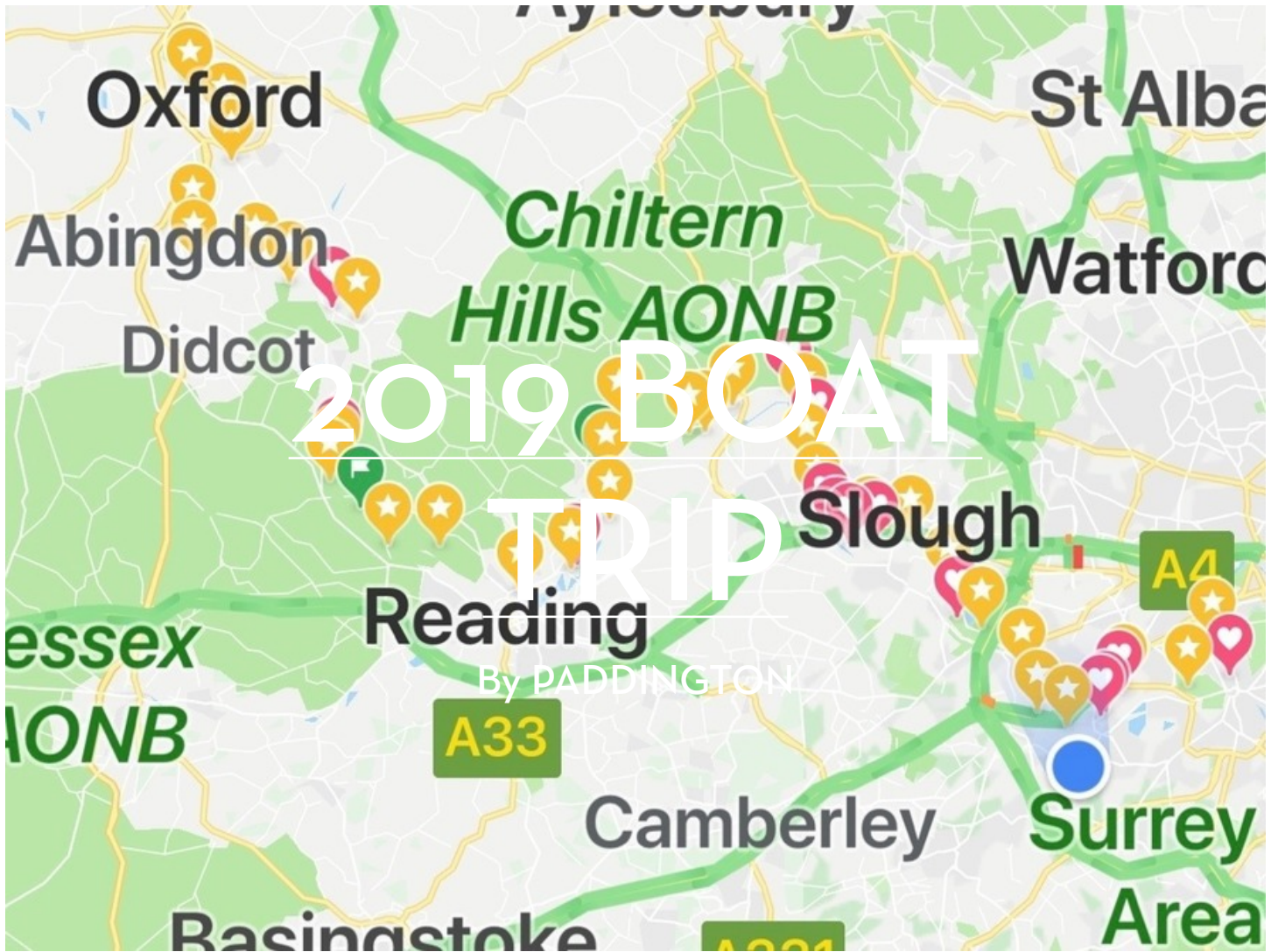


BONJOURNAL



02 Aug 2019

8:00 pm
Birthday Girl
Sunninghill

This year, the Ride London cycle event is on Fee's birthday. We would have headed off on the Sunday, Fee's birthday, but because the roads are all closed, we delay our boat trip start to the Monday.

Fee's birthday celebrations start on Friday with a first visit with Don, Liss, Ernest and Jane to Maya Restaurant in Sunninghill, owned by our neighbour Mabs. Transport by Limo - of course !

Saturday is spent preparing Drift A Wey.



04 Aug 2019

7:30 am
Cycle Race
Weybridge Railway Station (WYB)

KT13 Flags at the ready, we lend our support to the cyclists.



9:00 pm
Queens Head
Weybridge

Fee's birthday continues after the cycling with a delicious meal in the Queen's Head courtesy of Don.

This is followed by nightcaps in the JF.

05 Aug 2019

9:00 am
Early Start
Weybridge

Monday morning comes around way too early

9:00 pm
A Day at the Races
Royal Windsor Racecourse

First stop on the trip is Windsor racecourse. First race delivers a winner. Then not so good until the last race when Look Surprised comes in to save the evening. Even Paddington looked surprised.





9:30 pm
Sunset
Windsor Racecourse

And then the sun sets over Windsor Racecourse and we retire to The Shebeen for a Rum Chata nightcap as we start to tap into our winnings



06 Aug 2019

8:00 am
Breakfast
Windsor Racecourse

The day begins with a shower. It also ends with a shower or two but that comes later.

Breakfast of bacon rolls and we are ready for the day.

10:00 am
Bray
Bray

We have 7 locks to negotiate today, the first being Bray after which there are some lovely houses along Fishery Road.



12:30 pm
Bisham Abbey
Hurley

Between Marlow and Hurley we pass Bisham Abbey sports centre where the England football team practice their penalty taking. Paddington reckons they need a lot more practice, given their track record of losing all penalty shootouts.



2:30 pm
Ice Cream
Medmenham

Ice cream anyone ?



4:00 pm
Mooo
Medmenham

Ah, that's where the milk for the ice cream comes from !



8:00 pm
Arriba Arriba
Henley Riverside

We make it to Henley and are fortunate to get a mooring in prime position by the park.

We pay our £10 mooring fee for the night and head into town. Rain is due so we take our jackets, have a wee drink in the Coppa Club and then have mexican to eat at Pachanga's

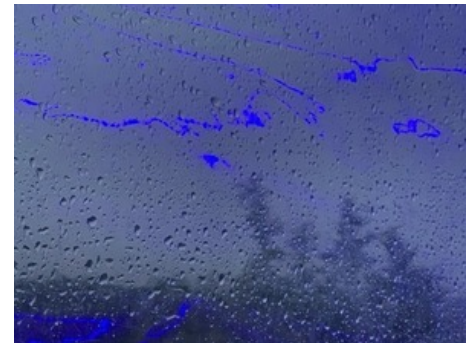


9:00 pm
Rain Rain
Henley Riverside

While we are in the Mexican it pours with rain.

It stops while we are walking back to the boat, we have avoided the rain.

And then the heavens open



07 Aug 2019

8:00 am
Wake up call
Henley Riverside

We wake to the sound of little birds running up and down the roof of the boat.

I suppose they think that's funny !

It's stopped raining and it is 8 o'clock - not so bad really.

Fresh coffee and eggs for breakfast before we head off.

Eight locks today ! We have a restaurant reservation at the Leatherne Bottel this evening in Goring.

12:00 pm
Sonning
Sonning Bridge

Some nice houses on the way up to Sonning where we will return for the theatre on Saturday



1:00 pm
Rain
Caversham Lock

After Sonning it tips down with rain, but only for ten minutes and by the time we reach Caversham Lock it has stopped.



2:00 pm
Post Box
Mapledurham Lock

Just before Mapledurham there is a letterbox in the wall on the river. What's that all about ?



4:00 pm
Goring
Leathern Bottel

No more rain and we arrive at the Leatherne Bottel near Goring in good time.



8:00 pm
Delicious
Leathern Bottel

Meal at the Leatherne Bottel is delicious. We would highly recommend a visit, even if not by boat !



12:30 pm
Pillbox
Clifton Lock

There are several of these along the north bank of the Thames. They were built as part of the next line of defence, should we have been invaded during the war !



08 Aug 2019

9:30 am
Upstream
Benson Lock

Today is our last day going upstream.

This stretch of the river is very quiet. Fewer boats and fewer points of interest.



3:00 pm
Abingdon
Abingdon Bridge

We arrive at Abingdon and find a suitable mooring.

11:00 pm
Say cheese
Leathern Bottel

After dinner cheese on board with a glass of red and cheesy music to end the night

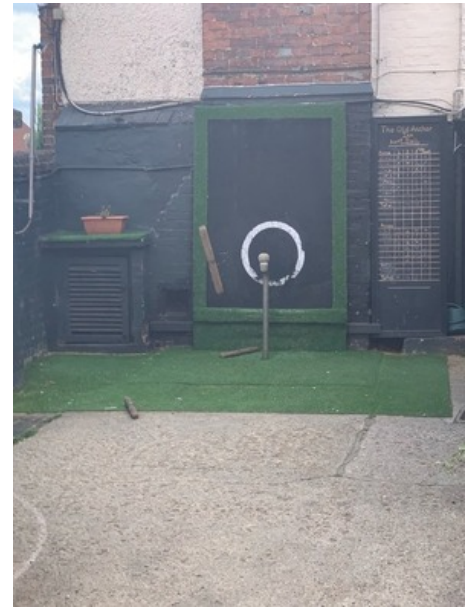




4:00 pm
Aunt Sally
The Old Anchor Inn

Seems that Aunt Sally is a very popular Pub Garden game around these parts.

You have to knock Aunt Sally off a pole by throwing sticks underarm.



3:30 pm
Old Anchor
The Old Anchor Inn

We have a couple of hours until we meet up with Anne and Tony for dinner and venture into The Old Anchor.

There is a sign saying something about Aunt Sally



7:30 pm
Dinner
The Nags Head

We Anne and Tony meet up with us and we have a nice dinner in the Crown and Thistle.

On the way back from the restaurant, Fee is intrigued by the Parking Meter.



With her HR diversity hat on she comments:
"The writing for the phone number to call is very small"
"That must be hard for the poorly sighted"
"And there's no facility like braille for the blind"

Fee, if they are blind, they probably shouldn't be driving !!

After seeing Anne and Tony off, we sit outside the Nag's Head for a while and get back to the boat before the rain is due.

09 Aug 2019

12:30 pm

Rain ?

Clifton Hampden Village

The predicted thunderstorms do not materialise overnight, just a bit of rain.

By morning it is dry and, after refuelling, we head off downstream.

We pass a riverside campsite with a peculiar sign.

The mind boggles as to what goes on here !

We don't hang around to find out



2:30 pm

Bath and a Bed

Shillingford Bridge Hotel

We arrive at Shillingford where we moor up and treat ourselves to a luxury night in a hotel with a real bed



5:00 pm

Digestives

Shillingford Bridge Hotel

After checking in, we walk a couple of miles to Wallingford where Graham buys a pack of digestive biscuits.

Graham has this weird thing where he has to have a packet of digestives when he stays in a hotel. It dates back to a time when he travelled to the US on business and woke up at 4am in a hotel starving and no food was available. This will never happen again.

Paddington agrees



9:30 pm

Who's selling what ?

Shillingford Bridge Hotel

After dinner in the restaurant, we retire to the bar for a Baileys or two, or three ?

At the bar, scottish middle-aged Colin is joined at the bar by a younger blonde in leather skirt.

"My, you got here quick !"

"Yes, I drive fast in my car"

"What do you want to drink ?
Lemonade ?"
"A double Bacardi and coke please"

Maybe needs to steady her nerves
for the hour/night ahead ?

Fee reckons he's a travelling
salesman. Probably right, but he's
buying tonight

10:00 pm
Any Port
Shillingford Bridge Hotel

The pre-Wedding party want the
area we are in with the comfy
leather chairs.

Shall we move ?

No, let's have a glass of Port



10 Aug 2019

8:30 am
Wedding Party
Shillingford

We go down for breakfast and the
pre-wedding party also decide to
have breakfast at the same time.
They are a funny bunch. One of
them very much reminds us of a
heron. He's a tall skinny bloke with
a long pointy nose. He walks on his
long legs as if he's walking in water.

The tall lady, who we think came on
the boat called Penny Lane, seems
to be in charge, organising
everyone's order on behalf of the
waiter.

Then there is Julia, clearly the
matriarch. Everyone bows and
scrapes to her.

"Julia's here"

"Oh Julia can I get this for you"

"Oh Julia can I do that for you"

"Oh Julia, give us a break !!!"

9:00 am
Windy
Mapledurham Lock

Outside it is blowing a gale.
Occasionally there is a shower, but
always there is wind.

We settle up the bill for last night,
climb aboard, and head off
downstream. We need to reach
Sonning tonight for the theatre.

The wind does not ease up all day,
but this means there are fewer
boats on the river and we make
good progress.

We've never seen waves on the non-
tidal Thames before, on the tidal
Thames, yes of course, but today
there are waves and squalls.

Most of the way, the wind is gusting
up to 45mph against the
downstream flow of the river. That
is what causes the choppy water

Clearly Reading is getting ready for
it's festival. A green metal "wall" is
being constructed all along the side
of the park beside the river.

4:30 pm
Thames and Kennet
Thames and Kennet Marina

We arrive at the Thames and Kennet
marina and are given our visitor's
berth for the night.

What an experience that is, trying to
moor between two boats in a
crosswind !!

But we manage it, get changed and
phone for a taxi to take us into
Sonning.

8:00 pm
Towards Zero
Sonning Eye

The taxi takes us to The Bull Inn for pre-dinner gin and tonics. Fee takes the opportunity to cool her sore thumb with an ice cube.

After that we walk across the bridge to Sonning Eye and past the Clooney's house to the theatre.

The theatre itself is amazing and very intimate. Only 200 people and the front row of seats is actually on the stage.

The Agatha Christie play at the Mill at Sonning is a fantastic production by Brian Blessed, with lots of twists and is very enjoyable.

The dinner beforehand is delicious as is the accompanying Provence Rose.

Back at the marina, the wind is still up and we are rocked to sleep.



11 Aug 2019

7:00 am
Sunshine
Harleyford Marina

The wind has passed during the night, both physically and metaphorically. We awake to sunshine.

Today we are making our way to Harleyford marina and then into Marlow. Jane and Ernest contacted us yesterday and asked where we would be today and if we could meet up for a chat and refreshments. We said we would probably be in Marlow around threeish, so that's the plan.

12:30 pm
Early Arrival
Harleyford Marina

We have an early start and make good time so, having passed through Henley, we arrive early. Taxi booked for 1:30 into Marlow



2:00 pm
Marlow Bar & Grill
Marlow

We meet up with Ernest and Jane for a chat and lunch at the Marlow Bar & Grill.

It is delicious !

6:00 pm
Botanist
Botanist

We pop into the Botanist.

Paddington is feeling a little Chilly ?

Chilli ? Chile ?



7:00 pm
Botanist
Botanist

Then Paddington needs a Pee ? Pea ?



12 Aug 2019

12:00 pm
Cookham islands
Cliveden

We make it to the islands before the showers.

The weather is meant to be better tomorrow so might get the dinghy out

But today's challenge is to build a small raft with twigs from the island!



1:00 pm
Raft 1
Cliveden

First some twigs



1:30 pm
Raft 2
Cliveden

Then a mast and sail



3:30 pm
Off she sails
Cliveden

And away she goes downstream
albeit a bit wobbly !

2:30 pm
Raft Launch
Cliveden

Then the launch of HMR Paddington



5:00 pm
Celebrations
Cliveden

Paddington celebrates the launch
with Fergal



8:00 pm
Sunset
Cliveden

This evening Fee cooks a great dinner and we share a bottle of red over a game of charades.

You would have thought that after 17 years marriage, communication would be good. But when it comes to charades, all bets are off. Especially after a bottle of red !

Tonight we have a lovely sunset.

No, the picture is not upside down, it is a reflection in the river



13 Aug 2019

8:30 am
Change of plan
Cliveden

We awake to a fine day, however, the forecast is not good for the next few days. Our original plan would have meant a lot of travelling in rain.

We decide that rather than hang around the Windsor area in the rain, we would be better using a decent day for the trip home.

Besides, Graham can almost sense the smell of curry from here.

12:00 pm
Homeward Bound
Bray

We set off at 9:30 and once again, enjoy the lovely houses along the riverside.

Zoom in on the second picture and you will see Michael Parkinson standing outside his house



12:30 pm
Old fella
Old Windsor

On the approach to Old Windsor lock we are greeted by this old fella



1:00 pm
Crack
Old Windsor

After going through Old Windsor lock, Graham decides he wants a wee. On returning to the cockpit and during the handover, there is a thud and a crack. Behind the boat, up pops a branch about two inches in diameter. The propeller has cut through it.

Phew ! That was a close call.

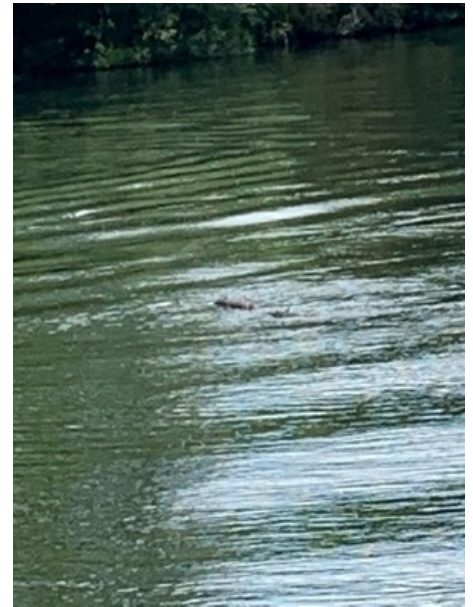


1:30 pm
Log Jam
Runnymede

As we are going along, the steering feels a bit stiff. Also we are not moving as fast as we should, given the rev rate. It seems there is still something caught down under. Graham puts the engine into neutral, then reverse, then neutral, then forward.

A few more clunks and a large piece of tree, about 9-10 inches in diameter appears behind the boat.

We do not like log jams on board the boat !



2:00 pm
Last piece
Chertsey Lock

While we are in Chertsey Lock, Graham notices a piece of branch under the swimming platform. Would you believe it, there is one last piece of tree stuck.

Graham hoiks it out and keeps it on board as a souvenir. Fee doesn't think we need a souvenir, thank you very much.



7:00 pm
Crown and Anchor
Crown and Anchor

We have a nice drive down along the county lanes and check into the B&B.

Then we take a taxi to the Crown and Anchor in Dell Quay



4:00 pm
Home again
The Jolly Farmer

At 3pm we arrive back at Walton Marina so we have made good time, five and a half hours from Cookham through 9 locks, despite dragging half a forest along for part of the way.

We have had a lovely time and are now looking forward to a pint and a curry.



15 Aug 2019

12:00 pm
Sea Bass
Pagham Harbour nature reserve

We visit the bird preservation area of Pagham Harbour.

Over the years, the land has periodically been reclaimed by the sea and by mankind.

At Sidlesham Quay we actually see a seabass which has made it's way inland on the incoming tide. The local committee leader of the local Parish tells us this is very rare

14 Aug 2019

10:00 am
Coasting
Chichester

The weather today is soaking so our decision to come home yesterday was a good one.

However, Paddington has decided that the holiday is not yet over so we are heading down to the coast for a few days (not on the boat !)





2:30 pm
Squacco Heron
Pagham Harbour nature reserve

We are directed to a small stream where we witness the even rarer appearance of a Squacco Heron who is on holiday from Spain.

We are surrounded by twitchers with powerful zoom lenses.

We have to make do with iPhones.

The second two pictures are nicked off the internet to show what it looks like closeup



16 Aug 2019

12:00 pm
Arundel
Arundel Castle

Paddington wants to visit Arundel on the way home before it rains



1:00 pm
Fee's Kitchen
Arundel Castle

Up the narrow steps to Fee's new kitchen



4:00 pm
Queen's Head
The Queens Head

Back in Webridge we re-acquaint ourselves with the revamped Queen's Head to finish off our holiday

