



The Batchworth Telegraph

Newsletter of the Friends, Winter 2018

Building Complete!

Inside



Our
Chairman
Speaks...



New tech
in lock
centre



Raising
the
funds



Free
Furniture



WW1
Water-
ways



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



99 Church Street, Rickmansworth,
Hertfordshire, WD3 1JJ

RWT is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Company number 2674596.
Registered Charity No 1024322

Contents

Chairman's Chat...	2-3
Mark and Rob Report	4-5
25th Rickmansworth Festival	6-7
New Technology at the Centre	8
New Education Centre Update	9-14
How we Raised the Funds	15
Free Furniture	16
WW1 Waterways (part 2)	17-18
Happenings Around Batchworth	19

RWT Trustees

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

RWT Operations Group

Chris Burridge
Chris Flaherty
Mark Saxon
Stephen Vincent

Company Secretary:

Beryl Whittaker

Education Programme Leader:

Rob Moore

General Manager:

Mark Saxon

Hon Treasurer:

Kay Fearn

Roger Conservation Team Leader:

Fabian Hiscock

Batchworth Telegraph:

Editor: Louise Broadbent

Email: Broadbent.louise@gmail.com

Chairman's Chat...



Welcome to the winter issue of the Batchworth Telegraph for 2018, the twice yearly magazine from Rickmansworth Waterways Trust. I hope no one is still guessing what our charity's major achievements were for 2018? The first was the success of our 25th Rickmansworth Festival, which we talked about in our summer issue. Since then we have completed our new education building, or to use its proper name and address, "The Batchworth Lock Education Centre, 101 Church Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1JJ". So 2018 has even built on our amazing achievement of winning the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2017. Much more about our new building and the amazing support we have had in bringing it to fruition later in this issue.

We did have fantastic weather this summer and everyone was out and about and wanting to get onto the water to cool down. This was reflected in the number of visitors we hosted at Batchworth, how busy our trip boat was and also the amount of ice cream we sold.

The rumour that most of the ice cream that Jillian buys for the Lock Centre is eaten by our volunteers is not true (the biscuit supply is a different matter entirely!). We did seem to be stocking the freezers just about every week during the hottest time of the year and we seem to be well and truly on the map as the best place to stop for an ice cream on a towpath walk or cycle ride. Thank you to all of our volunteers who have given a friendly welcome to all our visitors and made Batchworth Lock a great place to visit.

The number of charters we booked this year was again a record and everyone who enjoys a trip seems to say they are going to come again and are going to tell all their friends. One day we will reach absolute capacity with just one boat! We also attracted several new very capable volunteers this year. Not only have they helped out at Batchworth and in the Lock Centre, but they have also shown willingness to be trained as skippers. Mark has been busy most weeks putting new volunteers through their paces on the Pride of Batchworth and getting their skills to the level required to run Ferry trips and Charters. Our volunteers are the life blood of our organisation so it is great to see new faces who are keen

Chairman's Chat Contd.

to get involved in what we do - you are very welcome!

We had a very busy period during the end of the summer for Learning at the Lock and further visits during the autumn took the total up to 20 this year. We have seen a decline in the numbers from recent years and there could be several reasons for this. Firstly, when we had to move out of the Mill the message seemed to go out on the grape vine that we had stopped running Learning at the Lock.

Secondly, the cost of the coach travel, which many of the schools use to get to us, is continuing to increase, putting pressure on their budgets. Finally, our temporary arrangements using Room 1 in St Mary's Church Hall and the longer walk, especially for the smaller children, may have made it less attractive. However Rob has been working very hard to promote our current programme and has successfully attracted new schools to Learning at the Lock. We have already secured a very good number of early bookings for 2019, and, now that we have the building, we have the potential to offer a greater variety of educational visits to a more diverse age group.

Mark was very pleased to report at our recent volunteer

coffee morning that, this year, he had no bits of boat to show to people that had needed replacing or had fallen off the Pride of Batchworth. Work completed on the starter motor and wiring looms earlier this year seem to have resulted in much improved reliability. However one impact of the much heavier use the boat gets is that its paintwork is starting to look a little tired. Therefore, early in 2019 the boat is scheduled to be repainted and also to be lifted out and have the hull blacked (volunteers will be needed for the blacking) so the boat will be fully presentable for the start of next year's visitor season.

Roger's outings for next year are also being planned. As well as going to Little Venice for Canal Cavalcade around the early May bank holiday, we are hoping to take Roger to the Cosgrove Festival on the 20th and 21st July, and also to the Leighton Buzzard Festival the following weekend on 27th July. As well as taking Roger for its regular docking at Jem Bates' dry dock early in the New Year, all these outings give plenty of opportunity to gain experience in handling our unique historic wooden boat. Make sure you look out for messages from Mark when he is setting up the crew rotas for these journeys and get

involved.

I hope you enjoyed the summer sun and are very much looking forward to 2019, our first year of operating the Trust's new Education Centre.

Best regards,

David Montague

Mark Reports



It's Wednesday 28th November 2018, and, to all the fantastic people who have contributed in so many ways, yes, I am writing this in the new office at our wonderful education centre!

The office is open, but we still have a few minor details to sort out with building control before we can accept our first customers.

Little did any of us think in early 2017 that before the end of 2018 we would have a complete building ready for occupation for the start of the Learning at the Lock season in 2019. The building will allow us to provide so much more for the community in and around Rickmansworth and will enable us to expand into other areas of heritage education.

We still require some funding to finish off the groundworks around the centre and to provide some decking at the rear. If any of you know someone with a spare £5k, please let us know!

The late summer and benign autumn elongated the

season, and we have had record numbers of both visitors into the lock centre and money through the till. The lock centre has only been closed on one day of this year so far, a tremendous achievement for any voluntary organisation, and my thanks go to everyone who helps with maintaining our presence at Batchworth.

We decided to leap into the 21st century by installing a card payment machine, which is proving another fearsome enemy for the intrepid volunteers who staff the shop (see below).

We undertook a very successful volunteer day with a local company (Skanska) who really brightened up Batchworth Lock gates and the bridge adjacent to the Chess Lock. We have an excellent relationship with our local Canal & River Trust representatives and more ideas for a spring project.

Over recent months we have welcomed some new volunteers who are interested in skippering the Pride and undertaking Canal Centre duties at the weekends.

In early 2019 we plan to take 'Roger' to be dry docked at Bulbourne and the Pride will be repainted and 'blackened'

ready for the spring.

I continue to thank every single last volunteer at this Trust because, without your enthusiasm, dedication and sheer hard work, we would not have such a great organisation that we can all be proud of.

May I take this chance to wish you all a happy Christmas and peaceful New Year and I look forward to seeing all of you again in 2019.

Mark Saxon

Rob Reports



What a fantastic achievement – to see the new Education Centre almost complete! So many people have been involved with bringing an idea from planning to purpose-built construction. My own modest contribution has resulted in some stiff joints after a day spent gluing carpet tiles to the floor. It will not be long before old sheds and attics can be relieved of the various artefacts from Learning at the Lock that have been stored for so long. Indeed it will be very interesting for me to see such items as the fabled mangle, as I have not actually seen some of the hidden gems. Well timing is everything, and it will be my privilege to be the first Education Programme Manager in the new facility.

A new facility will mean new possibilities for developing Learning at the Lock. Pam, Fabian and I have formulated a skeleton plan for providing a heritage programme for adults. When the time is right, there will be a chance for volunteers to find out what we have in mind. The plan is modelled on the current school's

arrangements, so all the current volunteers will be confident in delivering the programme. Martin has started making some stands that can be put at key points around the Batchworth site, which will be used to display the wonderful photographs that Fabian has obtained for Learning at the Lock.

Has the new facility stimulated a new interest for schools to book, or is it the end of austerity? Either way I have taken bookings from a good number of schools ready for the summer of 2019. I thank Fabian and Mark for arranging the essential maintenance of 'The Pride' and 'Roger' around the school bookings. March suddenly became a popular month, which is unusual. The encouraging news is that two of the schools are making their first visit to us. I have a huge distribution list which I send out to Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and North London schools. The initial response was nil, but gradually more schools are finding out about us. My attempts at expanding the Learning at The Lock to secondary schools seem to be to no avail.

Last summer's bookings began well, but April really was 'the cruelest month' as

no bookings were taken. Fortunately a good number of schools came in the autumn to take the total number of schools booked to a respectable twenty. There were two bookings from cub scout groups, which is another avenue of opportunity. Two schools came from quite a distance, one from Canary Wharf and another from Princes Risborough. I was pleased to see a Tweet from Harvey Road in Croxley Green, encouraging other schools to come to us. The volunteers in the Canal Centre have also been very good at passing on information, every little helps...

'Thank-you all' for those who have volunteered over the years. Welcome to others who have just joined or are hoping to be part of our organization. I am very pleased that I have a full set of people for each visit. Some have been great at stepping in at short notice. I am sure that our efforts will mean Learning at the Lock will go from strength to strength.

Rob Moore

Rickmansworth Festival 2019

We are well into our planning cycle for 2019 and the team is busy ticking off the activities needed at this time of year.

Next year does present some challenges for the budget which the team are working through at the moment. As you know the Trustees require the Festival to be at break even before we open to visitors for the weekend. We require all the bills we have to pay to be covered by the income we receive from trade, catering franchises and sponsorship. This protects the viability of our charity in case we have a really wet weekend and no-one comes along and makes a donation.

Our first challenge is that we have some increased costs for our site infrastructure. Last year we needed an extra Portakabin since the office we used to use in the Aquadrome Cafe now contains the farm shop. We managed to get a really good deal from Portakabin last year but unfortunately their head office policy has changed and the local branch are not able to be as generous with their support as in previous years. We also expect the ability to gain sponsorship to be more challenging this year as Three Rivers District Council has changed their Leisure

grant process which could affect our ability to gain their support. They have been very generous for many years in giving a grant towards the extra infrastructure we bring in to the Aquadrome. We are working hard to resolve these challenges and ensure we have a viable budget for the 2019 event.

Our trade and boat booking process, this year, is going totally electronic! In previous years we have tried to implement an electronic booking system for the boats with mixed success. Last year with the help of Phil Bassett we introduced a much more efficient online process for the boaters which worked well. Janet Billing, our Festival Bookings volunteer, has been working with Phil to introduce a similar process for all our trade bookings. We are now ready to make this live and will be able to capture all our booking information electronically. Traders and boaters will receive a link to a form in an email, and they can then complete all their information online. The data is captured directly in an online spreadsheet which then extracts the information in the way we need to use it to record and track payments and also to plan the site layout. Once we have accepted their booking they will receive a confirmation

message with the information so they can pay electronically. This means no more transcribing handwritten information from forms onto spreadsheets, with all the potential for errors that entails. We also hope to move over to nearly all electronic payments thus removing the possibility of cheques going missing in the post or even on rare occasions "bouncing". All these changes make it much more efficient to manage the massive administration task around the booking process.

As I reported previously we also have changes in the management of the Waterspace Team. John Brice, who developed and grew the original canal based side of the Festival over the last 25 years, is handing over the Waterspace Manager role to Phil Bassett, who has also been on the Festival Team for many years. John will still be coming along to the Festival and volunteering, so he is not getting away from us just yet! Russell Blake is also stepping up to the role of Harbour Master, so we welcome him to his role on the organising team. I was reminded of John and the Waterspace Team's achievements when I was present at a Canal & River Trust (C&RT) trustees reception in London last week. An employee of C&RT, who is also a boater and

Rickmansworth Festival 2019 Contd.

regular Festival attendee, stated in front Richard Parry, Chief Executive of C&RT, that the Rickmansworth Festival was known as the best festival in the country for boaters. A fantastic testimonial to all the work John and our volunteers have put in over the years, so no pressure Phil and Russell!

Last year, thanks again to Phil Bassett, we had a much improved Festival Programme. We will continue with the new format and may even add further pages to the booklet which will allow more space for paid advertisements. We also intend to develop further the passport booklet of water based activities we

introduced this year for our 25th Festival which was branded as 25 years young. We hope other organisations will include activities for young people to "come and try" so more youngsters are attracted to join local organisations and get active on the water.

Can I ask all of our volunteers to book some time in their 2019 diary to help with the running of the event on the weekend of 18th and 19th May? Your help is essential to the running of an enjoyable event for our local community and we could not do it without you. Almost everyone I talk to knows about the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust through the

Festival, they all very much enjoy the event and attend every year. It is also an absolutely essential fundraising event for our education work and without the generous donations from our visitors we would not be able to do all that we do. You only need to look at our fabulous new Education Centre to see what the Festival helps us achieve!

To remind you of our amazing 25th Festival weekend in 2018, below is one of my favourite photos taken by Festival volunteer Hannah Crick.

David Montague



New technology at the lock centre!

In a very welcome update, card payments can now be taken at the lock centre. Volunteer training is being provided by Mark, and we

have already done several transactions this way. This reduces the amount of cash we hold and have to bank, which is always a good thing.



In other finance news, due to our fantastic success in raising funds for the new Education Centre, we have unfortunately moved into a category where we now have to pay bank charges. The new card system will help to keep those charges to the lowest possible level, and hopefully charges will be discontinued after a year of more normal bank activity.

Many thanks to Mark for initiating the implementation

of card payments and to all volunteers for adapting to this change.

Kay Fearn, Treasurer

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.

Batchworth Lock Education Centre: The Story of a Building Project

If you have been anywhere near Batchworth Lock over the last five months, you may have noticed a little bit of work going on...

This is the story of the construction of the Batchworth Lock Education Centre, or to give it its full address - 101, Church Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1JJ. Prior to McDonald

construction starting work, Mark Saxon had been busy ensuring everything was ready for them to begin. The shipping container used as our external store had been sorted through and emptied and anything we wished to retain stored in the workshop. A lot of material ended up being recycled or being transported across the road to the Three Rivers

District Council tip. The two boats and car that had been stored on the site were found new homes, and the fencing was taken down ready for disposal. The elements of the Little Union Canal that we wanted to keep were also safely removed. We managed to find a new home for the container, and this was removed in mid May.



Goodbye container!



Clearance starts!

On July 2nd McDonald Construction fenced the site securely and the first of many skips arrived. Then the task of removing the Little Union

Canal started. One thing we had all forgotten, or those who were around when it was initially built failed to tell, was just how much

tell, was just how much concrete was used in the base. Breaking up the canal bed proved very hard work!



Ready with the digger



These lumps are bigger than our digger!

Batchworth Lock Education Centre: The Story of a Building Project Contd.

After completing the breakup of the concrete, the rubble was taken away by grab lorry, and levelling the ground for

the foundations began. The builder had to prepare the surface to very exact tolerances ready for the

pilling contractor, so many tons of crushed concrete were compressed and rolled onto the prepared surface.



How many more of these?



Finally, all nice and flat!

Then the piling contractor arrived and started to position a total of 20 steel tubes to a depth of 15m. Each of these were then filled with steel reinforcing and

concrete to form the 20 legs that the foundation slab would be supported on. Once the pilling was in place, a supporting concrete slab was laid around the piles, and a

void former (more on these later!) was placed on top of this slab to support the steel reinforced slab that the building would sit on.



Well it was nice and flat!



All ready to pour the raised slab



Pouring the slab



Mark trying out his new office!

Once the slab was finished, and before the building was delivered, the plan was to remove the formers under the slab. These were very large rectangles of corrugated cardboard covered in yellow plastic. The plan was that these supported the weight

of the slab and then each former could have water pumped into it (you can see the small pipes going into each former in the picture above) and the collapsed plastic bag containing the wet cardboard could be dragged out. The pilling

Batchworth Lock Education Centre: The Story of a Building Project Contd.

contractor then found it did not actually work as they had planned. It was the first time they had used this particular system of building a raised slab and the formers were designed to degrade over several months. Since we needed them out earlier than this they brought in a water jetting contractor and proceeded to break up and

remove the formers, a very noisy and messy process which eventually worked!

During early September the building, which had been long in the planning, started to arrive. Think Ikea flat pack but with thousands of components! The lorry was offloaded in Skidmore Way and the packages brought

down to the canal side by fork lift truck. After two articulated lorry loads of timber had been delivered, the whole area was filled with black plastic wrapped packages. Cue loads of jokes from passersby and our volunteers about finding which one contained the allen key.



The first of many packages



Now where are the instructions...

In mid September the team from Keops arrived to make sense of all the packages and start to assemble our building. Concerns were raised about the level of the

slab due to issues with the formers underneath it, however these were resolved by McDonald Construction without impacting the build schedule. All the timbers

supporting the building were packed and laser levelled and an additional skim was applied to the top of the slab so the floor could be laid totally level.



Now where is part 2371...?



It looks like a building!

Batchworth Lock Education Centre: The Story of a Building Project Contd.

Watching the rapid construction of the building became a spectator sport. The speed of assembly was remarkable to see, and within a few days the building had taken shape. The largest timbers supported the roof, and once these had all been bolted together, a crane was brought in to lift the central roof truss into place. Scaffolding was erected around the building to allow the Keops team to work on the highest parts.



Left a bit!

A large amount of Kingspan insulation was delivered which was to go under the floor, under the roof and also between the inner and outer timber walls of the building.



First delivery of insulation

Progress continued at a rapid pace and before long the roof was completed, the pile of insulation had vanished and the roof was being tiled.



The roof is finished! With the outside just about finished, some of the Keops team started to build a second cabin inside the first. In order to give optimum insulation, a second layer of logs was assembled inside the outer walls with the cavity filled with more Kingspan insulation. You can see just how thick the walls are by looking through the hole cut for the toilet fan.



How thick are the walls???

While the team from Keops were assembling the massive jigsaw, the electricians and plumbers from McDonald construction were working on the roof, under the floor and in the walls to fit the first fix cabling and plumbing. Having essentially a cavity wall meant most of the wiring could be hidden and the plumbing put under the floor.



There seem to be some pieces left...

Within just three weeks the team from Keops turned that massive pile of logs into a building. Watching them work was very impressive, and they do seem to have done this a few times before... However, although this was one of the bigger buildings they have done this year it is not the biggest they have ever done! Once Keops completed the roof they handed back the building to McDonald Construction to continue the fit out. The sanitary ware and kitchen were delivered by Travis Perkins and the plumbers got to work installing the toilets and kitchen. All the lighting, heating and fire alarms were installed and tested.

While all this was going on and the scaffolding was still up, we took the opportunity to apply preservative and paint to the outside. This was a subject of much debate amongst the Trustees, and we wondered whether the task would be better achieved by paying for it to

Batchworth Lock Education Centre: The Story of a Building Project Contd.

be done. Mark Saxon however had total faith in the resolve of our volunteers and sure enough when the call came we had a total of 16 people who worked as a team to paint the building. The whole of the outside was coated with a clear wood preservative. Next the end nearest the workshop was treated with "HR Prof", a fire retardant to inhibit fire spreading from the workshop to our building. Finally the

whole of the outside had two coats of white Sadolin Superdec applied, which is about the best wood preservative money can buy, and we bought a lot of it! I think you will agree the resulting finish is amazing and a testament to the hard work of this excellent team of volunteers. We will need to keep applying further coats during the building's life but only at 5-7 year intervals!

Affinity Water did have three goes at trying to find the water main, but eventually all service connections were complete. McDonald Construction completed their external works and built the steps, ramp and also the block paving to the front of the steps. We then cleared the internal areas of surplus timber and cleaned the floors ready to lay 600 0.5x0.5m carpet tiles. I can safely say this is the most carpet tiles I have ever laid...



Some of the painting team in action

Once the building was complete inside, some of the same painting team took on the task of applying preservative to all the interior walls and floors. We did make the decision to spray the higher areas to ensure good coverage and Mark and I did this using full face

masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE). The photos of us in full PPE have been restricted on the grounds they may frighten young children. Finally the scaffolding came down and the external drainage, power and water connections could be made.

By mid November the building was ready, and we started to move everything that had been safely stored away into the new Education Centre. The notice was given on our rented office in Mencap, garages and stores were emptied into a Box Luton and more volunteer effort helped shift all our furniture into place. So apart from a few minor items we need to finish off to satisfy Building Control requirements, the project is essentially complete, and we will be all ready for our first school visits in March 2019. We still have more we would like to do, such as the decking at the rear of the building and more landscaping at the front, but these will have to wait until we have funding.

Batchworth Lock Education Centre: The Story of a Building Project Contd.

We have had many positive comments on how the building looks and how it seems just right for the canal side location amongst the Heritage buildings at Batchworth. It does not seem very long since we had the bad news that we had lost our classroom of 20+ years and it just shows how sometimes a challenge opens up opportunities. Thank you to everyone who helped make this vision of having

our own building a reality. So many people have helped fundraise, donated funds and volunteered at various times during the project it would be impossible to name everyone. I would like to give my personal thanks to Mark Saxon who has gone above and beyond to work alongside the Trustees to make sure everything possible to keep the project on track was done. Although

an employee of the Trust, Mark has the dedication of our most loyal volunteers! We will be having a formal opening ceremony and more details on this will be published later.

I will leave you with a few pictures of the completed building, which we all very much look forward to making full use of!

David Montague



From the canal side



View from the river



Entrance foyer



Teaching hall

How We Raised the Funds to Build!

Three Trustees formed the Fundraising Committee. We met frequently to plan strategy and discuss where we might apply for funds, etc. At times we were joined by our Chairman, whose skills, particularly in IT, were invaluable. We drank lots of coffee, had the occasional biscuit and lots of laughs along the way!

One of our group attended a Funding Essentials training run by Herts Community which helped us be more efficient in completing grant forms, most of which had to be done online. Completing grant applications is a lengthy and time consuming process, but we were delighted each time we learned we had been successful with an application! Our Treasurer kept the team informed about how we were doing in relation to the target.

Very early on, we were very pleased to learn we were being successful and this kept us driven and on target.

The Trust started off the funding activity by donating a large injection of cash, £70,000 in total, which was agreed by the RWT Trustees.

Companies and trusts who made very generous donations to fund our Heritage Education Centre

include the following:

- Affinity Water
- John Apthorp Charitable Trust
- Blenheim
- The Co-op
- Garfield Weston Charitable Trust
- Ethel and Gwynne Morgan Charitable Trust
- Schuco International
- St Martin's School
- The Rank Foundation
- Three Rivers District Council
- Travis Perkins
- Waitrose

Many others made very generous donations. One benefactor receives an annual bonus from a City Investment Firm which must go to charity. RWT has been the grateful recipient of this fund in recent years and our education facility has greatly benefited from this.

Trustees, past and present, volunteers and many friends of RWT made very significant donations to help us build the Heritage Education Centre. Many people also completed Gift Aid forms, which boosted the income. The 'buy a share of a log' scheme also raised significant sums of money. More than 1,800 logs have been bought.

There were several other fundraising activities and initiatives - proceeds from

the Rock Choir, sales of local honey, prosecco and canapes parties in the Canal Centre Garden, winter ceilidhs, and generous donations from boaters and visitors to the Canal Centre. It has all been very exciting and rewarding.

We are also very grateful to Mark McDonald and his company, McDonald construction, for all their support of the Trust during the construction. Mark's team have been a pleasure to work with and without his generous support and excellent advice we would not have obtained a building of the quality we have.

The person who has guided us through the design and planning process and helped us achieve our vision is our architect, Chris Gregory, of Tech Architecture. Chris has spent many hours working with us, as we have gone through various rounds of design changes, and he has ensured we ended up with a design that matched our requirements and budget.

We would like to thank everyone who has generously donated money, time and energy in so many different ways, and have made it possible to build such a stunning building which is the RWT Heritage Education centre.

Free Furniture!

Some of you may have seen we have already furnished the Education Centre with some fine desks and chairs, storage cupboards and many other items. We were very fortunate to find out that Watford-based medical device company, Schuco International, were relocating offices and had surplus furniture and office equipment they no longer needed. They generously sent a message out to local charities with a list of what was available and the date they could be collected.

On viewing the list of items it seemed too good to be true, so we hastily arranged to hire a Box Luton van with a tail lift and prepared to arrive on the appointed day as early as possible to get the first pick of items. There were several things we needed. Firstly, some willing volunteers not scared of some heavy lifting, and secondly, a place to store the items while we were waiting for the building to be ready. Since my garage was being demolished as part of our building work and Mark's was already full with items from the Mill for Learning at the Lock, we could not help. Luckily our Treasurer, Kay, offered the use of her garage so storage was sorted.

So on a soggy morning in August, Mark, my wife, Cas, and I, Chris Burrige and

John Hawkins arrived at Schuco's offices soon after 8am. We knocked on the door just to let them know we had arrived, expecting to have to wait for the appointed time, but to our surprise they said come on in and what would you like! After a brief tour of the building we decided what we would go for and started to load up. Below is a picture of Chris and me at the back of the full van showing what we managed to obtain.

Thanks to their generosity we managed to obtain desks and chairs for the office and a new chair for the Lock Centre, several office storage cupboards of various sizes, two glass display cabinets, a fridge, folding tables, a laser printer, kettle, microwave, toaster and lots of other bits and pieces. All these were safely stored, and last week

we moved them into the new building. Many thanks are due to Schuco for thinking of local charities before disposing of their unwanted items. It has made a tremendous difference to us as we would not have been able to afford what we managed to obtain for free!

I was also notified by a friend of a nursery getting rid of a number of good quality small tables and children's chairs. Again we managed to get these for free, and they are now in the Education Centre - Rob has already used the tables to lay out the activities for Learning at the Lock!

These very generous donations have made an amazing difference to us in being ready to go from day one, so many thanks from the Trust for this fabulous support.



Rickmansworth's WW1 Waterways

Part Two

We saw last time the difficulties experienced by the people engaged in canal carrying in the First World War across the country. As an example of these problems, the relatively few but still important steamers operated by the big carriers, largely from London – and so frequent visitors to Rickmansworth – suffered another double whammy. They were fuelled by coke, which was in higher demand during the war. It increased in price and decreased in availability, and with the canal companies not financially supported, the steamers became uneconomical just as the need for their high-speed services should have been increasing. This became a common story, and during 1916 the canal companies and the large carriers were starting to warn the government that they were heading for financial collapse. To put that into perspective, a total tonnage of 31,585,909 was carried on British canals in 1913, and that declined to 21,599,850 in 1918, while the capital of the pre-eminent carrier FMC dropped from an already precarious £135,000 at the end of 1916 to under £110k by the close of the war.

So by the start of 1917, with the railways severely overburdened but financially

secure, the canal system lay idle and neglected, with at least ten million tons of capacity unused and the whole structure under severe threat. Railway companies, with their profits guaranteed by the government, were able to pay war bonuses to their employees while independent canal carriers struggled to stay in business at all with rising running costs and diminishing trade. Finally, with strikes threatened on various waterways and boat owners warning that they could no longer carry on, the government took control (apparently at least in part out of fear of social unrest, a feature throughout industry in 1917). Under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trade, a Canal Control Committee met for the first time on 28th February, and a few months later, the necessity of giving financial guarantees to the major carrying companies was also accepted.

A paper of 9th Jan 1917 (presumably in the Board of Trade) titled 'Better Utilisation of Canals' discusses various options for manpower. Female labour was considered suitable only for the narrow canals, and not for warehouse work: it was at last accepted that there was a real problem. One of the most visible

actions to address it was the introduction in 1917 of the Transport Workers Battalions, to be used mainly to load and unload boats and barges as well as keeping the canals clear of ice. They don't seem to have been used in our area, however, and the Grand Junction Company struggled on, with only London's importance allowing it to provide the minimum service required to maintain trade. In the midlands, there was an attempt at a scheme employing women to take the places of their husbands, and one to employ boys to be trained by the boatmen, although this was very unpopular with the latter. There were some other attempts to recruit unskilled labour from outside the industry, and that too was resented by the core boat people, but on the whole, wartime conditions tended to enhance the boatman's status rather than diminish it. Possibly for the first time, the real value of his skills was recognised as it was found by experience to be impossible to replace him with men not born and bred to the life; in some areas experienced men were said to be commanding double wages (although that evidence is pretty thin), but in most places wages didn't increase in line with other industries.

Rickmansworth's WW1 Waterways

Part Two Contd.

The Canal Control Committee was also of some help in relieving other problems facing boat families, for example, concerning getting food supplies, they issued Travellers' Tickets so they could get supplies, including feed for their horses, at various points on the canal routes - it sounds obvious, but didn't happen until early 1918! Another example was the sheer difficulty of loading and unloading, especially domestic coal: with the men previously employed to do this having been called up, the boatmen often had to do it themselves, at cost of both time and effort, and the Control Committee was able to help to a limited extent. During the summer 1916 there was some payment of a War Bonus, for example, for those working at the mills of John Dickinson making paper, but not all received such a payment. Dickinsons, indeed, struggled itself to maintain its workforce: many men joined up and munitions making paid more, and although the whole business came under the technical control of the Ministry of Munitions there were still serious shortages of skilled people. The deliveries in and transport away of coal and raw materials were simply other examples of problems for the firm exacerbated by the state of the waterways

described above. Firms generally had problems with neglected canals, shortage of boats, high costs of repairs to them, and long delays in loading. And the boat people bore the brunt: by and large, long used to poor and overcrowded living conditions, long hours, derisory pay and dilution of labour, they saw only small changes to their work, their conditions or their lives.

In Rickmansworth, Batchworth Mill had been given up by Dickinsons in 1888, and was no longer associated with the canal, although Croxley Mill certainly was. The main waterways business was Walkers, at Frogmoor Wharf. Set up in 1905, by the outbreak of war it was already doing well, as timber, builders' and coal merchants, as well as boat builders. Although they had already in 1911 built the early motor boat Arvelecom and in 1912 the motor tug Hasty, most of their customers were still using horse boats. All but one were of wood, which was in increasingly short supply - only 18 boats were built during the war years (and just one repaired), including an experimental concrete boat. But generally the war brought more business to Walkers. Meanwhile, Batchworth Lake, from which Harry Walker had been

extracting gravel from the start of his business, was opened to the public on 3rd August 1914 - the day before the declaration of war.

Another major user of the canal at this time was the Harefield cement works of Coles Shadbolt & Co. They had merged with the British Portland Cement Manufacturers in March 1912, bought boats from Walkers, and sent most of their product to Bell's United Asbestos Co Ltd's works at Coppermill. From there a great deal of it went as asbestos sheet by boat to Batchworth Dock, just off the Chess at what is now the Travis Perkins site, for loading onto the railway at Rickmansworth - the engineering drawings for that wharf are dated May 1915, and the trade continued through the War.

All these businesses were of local importance, verging on a national role, and could be said to have bucked the trend of neglect of canals. But they should not conceal the underlying story: the canal system overall was neglected during the First War, and although the situation here was improved by the proximity of London, the seeds were already being sown for the eventual eclipse of canal carrying here, as elsewhere in Britain.

Happenings Around Batchworth

In between issues of Batchworth Telegraph we always accumulate a few photos of our volunteers and

others in action around and about Batchworth. Please note the form for volunteers to complete to opt

out of having a photo published is currently out of stock and being re-printed...

The first one shows our new Education Centre Security Officer who is taking a break from his hectic schedule by grabbing a few minutes relaxation in the Canal & River Trust workshop. At least he is taking health and safety seriously and wearing all the correct personal protective equipment.



Dean to Marie: - "I thought Mark said we just had a little bit of painting to do!!!

Due to the increasing pressure on moorings in the Batchworth pound the Trust has decided to take pre-emptive action to prevent boats mooring outside the Lock Centre along the River Chess. You can see Mark placing the first of many cones which will be positioned along the river bank to keep this area an unspoilt natural environment.





Upcoming Events

Friday 3rd - 4th January 2019 - **Roger travelling to Jem Bates' dry dock in Tring**

Saturday 30th March 2019 - **Formal opening of the Education Centre**

Bank Holiday weekend 4th - 6th May 2019 - **Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice
(Roger in attendance)**

Saturday 18th-Sunday 19th May 2019 - **Rickmansworth Festival**

Saturday 20th - Sunday 21st July 2019 - **Cosgrove Festival
(Roger in attendance)**

Saturday 27th July 2019 - **Leighton Buzzard Festival
(Roger in attendance)**

December 2019 exact date TBC - **Canal-side Carols at Batchworth**

Please look out for other events at Batchworth Lock throughout the year and 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