



The Batchworth Telegraph

Newsletter of the Friends, Winter 2015

Volunteers' Coffee Morning at Café Nero

(see pages 4–5 for more!)



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Our Chairman Speaks...



Witch-y Waterways



Winter 2015 Updates



All A-Boat Roger



Call 01923 778382 for more details or visit www.rwt.org.uk



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Chairman's Chat...

Welcome to the winter issue of the Batchworth Telegraph for 2015, the twice yearly magazine from Rickmansworth Waterways Trust. We have had a very productive and busy year and you probably remember some of the activities we reported on in our summer issue! So as we move towards the close of another year we should reflect on all that we have achieved over the year and also look forward to our plans for 2016.

Our Treasurer

As many of you know John Jones has been our treasurer ever since Rickmansworth Waterways Trust was founded in 1992. John has recently decided that it is time to "pass on the books" to another volunteer and so will stand down at the end of 2015. This is a significant milestone for our organisation as John has been a continual member of the team running our organisation and a real link to its founding objectives all those years ago. John is the first to admit he is not totally enamoured with the modern way of doing banking and he has immaculate handwritten ledgers going back to our founding days which have impressed our auditors over the years. I would like to

pass on my sincere thanks and those of the Trustees to John for his dedication in looking after all our day-to-day finances through times of fiscal feast and famine, although in John's words we have had many, many more years of famine! We are very sorry to see him leave our team but John still intends to be involved in the work of RWT for the foreseeable future.

John standing down obviously left us with a big role to fill and I am pleased to report that Kay Fearn has agreed to take up the role, initially for a year. Many of you may know Kay as our Festival Administrator, managing all the bookings from boaters and traders in the run up to the event each year. She has made significant improvements to our Festival processes, which is always the case when you get a fresh pair of eyes looking at the way we do things, and feels she can also take on this vital role for the Trust. Kay has very relevant professional experience in book keeping for other companies and will be able to make full use of the online banking and bookkeeping software that we have yet to fully embrace as an organisation. Many thanks Kay for stepping forward and it is a

sign of our increasing strength as an organisation that we have people with the ability and willingness to take on such key roles.

Volunteering – your contribution to our community

As you all know we rely on all of you to support our activities over the year and when I look back on 2015 I am amazed by how much we have achieved through the dedicated contribution of many individuals. I will leave Mark's article to give you some of the statistics for this year but just look at all you have contributed to in 2015!

We have had another very successful year for Learning at the Lock, educating nearly a thousand school children in our industrial heritage and the canals; we have organised and run one of the largest Canal and Community Festivals in the country; we have served nearly 10,000 visitors at the Lock Centre; taken many hundreds of people on canal boat trips

with the Pride of Batchworth being available most days for visitors to Batchworth; we have run 64 Charters, which raise significant funds for the Trust; we have showcased the work of the Trust and our historic narrow boat Roger at Little Venice and also the Braunston Historic Boat Rally (an event which required significant volunteer support and logistical efforts!); we have held volunteering days at Batchworth and work parties on Roger and the Pride of Batchworth to keep our environment welcoming for visitors and our key assets in good repair; we have run social events and other weekend family days at Batchworth Lock including hosting a venue for the Rickmansworth Folk Festival. A pretty respectable year by anyone's reckoning! We also just gained top billing in our region's Canal and River Trust November Volunteering Blog with a photo of some you at our recent coffee morning for the Education Programme volunteers.

So at this time of year we should reflect on all we have achieved in 2015 and look forward to 2016 as a growing, stable and successful organisation. Being successful in what we do and doing it well is important as it increases our profile in our community and also encourages others to get involved – so we can achieve more. Thank you to all our long-standing volunteers for your continuing commitment to our charity and I hope you felt this year was one you could look back on with a sense of pride and accomplishment. Also thank you to those who have joined our ranks this year. I hope you find us an open and welcoming organisation and feel what we do is rewarding and worthwhile.

Please enjoy a reflective and restful time with your families and friends this Christmas,

Best regards,

David Montague

Witch-y Waterways!



Café @ Lock 81 on Halloween



Jenny and Pam get into the spooky spirit!

Volunteers' Coffee Morning



Last November, 31 of us came to this bash. A record turn-out. It is becoming a party, and a wonderful chance to socialise that we don't otherwise have, apart from the summer Garden Party. These are important popular events in the RWT volunteers' calendar. Many photos were of course taken by Trustee, Les Mead.

Mark Saxon welcomed us all, especially Clare, Jas and Simon who are just joining us. RWT has had a record year with volunteers being given credit for healthy finances as well as 9,841 visitors coming to the Lock Centre, which has been open for 320 out of 328 days taking 1,527 volunteer hours.

Learning at the Lock has welcomed 899 children, taking more than 850 hours of volunteers' time. There are already nine bookings for 2016. This year there were 64 Charters involving over 300 volunteer hours.

Mark commented on how vibrant the whole RWT operation is, thanking us all again. Trustee Chris Burrige then thanked Mark for his wholehearted support of us all. John Highmore from the Canal and River Trust (CRT) attended our meeting. He is proud to support RWT, particularly as David Montague and Mark, plus volunteers, make such an impact on the locality's wonderful heritage with their

input, enthusiasm and expertise. He says the Lock Centre is a 'Welcome Station' where canal users from all backgrounds can find information and support. Ongoing volunteering at RWT justifies the money spent by CRT on upgrading the workshop welfare facility, for example.

Altogether it was a most enjoyable get-together. It is very gratifying for us to be rewarded in this way.

Pam Patterson

Photos from the Coffee Morning



**Don't
ignore it,
report it!**



**Emergency
Hotline**

If you see:

- Damage or danger to the natural environment
- Pollution
- Poaching
- Risks to wildlife
- Fish in distress
- Illegal dumping of hazardous waste
- Flooding incidents

Ring

0800 80 70 60

**Call free, 24 hours a
day, 7 days a week.**

This number is for
emergencies only, not for
general enquiries. Prompt
action can help the
environment.

Winter 2015 Updates:

- Learning at the Lock
- The Lock Centre
- Roger and the Pride of Batchworth

Learning at the Lock

Learning at the Lock has now finished for 2015, and once again we have had a very successful year in providing an amazing school visit for many children.

Final figures are 858 children attended the programme and 902 hours of volunteer time provided to present the various topics covered in the syllabus.

We continue to attract a stream of new volunteers and I am extremely grateful to everyone who assists with

this activity.

Once again, the dedication, good humour and professionalism of the volunteers provides the Trust with an education programme that we can all be proud of.

The feedback received from the schools shows how much they appreciate the day and the letters and drawings sent to us by the children seriously reflects on how much they take away from their experience.

I would like to take this

opportunity in thanking each and every one of the volunteers who do so much for the programme and look forward to seeing you all back with us once again in 2016. We already have 10 sessions booked with 5 in March!

If anyone wants to try their hand at presenting LaTL then we would only be too happy to provide the opportunity for you. Likewise, if any of you know anyone who you think may like to get involved with the programme, then please get them to contact me for further information.



Roger and the Pride of Batchworth

Those of you who regularly read the Batchworth Telegraph (BT) know of the ongoing maintenance we have undertaken on both the 'Pride' and 'Roger'.

After the 'Pride' throttle mechanism was changed (see last BT) we have now replaced both alternators, have installed a new instrument panel, new wiring loom, hours meter and rear fender and have bench tested both the starter motor and starter solenoid.

The boat was taken to P&S Marine at the beginning of October where she was lifted out for a hull survey. This has

come back OK and whilst she was out of the water, we gave her another couple of coats of protective blacking on her sides.



Two of the crew power-washing her off prior to the inspection.

With thanks to our friends at ARCO, we and other volunteers removed the ballast from Roger prior to her going up to Jem Bates at Bulbourne. Fabian is providing a fuller report of the activities that Jem completed and by the

time you read this, hopefully the ballast will have been replaced.

'Roger' is now taken out on a regular basis which is both good for the boat and also good for the Trust as it shows off one of our most important assets. A major venture was accomplished when we took Roger to the Braunston Boat Show in June as well as the Cavalcade Event at Little Venice in May.

These events are a fantastic opportunity not only to show Roger off but it provides a really great way for any volunteers to get involved with crewing and managing this wonderful historic boat that we care for.

The Lock Centre and Batchworth Area.

The lock centre has been staffed continuously throughout 2015 and my thanks once again go to the volunteers who open up and meet the public.

The figure for volunteer hours provided at the lock centre (to the 24th November) is 1,527 and the number of visitors (again to the 24th November) is 9,841. For a small charity this is absolutely fantastic.

Our continued open presence at Batchworth is really appreciated not only by our customers but also the boaters who live and pass through the Batchworth Area.

We have undertaken two major volunteer days during

2015 and my thanks go once again to ARCO (Watford) and GE Capital Money for their time and support in keeping Batchworth looking beautiful. We have also been greatly supported by the Canal & River Trust who provide us with all our equipment, and we now have two signs between Batchworth & Stockers Lock recognising our contribution to the Canal Adoption Scheme. (Pictured bottom of preceding page).

The Little Union Canal (LUC) underwent refurbishment over the winter period with Martin Stokes undertaking a fantastic renovation of the Lock Gates. A new volunteer, Mark Davis has opened the LUC on a number of occasions and new signage has been placed around Batchworth advertising the facility.

This short report does not really do justice to all the hard work and commitment shown by all of our volunteers. It is really quite amazing how much we accomplish and all of you should feel extremely proud that you belong to such a vibrant, energetic, fun and expanding charity.

Happy Christmas and New Year to you all and I really look forward to seeing you all in 2016.

Mark Saxon



John Hawkins re-pointing the steps by the Lock.



All A-Boat Roger

Once we'd got back from Braunston in July, there were several other commitments for Roger.

Learning at the Lock resumed, of course, and finished the term, then Beverley Clarke, who painted the cabin four years ago (and whose work is on sale in the Canal Centre), came back to touch up and re-varnish it – and to completely renew the scumble on the engine room door. What an impact such a simple “maintenance” makes – we're very grateful to Beverley for

her time and willingness, as well as her skill.

There were a couple of other on-show events in the Chess lock, and the restart of Learning at the Lock until the end of October: then, it was time to prepare for the docking period planned for the autumn. You'll remember that we dock Roger with Jem Bates at Bulbourne every two years, usually before Christmas, and the boat has to be pretty well empty for that. This has several advantages: not only does it make sure that we sort out the contents of the hold, but it

allows us to inspect the bottoms, and of course to ventilate the whole structure properly – vital to resist rot in a wooden boat. So late in October, before Mark's enforced stand-off, a gang of our own volunteers and some from the safety equipment company Arco emptied the boat of 10 tons of ballast and a couple of tons of “miscellanea”, including the shutts and mast, and stowed it in the workshop – all before lunch! It may take longer to put it back.



Roger's empty hold

And so we set off, with a strong crew, for Bulbourne on 13th and 14th November, for what was planned to be a two-week period.

The docking on 16th November was delayed, however, by

other work in the dock, and Jem's team didn't get to start until 23rd: but the result was the same, the complete renewal of the caulking, repairs to the gunwales and counter-cants, repainting of the fore-end and counter, and a complete inspection of the bottom with a few small repairs as required. Roger was undocked 10 days later, and we came back over the weekend 5/6th December: a bit exciting in the wind and rain, and with a few "interesting moments", but safely enough.

One of the most important outcomes, however, was the start of a proper plan for the repair of the cabin roof, which had a temporary patch in the early summer. There are various other things to be done

"next time", but the roof especially needs to be done in the summer – so we'll go up next in August 2017.

So as I write Roger is (nearly) back at Batchworth, looking smart (but empty), confirmed to be in good order, and with a new entry in the Conservation Pan to cover the work for 2017. More of all that later!

Fabian Hiscock.

Walking in Circles!

You may or may not be aware but long standing RWT volunteer Jillian Christensen has spent many hours exploring the countryside around Rickmansworth and recording a series of walks that everyone can enjoy. She has now recorded a series of 16 circular walks all starting from the Lock Centre and these have recently been updated with new maps and are available to download on our website:

<http://www.rwt.org.uk/around-batchworth/cycling-and-walking/>

Copies are also available in a folder in the Lock Centre for any visitors who want to enjoy the results of Jillian's long hours of research and also the local history that accompanies the route information.

I encourage you to take a look and consider completing one or two as you resolve to remove the excesses of Christmas in 2016! The complete list of the walks is given below.

All are Circular Walks - except 11 and 15.

Walk #	Furthest point reached on walk	Time	Distance
1	Springwell Lock	1hr 30mins	3 miles
2	Croxley Hall Farm	1hr 30mins	3.5 miles
3	Croxley Common Moor	1hr 20mins	3 miles
4	Loudwater Lane	1hr 50mins	3.5 miles
5	Harefield, Springwell Lane	2hr 30mins	4 miles
6	Croxley Green	1hr 40mins	4.75 miles
7	Hampermill	3hr	7 miles
8	Harefield, Coppermill Lock	2hr 30mins	6.75 miles
9	Rose and Crown, Harefield Road	2hr 40mins	6 miles
10	Cassiobury Park	3hr	7 miles
11	Heronsgate return via Chorleywood station	2hr 20mins	5.5 miles
12	Sarratt	4hr	9 miles
13	Withey Beds LNR	1hr	3 miles
14	Chandlers Cross	3hr 20mins	8 miles
15	Northwood return via Northwood station	3hr 40mins	8 miles
16	Figure of eight around Batchworth Lock Centre	1hr 25mins	3.4 miles

Ceilidh 2016

Just to remind you that tickets will go on sale shortly for our annual Ceilidh on Saturday 27th February at the Mill End Sports and Social club. There will be a licensed bar and doors will open at 7.00pm with dancing starting at 7.30pm. Our usual band, All Hands Around, are not available this year so we have Tim Brooks and the Gallows Hillbillies playing for us supported by caller Martin Lindridge. They come very highly recommended and so we hope for another excellent evening.

Phoenix Morris will also be dancing for your entertainment in the interval just before supper so you can get your breath back!

We will be providing a two course supper as usual and there will be a raffle. A separate communication will come out on how to book tickets but please book this date in your diary now so you don't miss it as we sold out of tickets in 2015.

Festival Plans

and silver years to come!

Many of you at this time of year are planning for the Christmas holiday season, writing cards, buying presents and planning time with your families and friends. However those on the Festival Team, in addition to thinking about all of the above, are also preparing for our Festival which is only in about five months' time!

We have already held our first planning team meeting and are putting in place all the bookings for the infrastructure we need to hold the event. We have been in contact with the companies that provide our trackway, toilets, security, portakabins etc, obtained the quotes and made the bookings. Carol Johnson is finalising the entertainment schedules and trying to field all the requests to perform that we cannot accommodate. Since we are well known we get many approaches from acts wanting to participate such as stunt display teams and large arena events which we do not have the space or budget for. Unfortunately Carol also could not find room in the schedule for some exotic Brazilian dancers that approached us...shame that, maybe next year...

We will also unleash the trade and boat booking documentation on January 2nd and so we are preparing all the forms to email to previous attendees and the website

updates ready for mid-January when we open up to new bookings. Last year we sold out of trade space by the end of February, and so we are expecting the first few months of 2016 to be fairly hectic with over 200 bookings to be processed for caterers, traders and boaters.

We are also fortunate to welcome Steve Mander to the team whose focus will be on gaining support from new sponsors. I have tried to manage this myself in previous years but never really had the time to do the role justice. Sponsorship is vital to the Trust being able to run the event as we cannot raise enough money from selling trade and catering space in advance of the event to cover what we need to pay out. Having Steve focus on this will make a big difference, especially as some of our costs are increasing due to the numbers of visitors we attract now. For example we have had to increase the number of toilets for 2016 which means additional budget needs to be found. Steve has already revamped our sponsorship information and has approached many local companies, including some national organisations that have not been involved before, and generated some interesting leads.

I have been involved in the Festival for over 18 years and

2016 will be my 15th leading the team. However we should remember that both the Festival and the Trust are approaching their 25th anniversary. This year will be the 23rd Festival including the first event which was held in 1993. We missed one year due to flooding and just had a very small gathering at Batchworth however the Trust was actually formed in 1992 around setting up the first event. Therefore 2017 will be the Trusts 25th anniversary since its formation and 2018 will mark the 25th Festival. The Trustees have been thinking what would be appropriate to mark 25 years since our foundation and I would be interested in hearing any thoughts on how we could mark these significant milestones in our history, so if you have any ideas please get in touch.

So when you are celebrating this season, remember to raise a glass to the members of the Festival team working away getting ready for our next Festival – and if you want to join the team you would be very welcome!

David Montague



Upcoming Events

Saturday 27th February 2016 - Ceilidh and Supper at Mill End Sports and Social Club, Penn Road*

Saturday 30th April - Monday 2nd May 2016 - IWA Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice - Roger and RWT team will be attending

Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd May 2016 - Rickmansworth Festival

Saturday in mid-July 2016 (TBA) - Rickmansworth Folk Day

December 2016 (TBA) - Batchworth Carol Concert

We will also be confirming a programme of other events at Batchworth Lock on several weekends during the summer.

*Ceilidh Tickets on sale now!

We have our annual Ceilidh on Saturday February 27th 2016 at Mill End Sports and Social Club with a licensed bar.

Doors open at 7.00pm, dancing starts at 7.30pm featuring Tim Brooks and the Gallows Hillbillies supported by caller Martin Lindridge.

Tickets are £14.00 per person including a 2 course supper with a vegetarian option.

Please email david.montague@btinternet.com (or call 01923 225456 / 07447 600065) to confirm the number of tickets required and if a vegetarian meal is needed.

Please refer to rwt.org.uk
for further information on these and other events

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