



The Batchworth Telegraph

Newsletter of the Friends, Winter 2014

**Chris pressures
the Pride!**
(see pages 8 –9 for more!)

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Chairman
Speaks...**



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**Festival
2015
Planning**



**Read All
A-Boat It!**



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99 Church Street, Rickmansworth,
Hertfordshire, WD3 1JJ
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RWT Trustees

David Montague (Chairman and
Festival Director)
Jenny Barzilay
Tina Berry-Chmiel (Finance Director)
Chris Burridge
Stephen Vincent
Peter Waters
Les Mead
Pam Paterson

RWT Operations Group

Mark Saxon
John Jones
Chris Burridge
Stephen Vincent

Hon Treasurer:
John Jones

Company Secretary:
Beryl Whittaker

Education Programme Leader:
Mark Saxon

Roger Conservation Team Leader:
FabianHiscock

Batchworth Telegraph:
Editor: Louise Broadbent
Email: Broadbent.louise@gmail.com



Chairman's Chat...

Welcome to the second issue of Batchworth Telegraph for 2014, the twice yearly magazine from Rickmansworth Waterways Trust. This year has been a landmark year for the Trust with several achievements of note:

- We had nearly 800 children enjoy Learning at the Lock with nearly 700 hours of volunteers' time provided to enable this to happen.
- We had our most successful Festival since the first event in 1993 welcoming over 25,000 people to Rickmansworth.
- The Festival received national recognition and was runner-up in the Recreation and Tourism category at the Canal and River Trust 2014 Living Waterways awards.
- We participated in events such as the Rickmansworth Folk Day, Croxley Revels, Chorleywood Village Day and Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice and held other events of our own such as our Ceilidh.

We welcomed nearly 6,500 visitors to the Lock Centre during 2014, and this was made possible by over 1,400 hours of volunteer effort.

These are just some of the key highlights and there are many other things our volunteers have helped us achieve as an organisation. So looking back at the past year is one thing, but looking forward to future years, what do we need to focus on as an organisation to continue to grow and improve?

Our key charitable aim is education and we have our very successful Learning at the Lock programme for Key Stage 1 and 2 children. This year Mark has led a series of major improvements to the classroom environment of the Mill, bringing it up to date and making it a more welcoming learning environment. However we need to broaden our reach and ensure we make the programme available to as many schools as possible so they get to experience this.

We have a large number of regular schools who attend each year. However there are many local state schools that have not yet been able to benefit from Learning at the Lock. We know that schools are finding it increasingly difficult to find time in their busy curriculums as budgets are squeezed and teachers' time becomes more limited for out of classroom activities. We need to find a

way of improving our reach to these establishments and adapting the programme so it better suits the time they have available. We need to show how a day spent "Learning at the Lock" provides an invaluable stimulus through many different in class learning activities throughout the school year. We have done a few outreach visits to schools and one possibility is to look at how we can adapt what we do to do more of this.

This year we made the difficult decision to halt our Under the Bridge programme aimed at older children. The programme needs to be re-built looking at our key customers and the target groups of children who benefit. We also need to look at what we can offer that is unique and of value compared to other similar outreach courses offered by other local waterways charities. We know the cost of the course as structured was considered high by some of the institutions and were unable to put many children through the course at a time. The trustees are determined to address these challenges and bring this programme back in an improved format. This is one area our new trustee Pam Paterson has a keen interest in and is going to work with Mark and the Trustees to achieve this.

We need to continue to adequately maintain our key assets which are our two boats and the Little Union Canal and you can find out more about our Lock Gate rebuilding project in this issue. We had let our maintenance of Pride of

Batchworth slip behind what was required to ensure it lived up to its name. Through the leadership of Mark and the continued efforts of many volunteers throughout this year we now have rectified all of the key remedial work required on the Pride and have a programme of forward maintenance that will ensure we do not get into this position again. We have recognised that the Pride of Batchworth will not last forever and the Trustees are putting aside some of our funds raised this year into a replacement fund for this asset. We need to be in a position to fund a new boat when the time comes and we recognise that due to our unique requirements this could be a bespoke boat building project so the funding will have to be planned well in advance.

Roger has also received much TLC and is now ready to be taken to more events next year. We will be taking Roger to Little Venice again next year and will hopefully get a prime mooring opposite Paddington tube station exit, courtesy of the harbour master, our very own Mark Saxon! We are also planning to take Roger to the Braunston Historic Narrow Boat rally at the end of June in 2015. This is the premier show for historic boats and Roger is one of the few examples where people are actually allowed onto the boat to see inside a restored wooden narrow boat cabin. We will be working out the logistics of the journey during the first part of 2015, but if you would like to be involved in either helping take the boat up and back or showing Roger over the

weekend then please get back to Fabian Hiscock.

We need to improve our links to local organisations, and the wide network of contacts our new Trustee Les Mead has in our local community is going to be very helpful in doing this. We also have affiliations with many other national organisations relevant to our charity, and we need to ensure we continue to contribute and benefit from our links to these organisations.

All of the above takes work and many hours of volunteer time, and when I look at the list of achievements I mentioned above and all the things we would like to do I have to remember that we are just a very small local charity. It is the strength and commitment of our volunteers that makes it possible to achieve all that we do and we need to attract more people who can spare time to help to develop RWT further. If you know of other people in your network of contacts who would find what we do interesting, stimulating and challenging then please reach out to them and see if they would like to get involved. If they would, please pass their details on to Mark.

Please accept my best wishes for the Christmas and New Year and I look forward to a successful 2015 for the Trust.

David Montague

Meet the New Trustees: Les Mead and Pam Paterson



Ever since the first Canal Festival 21 years ago I have been intrigued by waterways festivals. Having filmed most local events over the years and

been a member of the other local heritage trust, The Three Rivers Museum, it was a great honour to be invited to become a trustee of RWT. My interest in history and how we can preserve and share our heritage is well served by this trust in its education programme and the fantastic Festival. One of the defining moments of my year as Chairman of Three Rivers District Council was opening the 2014 Festival. Having also

been elected as a District Councillor for the last eight years, this was my final year, which will hopefully give me more time to concentrate on my heritage interests. I worked previously for 30 years in the TV industry so I now try to use my experiences and contacts to the benefit of both my heritage interests.

Les Mead



Brian Morgan, an old friend and former Chair of RWT, said, "Pam, you were a teacher! Would you mind being on the list of volunteers for Learning at the Lock just in case they ever get stuck?"

Of course, I agreed, and have never looked back. I find it

extremely worthwhile and enjoyable. The children are invariably receptive and well-behaved. The other volunteers are all good company. I can add my name to the rota to suit my diary. Now I cover the History session as well as the Roger slot and Conductor on the Pride.

When I was asked to become a Trustee, I resisted! However, I discovered who the others were and realised I'd be missing out on some serious fun if I didn't join in. I was made very welcome. At my first meeting, I felt included, and I understood what was

being discussed. (This is in contrast to spending six years as a school Governor where the jargon and acronyms were a constant challenge).

I hope to be of help with the education side of RWT, but I'm looking forward to future events, particularly the Ceilidh on 14th February.

Pam Paterson

Spotted: Les Mead at Last Year's Rickmansworth Festival!



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



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Hotline**

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- Poaching
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- Fish in distress
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**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.



Planning Underway for Festival 2015

My worries about the 2014 Festival being my 13th event as “person whose fault it is when it all goes wrong” were completely unfounded. We saw our most successful event ever in terms of weather, number of visitors and financial return to the Trust. Then to cap it all the Rickmansworth Festival was runner up in the Recreation and Tourism category for the Canal and River Trust Living Waterways Awards presented at the Tower Armouries in Leeds in September. So as I sit here writing this I am wondering how we can beat our 2014 successes in 2015!

At this time of year as we look ahead at everything we have to do it is a bit like staring up at a

mountain to climb. However we are treading a fairly well worn path, so there is almost a set time table the team follow each year to prepare. We had our first 2015 planning meeting at the beginning of October and preparations are already well underway. Kay Fearn has already made the key infrastructure bookings for trackway, toilets, security, St John Ambulance etc. Don Kyle has booked the portacabins, obtained the quotes for our programme and placed the order for the plaques for the boaters. Kay Fitzgerald has booked all the marquees we use for the site and warned the Aquadrome team when to expect us. Carol Johnson is finalising the entertainment

schedules and trying to field all the requests to perform that we cannot accommodate.

I am updating the booking documentation and getting the website ready to start booking in all the traders and boaters. Due to the demand we have from boaters and traders to attend the event we send out the invitation first to all those who have attended the year before to give them the chance to book again. It is after a further couple of weeks that we then open the booking up to all newcomers on the website.

I have had many enquiries since the last event from people who want to try and book in early (or even get a



flood of applications in late January.

We will also be finalising all sponsorship arrangements early in the New Year. Last year we were fortunate to have the generous support of Warner Bros Studios, Waitrose and Travis Perkins. These were in addition to regular supporters LoCo2 Energy, The Feathers, and many other local businesses and organisations. This year we are looking for a replacement sponsor for the children's farm as the Feathers have decided after many years of supporting us to support another organisation. We are extremely grateful for all their support and hope another local charity can benefit from their generosity, as we have done for many years. If you know of a local organisation that may want to get involved and help sponsor the Festival, please let me know. This sponsorship is vital as it bridges the gap between what we can raise in income from trade and catering

in advance of the event and the £35,000 - £40,000 it costs the Trust up-front to put the Festival on.

Coming back to the question I posed at the start of this short article – how can we beat what we did last year? Well I think for 2015 it will be a challenge but it depends on how you measure success. When I meet people throughout the year and talk about everything the Trust does I always get an incredibly favourable response when I tell them that the Trust organises the Rickmansworth Festival. Their comments include words like: "incredible", "amazing", "nothing else like it"; "we had a great time last year"; "great atmosphere" and "when is it, mustn't miss it next year". We should be very pleased with the way the event is valued by our community and it is these responses that we should value. Our key task is to ensure that everyone continues to feel this way about the event and

the contribution RWT makes to Rickmansworth.

If you are not yet involved and would like to be, or are aware of others who have had a great time at the Festival, tell them to talk to anyone in the team – they will be very welcome.

David Montague

Winter 2014 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 2014 and once again we have had a very successful year in providing an amazing school visit for many children.

Final figures are 799 children attended the programme and 695 hours of volunteers time was provided to present the various topics covered in the syllabus.

We welcomed a new volunteer, Margaret Owen, and we (hopefully) have two new volunteers starting in 2015.

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. I look forward to seeing you all back with us again in 2015.

The lock centre

The lock centre has been staffed continuously throughout 2014 and my thanks once again go to the volunteers who open up and meet the public.

The figures for volunteer hours provided at the lock centre (at the end of October) is 1,410 and the number of visitors, again to the end of October, is 6,390. 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.

Two volunteer days in 2014 saw both Batchworth Lock and the Chess Lock painted and we assisted in the removal of Himalayan Balsam from an area of the River Chess adjacent to Roger's mooring.

The Little Union Canal is undergoing refurbishment over the winter period, with Martin

Stokes undertaking a fantastic renovation of the Lock Gates.

We really need to find a volunteer who is willing to open up the Little Union Canal on a more regular basis in 2015, especially at weekends, so if any of you know of someone who may be willing to help out, please let me know.

Roger and the Pride of Batchworth

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

After recognising the problems with the Pride's stern gland and after receiving reports that there was unusual vibration coming up from the propeller shaft, we took the Pride to P&S Marine for an inspection.

It was found that the stern gland had reached the end of its ability to effectively work, making it necessary to take her out of the water for replacement.

With the boat out of the water it was also found that the wear on the stern gland had adversely affected the propeller shaft, which was also in need of replacement.

Whilst on dry land, Chris Flaherty and myself applied a protective coating of 'Blacking' to the hull sides.

The Pride is now back in the water and with proper inspection, maintenance and care should provide us with a few more years of service.

The engine room of Roger has been cleaned and painted as have the gunwales on the edge of the boat.

The outside cabin roof and sides have also been renovated where damage had been found.

'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 major assets.

There are plans afoot in 2015 to take Roger to the historic boat rally at Braunston as well as to the Little Venice

Canalway Cavalcade in May.

A recent volunteer day in Croxley Green saw both the Pride and Roger taking part by becoming a field kitchen and 'comfort' facility for those people who attended. This sort of activity provides the Trust with greater public awareness of who we are and what we do, and I hope we will be involved with other local volunteer days in 2015.

Mark Saxon



Pride complete and hull blacked



Propeller shaft removed



New propeller shaft in place

Read All A-boat It!

Little Union Canal in National Press Release

We were fortunate enough to be the subject of a press release issued by the C&RT recently around the work being done by Mark Saxon and Martin Stokes to refurbish the Lock Gates on the Little Union Canal. A great fun article and good publicity for our charity!

VOLUNTEERS FIT NEW MINI-LOCK GATES AT RICKMANSWORTH



Annually, the Canal and River Trust embarks on an ambitious programme to refurbish, repair and replace lock gates on the waterways throughout England and Wales. This costs the charity more than £4 million every year.

Not to be outdone, volunteers from the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust have recently embarked on their own ambitious scheme to upgrade and enhance some lock gates – but on a much smaller scale, and at much less cost...

Based at Batchworth Lock, Rickmansworth Waterways Trust operates what they claim is the UK's only working model canal system: the 'Little Union Canal'.

Complete with tiny narrowboats and fully working



lock gates, this miniature waterway provides a fun and educational experience for children, families and other visitors to the canal.

Volunteer Mark Saxon explains why the lock gates now need replacing:

“Throughout the year, volunteers from Rickmansworth Waterways Trust help to run an educational programme for local schoolchildren called ‘Learning at the Lock’. That’s when I don my Captain’s hat and show them how a canal works, using our marvellous scale-model here. It’s a lot of fun, but the wear-and-tear on the miniature lock gates is quite significant, as you can imagine. That’s why we’re extremely grateful to

Martin Stokes for volunteering to help repair them. He’s a bit of a dab-hand at carpentry, so I’m sure our Little Union Canal lock gates will soon be looking as good as new.”

Volunteers from Rickmansworth also play an active part in helping to maintain their local canal environment, by regularly participating in task days which are arranged and resourced by the Canal and River Trust.

John Highmore (South East Volunteer Coordinator for the Canal and River Trust) explains: “The Ricky volunteers are an absolute pleasure to work with. Throughout the past year, they’ve generously given their time to help with a variety of projects, including lock-painting

(the full-size ones, I mean!), hedge-laying, litter-picking and the removal of invasive plants from the canal such as Himalayan balsam. They’re a very friendly and talented bunch, who also put on a superb festival each May. This year, they were presented with one of the Canal and River Trust’s ‘Living Waterways’ awards, which recognises the festival’s enormous success in bringing the community together. We cannot thank them enough for their energy and enthusiasm.”



Upcoming Events

Saturday 14th February 2015 - Ceilidh and Supper at Mill End Sports and Social Club, Penn Road*

Saturday 2nd - Monday 4th May 2015 - IWA Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice
- Roger and RWT team will be attending

Saturday 16th - Sunday 17th May 2015 - Rickmansworth Festival

Saturday 27th - Sunday 18th June 2015 - Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally - Roger and an RWT team will be attending

Saturday 12th December (TBC) - Batchworth Carol Concert

***Ceilidh Tickets on sale now!**

We have our annual Ceilidh on Saturday 14th February 2015 at Mill End Sports and Social Club with a licensed bar.

Doors open at 7.00pm, dancing starts at 7.30pm featuring an excellent caller and the music of "All Hands Around".

Tickets are £12.50 per person including a two course supper with a vegetarian option.

Please email david.montague@btinternet.com (or call 01923 225456 / 07771 844526) 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

Batchworth Lock Canal Centre
99 Church Street,
Rickmansworth
Hertfordshire, WD3 1JD
T: 01923 778382

www.rwt.org.uk