



Beautiful Pea Green Boats

The editor's irregular 'matters arising' column

LOIRE FESTIVAL OF RIVER BOATS

There's a certain irony that I had to open this issue with the sad news that the Beale Park Boat & Outdoor Show, the Thames-side event which *Water Craft* has supported since its inception in 2003, cannot go ahead this year – and I'm now winding up the issue with news of a French festival of rivercraft, which also began in 2003 and this year will be showcasing the boats of the Thames. Yes, our Thames.

The banks of the River Loire are listed as World Heritage sites for their natural beauty and every second year, the city of Orléans celebrates the river's long history with the biggest festival of river craft in Europe.

The numbers are *incroyable*. From 18 to 22 September, the quays will be alive with over 220 traditional and river-going vessels from the Loire and other French regions – plus that invited fleet from the Thames. Over 700 sailors will present the trades and traditions of inland water transport and recreation. Each day will have dozens of on-water activities – regattas, parades and boat trips – while ashore there will be exhibitions and displays by boat craftspeople and over 300 free shows – concerts, children's entertainments and street theatre. In 2017 the festival attracted – dramatic pause for effect – 750,000 visitors! For more information: www.festivaldeloire.com
To take your own Thames boat there: www.evt-infos.com

