UKMA news

The newsletter of the UK Metric Association
Campaigning for a **single** *rational* system of measurement
Patrons: Lord Taverne, Prof Jim Al-Khalili, Gavin Esler

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Editorial, by John Austin

The last quarter has been fairly quiet for the UKMA. With the new Labour government firmly in power it would be useful to know where it stands regarding the completion of metrication in the UK. With other things on its plate right now, we might need to be resigned to our current measurement muddle for at least a few more years. Nonetheless, our Chairman, Peter Burke, has been exchanging correspondence (both before and after the election) with the new Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathon Reynolds. Business and trade seem already aligned to the metric system. The UK measurement muddle may be caused in part by the Department for Transport use of imperial units for the public but with metric units below the surface. Indeed, whether there is a measurement muddle at all has been challenged by a visitor to our website, and the email discussion with UKMA Secretary, Ronnie Cohen, has been included starting on page 8.

Before that, though, we summarise an article from MetricViews explaining the non-SI units that are used in conjunction with the SI. These include the tonne and the litre which are of course well-known. There is often confusion about the size of a ton (see page 11), so why not use the tonne instead? The Olympics are now a fading memory and were of course almost entirely metric but the exceptions are discussed on page 3.

It seems that the litre has been making up ground on the traditional pint of milk and this is described on page 5, also from MetricViews. By comparison, the pint of beer (and the half) remain popular in Britain, evoking nostalgia on the part of many consumers. There would, though, be no harm at all in reducing the serving size to 500 ml and recent studies suggest that this might come with health benefits. It could still be called a pint, as they do in Belgium and no doubt other countries on the continent. Beer sizing has been an issue that has occurred frequently in UKMA archives. On page 10 is included some media reaction concerning the health benefits of serving size reduction. We finish the Newsletter with our usual list of articles submitted to MetricViews.

Which non-SI units are accepted for use with the SI?, *abridged article by Ed. based on article by Isaac, in MetricViews*

Most readers will know by now which units are SI and which are not. As well as the SI units, many units have been added for practical and technical convenience. There are 15 non-SI units that are accepted for use with the SI, as given in the following table, reproduced from [1] with some modifications.

Name	Symbol	Value	Name	Symbol	Value
minute	min	60 s	hectare	ha	10 000 m^2
hour	h	60 min = 3600 s	litre	L, l	0.001 m^3
day	d	24 h = 86400 s	tonne	t	10^3 kg
astronomical unit	au	149 597 870 700 m	dalton	Da	Note 1
degree	°	(π/180) rad	electronvolt	eV	1.602 176 634 ×10^{-19} J
minute	'	1/60 °	neper	Np	Note 2
second	"	1/3600 °	bel	B	Note 3
			decibel	dB	0.1 B

- Note 1: 1 dalton is the mass of one twelfth of the neutral carbon-12 atom and is commonly used in physics and chemistry to express the mass of atomic scale objects. It has been experimentally determined to be 1.660 539 068 92(52) × 10^{-27} kg [2].
- Note 2: the neper is used to compare amplitudes such as in signalling. Given a signal A2 which attenuates to a size A1, the attentuation is expressed using natural logarithms N = ln (A2/A1).
- Note 3: the bel is a similar unit as the neper, but uses logarithms to base 10 and relates to power rather than amplitude. 1 bel = 2 $\log_{10}$ (A2/A1), assuming the power is proportional to amplitude squared. Hence 1 Np = 2/ln(10) B = 0.8686 B approx. The decibel (0.1 B) is more often used for sound loudness, rather than the bel. The loudness (in dB) varies as the square of the pressure wave, p, and is given by L_p = 20 log (p/p_{ref}) where the reference pressure, p_{ref}, is 2 x 10^{-5} Nm^{-2} [3]

Interestingly, the light year is not yet included and perhaps one day it will be. Neither is one year included.The perceived difficulty is the variation in the size of the year used in common usage, often 365 days (366 for a leap year), but that could easily be defined as 365.242 days or a higher or lower precision number.

One would have hoped that national metrology institutions would have recorded the list of 15 correctly, but as noted by Isaac[1], sometimes they don't.

National Physical Laboratory (NPL)

The UK's National Metrology Institute is at NPL in Teddington, Middlesex. Details of SI units can be seen at SI units - NPL Once there, click on "non-SI units...." at the top of the page. In the commentary on Isaac's article in Metric Views the issue of inaccuracies in the list of acceptable non-SI units was raised directly with NPL staff again by another UKMA member. This follows on from contact 6 months ago by Isaac and as no action had been taken, the MetricViews article was written. Another correspondent suggested that these details were not important. Like Isaac and perhaps many others at UKMA, I think it is critical that NPL record the details accurately and they

have a responsibility to do so. Just a few days after Isaac's article appeared, NPL updated its website so the omissions and duplications have been corrected.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

The US national metrology institute is at NIST, in Gaithersburg Maryland. NIST is an organisation with an annual budget of over $1 bn. It may cost only $100 to fix a website. Failure to do so therefore is not down to budgetary constraints, but that correcting any errors is considered very low priority. Following the MetricViews article, but not necessarily as a result of it, NIST now seems to have made some corrections. So, many of Isaac's original comments no longer apply. There are still discrepancies, though. For example, NPL uses a 2019 value for the dalton and NIST quotes the updated 2022 constant which is slightly different but by more than the experimental error. Personally, I hate the term "metric ton", on the NIST site, but I don't know of any country other than the USA that uses this phrase to mean 1 t. I would have thought that journalists would have preferred the word "tonne" as it is shorter than "metric ton".

Finally, as Isaac concludes in his article, as both NPL and NIST are national metrology institutes, it is shocking that information on their websites about non-SI units has seemingly remained incorrect for so long.

References

[1] Which non-SI units are accepted for use with the SI? – Metric Views
[2] CODATA Value: unified atomic mass unit (nist.gov)
[3] Sound Pressure (engineeringtoolbox.com)

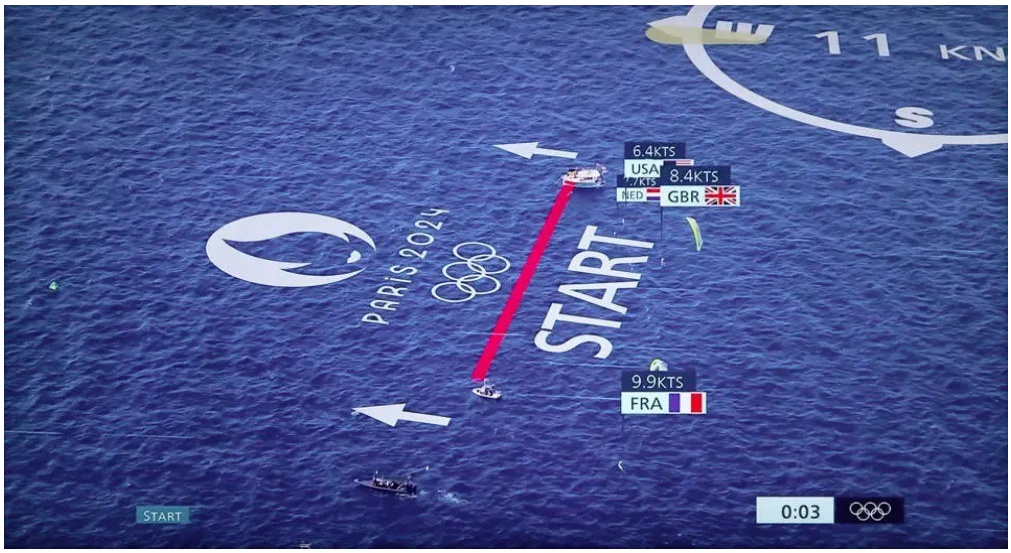
Non-metric units in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, *abridged article by Ed. based on article by Isaac, in MetricViews*

Like Isaac I am a great fan of the Olympics and although I wasn't watching and listening quite as carefully as Isaac, I share a lot of his sentiments, expressed in MetricViews [1]. Isaac points out that while most events such as athletics, swimming and cycling are exclusively metric, some hold-outs of non-metric units remain. Isaac identified golf and sailing as using non-metric units extensively.

Golf

Isaac showed the image (previous page) from the golf tournament. It shows a range of different statistics from a stroke, including the total distance of the hole (431 m), the golfer's 2nd stroke (179 m), the apex of the stroke (30 m), the curve of the stroke (9 m) and the ball speed (230 km/h). It is remarkable that all these statistics are available and must be of tremendous benefit to the golfer. Unfortunately, the metric units are given in small capitals while all the statistics are given in dual units. Isaac also notes that ball speeds are given in km/h when, for short flight times, m/s would be more appropriate. This curiosity has been noted on MetricViews when discussing Wimbledon Tennis statistics [e.g. 2], which also refer to ball speeds in mph. Unfortunately, according to Isaac [1], the BBC team made no use of the metric units supplied, choosing instead the imperial units. Isaac comments that ″If ever there was a case for golf's governing bodies to bring their sport up-to-date internationally, it was this muddled use of units seen on TV coverage shown all round the world.″

Sailing



Isaac shows this image from the start of the women's kite event. It shows the competitors' speed in knots as they approach the start line and overlaid on the image is the wind speed in knots. For some reason, a different symbol is used for knots in both cases. The SI unit of wind speed is of course m/s and this would have been obtained from the weather model that the graphic has used. Use of m/s throughout would have been preferable, especially as distances in the same race were shown in metres. Martin Vlietstra informs me that the knot and nautical mile were "non-SI units accepted for use with SI" in the 8th edition of the SI Brochure (2006) with the caveat that they were for use in marine and aerial navigation. They did not appear in the 9th edition of the SI Brochure (2019).

The Marathon and Athletics commentators

Isaac also mentions the marathon in his article. The event is part of the athletics programme so is actually marked in metric. Isaac found one occasion when Paula Radcliffe was surprised that the course elevation was given in feet while the distances were all given in kilometres. I'm sure it is quite a challenge being a commentator and there must be a strong tendency to lapse into imperial to fill empty air time. Tim Hutchings (not part of the Olympics coverage on this occasion) has a tendency to convert to inches when competitors are close. For example if two long jumpers are 2 cm apart, Tim will often revert to imperial such as "the two competitors are less than an inch apart!", as if this somehow made it any more informative than 2 cm. Isaac comments that Steve

Cram reverts to yards sometimes when expressing the distance between running competitors. On the whole, I think Steve is probably one of the most metric-thinking of the commentators, so this use of yards may simply be an oversight or the pressure of live commentary.
I watch most of the athletics on the TV, and the commentators are mostly former international athletes and well-informed. There are two other things that annoy me, though. Firstly, when the urge to fill air time arises commentators will sometimes do a conversion to imperial and then use the phrase "in old money". It was a cute phrase 50 years ago, when we were going through the teething problems of a change in our currency but it is now a really worn out phrase. The other thing is that field event commentators, especially Steve Backley will quote athletes' heights in feet and inches. This is quite bad since they are presumably getting their data from a reputable source. Indeed the weights of the athletes are often quoted as well, especially for the throwers (Steve's specialty) but those numbers are often given on air in kilograms. What's the BMI of an athlete who weighs 95 kg and is 6ft 2 in tall? It takes some effort to find out. Also, wouldn't it be useful to know the height of high jumpers in metres? So there we have Nicola Olyslagers who is very tall for a woman (6ft 1 in) jumping a bar at 2.00 m. Is that good? You need to have her height in metric to know that she is jumping a massive 14 cm above her head. She jumped 2 cm higher in the 2020 Olympic Games. The men are even better relative to their height. Incidentally, I discovered that Nicola weighs 63 kg. So her BMI is 18.2. So she is "underweight" [3], but see the cautionary remarks about applying BMI categories. It is certainly interesting to explore when fit and healthy people diverge from the "healthy" BMI, but that is for another time.

Isaac ends his article by looking forward to the 2028 games in Los Angeles. We all hope that sailing and golf will be fully metric by then. Alas, this seems to be unlikely, and I think we can expect to see that even the athletics results may well have a lot of conversions to US customary units, to suit the home audience, with a corresponding great deal of confusion.

References
[1] Non-metric units in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games – Metric Views
[2] Miles beyond transport – Metric Views
[3] How to Calculate Your BMI (Body Mass Index) (verywellhealth.com)

Iceland supermarkets lead the way for litre-based sizes of own-brand milk, *article by Ronnie Cohen, first published in MetricViews*

So far, Iceland seems to be the only major British supermarket that is selling own-brand milk and all other milk brands in litre-based sizes.

One-litre sizes for Iceland own-brand skimmed, semi-skimmed and whole milk containers.

Their own-brand skimmed, semi-skimmed and whole milk is also available in two-litre and three-litre sizes.

Why haven't any other major supermarkets followed suit by dropping pint-based milk sizes? I recently went to an Iceland supermarket and was impressed to see no pint-based milk containers there. All their own-brand milk containers are sold in litre-based sizes.

Why have pint-based sizes for supermarkets' own-brand milk products persisted for so long? Could it be something to do with the exemption for one-pint glass bottles delivered to houses by milkmen in the olden days? These days, all milk brands except the supermarket brands tend to come in rational litre-based sizes. So, pint sizes for supermarket milk brands are an anomaly.

[Ed. In the ensuing discussion many readers were encouraged by this development, with **metricviewer** suggesting that UKMA and individuals thank Iceland for their forward thinking. **Metricmac** indicated that One-Stop stores, which is a convenience store owned by Tesco, has been selling milk in metric-sized cartons. He suggested that One-Stop is used to pilot customer reaction to new products and if history is anything to go by, we might expect to see Tesco stores themselves selling milk in metric sizes. **M** pointed out that several other supermarkets have been selling milk in metric sizes, although that is for "filtered" milk . Filtered milk is a separation process that allows its reconstitution with less water and free of lactose, especially for those that are lactose intolerant. **ImperialStormTrouper** tried to put the case for continuing with pints but didn't succeed. Unfortunately, Sainsbury's, where I shop, still sells 2.27 L (4 pints) cartons of milk and other imperial sizes. They do at least quote the price per litre so that we can make a decision as to whether to buy skimmed fresh milk or skimmed UHT milk (sold 1 L at a time). Nonetheless it is often confusing if we go to the supermarket after my exercise when my cognitive powers are not up to their usual standard. Ultimately, the reason why metric-sized milk cartons is so important is that the doorstep milk delivery, which is still continuing after a fashion, was always in glass pint bottles and it was considered too expensive to change to litre or half-litre sizes. This argument has been raging for 50 years, so it could have been done by now.]

Small items

UK Mainline and Underground Railways, *by John Austin*

Standard Gauge for UK railways, the distance between the inner edges of the two rails, was declared to be 4 feet 8.5 inches by the railway act of 1846 [1]. This was repealed in 1959 when the standard guage was quoted as 1435 mm, just 0.1 mm from the old imperial standard [Martin Vlietstra. pers. comm.]. Most countries on the continent also use 1435 mm. In comparison, the Glasgow underground which does not connect with mainline services has a narrower gauge and is declared in imperial at 4ft (1219 mm). Both London and Glasgow undergrounds were built in the 19th century before unit standardisation was considered. Indeed, the metric system at the time was not as comprehensive as it is now and the SI did not exist at all. Speed limits for lines are still a mix of mph and km/h. Most modern lines are built fully metric (metric gauge and metric speed limits). Many old lines still use speed limits in mph and although the gauge was originally constructed in imperial units, the tolerance for safe train operation is 2.5 mm so both metric and imperial can be accommodated.

To put this into broader context, the UK imperial guage was also used in South Africa [2] as the rolling stock was initially built in the UK. It was only in the early 1970s that South Africa adopted the metric system.

References

[1] Railway Regulation (Gauge) Act 1846 - Wikipedia
[2] Early Metrication on Southern African Railways – Metric Views

Above (right): Glasgow underground. Image by Foulger Rail Photos from Basingstoke, UK - Glasgow Subway Stadler unit at West Street 160624, CC BY-SA 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=149553833

Above (left): Information on dimensions for the Class 360 train coach. The notation uses a comma for the decimal point, consistent with the European continent. The maximum speed is given in both mph and km/h, although the wrong symbol is used for the latter. [Image by Luke Nikolaides published on the UKMA facebook page UK Metric Association | Facebook]

Lord Kelvin tribute

As pointed out in our annual quiz at the end of last year, Lord Kelvin took his name from the river that runs through Glasgow, near the university where he taught and did his research. Of course, in turn, the SI thermodynamic temperature is named after Kelvin himself. A few months ago, I was in Glasgow and sought out the famed river. It is just a small river about 20 m wide and Kelvingrove park is to one side. The river feeds into the Clyde. Here are some pictures for the curious.

Lord Kelvin statue

River Kelvin

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

On 6th June, the Herald, Scotland provided this tribute [1] to Lord Kelvin, in honour of the 200th anniversary of his birth. As well as his academic prowess, Lord Kelvin was adept at interacting with the business community to obtain financial support for some of his scientific work. He was also a noted innovator and had 70 patents to his name.

[1] Lord Kelvin: The man who helped make the modern world | The Herald (heraldscotland.com)

Is there really a measurement mess in Britain?, *email discussion between K. McDonald and R. Cohen*

The following discussion took place by email between Kenneth McDonald and Ronnie Cohen and I thought that it was worth including in the newsletter, with permission from the participants.

K. McDonald, 13 September 2024, to ukmetric@gmail.com:

I have just read your 'Why are we in this Mess' website page [1] about the difficulty of changing to fully metric measuring criteria. Whereas I agree that universal metric measurement would probably be more convenient for engineering areas. I would just like to say that I think you should temper your apparently total support for this single type of measuring process; we live in a shrinking world of multiple languages, cultures and most importantly, engineering standards. I think your organisation has a level of responsibility for preparing our future engineers to be able to work within these diverse environments and that you should include some direction towards managing these current differences within your published documentation. I think that this would probably be of more help than a simple statement that you believe everything should be changed to Metric.

Ronnie Cohen, 20 September, 2024:

Thank you for your comments about the UKMA 'Why are we in this Mess' website page and your views about metrication in the UK.

Engineering, construction and manufacturing are predominantly metric and switched to metric in the UK many years ago. International standards bodies such as the International Organization for Standardization, the International Electrotechnical Commission and the General Conference on Weights and Measures exist to ensure common standards in various fields. There are also national standards bodies in many countries to ensure common national standards.

The UK Metric Association (UKMA) is campaigning for the UK to complete its transition to the metric system and replace usage of imperial units with metric units so it becomes the default system for all trade, administrative, legal and official purposes.

Most of the Commonwealth have completed their transition to the metric system. Ireland completed it when it changed its speed limit signs to km/h as the final stage of its metric road signs conversion. Other European countries that switched to the metric system a long time ago once had their own national measurement systems. Most of these systems are now obsolete. Unfortunately, a few countries such as the USA and the UK have been unable to do this.

All countries need a system of weights and measures that everyone can understand and use. No country needs two systems of weights and measures.

K. McDonald, 20 September 2024:

My point was not that we should not all change to a single measurement standard, it was that we are not there yet and we need to accept that other measurement standards currently exist and accept them into what we believe will be eventually accepted as the global measurement standard.

I agree that the metric measurement standard is the most likely standard we will end up using, however, your organisation may wish to consider this lesson from recent history.

In the early 1990s there was a contest for word processing dominance between two large companies, one was a company called Word-perfect and the other was called Microsoft Word. Strangely enough most documentation generating companies at the time agreed that Word-perfect was the best performing program of the two, however, Microsoft Word added a conversion program to their basic word processing program so that customers using either program could read either documents. Word-perfect refused to add a conversion program to their basic word processing program and within about ten years they went out of business.
Microsoft Word then continued to develop conversion programmes for any and all other word processing programs which subsequently came onto the market and the rest is, as I say, history. Recognising that other standards exist is an essential part of the process of integrating them into a global system and creating a truly global standard.

[Ed. This final argument seems a bit confusing. Firstly, Microsoft Word and Word Perfect are different commercial software packages. By contrast imperial and US customary units are defined in terms of metric. For example 1 inch = 2.54 cm, *exactly.* Secondly, Metric *is already* a global standard. The difference is that the US and the UK publicly use only parts of it. UKMA *does* recognise that other units exist, but it is an exaggeration to call them a “standard” as they are not inter-related. For example, imperial has numerous units for energy (metric has one), but no units for electricity (it borrows from the metric system). At the UKMA we believe that imperial units are too confused to be practical, so everyone would benefit from their disappearance from common usage.]

K. McDonald, 1 October, clarification of his earlier remarks:

You said that Ireland changed its speed limit signs to km/h as the final stage of its metric road signs conversion. You are correct in saying that Ireland completed changing its speed limit signs to km/h around 2005, but I do have a bit of an issue with your assertion that this was because of any 'metric conversion' policy on the part of the Irish Government.

The fact is that at the turn of the century all of the road signs in Ireland were very old, they were actually put in place a long time before that by the then 'British Commonwealth'. These old road signs were the same as those provided in places like Gibraltar or Malta, they were all about four feet high and were impossible to see when the hedge-growth next to the road started to sprout each spring/summer. I know this because I was a frequent visitor to Ireland at the time, it was not such a problem in Gibraltar or Malta, but in Ireland it just meant that road users could not see the signs during these periods.

The road speed limit signs in Ireland were destined to be changed for new signs because the road users could not see them, not because the Irish Government wanted to change the signs to metric speed signs.

My point is that Ireland changed its road signs because it needed to change them and it had known for a long time that drivers had difficulty seeing the road signs in the summer months, not because it needed to promote a metric measurement system.

Full conversion to metric measurement will only be achieved when people have a practical reason for making the change, you should concentrate your efforts on providing this 'practical' reason rather than just promoting the change.

[Ed.: According to the Irish Times, which disagrees with our correspondent, the conversion to metric *was* part of the country's metrication, as required by EU law. The UK had negotiated an exception to the relevant EU law.

"All distance and speed-limit signs in the Republic will be transferred to metric by January 20th [Ed: 2005], it was announced today. The Minister for Transport, Mr Seamus Brennan, confirmed all 50,000 signs in the State would finally be converted from miles to kilometres as required by EU law." [2]]

References

[1] The mess we are in – UK Metric Association (ukma.org.uk)
[2] All road signs to be in kilometres by January 20th – The Irish Times

The Health Benefits of Metric Beer Sizing, summary of material presented by Isaac, Peter Burke and other European explorers

In mid September, an academic study [1] suggested that reduction of serving sizes for beer would lead to an overall reduction in sales with a possible improvement in health. This has been reported by **Isaac** in MetricViews [2] where the reader may find a more complete description. A way of easily reducing serving size would be to switch to metric, as discussed by **Isaac**. Our chairman Peter Burke also raised this issue in the Guardian newspaper letters pages [3]:

Monday 23 September 2024 The Guardian

Letters

Cheers to that! Here's to the end of the pint

It is entirely commendable to try to bring down the nation's alcohol consumption (Last orders for pints? Two-thirds measure of beer better for health, 18 September). Whether reducing the size of the standard beer measure succeeds in achieving this remains to be seen.

What is unaccountable is the proposal to move from a pint measure (20 fluid ounces) to two-thirds of a pint (13.33 fluid ounces), which is not even a round number in imperial measures. Nor, indeed, does it have a name.

If the new measure were 500 millilitres, it would represent a decrease of about 10% and once and for all remove the anomaly whereby beer is the only liquid still sold in imperial units. Almost everything else, from wine and spirits to washing-up liquid and petrol, is sold in metric, and that of course is the norm overseas – not only in Europe but virtually everywhere else outside the US. Even the Americans do not use the UK's imperial units – their pint is significantly smaller.

The UK government decided in 1965 to metricate. When almost all other retail products went metric, an exemption was given to the pint, on the grounds that drinkers allegedly had a sentimental affinity to the name. If we are going to abolish the pint, that argument collapses. Surely, this is an opportunity to move the sale of beer into the 21st century.

Dr Peter Burke
Chair, UK Metric Association

Unsurprisingly there was a great deal of correspondence there in favour of keeping the pint [4], none of which addressed the health issue. Our committee have been on their travels, unrelated to UKMA work of course. They have sent back some holiday snaps, mostly from the continent, and show the prices of different beer sizes. Ronnie points out that in Belgium the word pint is used for a volume of 500 ml, or 50 cl as they like to write it. Other common beer sizes are 250 ml and 330 ml. I wonder if in the latter case, the barman drinks the last 10 ml out of each litre bottle sold.... Another comparison of beer sizes in different countries can be found here [5].

From Ronnie Cohen:
Past Metric Views topics have been written by Robin Paice and Ronnie Cohen [e.g. 6,7,8,9]. Also, you can follow the links in the articles and comments for more material.

The International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) recommendations for beer sizes are all based on rational metric sizes. The OIML recommendation R138 lists nominal capacities of 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 400, 500 and 1000 ml, together with glasses that have capacities of 0.1 of these amounts and 10 times these amounts (in the range 20 ml to 5 L). The recommendation goes

on to say that in addition, local regulations may include other nominal capacities. The standard goes on to define the maximum permissible error associated with glasses.

Beer prices in bars in Porto, Portugal, Images supplied by Tony Wilson, showing assorted sizes.

References

[1] Impact on beer sales of removing the pint serving size: An A-B-A reversal trial in pubs, bars, and restaurants in England | PLOS Medicine
[2] The health benefits of switching to metric beer sizes – Metric Views
[3] Cheers! Here's to the end of the pint | Beer | The Guardian
[4] Arguments in favour of keeping a pint-sized beer | Beer | The Guardian
[5] How the British pint compares to beer glasses around the world (yahoo.com)
[6] Third of a pint, anyone? – Metric Views
[7] The "traditional" pint – Metric Views
[8] Bizarre 2/3 pint proposal to go ahead – Metric Views
[9] BIS sticks with pints of beer (but only on draught) – Metric Views

Tonnes and tons of measurement muddle in the media

There is not much to report this quarter, but a couple of things have caught my eye within the last few days. Although Dagens.com (UK) is probably not considered a well-known media site, the authors there don't really understand tons. Apart from using that dreaded phrase "metric tons", they obviously assume the US ton, even on a UK website. I wonder how many of its readers noticed the following conversion error:
"Despite these setbacks, Russia still aims to triple its LNG exports to 100 million metric tons (about 110 million tons) by 2030, hoping that China remains a reliable buyer." 100 Mt is of course 98.4 million tons (UK).
Russia's Largest Trading Partner Shuts Down Putin's Plans (msn.com)

And, on a similar topic, the DailyWrap news service states that "*From North Korea to Russia, nearly 5,000 metric tonnes (around 5,500 UK tons) of artillery shells and ballistic missiles were sent."* This one compounds all the errors. "metric tonne" is a spelling mistake or tautology [either metric ton (yuk!) or tonne]. It's a phrase used by the USA but without the ending for tonne, so not surprisingly it is converted to US tons which in view of the fact that it is a British website page, is actually called by mistake a UK ton to add to the muddle.
Ukrainian strike on Russian base near Donetsk kills 20, including North Korean officers (msn.com)

For the record, 1 ton (UK), also known as a “long ton” is 2240 lb, which is also 160 “stones” (don't ask). The US ton, also known as a “short ton”, is 2000 lb (same pound). One tonne is of course 1000 kg.

UKMA Committee

A reminder of the committee for 2024-2025. Two further candidates will be considered as “other members” when the committee next meets. Contact details of the Secretary may be found here: https://ukma.org.uk/about/contact/

UKMA Officers

Chair	Peter Burke
Secretary	Ronnie Cohen

Recent articles posted on MetricViews

You may have missed the following articles posted on MetricViews, https://metricviews.uk/, since the last newsletter. The number of comments are indicated, as of 9 October.

“The health benefits of switching to metric beer sizes”. Posted on 20 September. 19 comments.

“Why are inches used in legislation and guidance on offensive weapons?”. Posted on 15 September. 1 comment.

“Which non-SI units are accepted for use with the SI?”. Posted on 30 August. 19 comments.

“Early metrication on Southern African railways”. Posted on 23 August. 1 comment.

“Non-metric units in the Paris 2024 Olympic games”. Posted on 12 August. 10 comments.

“Iceland supermarkets lead the way for litre-based sizes of own-brand milk”. Posted on 6 August. 13 comments.

“DfT hides metric nature of location signs from general public”. Posted 26 July. 4 comments.

Draft articles for MetricViews are welcome and should be e-mailed to: secretary@metric.org.uk

UKMA websites

UKMA began as an internet forum, and the internet is our principal vehicle for carrying our message to the public. Two new UKMA social media accounts have been added to the growing list

A BlueSky page, https://bsky.app/profile/ukmetric.bsky.social.
A Threads page, https://www.threads.net/@uk_metric.

We also have:
The main UKMA web site, https://ukma.org.uk.
A factual web site, https://thinkmetric.uk.
A blog, https://metricviews.uk.
An X page, https://twitter.com/UKMetric.
A YouTube channel, https://www.youtube.com/user/UKMetric.
and a Facebook page, https://www.Facebook.com/UKMetric.

These are available to all, not just members.

Can you help?

The Committee is looking for volunteers who may be able to help in the following areas:

- Responding to technical consultations by ISO and BSI.
- Reviewing printed media for stories to link to our X and Facebook pages.
- Assisting with the production of material for uploading to YouTube.

If you think you may be able to help, please contact secretary@metric.org.uk

About this newsletter

UKMA News is published by the UK Metric Association, the object of which is to promote the full adoption of the International System of Units (SI), commonly known as 'the metric system', as the legal and default system of weights and measures throughout society in the United Kingdom.
Your feedback and comments on UKMA News or on the UK's stalled metric upgrade are welcome. To submit, or if you no longer wish to receive UKMA News, please email secretary@metric.org.uk.

