasure in writing to tell you that the Electric Launch you built for me on your patent principle gave me entire satisfaction. The boat is built on beautiful lines; moves without vibration or wash; steers well; and goes several speeds, the top speed being really fast. I should certainly place another order with you if I require another boat of any kind, as I consider your patent principle admirable, and you understand the business of boat building most thoroughly.

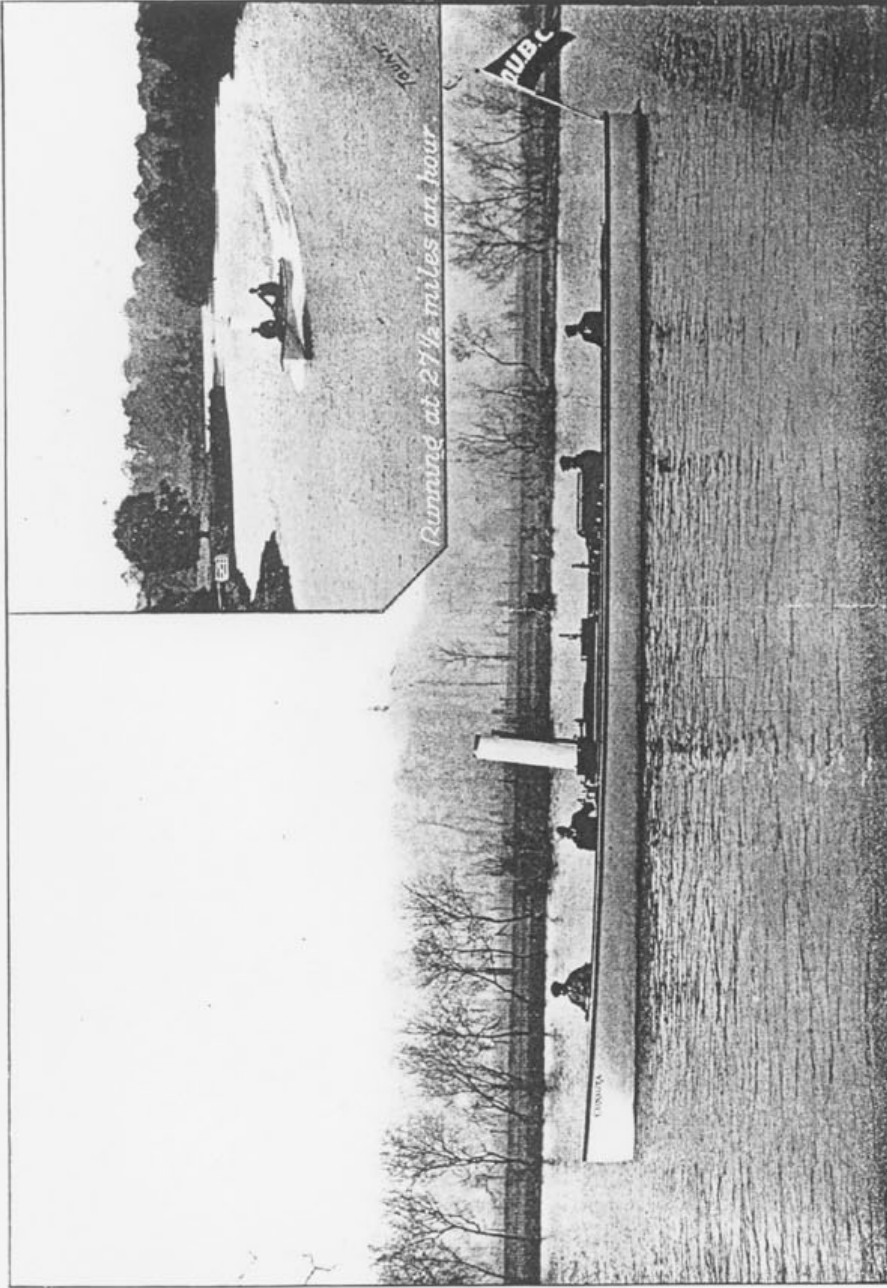
I am, yours faithfully,

GEORGE FABER.

52, SLOANE STREET, LONDON, S.W.

January 11th, 1900.

ROYAL UMPIRE LAUNCH.



Fitted with
Steam
Equipment
developing
100-h.p.



Built of
4 Skins of
Mahogany
on our
Patent System.



"CONSUTA."

DEAR SIR,

In answer to your enquiry as to how the Steam Launch "Consuta" that you built to my order on your patent sewing up principle suits me, I have pleasure in telling you that it has in every way fulfilled my wishes. As you are aware I gave you the order for the purpose of enabling me to fulfill a contract I had entered into with the Committee of the Henley Royal Regatta to construct a Launch to reduce the wash hitherto made by Launches carrying the Umpire, and I am pleased to say that I have been thanked by the Committee for the results obtained, and they have engaged the Boat for a term of five years.

In addition to Umpiring at Henley and other Regattas, and at the last Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, I have used the boat continuously since she was built, and she has given me every satisfaction.

GENTLEMEN,

Reverting to your enquiry as to the condition of my Launch "Consuta" after her seven years' work, I have pleasure in stating that in my opinion the hull is as stiff and sound as the day she was launched, and except for painting and varnishing it has never been touched. Considering the work she has done in umpiring and other work calculating to strain the boat, including a lot of work on the tideway and being repeatedly hauled in and out of the water at all times of the year, I consider the state of affairs most satisfactory. She has run some 10,000 miles during the time.

LEANDER CLUB, HENLEY-ON-THAMES,

January 23rd, 1900.

Yours faithfully, H. S. CLUTTON.

9, WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON, S.W., September 26th, 1904.

SAUNDERS' PATENT LAUNCH BUILDING SYNDICATE, LTD.

Yours faithfully, H. S. CLUTTON.



© The Francis Frith Collection

Abingdon, the Boat House 1890 26987

Finally if you like historic photos of the Thames covering it's boats, towns and villages the Francis Frith collection is well worth a search, see <https://www.francisfrith.com/uk/> .

All Frith photos are copyright, however it is possible to purchase high quality copies of individual photos or obtain a 12 page year calendar with twelve selected photos (your choice), starting on the year and month you would like.

For my birthday I was given one of these calendars with some great photos of Thames boating scenes taken in the late Victorian period,

The calendar option is excellent value if you would like several prints, the photos are about A4 size and you chose the twelve photos from the Frith collection. The sample photo above is from my calendar and was taken in Abingdon in 1890. The landing stage states it is for the Crown and Thistle Hotel, so I looked at a map and see that this pub is not on the river but a short distance along Bridge Street – after some further research I think we've identified the location in the old photo; so where do you think it is, above or below Abingdon bridge?

Latest news from the EA (guidance note No 7)

The Thames is now open for navigation with overnight stay for private boat owners, and with assisted passage through locks, however please note that Covid 19 restrictions still apply.

Brian Smith