# King Charles makes royal first with hybrid Uber boat commute on Thames



# King Charles Embraces Sustainable Travel on Thames Commute

In a move that reflects his commitment to environmental sustainability, King Charles III made headlines this week by opting for a hybrid Thames Clippers 'Uber boat' for his commute, marking a royal first for the monarch. At 76, Charles appeared to relish the change from his usual State Bentley while navigating London's iconic waterways beneath a sunlit yet breezy sky, with landmarks like the Houses of Parliament gracing the backdrop.

Upon his arrival at the floating pier in Westminster, the King interacted with executives and the Lord Lieutenant of London, Sir Kenneth Olisa. With his characteristic wit, he humorously queried, "Am I going to get into the right boat? There are so many to choose from," as he artfully bypassed a vessel brimming with tourists and commuters.

The hybrid ‘Mars Clipper’ showcased the growing trend towards eco-friendly transport along the Thames. This vessel is one of three battery-powered crafts in a fleet designed to reduce carbon emissions significantly. Thames Clippers, a pioneer in this area, has been heavily investing in hybrid and hydrogen-powered alternatives to traditional marine energy sources. As Charles embarked on his ten-minute journey to the Thames Tideway Tunnel project, he expressed enthusiasm about the advancement in vessel technology, remarking, “It’s a nice way [to travel].”

The King’s visit also included a tour of the Thames Tideway Tunnel, often referred to as London’s ‘super sewer,’ which recently commenced operations after a decade of construction. This 25km-long engineering feat aims to mitigate the pollution of the River Thames, effectively storing the equivalent of 640 Olympic swimming pools of storm sewage. Historically, the Victorian sewer system was designed for a population of just four million; however, rapid urban growth and climate change-related rainfall have rendered it inadequate.

Accompanied by Secretary of State for Environment Steve Reed, the King observed real-time data illustrating the amount of sewage being captured by the tunnel. The innovative system has already successfully diverted over six million tonnes of storm sewage since its launch, with Tideway’s advanced technology calculating sewage influx during rain events in real time.

During his visit, Charles also engaged with members of the 25,000-strong construction workforce involved in this ambitious project, reminiscing kindly with workers about their families and the challenges they face. The site features a 'mini park' with 71 trees and 3,000 plants, demonstrating a commitment to enhancing the environment around this monumental infrastructure.

Andy Mitchell, CEO of Tideway, lauded the project as a significant accomplishment, stating, “It’s taken over ten years of work from an awful lot of people to get where we are now.” He emphasised the job creation aspect and the commitment to cleaner rivers, adding that in an average year, the system will prevent 40 million tonnes of sewage from entering the Thames.

This dedication to ecological issues resonates with the King’s long-standing advocacy for environmental conservation. Charles has been vocal about the threats posed by climate change since he was 21, and his engagement at events like COP28 demonstrates a deep concern for future generations.

Additionally, the new system is now fully integrated with the Lee Tunnel, operational since 2016, completing the London Tideway Tunnel network aimed at safeguarding the Thames from sewage pollution. Tideway reports significant reductions in environmental impact, having diverted 6,790,231 cubic meters of sewage from the river since August.

Later, Charles greeted noted poet Dorothea Smartt, whose work adorning the tunnel's ventilation columns reflects a fusion of art and engineering. The King’s affinity for nature and passion for sustainability were further highlighted during his attendance at the premiere of Sir David Attenborough's documentary, reinforcing his commitment to environmental advocacy alongside figures known for their activism in this field.

Charles's journey aboard the eco-friendly Uber boat and his engagement with critical infrastructure projects indicates a royal endorsement of sustainable practices, setting an example in the continued quest for greener solutions to urban transport and environmental preservation.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687539/King-Charles-switches-commute-takes-Uber-boat-River-Thames.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqeqjpd26evo)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687539/King-Charles-switches-commute-takes-Uber-boat-River-Thames.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.thamesclippers.com/news)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2020/07/08/uber-sets-sail-river-thames-boat-service/), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uber-horse-drawn-carriages-coronation-dulwich-park-king-charles-b1076931.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687539/King-Charles-switches-commute-takes-Uber-boat-River-Thames.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.henleystandard.co.uk/news/river/180078/flotilla-for-king-charles-iii.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687539/King-Charles-switches-commute-takes-Uber-boat-River-Thames.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.thamesclippers.com/news)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqeqjpd26evo), [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2020/07/08/uber-sets-sail-river-thames-boat-service/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687539/King-Charles-switches-commute-takes-Uber-boat-River-Thames.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-66204933.amp)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14687539/King-Charles-switches-commute-takes-Uber-boat-River-Thames.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqeqjpd26evo> - In September 2023, Thames Clippers launched the Earth Clipper, Europe's first hybrid high-speed passenger ferry on the River Thames. This £7 million vessel operates solely on battery power through central London, recharging its batteries with bio-fuelled power west of Battersea Power Station and east of Tower Bridge. The Earth Clipper is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 90% compared to conventional marine diesel. The company aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040 and has plans for additional hybrid boats in development.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2020/07/08/uber-sets-sail-river-thames-boat-service/> - In July 2020, Uber partnered with Thames Clippers to offer riverboat services on the River Thames, rebranding them as Uber Boat by Thames Clippers. This collaboration allows Uber users to book tickets for Thames Clippers' river taxi services through the Uber app. The service operates between Putney and Woolwich Arsenal, with stops at key locations such as Canary Wharf, the London Eye, and Battersea Power Station. The initiative aims to provide Londoners with alternative transportation options along the Thames.
4. <https://www.thamesclippers.com/news> - Uber Boat by Thames Clippers regularly updates its news section with information about new services, partnerships, and environmental initiatives. Recent announcements include the introduction of the UK's first fully electric cross-river passenger ferry, named Orbit Clipper, set to launch in Spring 2025. The company also offers special events like New Year's Eve sailings and comedy sailings, and has expanded its services to include routes to Chelsea, Wandsworth, and Putney, providing weekend services to and from West London.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uber-horse-drawn-carriages-coronation-dulwich-park-king-charles-b1076931.html> - In April 2023, Uber offered the public a chance to ride in a replica royal carriage in Dulwich Park, London, in the lead-up to King Charles III's coronation. The horse-drawn carriage rides were available on May 3, 4, and 5, allowing participants to experience a journey reminiscent of the royal procession. The initiative aimed to celebrate the coronation and provide a unique experience for Londoners, with bookings made in person at Carriage Drive in Dulwich Park.
6. <https://www.henleystandard.co.uk/news/river/180078/flotilla-for-king-charles-iii.html> - In December 2024, approximately 150 boats participated in a flotilla on the River Thames to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. Despite unpredictable weather, spectators gathered along the banks to watch the spectacle and wave Union flags as a variety of vessels traveled upstream from Hambleden Lock to Marsh Lock and back. The flotilla included rowing boats, motorboats, skiffs, launches, dragonboats, canoes, and paddleboards, all decorated with Union flags and royal insignia.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-66204933.amp> - In July 2023, the annual 'swan upping' ceremony took place on the River Thames under the auspices of King Charles III. This tradition involves a flotilla of small boats counting, weighing, measuring, and checking the well-being of young swans, known as cygnets, along the Thames. The King's Swan Marker, David Barber, led the ceremony, wearing a feather in his cap. The event combines heritage, royal ceremony, and wildlife conservation, with concerns about the impact of avian flu on the swan population.