

The Mayor of Maidstone Court of Survey Cruise

Saturday 7th August 2021

High Water: Allington Lock: 13.30pm

Morning Programme

The Mayor of Maidstone Cllr. Fay Gooch accompanied by Mr Peter Gooch, propose to sail over that part of the River Medway which lies within her Charter Jurisdiction, assisted by members of the Hampstead and Yalding Cruising Club, on SATURDAY 7th August 2021.

The Mayor will meet Official Visitors at 10.00 am at Jubilee Wharf for a departure time of 10.30 am.

An out line of the day's programme is as follows:

- 10.00** The Mayor, Cllr. Fay Gooch and Mr Peter Gooch, will be greeted by Jack Guntrip, the Commodore of the Hampstead and Yalding Cruising Club and Bob Tuthill the Cruise Organiser and Past President of the HYCC, and Mark Smurthwaite the President of the HYCC. The official visitors, after being welcomed by members and flag officers of the Hampstead and Yalding Cruising will board their vessels. The Mayor will be piped aboard Solitaire V, the Mayor's barge and the ships horns will be sounded marking the start of the cruise.
- 10.30** The Mayors Barge will take position at the head of the escort vessels and proceed down river to the cut at Allington Lock, arriving at Allington Lock the Mayor will be piped ashore by the Maidstone unit of the Sea Cadets.
- 11.00** The Mayor will officially open the newly refurbished Allington Lock with the official visitors and the Environment Agency in attendance.
- 12.00** The Mayor will be piped aboard the Mayors Barge which will lock through at Allington Lock and take position at the head of the escort and proceed down river from Allington Lock, to Hawkwood Stone, the Mayor of Maidstone's boundary.
- 13.15** Arriving at Hawkwood Stone, the Mayor of Maidstone will greet The Mayor of Medway who will come along side to welcome the Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling, as this marks the boundaries between the two Mayors, this arrival will be marked by vessels sounding their ships horns.
- 13.15** The Mayor's Barge will proceed at a normal pace back to Allington Lock with escorting boats from the HYCC.

Please note: The order of the Convoy back to Allington is:

- 1. Solitaire V - Mayor of Maidstone Cllr. Fay Gooch & Mr Peter Gooch
Bob Tuthill, Cruise Organiser HYCC, and the Mayor's Cadet, Holly Sherwood
The Mayor's Civic Officer, Russell Esgate**
- 2. Kashmir - The Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling, Cllr Roger Roud and Mrs Pam Roud**
- 3. Four Winds III - The Mayor & Mayoress of Medway Cllr Jan Aldous & Mr Tony Aldous**
- 4. Lorena Joy - Cllr Marion Ring & Mr Richard Ring, Mo Clayton, Past President HYCC.**
- 5. Solstice - Mark Brattle (Swanmaster), Steve Hart,**
- 6. Hamalena - The Ashford Folk Band.**
- 7. Golden Joy - Cllr David Burton and Mrs Sue Gilbert (Leader of the Council)**
- 8. Lady Elenor - Cllr Denise Joy and Mr Kenny Joy (Lib. Dem Group)**
- 9. Bourne Voyage - Cllr Stephen Mumford and Mrs Val Mumford (Independant Group)**
- 10. Mistura - Cllr John and Mrs Brenda Wilson, East Farleigh Parish Chairman.**

- 14.15** The Mayor's Barge will lock through at Allington and will take up position at the head of the convoy and proceed up the river to Maidstone - Jubilee Walk where certain guests may disembark.

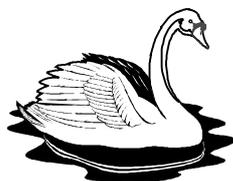
Picnic lunch break to be taken on board respective vessels.

Afternoon Programme

- 14.15** The vessels carrying the East Farleigh Chairman and the Sea Cadets will proceed up river to get East Farleigh Lock ready.
- 14.30** The Mayor's convoy will proceed up river to East Farleigh Lock
- 15.15** Arriving at East Farleigh Lock, the Mayor will be piped ashore and may be greeted by the Chairman of East Farleigh, Cllr John Wilson who will be on a boat and the Chair of Barming and Tovil Parish Councils if in attendance and ships horns will be sounded marking the inner limit of the Mayor's Charter jurisdiction.
(The convoy after locking through will render assistance to the next locking)
- 15.45** The Mayor's convoy will proceed up river to Teston Lock.
- 16.15** The Mayor's Barge with escorting boats will lock into Teston Lock where she will be welcomed by the Chairmen of West Farleigh, Teston and Nettlestead Parish Councils if in attendance.
- 16.45** The Mayor's Barge with escorting boats will lock through Teston Lock and wait for second locking, if necessary **before** proceeding up river to Wateringbury.
- 17.00** The first of the Convoy arrives at Medway Wharf Marina, Wateringbury. The Mayor of Maidstone, the Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling and the Mayor of Medway can observe the Swanmaster proceeding with the possibility of ringing some swans, this will allow time for the whole convoy to arrive at Medway Wharf, the Mayor of Maidstone will be welcomed by the President of the Hampstead and Yalding Cruising Club, Mark Smurthwaite and other HYCC flag officers in attendance.
- 18.00** The remainder of the Convoy arrives at Medway Wharf Marina, Wateringbury, where an official buffet reception will be held and there will be a welcome from the President and a small speech from the Mayor of Maidstone, the President and The Commodore. The Swan Master will give his report on the Swans and general wildlife on the river. All Club Members and their guests on the cruise are cordially invited to attend the official reception which will finish about 19.30 or thereabouts. Although all crews are welcome to stay and enjoy each others company after the official reception.

Buffet Reception of 1 hour.

Please Note: All timings are approximate for the up-river stage and may vary slightly to fit in with other river users. All vessels will be advised during the cruise on VHF Channel 6.



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NOTES

1. Commemorative pennants will be distributed by the Mayor to each vessel at the end of the Cruise at Wateringbury.
2. Adequate safety equipment should be carried on all boats.
3. Due attention must be paid to the guidance and instructions of the Cruise Organiser (Bob Tuthill, Past President and Commodore) or the Commodore aboard the organising boat.
4. R/T Communication VHF Channel 6 with convoy instructions from Bob Tuthill or the Commodore of the HYCC aboard Solitaire V.
5. When convenient, boats may join the convoy en-route. Please check with the Commodore's boat first.
6. From Hawkwood Stone to Wateringbury the Mayor of Maidstone will hold a Court of Survey.
7. Some food snack and refreshment should be brought along with you, or liaise with the skipper of the vessel carrying you for further info.
8. Finally, the fullest support is requested from all Clubs and Organisations on the Medway to make this a truly memorable event. Allington Lock and Notice to Mariners have been notified of this event.



A writer with the initials “S.C.L.” who wrote a history of Maidstone in 1834,

had this to say of the bridge:

“...commonly called the Great Bridge to distinguish it from the lesser one over the Len in Stone Street...the building is old and unsightly and though some years ago it was widened and repaired, it is fast falling into decay. The western end seems of greater antiquity than the rest of the work, and is probably part of the bridge erected here by one of the Archbishops of Canturbury in the 14th Century. Till late in the last century this bridge was encumbered with several small houses. At its eastern end is the town watchhouse, a neat building in stucco with an iron railing before it.”

The “small houses” on the bridge were, in fact, six alms-houses maintained by the fraternity of Corpus Christi, a religious guild of considerable importance in the town. Each comprised a room on the ground floor and a garret above.

As the Medway was so important to the prosperity of the town, the bridge and its immediate vicinity naturally formed the focus for all public activities and pageants connected with the river. For example “the Mayor being Conservator of the River, it was customary for him to annually hold a court for inspecting the Condition it is in, and to redress any disorders, and remove any Nusances relating to it; at which Time, the Corporation used to attend in their barges, etc., and it was called the Mayor’s Fishing: upon these publick Fishings in King James the First’s Time (when Stephen Heely was Mayor in 1606), a great Tempest happened whilst they were at Millhale, and a Messenger came to acquaint the Mayor and Attendants, that the town was set on Fire by Lightning in the Middle-Row, to their great Consternation.”

It is somewhat curious that in this short account of the Mayor’s Fishing Court, no reference was made to swans or an annual Swanmarking, for these birds have always frequented the river and do so today. In the second charter of James I, 1619, Maidstone was given a grant of swan rights from the Crown, worded in the following manner:

“And that also the aforesaid mayor, jurats and commonalty and their successors, may likewise have, by the waters aforesaid (i.e. the Medway), from the aforesaid bridge called East-Farleigh Bridge unto Hawke wood (on the boundary of Rochester) the liberty and privilege of keeping swans, cygnets, and a swan-mark for the same, and to change and alter the same swan-mark at their pleasure; and also to sign and mark all and singular the swans and cygnets by the water aforesaid, or within the metes and limits aforesaid, and the banks and soil of the same, building , breeding or resorting, and not lawfully signed or marked with the swan-mark aforesaid, and full power and authority, the swans and cygnets aforesaid swimming or straying out of the limits and metes aforesaid, by water and land, to pursue, retake, bring back and have again, without the impediment of us, our heirs or successors or of any other of our officers or ministers or other whatsoever.”

These rights were confirmed and continued by two later charters in 1682 and 1747. What swan-mark was adopted does not seem to be recorded.



Court of Survey Cruise

Under a Charter of Queen Elizabeth I, dated 4 December 1559, the Queen's Town of Maidstone was granted liberties in the River Medway extending from East Farleigh to Hawkwood in Burham. A Court was held annually to inspect the condition of the River Medway, to redress any disorders and remove any nuisances. The Corporation used to attend in their barges what was then called The Mayor's Fishing Court.

These liberties were augmented in a Charter of King James I, dated 12 July 1619, which granted the privilege of keeping swans and cygnets on this stretch of the Medway and marking them. From time to time, since 1559, the Mayor has traversed the River between these limits and held a Court of Survey.

The duties are listed in Burghmote Book 3, under the date 2 May 1629, amongst "addicions to our liberties":

"To have liberty to keepe Swans from East Farleigh Bridge to Hawkewood, and a Swan marke, and to alter and change the same at our pleasure, And to seise and marke all white Swans as our owne not lawfully marked, And to preserve them straying, And retake and rehave them."

The practice was revived in 1975 and the Mayor of Maidstone's Court of Survey Cruise has largely been held annually since. A Swan Master was appointed and the swans are now marked by means of a numbered ring put on their leg. From 1975 Bob Tuthill Assisted the Cruise Master and from 1981 Bob Tuthill and the Hampstead and Yalding Cruising Club have solely organised the event.

