



The Batchworth Telegraph

Newsletter of the Friends, Summer 2022

Festival 2022: We're back!



Photo by Hannah Crick

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Our
Chairman
Speaks...



Artwork
at the
Lock



Thank You
Festival
Volunteers



Roger's
Blast from
the Past





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Chairman's Chat...



Welcome to the summer issue of the Batchworth Telegraph for 2022.

Compared to the last two years, this summer we have been able to run our usual programme of activities and "normal" has been a word we have been able to use in conversation!

Schools, both regular attendees and new schools, have been returning to Learning at the Lock (LatL), and June has been very busy with Rob and the team of LatL volunteers working hard to exceed schools' expectations for a great educational day out. We hope, during 2022, to get back to the number of schools we regularly used to host before COVID impacted our programme. All the improvements we have made to the centre, including the decking and picnic tables for the lunch area, mean we have an ideal facility to host schools. Rob has also hosted several visits for adult groups where they receive a coffee, a talk and a boat trip. This is an area of our education we are working to expand, aimed at groups such as the University of the Third Age, and has proved very successful with the groups attending.

Recently, we received our invitation to renew our accreditation for the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge. I cannot believe it is over two years since we obtained this nationally recognised standard, which is so important for schools when selecting an external education visit for their pupils. We will be renewing our accreditation in the autumn,

giving us an opportunity to benchmark our performance against the standard to ensure we continue to deliver an outstanding educational day for our schools.

Our regular hirers have returned to use the Education Centre, which is an important source of income for the Trust. We rely on this income to cover the costs of running the centre, and it is important that we offer a venue for our community to help fulfil the terms of our lease and our charity's educational remit. One of the higher costs of running the centre is heating the building in the colder months, and rising energy prices will start to impact us from around now. We were fortunate that Tina, our Finance Director, had negotiated a fixed price deal, which had shielded us from the recent increases in electricity prices. Unfortunately, this deal has now come to an end, and the renegotiated deal will result in our electricity costs doubling. We will review the impact of this on our rates for hiring the centre at a future Operations Team meeting.

The Batchworth Lock Canal Centre is busy again with good uptake of boat trips, charters and ice cream sales. We are still seeing people come to Batchworth who know little of our existence or did not even know we offered boat trips, so a sub-team of trustees is looking at ways we can better promote the Trust,

Chairman's Chat Continued...

especially boat trips, and increase the footfall at Batchworth. We know we are one of the very few organisations that offer short canal boat trips, with the only other near ones being in London or Milton Keynes! We are looking at, amongst other things, new signage and social media campaigns to better promote what we do and increase awareness of our operation at Batchworth.

Unfortunately, in the last couple of weeks, our boating operations, and hence LatL, have been impacted by a major mechanical failure on the Pride of Batchworth. During a school visit, the Pride's hydraulic pump failed, which also damaged the engine drive plate. A marine engineer rapidly attended the boat, and he is now sourcing the parts required to affect a repair. Until the parts are sourced we have cancelled our boat trips and charters, and Rob is currently running other activities for the schools that are happy with this. We hope to get the Pride back up and running very soon at what is our busiest time of year! This goes to show how important our strategy of replacing or supplementing the Pride is. Our trip boat is an essential part of our operation and is very heavily used.

For the first time in two years, we took Roger to Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice at the beginning of May. It was

great to allow our volunteers to get experience, again, of steering our historic boat. For the first time, we showed off the new Harvey Taylor livery top cloths and information display boards to a wider audience. Although there seemed to be fewer trade stalls at the event, we were very busy and welcomed a large number of visitors to see Roger's cabin.

Our own Festival last May was very successful, and it was good to welcome visitors back and, very importantly, thank them for their donations. The Trust has been very fortunate to come through the last couple of years in a secure financial position. However, this has shown us that we need to broaden our income streams as much as possible to reduce our dependence on income from the Festival. Having a broader base of income streams will mean we are better placed to ride out any adverse impacts on our operations in the future.

We had our first face-to-face AGM since 2019 on 19th July 2022, and it was great to welcome many of you back to Education Centre at Batchworth Lock to hear about the work of the Trust and our plans for the future. At this meeting we also introduced three new trustees who were co-opted at the start of 2022, Paul Childerhouse, Marie Gillen and Deane Symes, and we all look forward to working with them.

Many thanks to all our volunteers, trustees, and Rob and Mark for all your work to support the Trust. We could not achieve all that we do without you!

Best regards,

David

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.

Mark Reports



The last few months have been an interesting time for the Trust, with a very successful Festival under our hats and the Pride of Batchworth being out of action since the 15th June!

The shop has been open every day so far in 2022, and some 984 volunteer hours have been put in by those working therein. We've seen over 5,500 visitors, and almost £15,000 has gone through the till.

Our ability to remain open and to provide the services we do is a really noticeable achievement in the area, and I

am frequently complimented on our level of service, both in the shop and the wider area that we cover.

Prior to the Festival, we were able to fill in all of the potholes on the towpath between Batchworth and Stockers Lock, using a 'work flat' boat loaned to us by Waterways Experience and sand and cement provided by the Canal & River Trust. My thanks go to everyone involved with this endeavour as it was one of those jobs that needed doing. It goes to show that we can provide not only a great service to those using the Trust facilities, but we can also improve our adopted area for the use of those visiting

Rickmansworth.

The Education Centre remains an important asset in our ability to generate income for the Trust. Since January 2022, we have had 109 bookings, bringing in an income of £2,797.

I hope that within a week or so I will have news about a repair to the engine of the Pride, as our ability to generate income from charters and ferry trips has been halted by its damage.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust garden party on Saturday 13th August.

Kind regards

Mark

Rob Reports



'Rob, we are stuck in the middle of the canal, and the engine is making strange noises!'

My work phone does not ring very often when I am at Learning at the Lock (LatL), and a call like this I could do without, especially as the next words were: 'What shall we do?'. Well, moving the boat to the side, so the children and adult passengers can alight from the boat and walk along the towpath, when others are moored nearby is difficult, but not impossible. The advice to use the boat pole to sort of

punt the stricken Pride must have been a comical sight for anyone who was not directly involved. Fortunately, another boat came to the rescue, and the Pride came into Batchworth with ropes from the rescue boat like arms around the shoulders of the sad vessel.

Waiting by the side of the canal was a marine engineer far from any sea, but, obviously, semantics were not necessary at a crucial time like this. The engineer, with an impressive array of spanners, soon set to work. With several pairs of eyes peering into the mysterious world of a boat engine, it seemed as if the problem would soon be

solved. The issue was not just something stuck in the propeller - it was more complicated than that, but at least it was identifiable. A quick phone call to Isleworth was needed to replace the broken part. Unfortunately, the part is difficult to find, and the Pride might be out of action for up to two weeks.

Now into the third week since this event, the volunteers and I have settled into a new routine. Instead of a boat trip, we now have a nature walk, devised by Mike Lansdown, and an art activity. When the boxes that had been stored away for the period during the building of the Education Centre began to reappear, I noticed one full of paper

Rob's Report Continued

plates, paint and brushes and a strange hole-puncher. As most teachers do, I stored the idea for future use. This idea is now put into action, and the children paint traditional roses onto paper plates. This gives them a new activity and something to take home with them at the end of the visit. More on this on page 12.

Mark Lansdown's nature walk is also well received. The teacher's feedback was that the walk was 'enjoyable and informative.' If I had had that comment on my lesson plans, I would have been very happy.

The spring/summer season had begun well after some early hesitancy left-over from COVID. The early visitors in March had weather that would

be normally expected in a good summer. Volunteers came forward quickly after schools booked, and often all the roles were filled within an hour of posting the new booking. Sadly, over time, a number of our regular volunteers have succumbed to different ailments. Our thoughts are with them and their families. We all remember Barrie Jervis, as he had been a regular skipper on the Pride.

The summer term is coming to an end, and by July 24th, LatL sessions had been completed. A number of the bookings were from schools that have not visited us before, or had only been once before and had returned. All were impressed with the facilities, the enthusiastic volunteers (a description that appears on all the feedback), and the activities. I have had some enquiries about autumn bookings, but no firm dates secured yet. At the Croxley Revels and the Festival, we had a number of speculative enquiries

from Cub Scout leaders and some potential new volunteers.

Apart from schools, we have begun the adult heritage programme. The University of the Third Age groups that have visited us have enjoyed their time here. I have also contacted other adult groups and had some encouraging feedback, but it seems it will take time before the new venture will really become widespread. I would like to thank Mark Saxon for his entertaining and informative talk - a feature that was backed up by a member of his audience and former actress.

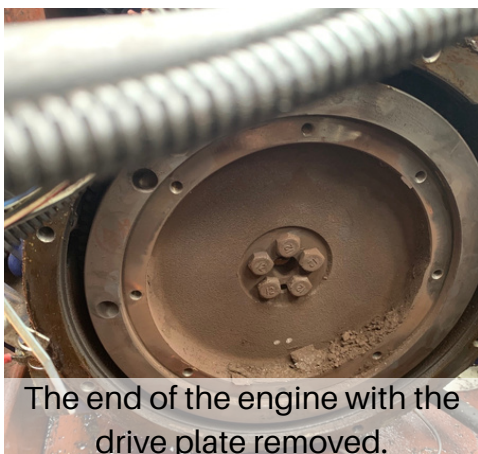
I would like to thank all the volunteers who come to LatL not only for their hard work but also for their good humour, good friendship and the commitment they all bring.

Rob M

Pride's Engine, but Not How We'd Like It!

You will have heard in this issue about our recent challenges with our trip boat, the Pride of Batchworth. Currently, it is sitting on its mooring a few parts short

of a complete propulsion system, and we very much hope the relevant replacement parts will be with us soon!



The end of the engine with the drive plate removed.



The damaged drive plate detached from the engine.



This big gap is where the hydraulic pump should be!

New Trustees

We would like to welcome three new Trustees to Rickmansworth Waterways Trust (RWT). They should all be known to you - some have been volunteering for

the Trust for quite a few years - but in case you are not acquainted with them, they introduce themselves below!

Paul Childerhouse

I'm Paul Childerhouse, better known as Chilly to my friends, and I've been involved for a long time with the Trust - since those early days when Colin and Angela Eastman frequently met up on a Friday evening in the Fox and

Hounds. There we would deliberate on the benefits that a canal festival would bring to the town, and it was there where they twisted my arm to run a come-and-try canoeing event at the first Festival, led by the Nomad Kayak Club.

It was not until Festival three

that I got involved in the land-based elements of the Festival, where I sat around a small coffee table at Chris Jacques' house along with Ken, Les and Dennis, and we formulated our plans. Roll forward 20 years, and I have somehow failed to extricate myself from the organisation, still finding myself drawn to the success of the festivals, despite supposedly getting wiser, yet stiffer with age, I continue to be motivated by David's overwhelming enthusiasm to organise another great community event.

I have always advocated that if we want to live in a community where things happen, then we have an obligation to volunteer and get involved. While I'm also involved in Scouting, and despite finding myself catapulted into premature retirement, which required me to establish new business opportunities, it remains my intention to support the work of the Trust more fully from Autumn through to Spring.



Marie Gillen

As some of you may know, I am a 'sarf' London English teacher. I moved to Croxley Green 7 years ago but still commute in to earn the pennies. Prior to joining RWT, I had only ever been on a canal boat once - a 72ft monster. I wasn't exactly a

natural, but I did become hooked! The year after moving up here, whilst on my birthday celebration charter, I got chatting to Chris Burridge and Mark Saxon. The Trust has stuck with me ever since!

Since joining as a volunteer, I have gained so much confidence, made so many

wonderful new friends and become involved in so many things I couldn't have imagined having the opportunity of doing. Following much expert training, I am now a qualified skipper, excellent bridge and boat painter, and adept at wielding a leaf blower, chain saw, branch shredder and

New Trustees Continued

broom. I'm still working on my till operating skills; however my ability to drink tea is second to none.

In my role as a volunteer, and more recently as a trustee, I would like to help RWT continue to flourish as a wider part of the community.

I would also like to develop RWT's inclusive ethos of encouraging anyone, with even a small interest, to access the wide range of opportunities they may never have envisioned and become actively involved, as I have.



Dean Symes

Like most volunteers I am retired, and seeking something new and interesting with like-minded people. Having volunteered with a number of national organisations, one for 5 years, I sought a change.

I discovered that RWT offered all the challenges and camaraderie I was seeking. I joined the year before COVID struck, and, following the resumption post COVID restrictions, qualified as a skipper.

I then successfully applied to join the board of trustees and continue to enjoy the opportunities RWT offers.

Festival 2022

We're back!!!

Having had to cancel the last two Rickmansworth Festivals, I hope you all agree that the team and all our volunteers delivered a fantastic event for our community on the 21st and 22nd May this year. We were blessed with perfect weather, massive attendance, and, with people's pent-up desire to get out to events after the last two years, we broke all our records. We were very lucky that the rain that arrived just after the weekend held off, otherwise it could have been a very different story!

I cannot say that this event was not without its challenges; in fact, in the run-up to the weekend the words "never again" were heard to cross my lips. Our major challenge was the budget,

with almost all our costs having increased significantly since the last event in 2019. We needed to raise nearly £65,000 to fund the Festival and to meet the Trustees' key objective of opening the doors at break even. This is so we do not bankrupt our charity, even if it rains all weekend, which, I am sure you would agree, is a noble objective! Thankfully, due to the very generous support of Affinity Water, who used the event as a showcase for their Save Our Streams campaign (see photo below), we raised sufficient funds through sponsorship, trade and catering income to cover this increased budget. Following our debrief meeting we know we will face some increases in costs in 2023, so obtaining sufficient sponsorship for next year will remain a real challenge.

On top of the financial challenges, we also faced a couple of other hurdles. The marquee company that we had contracted unfortunately had to cancel due to a serious illness in the family, and this happened only a couple of months before

the event. They were a new supplier due to our long-standing marquee company, Pridewatch Events, closing their Luton branch as a result of the pandemic's effect on their business. We were using them to supply marquees for the environment fair, the beer tent and also a special height marquee for the main stage. So we did have a bit of a scramble to get everything in place on hearing this news, especially as many other clients of theirs were also looking for marquees.

We ended up with two different suppliers providing two of the marquees and a trailer stage for the main arena.

This all worked out well in the end, and the different stage arrangement was a real success. We also had to select six new caterers due to changes in several businesses caused by the pandemic, and finding a coffee unit to go into the environment fair area was



Photo provided by Affinity Water

Festival 2022 Continued

a real challenge!

Another late change was the introduction of new street trading legislation in Three Rivers. This came into force only a few weeks before the Festival, and we also had to wait for the application forms for events to be made available so we could provide everything required. This was put in place in time, but quite a bit of correspondence was required with licensing to ensure we were compliant with the new process.

Many thanks are due to Pam Paterson who took over the recruitment and coordination of all the volunteers who help run the Lock Centre, crew Pride and staff our donation points during the weekend. Pam took this job over from Chris BurrIDGE who had carried out this role for many years. We complicated Pam's

first time doing this by introducing SumUp card readers to collect cash-free payments from our visitors. Our volunteers found them easy to use and they worked fine until, firstly, we saturated the bandwidth at the Festival when the site was full, and, secondly, when we unknowingly reached a limit on our SumUp account for the amount of money we could bank. This meant we probably lost several thousand in card donations over the weekend. We have now removed the block on the upper limit after going through their accreditation process, and we are looking at solutions to provide wifi hot spots to avoid bandwidth issues. Hopefully we will be better prepared in 2023!

I would not say the weekend was without other challenges, but all the team members worked together well, despite having a two-year gap between events. All functional areas delivered what they needed to do, and we had great feedback from the public who were so glad the Festival

had returned. Affinity Water were very pleased with the event and the way the team worked with them to accommodate their needs. We had great feedback from our traders and caterers on how busy the weekend was, and even the fairground said they had had their best Festival weekend ever. The Trust also broke records in terms of donations collected, returning over £40,000 to the charity, which is very important as we have missed this source of income for the last two years. We could not have done this without all of you volunteering to support the weekend, so many thanks again for giving up your time to support this successful community event.

Despite what I was saying about "never again" in the run-up to this year's event, we have chosen the date for the 2023 Festival, and we will hopefully do it all again on the 20th and 21st May next year!

David Montague



Photo by Hannah Crick

Thank You Festival Volunteers!

I had offered to find volunteers for bucket shaking and card reading at our Batchworth Bridge, Aquadrome, Fairground and Stockers entrance points. We also needed skippers, crews, Roger presenters and volunteers to man the Canal Centre. Nearly 400 volunteer hours! I hadn't compiled this rota before, but I felt that Chris Burridge needed a break after many years of doing it.

Quotations from the Run-Up to the Festival:

26th April - 'Good Morning Pamela. Mark has just floated past (on his voyage to Cavalcade), and I asked if I could assist with collecting?'

27th April - 'I'm a new volunteer and can help at the Festival. Here's my CV.'

28th April - 'I had committed to skipper a boat through the Caledonian Canal and be back in time for our Festival. Unfortunately, they closed the Caledonian Canal, our trip will be delayed, and I won't be back in time.'

5th May - 'I have developed a debilitating case of plantar fasciitis. Hence I won't be able to do any running around.'

10 days to go - 'My wife noticed the Festival marked in the diary and had to confess to arranging a surprise birthday lunch with old friends

on that date.'

10 days to go - 'Got a problem. I'm on a table for another charity at the same time!'

6 days to go - 'I've done something to my ankle and can hardly walk'.

6 days to do - 'We've just returned from a wedding in Dubai and testing positive for Covid!'

As you can see, the number of people offering help fluctuated from day to day but totalled about 100. They were fantastic. Many met Mark in advance to

learn how to work the SumUp card machines. Many were persuaded to help us for the first time. The rotas changed constantly. Even on the Festival days, rotas changed.

Quotations from the Day:

'Pam, I'm at Batchworth. Where is Stockers?'

'Half a mile away.'

'I can't walk that far.'

'Ok, stay and collect there.'

One of their collectors was asked to run the half mile to



Sisters Sonia and Bettina

Thank You Festival Volunteers Continued

shake a bucket at Stockers. Thank heaven for mobile phones and willing-and-able volunteers.

Visitors were very pleased indeed to see our Festival back after the COVID break. They thronged in.

I bumped into a friend: 'Sorry I

couldn't help you, Pam. But look, I've just bought a wedding outfit at one of the stalls!'

Another, who kindly stepped in to volunteer, said to me: 'I've just finished my stint and loved it. Can I do it again next year?'

The answer will of course be YES. I was immensely proud of all the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust volunteers, as well as my own friends who rallied around to fill empty slots when the Scouts were unable to cover the Aquadrome entrance. The results show that all our work was really worth it. It is the bucket collection that provides most of

our profit. Bucket collectors are a vital part of the Festival.

A HUGE THANK YOU to all of you who supported. It was fun, and I hope to see you next year.

Pam Paterson (Trustee)



Manning the Aquadrome entrance

Artwork at the Lock

With the Pride out of action, Learning at the Lock had to find an alternative activity. Hidden away in a storage area at the Education Centre was a large box with some art equipment in it. I had noticed it before, but it was only when I needed to find inspiration that I decided to investigate the box more carefully. I found

paper plates, paint, paintbrushes, a hole puncher and some ribbons. Luckily, there was also a decorated plate, so I was able to identify the activity.

As a previous teacher, I know the challenges of doing art with a group of small children. They love the activity, but clothes, faces and all surrounding areas are vulnerable to stray paint. This, along with the fiddly pieces of equipment, brushes, paint pots, water, etc., which need cleaning at the end, keeps the

teacher on full alert. Perhaps for this reason, the feedback from teachers has been very positive. They can record that the children have done some art without having to go through all that stress.

The children have produced some very pleasing work, as shown in the picture. These particular paintings were done when Alison was taking the groups, and I am sure she is better at finding the hidden artist in the children than I am.



In Memory: Barrie Jervis and Jim Christensen

We were very saddened to hear recently of the passing of two volunteers with Rickmansworth Waterways Trust (RWT).

Barrie Jervis passed away in the early spring after a long illness. He volunteered with RWT as a skipper, and I completed many charters with Barrie where he recounted anecdotes from his long career in Lloyds as an underwriter. Through his role as an expert in marine law, he often relayed real-life

examples of maritime accidents, which reminded us all of how things can go seriously wrong when at sea. He circulated a digest of such incidents to remind us of how, even in our own inland waterways boating, you can take nothing for granted! Barrie even had his own incident when he fell into the canal by the edge and found out how difficult it is to get out of even a shallow depth of water with heavy wet clothes. This led to Mark investing in the emergency ladder, which we now carry on Pride!

Barrie had a great sense of humour and was always the life and soul at many Trust functions. He helped us celebrate gaining the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and the opening of the Education Centre. His passion for life and the support he gave to the Trust will be greatly missed.

Our thoughts are with his wife, Beverley, who has volunteered with Learning at the Lock for many years.

Jim Christensen passed away suddenly just before the end of 2022. He was a volunteer you may not know well, however many of our boating adventures in Roger would not have been possible without Jim's support. He always stepped up to chauffeur the crews to and from the boat's location at either the start or end of a day's boating. He was a quiet supporter of the Trust, and he attended a few of our social functions where I hope you got to meet him. His wife, Jillian, you will know well as the volunteer organiser of our Charter operation, and our thoughts are also with her.

Roger's Blast from the Past

While we were doing our stint selling wares and presenting Roger at Cavalcade in April, a young woman approached us saying that her mother was a granddaughter of one of the Bushell brothers who built the Roger. The photo shows the woman and her husband with her mother, Jane Elwell nee Bushell. They posed happily on the boat. Jane said how delighted her grandfather would have been to know that the Roger through our Learning at the Lock programme is now benefiting

children, who are getting to enjoy hearing all about families who would have lived in boats like Roger. Jane had attended RWT's official opening ceremony

of the Roger in the 1990s.

Pam Paterson (Trustee)



Spot the Difference!

You know the area really well, but many people forget just

how much the area around Batchworth Lock has changed in recent years.

The first photograph was taken in 1993 by retired canal inspector Tom.

The second was taken by Mark in June 2022!

How many differences can you spot?!



Photo caption contest!

Such is the popularity of the photos submitted by our readers that my inbox has been overflowing with contributions! Many thanks to all our volunteers, who have gone above and beyond to pose for the camera.

Mark is always looking for new ideas on how to keep our volunteers in peak condition ready for the next task. However the trustees are not sure that shrink wrapping them is the best way to keep them fresh, but it will at least protect them from the frost!



Mark carrying out a practical demonstration of one of the oldest jokes concerning how many people it takes to fill in a pothole! What a minute, there were six Rickmansworth Waterways Trust volunteers observing a minute ago...

Terry, Marie, Deane and David were very pleased to have recovered the first Batchworth Ferry from the depths of the Grand Union Canal. We hope

to complete some minor renovation work and have this historic boat ready to go back into service in the near future!



Rob taking his first fishing lesson from Martin. After a few more hours, he should be sufficiently trained to use a fishing rod...



Upcoming Events

Saturday 30th-Sunday 31st July – **Roger at Denham Country Park Festival**

Saturday 13th August – **Rickmansworth Waterways Trust garden party**

Saturday 3rd December (TBC) – **Canalside Carols at Batchworth**

Saturday 29th April-Monday 1st May 2023 – **Roger at Little Venice**

Saturday 20th-Sunday 2nd May 2023 – **Rickmansworth Festival**

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Hertfordshire, WD3 1JD
T: 01923 778382

www.rwt.org.uk