

PLA HARBOUR MASTER'S RECREATIONAL NAVIGATION GROUP

Notes of the meeting held at Pinnacle House on 25th October 2017

Present:

Nick Evans (<i>Chairman</i>)	PLA, Deputy Harbour Master (Upper)
Darren Knight	PLA, Assistant Harbour Master (Recreational)
Lyn Kindlen-Funnell	PLA, Deputy Harbour Master (Lower)
Sarah Broad	PLA, Navigational Safety Systems Coordinator
Amy Taylor	PLA, Thames Vision Delivery and Policy Advisor

Pamela Chart	Association of Thames Yacht Clubs
Richard Hart	Association of Thames Yacht Clubs
Mike Wardle	Shadwell Basin Activity Centre
Patrick	Dutch Barge Association
Peter Finch	River Thames Society
Nick Edmunds	Richmond Canoe Club
Banny	National Community Boats Association
Chris Winnington-Ingram	Corinthians Trust
Alex Hester	Chelsea Kayak Club
Kevin East	British Canoeing
Tony Reynolds	TRRC Rowing Safety Advisor
Ray Blair	Designated Person (Marico Marine)

Apologies:

Mark Towns	PLA, Harbour Master Upper (HMU)
Jon Beckett	PLA, SMS Manager
Paul Hyman	Active360 (Standup Paddleboarding)
Harry Whelan	London Kayaking Company
Bill Mitchell	TRRC PLA Liaison Officer
Roger Squires	Inland Waterway Association
Mike Thomas	Dragon Boating
Dave Jones / Mike Chambers	Association of Thames Yacht Clubs

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Minutes of the PHRNG held on 29th March 2017 were approved.

3. Actions from Last Meeting (All Actions listed here)

- a. Revised signage for various points along the river has now been designed and is currently with our Planning and Civil Engineering teams to progress the project by early 2018. **Action Closed**
- b. PLA to consider if vessel speed logs could be made public with tidal flow modelling data online. **Ongoing Action** – currently in discussions to develop an accelerometer on houseboats at key locations to measure wash issues
- c. Hurlingham YC believed there had been a change in sediment and scaling around Broomhouse Pier. AHMR has met with representatives and highlighted no significant changes from Hydrographic surveys. Black flag days are also possible causes as to why Broomhouse Pier and the vessels moored there have taken the ground in 2017. **Action Closed**

- d. HMU to check that Imperial Wharf Marina and Chelsea Harbour are meeting the requirements of their River Works Licence – appear to be complying with the terms of the river works licence. **Action Closed**
- e. AHMR to discuss with the PLA Hydrographic team about the possibility of providing tidal stream data at various points along the tidal Thames. **Ongoing Action**
- f. Kew Bridge Pontoon – St. George have been successful in amended their Section 106 obligations. The PLA are awaiting an application for a variation to the river works licence to see this pontoon removed. **Monitoring**
- g. AHMR to speak with Hydrographic team in relation to a tide gauge at Hammersmith Bridge. **Action Ongoing**
- h. PLA to consider request to include dates in the title of Notice to Mariners and SMS Manager to consider the webpages for Notices to Mariners and the potential to have active and non active lists. These requests has been considered however this will not be possible in the short-term for various reasons; title of notices would effectively take up half a page and the content management system is not able to assist at present. This is something that the PLA still wishes to pursue and will continue working to improving the situation. **Action Closed.**
- i. AHMR to consider naming private vessels in incident reports to PHRNG. Following review all vessel names have been excluded. **Action Closed.**

Actions arising throughout the course of this meeting:

- a. Members to review Terms of Reference and submit comments to AHMR by 14th November 2017. AHMR and Kevin East to meet to review canoeing representation at these meetings.
- b. AHMR to discuss with PLA Corporate Affairs what the PLA's policy is on social media groups and online forums that discuss and advise on navigation on the tidal Thames.

4. Review of PHRNG Term of Reference

Some minor PLA comments were noted and the group added some additional comments on current representation. AHMR requested that should there be any further comments that they are submitted by 14th November and he will meet with British Canoeing to discuss future canoe/kayaking club representation.

5. Publications Update

a. Top Tips

The PLA have produced a new educational leaflet with eight key messages. These are not handed out in the same way as the Recreational User Guides as they are more for when river users have got things wrong and need some on the spot messaging and guidance for the remainder of their passage.

b. PLA App

PLA App has been in circulation for almost a year and the PLA is constantly seeking feedback for further improvements. No comments were received within the meeting and should any members have any comments, please forward to AHMR.

c. Red Tape Challenge - General Directions & Byelaws

- i. The PLA have recently conducted a review of all regulations which is currently out for internal consultation with all PLA Staff. This will close on 4th December.
- ii. The main intention is to produce a Port Information Guide, which will act as a single port of call for all PLA Regulations and Guidance. This will not

include the 'Paddling' and 'Rowing' Codes, which will continue to be stand alone documents.

- iii. The Permanent Notices to Mariners publication/document will cease to exist following the Red Tape Challenge.
- iv. The results of the internal consultation will be compiled and all feedback considered. Any proposed amendments will then be consulted on within the wider stakeholder community, through the PLA's public consultation process. However, this will not take place until later in 2018.

6. Events

Events list was circulated in advance and the Online Events Calendar is already being updated with requests for 2018. Please ensure that proposed dates are submitted at your earliest convenience and that all risk assessments/event plans are submitted to the appropriate harbour master team at least 4-weeks in advance for comment and review.

7. Review of Incident Report

- i. The incident report was reviewed and is attached in Appendix A to these minutes.
- ii. Question asked whether the PLA would look at reducing the requirements for recreational vessel to transit the Thames Barrier during the Red Tape Challenge. It was explained that the PLA is unlikely to reduce the requirements in this control zone.
- iii. Concern raised over wash from commercial freight operators in the Nine Elms Reach but was unsure just how serious the effect was on recreational river users. DHMU explained that all incidents and near misses reported are fully investigated, so please ensure that all concerns are raised when they occur.
- iv. A member of the PHRNG asked whether commercial operators were aware of the 'Rowing' and 'Paddling' Codes of Practice. DHMU explained that all PLA local knowledge examiners expected those going for the Thames LKE or revalidation to have knowledge of these codes and what recreational river users would be doing in the LKE area.
- v. It was suggested that there are various social media platforms (with at least 10-20 facebook group) providing information and guidance to other river users as to what to expect and how best to cope with the conditions on the tidal Thames. Therefore it was asked how the PLA monitors these various platforms and groups to ensure that accurate information is being given. AHMR will discuss these concerns with the PLA's Corporate Affairs team; however reminded all members that should you see questionable advice that they either direct those asking for advice to the PLA/Boating on the Thames or to alert the PLA directly so that we can provide addition assistance.
- vi. It was noted that the Master of the fatal speed boat incident near Wandsworth Bridge in December 2015 was recently at Wimbledon Magistrates' Court charged with manslaughter by gross negligence. He has since been ordered to appear at the Old Bailey in November.

b. Ebb Tide Flag Stats

- i. The flag stats are from 1st March 2017 until 30th September 2017
 - Red 0%
 - Yellow 0.3%
 - Green 37.9%
 - Black 62.1%

It should be noted that between 1st July to 30th September, 85% of the time was spent on Black Flag.

c. Safety Bulletins

- i. The PLA have issued the following Safety Bulletins:
 - [No. 1 of 2017](#) – Navigating in Close Proximity to Piers, Jetties and Other River Structures
 - [No. 2 of 2017](#) – Compliance with Closed Arch Signs
 - [No. 3 of 2017](#) – Lifejacket Crotch Straps
- ii. We would like to draw you attention the following international accident investigate reports:
 - MAIB investigation report [9-2017](#): Love for Lydia - Carbon monoxide poisoning
 - MAIB investigation report [18-2017](#): Vasquez – Carbon monoxide poisoning
 - [MCIB/263](#) (No.6 of 2017) Report – MOB from angling boat BLUEBIRD II
 - [MCIB/265](#) (No. 7 of 2017) Report – Empty vessels found off Tawin Island

8. River Works

a. Central Navigational Channel Arch Closures at:

i. Hammersmith Bridge

- The bridge is having temporary emergency works conducted between 21st to 29th October 2017, as described in Notice to Mariners U14 of 2017.
- The main repair project is likely to commence in 2018 and will last for approximately two years. The PLA continues to monitor the predicted timings for the project and will keep river users' updated once further information is available.

ii. Rotherhithe Bridge

- A proposed new foot and cycle bridge is proposed between Canary Wharf Pier and Rotherhithe, which has strong Mayoral backing.
- No final design has been formalised and no agreement has yet been reached regarding the dimensions of the bridge, between the designers and the PLA.
- A public consultation is due to commence shortly.

iii. Nine Elms Bridge

- A bridge is still being discussed in this location however progress is slow and does not have the same level of support as the Rotherhithe Bridge.

b. Fulham Football Club

- i. A revised planning application is being submitted to the council and we would encourage all those affect to comment on the application.

c. Blackfriars Zipline

- i. An application been submitted to the PLA for a long-term zipline across the river at Blackfriars, which is current being considered.

d. Thames Tideway Tunnel

- i. King Edward Memorial Garden – construction of the coffer dam wall remains ongoing and in-filling will commence shortly.
- ii. Chambers Wharf – the sinking of the drive shaft has commenced and spoil is being taken away by 2 to 3 barges per week. Construction materials for lining the tunnel walls are being delivered by one barge every 2 weeks.
- iii. Blackfriars – deconstruction of the old pump station is underway. Construction works to the western end of the coffer dam wall is due to commence at the end of November 2017.
- iv. Victoria Embankment – ongoing construction of the coffer dam wall continues.
- v. Albert Embankment – UXO investigation surveys are ongoing.
- vi. Heathwell Pumping Station – trial pits due to start in November 2017.
- vii. Kirtling Street – construction of the main jetty is complete and berthing piles are due to be fitted shortly. Muck away has commenced and is currently being transported via the old Cemex Jetty.
- viii. Chelsea – Trial pits are due to commence shortly and full works will start in Q1 of 2018.
- ix. Cremorne Wharf – Bed levelling activities is underway and a planning application is due in early 2018.
- x. Carnworth Road – construction of the sheet piling walls are ongoing and bed levelling for the new campshed will be completed shortly. Tunnel boring machine due to be on site by, 1st December.
- xi. Putney – pre-works preparation works ongoing, application being processed and works to start in earnest by end of 2017.
- xii. TTT Barge Moorings – a number of new temporary TTT barge moorings will be installed at various locations along the river during 2017/18 and mariners will be advised of these in due course via Notice to Mariners.

e. Illuminated Bridges Project

- i. There is a developed proposal to illuminate all the bridge between Tower and Putney. However due to other major infrastructure projects this will mean that this project will be completed at a slower pace.
- ii. There will be a number of surveys and studies conducted in the coming months and years.
- iii. In 2018 it is anticipated that; London, Cannon Street Rail and Southwark Bridge's will be illuminated.

9. AOB

- a.** Trees – The PLA will shortly be conducting a survey and deciding on our 2018 tree management works on PLA land, which is essentially between Beverly Brook and Kew. If there are any trees of concern, please advise AHMR by 7th November 2017.
- b.** Dangerous Structures – it was brought to the PLA's attention that there were some stumps/piles sticking out of the riverbed near Battersea Park which could be dangerous for small recreational craft. The PLA's harbour service launch has been asked to investigate and this is one of the Marine River Inspector's (MRIs) duties, however if you see anything please report to London VTS or the launches directly and we will deal with it.
- c.** Great River Race – it was noted that the group wanted to thank the organisers and the PLA for another great event.
- d.** Low Emissions and ban on wood/open fires – concerns raised about the Mayor's proposals and the implications on the tidal Thames. It was explained that the PLA are conducting an Air Quality Study to understand the Thames impact on London as a whole. In addition the PLA is the first Port in the country to introduce a 'Green Tariff' for the greenest ships entering the Port. In addition, the PLA have currently been analysing whether our two harbour service launches in the upper district could be retrospectively fitted with electric engines and recently concluded that the technology is not quite there, yet. It is noted that the Thames is currently exempt from the Mayor's plans but this is likely to change in the near future, however ensuring that all recreational vessels complied with any potential changes would be very difficult to achieve as they do not need to be licenced.

DONM: 21st March 2018
Pinnacle House, 26 – 26 St Dunstons Hill, London, EC3R 8

INCIDENT REVIEW 1st MARCH 2017 TO 30TH OCTOBER 2017

There have been 26 reported recreational incidents since the last Port of London Authority Harbourmasters Recreational Navigation Group (PHRNG) held in March 2017. This demonstrates that incident numbers have **increased by 42.3%** compared to the same period of the previous year. It should be noted that recreational incidents in the upper district account for 23.4% of all the reported incidents in this area, between 1st March 2017 and 30th September 2017.

Monthly Recreational Incident Statistics

2015												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
3	2	2	6	4	5	11	8	4	5	2	2	55
2016												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2	2	1	3	3	4	1	2	1	4	1	2	26
2017												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	2	5	3	4	2	2	4	6				

CONTACTS – 2 (3) There has been fewer contact incidents during this period however one was categorised as a serious incident. It should be noted that this is the first time a recreational incident has been categorised as ‘serious’ since a fatality in May 2015.

The serious incident involved a rowing eight which made contact with the central abutment of Albert Bridge, while racing four abreast in Chelsea Reach. This incident occurred following a major rowing event being cancelled due to poor weather. The cancellation of the event led to some rowing clubs organising an ‘alternative’ event. The PLA would like to thank the TRRC for their support throughout this investigation and the robust actions taken against the coxes and athletes concerned. The cox and coaches responsible for organising this event were issued with a Harbour Masters Warnings under Section 108 of the Port of London Act.

The second incident involved a narrowboat attempting to transit outward bound around the backwaters of Eel Pie Island. Upon realising his mistake, the Master attempted to turn the vessel around but made contact with three moored craft. The vessel was later sighted with a fouled propeller and following a discussion the duty Marine River Inspector (MRI) was issued with a Harbour Masters Warning under Section 108 of the Port of London Act.

COLLISIONS AND NEAR MISS COLLISIONS - 6 (6) There have been no change in the number of reported collisions and near misses:

- One incident involved a number of rowing eights and a tug with tow. This incident was closely linked to the contact incident resulting from the cancellation of a major rowing event. This incident led to the PLA amending the rules for rowers and paddlers when going downriver of Fulham Railway Bridge.
- There have been three further near misses between rowing vessels and commercial craft. The predominant factors were that they failed to keep an appropriate lookout (Rule 5) and failing to act in a timely manner. In one case there was a lack of group management and the club has been requested to review their safety management system accordingly.

Appendix A - PHRNG 20 INCIDENT REVIEW

- A collision occurred between a novice sailing dinghy and a convoy of narrowboats near Chiswick Eyot. The novice sailing vessel lost control and one of the narrowboats realised that the risk of collision was significant. The narrowboat reduce her speed which resulted in a minor collision. An educational discussion was held with the sailing club to ensure that they understood the requirements of Rule 9 (Narrow Channels) and the Thames Byelaw interpretation of 'fairway'.
- A motor cruiser outward bound had a near miss in the backwaters of Isleworth Ait with a rowing double inward bound. In addition the motor cruise made no sound signals to warn of a risk of collision. An educational discussion was held with the motor cruiser and was reminded that when navigating outward bound they should be keeping to the starboard side of the fairway and not navigating in backwaters. The rowers were equally reminded of Rule 5, as they did not see the motor cruiser until the last minute.

GROUNDING - 2 (0) The two incidents involved Dutch barges in the upper reaches of the tidal Thames. In both incidents neither had up-to-date charts on board and relied solely on electric chart plotters to assist their navigation. Furthermore neither vessel had consulted the PLA's Ebb Tide Flag Warning System, which was on 'Black Flag – Caution – Low Fluvial Flows' which might have assisted them in planning their passage. It is important that all river users consult the warning system, especially in summer months (July-September) when we have experience 85% of Black flag days and when this is the case, river users should expect chart datum or lower than chart datum depths.

INAPPROPRIATE NAVIGATION - 7 (0) Incident statistics have increased dramatically:

- There have been two incidents in where rowing vessels have navigated through Richmond Footbridge while the weir gates are being operated. This is inherently unsafe navigation whilst complex machinery is being operated and a closed arch sign was in place throughout albeit obstructed for a short period. As a result all coxes involved in such incidents have received Harbour Master Reprimands under Section 108 of the Port of London Act. We ask that this nature of dangerous navigation is brought to the attention of all river users', as this irresponsible attitude by river users' must not continue.
- A motor cruiser was observed to be navigating erratically and exceeding the speed limits. The Marine Policing Unit (MPU) intercepted the vessel at Putney. Just before the MPU arrived some of those on board jumped overboard to swim mid-channel. It was explained to the MPU that they were swimming to free a fouled propeller, however following interview with the Master it became apparent that the fouled propeller only occurred after they jumped into the river. The MPU and the RNLi escorted the vessel to Chiswick Pier and the MPU reported that they believed all those on board were heavily intoxicated. The Master was issued with a Harbour Master Reprimand under Section 108 (navigating without due care and attention) of the Port of London Act.
- A RIB was observed to transit the Thames Barrier without seeking permission. London VTS attempted to contact the vessel but to no avail. The duty Marine River Inspector (MRI) intercepted the vessel where a number of important safety concerns were addressed and educational materials was passed to the Master.
- A motor cruiser was observed navigating on the incorrect side the channel while on passage from Gravesend to Teddington. On passage the motor cruiser navigated the Thames Barrier and was instructed to proceed through 'Golf span' but navigated through 'Delta span'. The Master was issued with a Harbour Master Warning and sent some educational materials.

Appendix A - PHRNG 20 INCIDENT REVIEW

- Two incidents involved sailing vessels which kept tacking across the fairway causing navigational issues for other river users. In one case the vessel was also navigating without any lights and when intercepted by the duty Marine River Inspector (MRI) was issued with a Harbour Masters Warning.

MECHANICAL FAILURE - 3 (1) There has been an increase in the number of mechanical failures throughout the summer of 2017. Two of these failures occurred on narrowboats; one suffered a steering arm failure and other vessel suffered an oil pipe failure where it had become detached from the main engine. The third incident involved a Dutch barge essentially picking up a small rope around the propeller however the master did not realise this and was over worked the main engine, which eventually overheated.

WASH - 1 (0) A motor cruise was reported by a number of rowers for creating excessive wash. An educational discussion was held with the Master of the vessel and was reminded of Thames Byelaw 57 (Wash and Draw Off) and the effects on other river users. We would like to remind all river users of the importance of reporting incidents immediately so that proactive action can be undertaken, as this incident took two-days to be reported.

BREACH OF BYELAWS - 5 (0) Incident statistics have greatly increased in this area:

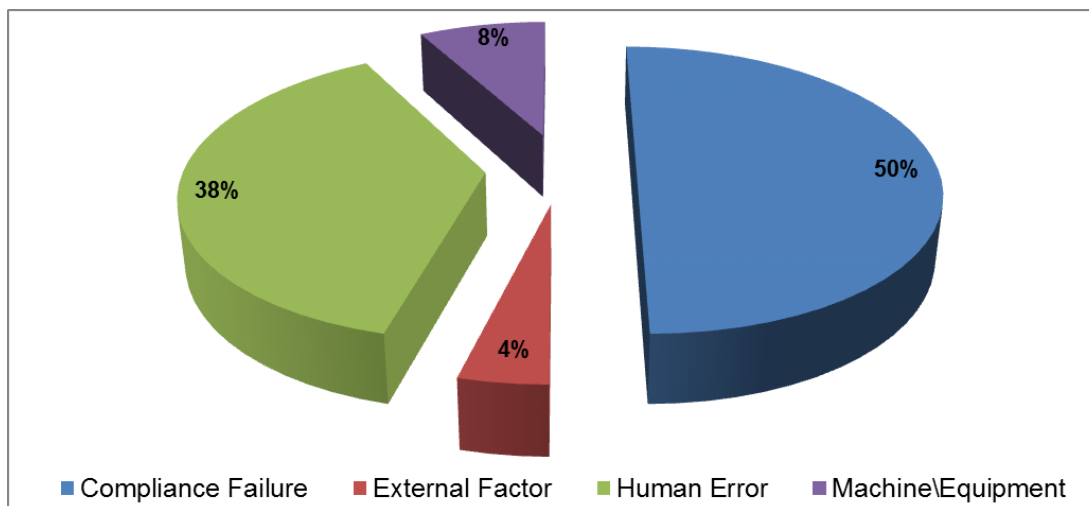
- Three incidents were due to motor cruisers failing to comply with Thames Byelaw 16 (Speed Limits) and navigating erratically. One of these incidents involved a vessel navigating inappropriately in the Thames Barrier Control Zone (General Direction 27) and it was one of the vessels also involved in one the inappropriate navigation incidents as explained above. All three Master's received some educational materials and a Harbour Master Warning's for not comply with the Byelaws.
- The remaining two incidents are in relation to Stand Up Paddler-boarders (SUPs) non-compliance with Thames Byelaw 13 and the SUP rules, as detailed in the Paddling Code of Practice. In both instances SUPs were sighted navigating in Central London, with support from other enforcement agencies on the Thames, the PLA moved them to areas where they could comply with the rules. It should be noted that in one instance the SUP's had no form of buoyance aid, as recommended in the Paddling Code of Practice.

We continue to ask members to encourage the organisations they represent to report all incidents and near miss reports to ensure that we gain a clear understanding of what issues there are for recreational river users' on the tidal Thames. We would also ask that you to remind all members of the requirements as detailed in Thames Byelaw 8 that states that all incidents should be reported immediately to London VTS (VHF Channel 14 or 020 8855 0315) and followed up with a written report as soon as practicable following the verbal report.

Analysis

Through analysis of the causal factors for the same reporting period in 2016, we have seen a dramatic increase in the Compliance Failure and Human Error. This is in part due to the manner in which we categorise incidents and looking further than just human error as a cause. This does highlight how many incidents could have been avoided with a more robust approach to both internal and external rules, regulations and procedures.

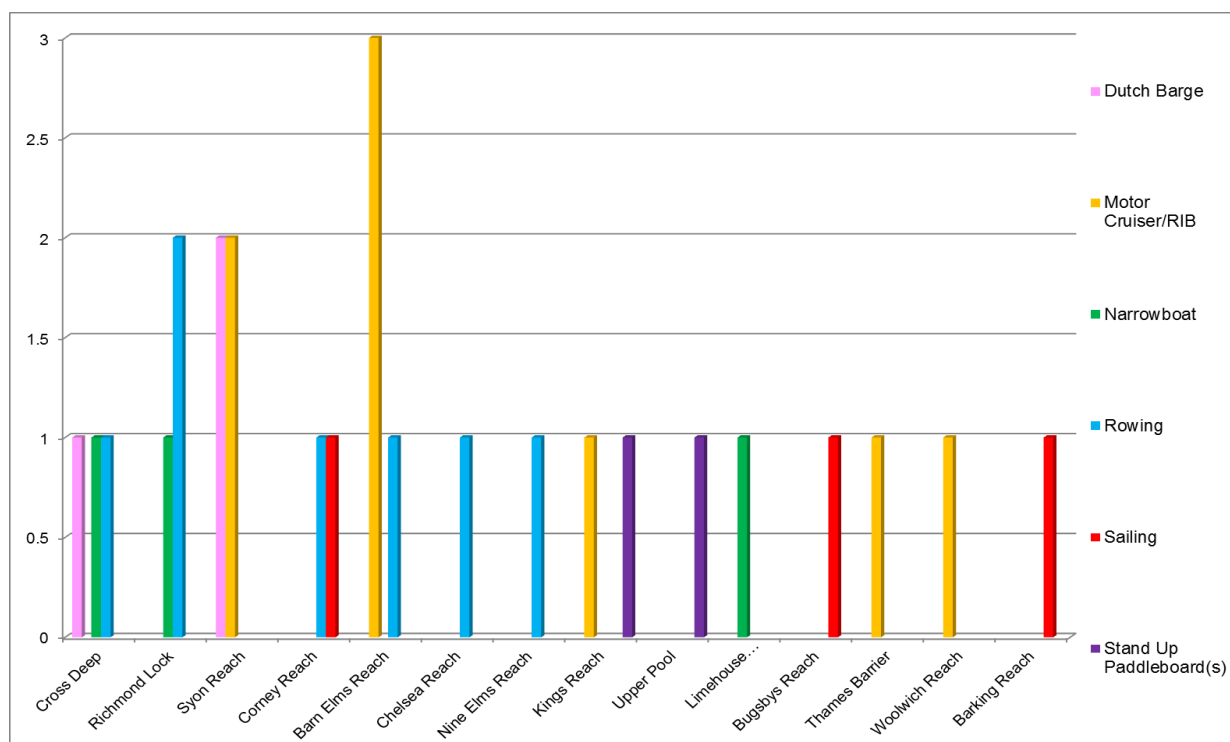
Appendix A - PHRNG 20
INCIDENT REVIEW



Looking in greater depth at the Human Error and Compliance Failures we found the overriding factor in all these incidents is failing to comply with the rules and regulations.

We continue to encourage increasing sustainable use of the tidal Thames for sporting, leisure and recreational activities, yet it is important that all river users comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), Thames Byelaws, General Directions and our easy to digest Codes of Practice, to ensure that all activities are conducted in a safe and fun environment.

The graph below demonstrates the location of recreational incidents have occurred during this reporting period by the type of activity. We would expect that rowing incidents to be the highest percentage of historic statistics due to the tidal Thames being the centre of rowing in the United Kingdom, but we see motor cruisers/RIBs are the highest number of statistics.



Note – Figures in brackets are for the previous 6 month period from 1st October 2016 to 28th February 2017

Appendix A - PHRNG 20 INCIDENT REVIEW

The graph above demonstrates the areas where further work needs to be developed. The incidents in Barn Elms Reach with motor cruises/RIBs relate to these vessels not complying with the speed limits and navigating erratically.

Richmond Lock appears heavily in this graph on this occasion following two sets of rowers being caught for navigating through arches while complex machinery was in operation. In one case the cox was instructed to 'push on' as the weir was being lowered and in the other case the crews did not wait for the weirs to be fully lift and the closed arch signs removed. Following the first incident we issued a Safety Bulletin (Compliance with Closed Arch Signs) and we are currently considering establishing an exclusion zone around Richmond Lock and improved CCTV.

Safety Bulletins

During this period the PLA has produced the following safety bulletins;

- [No. 1 of 2017](#) – Navigating in Close Proximity to Piers, Jetties and Other River Structures
- [No. 2 of 2017](#) – Compliance with Closed Arch Signs
- [No. 3 of 2017](#) – Lifejacket Crotch Straps

We would like to draw you attention the following international accident investigate reports:

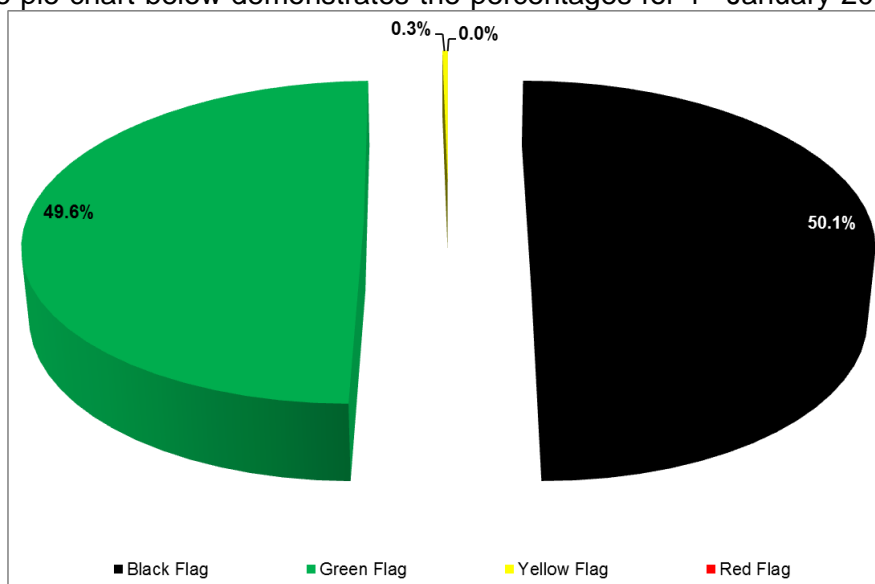
- MAIB Report [9 of 2017](#) – an investigation report into another carbon monoxide poisoning on board a motor cruiser on the Norfolk Broads.
- MCIB Report [6 of 2017](#) – this is an investigation report into a fatal man overboard incident from an Angling vessel in Ireland.
- MAIB Report [18 of 2017](#) – the investigation report into another carbon monoxide poisoning on board a motor cruiser in Cardiff.

PLA Ebb Tide Flag Stats

For the PHRNG reporting period of the 1st March 2017 to 30th September 2017 the PLA Ebb Tide Flag Stats are as follows:

Black Flag	62.1%
Green Flag	37.9%
Yellow Flag	0%
Red Flag	0%

The pie chart below demonstrates the percentages for 1st January 2017 to 30th September 2017:



Note – Figures in brackets are for the previous 6 month period from 1st October 2016 to 28th February 2017