

SUTHERLAND'S GRAND DESIGNS

Planning Permission for New Clubhouse Approved



'Any other business, Peter? - Oh yes, I just thought I should mention we've got planning permission for the clubhouse...'

Great news! We've been given planning permission to redevelop our clubhouse.

It was back in October 2005 at the official opening of the new boathouse that UTRC President Peter Sutherland first publicly announced his intention for the club to embark on its next ambitious project, namely the clubhouse redevelopment. Although plans had been worked up and approved some years ago, permissions had lapsed and many thought the opportunity had been lost. But not our Peter. In the past months, his personal drive to resubmit the plans and act on them has proved unstoppable and this is fantastic news for the Club and all our members.

For many, this development is a natural progression following the building of our new boathouse. The project will completely modernise our training facilities which have barely changed over the past thirty years. The sketch

above shows how the existing clubhouse will be retained, with a main feature of the redevelopment being the extension of what we call the singles shed onto two floors. The new development will give us much larger training facilities and will enable us to extend our changing rooms. Additionally there will be a dedicated Club room for after-training get togethers and a first floor balcony giving what are likely to be the finest views over the Henley Royal Regatta course.

Final planning permission was granted in March. Given such a momentous decision, most people would have rushed out with tremendous excitement to spread the news far and wide. However, the reality of the actual announcement is a somewhat more intriguing story! Chairman Steve Dance recounts events: "We had worked our way through the agenda of a fairly normal committee meeting, when we finally came to 'Any Other Business'. At this point Lady President Diane suddenly appeared with a bottle of champagne and Peter broke the news to the committee. Quite understandably we were completely amazed that he'd managed to keep this to himself not only throughout the entire evening but for the day prior to the meeting as well!"

While it's undoubtedly great news that we've crossed the first hurdle, there's no time to waste as the real hard work starts to raise the funds to make our plans a reality. If you think you can help in any way, or want to know any more about the project, just grab Peter whenever you see him or talk to any of the committee..

In This Issue:

- Club EGM - 19th April
- Around The Squads
- Steve & Will's Italian Job
- That Sinking Feeling
- Jenny Meets Her Match
- Naomi's Weather Report
- Diary Dates

A WORD FROM THE CAPTAIN

Juliet Machan



Hello and welcome to the latest Upper Thames newsletter. I trust you had a restful Easter and are now enjoying the longer days and more hospitable water conditions (that is until the cruisers spot the sunshine!). As you can see from our headline, the club has now received planning permission to redevelop the clubhouse which is fantastic news! I know Peter wants to get cracking on this so he can enjoy HRR 2009 from the balcony so please do let us know if you would like to get involved. We will be holding a series of fund raising events over the next 12 months, so please show your support - it will benefit us all.

On the rowing front it has been a frustrating time for all with the weather playing havoc with both racing and training schedules. In fact, none of the squads managed to have a single competitive race before the main Tideway Heads, and as you'll read the Men's race was something of a damp squib. We need to put that all behind us and hit the summer regatta season with a vengeance.

Throughout the winter months we've urged all athletes to take extra caution on the river due to the adverse conditions. As we come into the summer safety is still important as the dangers simply change format - instead of wind and stream we will shortly have the infamous booms, and floating debris will be replaced by pleasure craft and visiting crews who sometimes don't know the river regulations. Whatever you do, please do take care and if you have any questions about safety, don't hesitate to contact Will Hoodless our safety advisor.

Last but by no means least, on Thursday 19th April the club will be having an Extraordinary General Meeting where we are seeking approval to apply to become a CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club). There are many strong and sensible reasons for the club to do this, and full details are set out on the back page of this newsletter. Please do make the effort to attend.

In the meantime, keep training and we look forward to more success over the summer.

Juliet xxx

AROUND THE SQUADS

The Men: JPM

The men have had an interesting winter season with the unfortunate highlight being the sinking of the 1st eight during the ill-fated HRR. It seems that our crews can't go near the Tideway without some kind of incident occurring, the events of 2007 following on from the antics of the 'Magnificent 7' last year.

Starting at number 45, the crew comfortably raced off the start with things going well until they hit Barnes Bridge at which point conditions took a drastic turn for the worse and they started taking on water at a rate of knots. Not even Dan Andrews' pump could help save them. By this stage Leander, Henley and Italian Navy crews had all seen their races come to a premature end and proceedings were abandoned shortly afterwards. It was left to the 2nd eight with Paul Stuart-Bennett racing in his 39th consecutive HRR to continue flying the club colours seeing off the challenge of Goldie as they successfully navigated their way back down to Putney. A visual tale of the 2 crews is shown below. All joking apart, everyone survived, boat and blades were recovered and the day generated some real banter between crews in what were truly horrendous conditions.

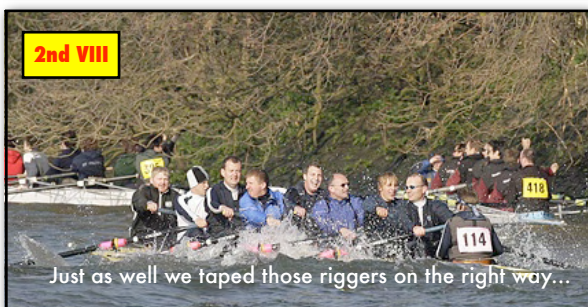
After a frustrating winter, we're now getting back into the swing of things with some small boat work before looking at potential combinations for the summer season which kicks off with Wallingford in May.



Middle four - big legs NOW!



Hey Pete, this is a bit easier than rating 34 for the next 15 minutes...



Just as well we taped those riggers on the right way...



We're still alive and I can see Putney Bridge - let's row big guys...

The Women: Clare Forgie

After the successes of the earlier Heads, the very wet weather took its toll with racing at Walton, Henley Fours and Reading Heads all being cancelled due to flooding conditions.



Finally the women managed a race coming in 20th at the Women's HRR

Luckily, we managed to find an alternative way to get us in the mood for racing, and Oxford University Lightweight Women became a regular sparring partner in our preparations for the Women's Eights Head. First impressions aren't always

right though, as we went into our first side by side encounter thinking: 'we should beat this bunch of lightweights pretty easily'. How wrong we were! In fact, it gave us a good wake up call and things began to get a little more serious and competitive, but still good natured, between the crews. All in all,



A study in concentration from the experienced Vet B crew

both of us seemed to benefit from training together and in the weekend prior to the Head the crew beat Osiris in our 1000m pieces.

Unfortunately these training races took their toll on Becks Sadler as she went down with a heavy cold and was not allowed to race in the Head, although she made an invaluable contribution by coxing the crew. The Upper Thames girls raced in the Senior 2 category with super sub Helen Mangan helping us out on the day and they finished a very creditable 20th overall. The crew line-up was bow Hannah Read; 2, Claire Ginn; 3, Imogen Roberts; 4, Elise Cope; 5, Naomi Ashcroft; 6, Helen Mangan; 7, Katie Currie; Stroke, Jenn Hawkins; cox, Becks Sadler.



The women's 2nd eight, seen just off the start with all 8 blades...

The second placed UTRC crew was the Vet B crew organised by Jo Wilby. This crew had struggled to get all 8 out on the water prior to the race, but on race day coped well with the rough conditions to finish 65th out of the 277 crews.

Not to be out done by the Men's Magnificent 7 performance in 2006, the Upper Thames B crew decided to row down the course with only 7 blades after an incident just after Barnes. However, all 9 crew members remained on board and the girls fought a great battle with every overtaking crew.

Now that's done our focus is well and truly on the regatta season with Wallingford and then Ghent being our first chances to race in various boat and crew combinations.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW...

...but who you know that's important. So here's a handy reminder of who to speak to if you wake up in the night thinking about anything to do with the club. But please try to wait until morning before making the call if you can.

KIT

Martin Dawes
07837 922608
martin-dawes@supanet.com

GENERAL ROWING MATTERS

Juliet Machan
utrcaptain@perfectlypicked.com
01491 574119

MEMBERSHIP

Dom Foley
dominicfoley@aol.com

JUNIORS

Steve Poulter
srpoulter@sky.com

VISITING CREWS

Caroline Chilton
caroline.chilton@btopenworld.com

MAINTENANCE

Derek Thurgood & Sid Rand
derek@thurgoodav.freeserve.co.uk

All details are also on our website
www.utrc.org.uk

Membership Update: Dom Foley

Membership continues to grow from 2006, and with much pestering, the money brought into the club has exceeded expectations, so thank you all for all for your understanding. I would urge those who have not yet paid to do so quickly, to help us make this a record year for membership.

With Henley Royal Regatta on its way, could I ask that you inform me of any change of address in the past twelve months, as we don't have any reserve for incorrectly addressed Henley tags.

We have also recently reviewed how we organise our junior membership. New juniors now have a staggered way of payment throughout the year, as we recognise the implication of paying £150 upfront only to find your child doesn't like it after a month! On this basis, for new juniors only, there is an initial payment of £50.00 for the first four months, followed by two further payments through the year.

As a reminder, ARA membership is expected for all members who use the club, as this provides valuable extra insurance to yourself, whether you are racing, travelling, training, or rowing recreationally. All club members who have their own boats must also have their own insurance.

If you have any questions about membership or know someone who's interested in joining just ask them to contact me on dominicfoley@aol.com And if you have moved don't forget to let me know. Thanks!

Rules Reminder

* During the summer months it is very tempting to want a 'row with your mates' who may not be UTRC members. Please remember that all Guest rowers need permission from the Captain otherwise we will not be insured.

* Please note that no junior is allowed on the water without an 'approved' coach on the bank. For more information talk to the Captain.

The Novices - A Self Assessment Report!

The novice group, also known as Dom's squad, continues to grow. What started off in September 2006 as a small group of people with no previous experience wanting to take up rowing has now grown into a 16 plus squad which is expanding all the time.

The ages range from 21 to 50 with a similarly wide range of physical and technical abilities! The uniqueness of this group is the variety of opportunities offered. It caters for both rowers aiming to join the senior squads and rowers whose objectives are more recreational. Each member is supported and encouraged to develop to the best of their ability and contribute to the squad, with advice on training and occasionally diet provided as well!

The squad has quickly become an integral part of the UTRC community with many members attending training nights and other activities such as core stability sessions. A lot of the novices have also been helping out at UTRC events.

So why is the group so popular? This might be to do with the excellent coaching or the support given by the other members of the squad all of whom have developed a passion for the sport. Or perhaps it's the social scene with a trip to Sicily planned and regular organised meals and drinks in Henley.

Enthusiasm and social skills are not the group's only claim to fame. Andrea Fisarova (a.k.a Xena the Warrior Princess) flew the coup and joined the Senior Women's crew. With only 7 month's experience under her belt and the wild support of the rest of the group she tackled the Women's Head of the River in March as her first race. It was with great dismay that onlookers from Hammersmith Bridge discovered that a fabled Thames River creature had made off with her blade at an inopportune moment. Naturally Andrea offered to throw herself from the boat in pursuit of the creature but was talked out of that course of action. Jacques Cousteau's team will be arriving later this year in an attempt to track the creature to its lair and retrieve the missing blade. Andrea, we salute your courage and your undoubted ability.

Another member of the group who should be singled out is of course Dom. Without his experience, enthusiasm and of course buckets of patience with us all, the group would not be where it is today. Some of the highlights of Dom's antics that spring to mind include: Driving the rescue launch at top speed to transport a bedraggled Adornino back to base camp (Adornino later confessed he thought his arms would be pulled out of their sockets whilst clinging to his single) and taking groups of ladies out in the dark while encouraging them to draw up to the nipples. No wonder they were taken aback when the next command from the cox box was to row with eyes shut!

The Vets: Paul Stuart-Bennett

The 2007 Veteran Head of the River for eights was held on the morning of the 1st of April. The significance of this date was obvious as over 180 crews of old fools raced over an unusually short course from Hammersmith to Chiswick. Compared to the main Head held less than 24 hours before, the conditions were very fast. The organisers were so keen to get the race under way that the state of the incoming tide was ignored and the earlier crews had little help from the turn of the tide whereas the later starters, generally somewhat older, benefitted greatly. It was an interesting way to demonstrate the handicapping system and five of the winning men's age groups (B,C,D,F&G) were within 5 seconds of each other in the results list.

The women's Veteran B category (where age is never mentioned) was a hotly contested race between UTRC and Tideway Scullers who had stacked their crew to



The ever enthusiastic and expanding novice group

try and win back the trophy. In the end Upper Thames were just unable to keep the Scullers crew from closing in on them along the windswept course and there were only a handful of seconds between them which was an impressive result.

In the men's events, the Vet C eight's first task on race day was to locate their boat as it was one of the eights which had succumbed to the conditions during the previous day's abandoned race. Fortunately, it had not suffered any damage. Steve Dance had spent hours on the phone to select the best possible crew from the athletes available. They had a really strong rhythmic row which gave them 4th place in a closely fought category.



Life in the old boys yet - the victorious UTRC/Wallingford Vet D 8+

The men's Vet D eight was a composite with Wallingford Rowing Club. This experienced old crew contained only one member who has not rowed for Upper Thames in the past and he was included in an effort to bring the average age down to somewhere near the 50 years required. The crew sat as tall as possible in the boat (especially John Ewans) to make the most of the tailwind and covered the course rating rather higher than planned. In so doing, they managed to row away from the main Croatian opposition to win their category. Who knows what the summer will bring for these competitive athletes?

Junior Update

The juniors have also suffered this winter due to the bad weather, but have made the most of their time at the club with land training. Our younger juniors started the year with the Oxford Schools Dry Rowing Competition on Sunday 4th February pulling in a great medal haul. The results were as follows:

Gold	Silver	Bronze
Girls J9: Siobhan Mottram Boys J10: Jamie Mottram	Boys J9: Tommy Mottram Boys J12: Sam Mottram Boys J14: Angus Wooding Boys J11: UTRC Team	Girls J12: Jo Unsworth

This success has continued with Hannah Shimmin and Katherine Poulter gaining selection for the Junior Inter-Regionals, and then, hot off the press, winning a silver medal at Ghent Regatta in the Womens J16 2x event – a great result considering they are only J15. More details in the next issue.

On 24th March a group of youngsters took part in a rowing taster session that Upper Thames organised as part of the Henley Youth Festival. Coaching was provided by Olympic Silver medallist Miriam Batten-Luke and World Champion Naomi Ashcroft. The session started with a great introduction to rowing from Miriam and culminated in a rowing challenge on the ergometer.

All the youngsters aged 9-16 did amazingly well and medals were presented to the fastest girls and boys.

Pictured here with Miriam and captain Juliet are some the participants on the day plus all the medal winners. Boys: Gold – Josh Smith; Silver – Sam Mottram; Bronze – Harry Cowley. Girls: Gold – Lara Wirt; Silver - Issy Sanderson; Bronze – Siobhan Mottram. Well done!

DIARY DATES

Get them in your calendar now to avoid double booking with important family events!

6 May
Wallingford Regatta

7 May
Marlow Spring Regatta

25 - 27 May
National Schools Regatta

2 - 3 June
Met Regatta

16-17 June
Reading Amateur Regatta

22 - 24 June
Henley Women's Regatta

23 - 24 June
Marlow Regatta

24 June
Thames Valley Park Regatta

4 - 8 July
Henley Royal Regatta

13 - 14 July
Henley Veteran's Regatta

20 - 22 July
National Championships

4 August
Henley T&V Regatta



UTRC - YOUR STORIES

A Paddle on the Po

On 12th November 2006 Will Hoodless and Steve Dance joined the likes of Mahe Drysdale, Olaf Tufte, Ekaterina Karsten and 360 other scullers from around the world in an eleven kilometer 'round a buoy' head race on the river Po in Italy.

The event called 'Silver Skiff Race' was first held in Turin in 1992 as a local sculling challenge between veterans. Today it has grown into an international two day event supported by FISA and attracts some of the best scullers in the world. They compete for various prizes including 800 euros in gold coins for the fastest man and woman, and 1000 euros for anyone breaking the course record.



World class scullers could be seen in action in Turin as well as Steve Dance

Whilst some of the fastest scullers on the planet will be seen there, the race also welcomes a breadth of competitors, hosting a 'Kinder Skiff' - a 4 kilometer children's race on the Saturday and an 'International to Veteran H' race on the Sunday.

Despite having two collisions reigning World Champion Mahe Drysdale from New Zealand won the race in a course



Will Hoodless practices his Italian sculling technique

record time of 40:32.74 with Lassi Karonen from Sweden second and Olympic Champion Olaf Tufte third. Ekaterina Karsten from Belarussia was the first woman home in just over 45 minutes, with American Michelle Guerette second and Marianne Nordahl from Norway third.

Our own single sculling star Will Hoodless, sculling in what can only be described as a 'veteran Fillipi' finished 31st in a time of 43:55.5, respectably just behind several Italian lightweight Internationals. Steve was pleased to complete the course finishing in a time of 48:55.6 and within reach (with a bit more training) of the top veteran C scullers.

The verdict from both: 'A splendid unique event well worth a trip - but do take your own boat and blades.'

RSC Cerea (which incidentally was the first Italian rowing club founded in 1963) will be organising this years 'Kinder and Silver skiff race' on 10th and 11th November 2007. If there's enough interest and someone crazy enough to drive UTRC could take a trailer to the race. So, if you fancy it, contact Will Hoodless.

Postcard from America

Here's a shot of Charlie Hamblin competing in the US National Masters Championships racing in UTRC colours and continuing the winning Vet D tradition!



Jenny Robb meets her match

As many members know, Jenny Robb has been organising our major events at Upper Thames for some time now. Well, finally she's had an opportunity to organise an event of her own, namely her recent wedding to Tim Costello. Held in the beautiful setting of Constantia in the South African winelands, the newsletter editorial team were lucky enough to get an invite and can safely say that a good time was had by all. We wish them every happiness together!



The happy couple - Mr & Mrs Jenny Robb

WEATHER WATCH

Naomi Ashcroft



The Captain has asked me to write an article on 'Flooding', so I will, as usual, do as I'm told!

Frustration with our ever changing weather conditions is commonplace among those who of us enjoy messing about on the river. No doubt the Oxford and Cambridge crews competing at the Henley

Boat Races on 1 April were delighted with the raging headwind and white horses that greeted them on their big day. Still, at least the river was back in banks after the flooding that occurred earlier in March and all the crews managed to stay afloat en route to the finish line, in contrast to the men's 1st eight who did a great yellow submarine impression on the Tideway a day earlier.

I've been living in Henley for 10 years and during that time I've witnessed two significant flood events along this reach of the Thames - in December 2000/January 2001 and January 2003, both of which occurred while I was working for the Flood Defence function of the Environment Agency.

The normal water level in our reach of the Thames is set by what is called the 'head' level for the Hambleton Reach, required to maintain navigation and controlled by the weir control structures at the Hambleton Lock site. If the weir gates at Marsh Lock are opened to control the water level in the Marsh reach upstream, then the lock keeper at Hambleton will have to operate the weir gates to try and keep the water levels within the allowable limits for navigation.

Without stating the obvious, flooding occurs when the flow in the channel exceeds the bankfull capacity, dictated in the main by the channel's cross sectional area, the gradient of the bed and the roughness of the channel. This increase in flow can be as a result of a severe rainfall event in terms of duration, intensity or both. There are natural low points along the banks where the river will first start to fill the adjacent floodplain. Local



Rising groundwater often means the field at the bend on Remenham Lane is flooded

groundwater levels also rise with the rising river levels and increase saturation of the catchment. The ponding that is often seen at the double bend along Remenham Lane is actually due to rising groundwater.

As the flow increases beyond bankfull levels it uses the floodplain for conveyance. At this point all the weirs and control structures at each of the lock sites along the affected section of the Thames will be fully open. You could argue that for flood risk purposes we'd be better off not having the

locks and hence the weir control structures as they do create a restriction to flood flows, even with all the gates open. However, for the majority of the year that would mean no navigation, even for the likes of us!

Once the river is using floodplain for conveyance there is likely to be a risk of flooding to property. If this is the case the Environment Agency will issue a flood warning for the reach. I'm informed by a Remenham resident that this entails moving your cattle to high ground and your wife and other domestic appliances upstairs.



In 2000/01, Upper Thames were considering offering swimming lessons to new members

The extent and impact of the flooding very much depends on where the severe rainfall event occurs. The January 2003 event was the result of sustained rainfall in the Aylesbury area which made its way to the Thames via the River Thame while the December 2000 flooding was due in part to sustained rainfall on the Kennet catchment. Rainfall patterns therefore dictate which conurbations are most likely to be at risk. The Environment Agency has a network of water level monitoring sites and rain gauges across the 'Thames' Region which allows them to a) monitor rainfall and the rise and fall of river levels as the flood event moves downstream and b) simulate the rainfall in a hydraulic model to try and predict the magnitude of the flood event at critical populated locations.

All the data is then used in an attempt to accurately predict the likelihood and extent of flooding and provide warnings to enable us to prepare appropriately. Having said all that, I have to confess I live at the top of a hill!

Please note: These are my own views and not those of the Environment Agency! For more information on measures to reduce flood risk refer to www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Like what you read?

Think you can do better?

We'd love to hear from you!

Send your thoughts and stories to:

newsletter@utrc.org.uk

UPPER THAMES APPLIES TO BECOME A CASC



UTRC Chairman Steve Dance spells out the key facts in advance of the EGM on 19th April.

On reading the headline I guess many of you will be asking 'What is a CASC and why would UTRC want to become one?' This article intends to explain what a CASC is and how it can benefit UTRC.

CASC stands for 'Community Amateur Sports Club'. This is a scheme set up by the Government a few years ago to allow UK sports clubs to gain several financial benefits. These include:

- **The ability to reclaim gift aid on any donations from individuals**
This can mean that for every pound donated, CASC clubs can claim an extra 28p from the Government
- **Exemption from corporation tax on profits (within certain limits)**
This allows clubs to reinvest profits for the benefit of the club (current limits are £30k on trading and £20k on property income)
- **Exemption from Corporation Tax on bank interest received**
- **A range of tax reliefs to encourage individuals and companies to donate to and support CASCs**
These include allowances for donating businesses, higher rate tax payers and the exclusion of any relevant gifts from inheritance tax limits
- **80% mandatory business rate relief**
Currently, local authorities can allow discretionary relief up to 100%. However this is not a guaranteed right. All CASCs are entitled to mandatory relief of at least 80% from business rates

Unsurprisingly, the ARA, Sport England and the Government are all strongly encouraging sporting clubs to become CASCs, with thousands already registered and gaining significant financial benefits.

So, what does a sporting club have to do to get these benefits?

Clearly becoming a CASC has the potential to deliver significant financial benefits for clubs. However, there are some criteria to meet, and commitments to make in order to become a CASC. These include:

- The purpose of the club must be to provide facilities for and encourage participation in sport (in our case rowing)
- The club must be open to all members of the community (with our broad range of members we already practice this)
- Profits from the club must not be redistributed to members (i.e. they must be put back into the club. This is already the case)
- The constitution must have an acceptable dissolution clause (UTRC already has a clause which prevents

members running off with any profits from selling UTRC assets and lining members' pockets)

- Club members must not be paid to play the sport
- There is currently no provision to deregister (so 'once a CASC always a CASC')

So, what does this all mean for UTRC?

Over the last year the UTRC Management Committee, has reviewed the pros and cons of becoming a CASC. We have taken advice and investigated and debated the various issues involved. In summary, and after months of consideration, the UTRC Management Committee has unanimously decided to **strongly recommend to members that UTRC seeks to become a CASC.**

The potential financial benefits to UTRC are extremely attractive and changes to the constitution called for by joining the scheme generally support good club management and governance. Bearing in mind UTRC's ambitions and plans for the new clubhouse, **potential savings could be tens, and possibly hundreds of thousands of pounds** over the next few years.

So what is the process to become a CASC? Essentially, there are 2 key elements in becoming a CASC:

1. Proposal and acceptance of a few constitutional changes at an EGM
2. Successfully following a set of application procedures and processes to satisfy Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) office

Of course, it is the UTRC membership who will ultimately decide whether we will become a CASC. Therefore, in line with our existing constitution, an EGM is being organised at the clubhouse on **Thursday 19th April 2007** at 8:30 pm to allow members to vote. Details of the meeting and constitutional changes needed by HMRC will be communicated to club members before the meeting.

Assuming that we vote to become a CASC, the Management Committee will advise HMRC of the EGM result and seek to complete the application process with HMRC at the earliest possible date.

This is an important decision for UTRC and I hope that as many members as possible will attend the EGM and vote.

Of course, if you have any questions about UTRC becoming a CASC before the meeting, please do not hesitate to ask myself or a member of the Committee.

Further information concerning CASCs can be obtained from the following websites and there are full details on the UTRC website www.utrc.org.uk

www.cascinfo.co.uk

www.oara-rowing.org/render.aspx?siteID=1&navIDs=1,141,353,355,998

www.hmrc.gov.uk/casc