



The Conservator

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The Newsletter of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators

A Message from the Master



It is an enormous privilege and honour to be installed as the 35th Master of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators.

I see us as a leading Livery company on environmental issues. We are a Company of action - looking at the big picture, founded on detailed knowledge and experience - for our task "*Promoting a diverse and sustainable environment*". We are in a good position to help tackle the huge national and international challenges we are facing on managing water, climate change and energy. We share public concern for the state of our rivers and coastline.

Within our Company we have tremendous expertise and experience of water and environmental policy and practice, and on wider issues including waste management, the circular economy, and land use. We will share

our knowledge with any party that asks for help. We will continue our topical monthly webinars, responding to consultations and being at the forefront of the campaign for Livery climate action plans.

We need to grow to deliver on our objectives. I want to welcome more members who share an interest in water and the environment, who will bring with them a current perspective on the sector. I appreciate that like many other Livery Companies, we are facing major challenges. We are working hard to control costs. Thanks to the work of Past Masters and members, despite Covid and cutbacks, we are on an even keel, successfully recruiting new individual and corporate members. The Wardens are leading our recruitment drive and I encourage everyone to help.

The Court has endorsed groups and committees with specific objectives for the year. We are working to improve our communication, inside the Company and through a new website. I encourage more members to consider joining the Court.

I am grateful to the many who already support our Trust, and urge all Company members to contribute. It helps finance young people, from primary age to post-graduate, to access water and environmental learning. I am keen to raise the profile of both the Company and the Trust and encourage more young people to join the Company. I am grateful to the Trust for supporting students to become Associates of the Company.

I welcome our new Wardens Dylan Barker, Carolyn Roberts and Tom Flood, Master's Bailiff Gemma Harvey and Thames Warden's Bailiff Stuart Herritty.

I am pleased to welcome great speakers this coming year: Michaelmas Lunch - Sarah Mukherjee, former BBC journalist and CEO of IEMA (the largest environmental professional body in the UK); Banquet - Dame Fiona Woolf, past Lord Mayor and environmental champion; Myddelton Lunch - Tony Juniper, Chair, Natural England; and Election Lunch - incoming Lord Mayor and member of our Company Alderman Michael Mainelli. I also look forward to welcoming eminent speakers and guests to our two City Water Debates in November and March, and to discussions with leading players on water and environmental issues.

We have an exciting social programme including various visits, the opportunity to drive sheep over the Thames and a float in the Lord Mayor's show. Watch out for more details.

My grateful thanks to everyone who has helped my Consort Eileen and me on our journey, especially to my predecessor Colin Drummond for his leadership and commitment to the Company, and to his consort, Georgina; they have set a high bar for Eileen and me to follow. I must make special mention of our Clerk, Liveryman Christine Duthie, who has provided first-class support for the Company and the membership.

This is a great Company supported by committed people, and I am excited to be able to serve you as Master. Eileen and I look forward to working with you and for you over the coming year.

Please follow my blog <https://masterwaterconservator23.blogspot.com/>

Martin Bigg
Master Water Conservator



Our Wardens 2022-2023



Thames Warden

After leaving school, Dylan Barker became an apprentice in the construction industry. On completion, he moved into building services, later forming his own company primarily as a heating and ventilation contractor serving mostly the retail sector. During this time Dylan also formed a recruitment company that specialised in supplying labour to the heating and ventilation industry.

His knowledge gained in the mechanical service sector stood him in good stead as he now works along with his wife Sharon at Precolor, which specialises in the manufacture of

potable water, effluent and chemical storage tanks.

During his tenure, Dylan has increased the product range of one-piece rectangular free-standing tanks, and now manufactures the largest tank in Europe. He has designed systems for testing Remotely Operated Vehicles ("ROVs"), manufactured covers for the security of water treatment works and designed chambers for wellheads for the security of boreholes.

His hobbies include rugby and sailing



Fleet Warden

Professor Carolyn Roberts is a water resource management and science communication specialist, who has worked, researched and published across the world. She specialises in the impact of human activity on the water cycle and water

quality, including the impact of housing, industry, mining and waste disposal, but has wide interests in environmental management. She was Technical Advisor to Gloucestershire County Council following the dramatic flooding of 2007 that led to changes in UK flooding policy. After an academic career at Exeter including Head of the School of Environment, and Director of a national Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Gloucestershire University, she moved to Oxford University, directing a national programme that linked industry with researchers to foster the development of innovative environmental technologies. They worked with hundreds of businesses - multinationals to SMEs. Carolyn also assisted the government to promote UK technical expertise internationally.

Alongside a Gresham College

professorial role, she now works as a consultant, assisting businesses and universities to develop technological innovations that take us closer to being environmentally sustainable. She advises Innovate UK, the government's innovation agency. She also assists the police in murder enquiries by identifying the pathways followed by human bodies floating through river and canal networks.

Carolyn has chaired two major UK professional bodies: the Institution of Environmental Sciences, and Society for the Environment, and is an elected Fellow of several others. From time to time she appears in the media, including a 2016 appearance on 'The Life Scientific' on BBC Radio 4, and as an expert adviser to the BBC TV fiction series 'Silent Witness'. She is also a Trustee of the Water Conservation Trust.



Walbrook Warden

Tom Flood was born and educated in Ireland where he gained a lifelong appreciation for the natural world. In 1972 he emigrated to the UK. His first sales and marketing position was with 3M UK. He then joined the voluntary sector, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Over a 26-year career, 12 as CEO, he made this a UK wide organisation, recognised as charity of the year. Its patron was the late Duke of Edinburgh. In 2004 he was awarded a CBE for services to conservation. A founder member of the UK Water Partnership, and with Past Master Mark Lane, helped to establish a private public body. Today it provides thought leadership, informed research and collaboration to drive innovation in a diverse water community. Its relevance is reflected

in the public debate about the quality of our water.

In 2001, he became chair of the Dorset Community Foundation, a grant giving body, which also manages the Paul Cornes Fund, a living legacy to his late civil partner who sadly died during the COVID pandemic. He was recently elected President nominee for the Rotary Club of Poole. Tom divides his time between Farringdon, EC1 and Bournemouth. He is a keen gardener, amateur chef, and explorer of the Dorset countryside. He is also a co-owner of a Patterdale terrier "Miss Jessie" – 'she's great company'.

Tom will be installed at the Michaelmas Court in September 2023.

Reflections on my year as Master 2022-23



What a difference a year makes! In July 2022, we were just emerging from a series of setbacks caused by Covid and associated lockdowns, our speaker for the Installation lunch caught Covid, and we faced ongoing uncertainties of rail and tube. These were a major challenge to the Livery movement, where fellowship is of the essence. In the event, our indomitable spirit showed through the difficulties and hastened our transformation to the new realities. Having adopted a new, explicit mission statement 'promoting a diverse and sustainable environment'; we have found this has resonated with current, new and prospective members, and demonstrates our commitment to action.

We increased our involvement, in a non-partisan way, in the major policy issues of the day. Indeed, we had no option as so many of us were deeply dismayed by the state of public discourse on matters relating to water and the environment. We saw our role as contributing to serious fact-based debates and, by so doing, I feel we did good service, not just to the City, but to our sector. In this context I would commend the contribution of Past Master Peter Matthews, who led on government consultations' responses and advice to DEFRA. We now have an impressive series of consultation responses on our website.

We have continued with our popular series of webinars on a wide range of environmental topics, ably hosted by Past Master Rob Casey, now numbering around 30.

The distinguished speakers at our formal events, included Lord Deben, Baroness Young, Rebecca Pow MP, Minister for Water, Robert Hannigan CMG, Rear Admiral Brian Perowne CB, and Alex Plant, Director of Anglian Water/now Chief Executive of Scottish Water; supported and challenged us in different ways. Our City Water Debate was held in March 2023 when Sir Dieter Helm, the chairs of EA, Ofwat and Anglian Water, and the chief executive of British Water debated the crucial issue of governance in the water sector. Further debates on governance and funding issues are planned.

We have maintained and built on our role of educating school children and future professionals in the field of water and the environment. Our



charity, the Water Conservation Trust, has provided bursaries to more than 180 post-graduate students, who without our support, could not have undertaken their courses. The Company also awards Best Dissertation prizes for the best in class at each of the courses the Trust supports. In the past year, Court Assistant Ramon Bravo and Thames Warden Martin Bigg have expanded our Associates programme, available to young professionals, which includes a lively series of targeted events and mentoring.

We had a packed social programme including two Master's weekends, mine in Somerset in September 2022, and Past Master Rob Casey's (delayed from 2020/21 due to Covid) in Holmfirth in May 2023. My Master's dinner was in the beautiful surroundings of the Oxford and Cambridge Club. Other events included visits to the Mithraeum, the Bank of England and The Charterhouse (with its medieval water supply), and a walk tracing the route of the River Walbrook. Mudlarking

on the Thames, organised by my Consort Georgina, was particularly popular and had to be repeated due to popular demand. The final event of our year was our delightful summer reception, again at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, where members new and old could meet each other and look forward to the future.

The net result of the above has been a surge in recruitment - around 15 new individual members and four new corporate supporters (the latter ably wooed by Past Master Mark Lane). These are record figures in our recent history. We are not yet back to the numbers we had 15 years ago but we have adapted to the new world and are moving forward with confidence.

New Freeman and Liveryman – Election Court Lunch April 2023

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve as Master for the second time. I would like to thank you all for your great support and friendship. Particular thanks are due to our Clerk, Liveryman Christine Duthie, whose selfless dedication and warmth have been a key part of the transformation of our Company. Finally, none of this would have been possible for me without the indomitable help of my beloved wife, Georgina. It is a joy to have re-established our proper succession through Warden to Master, and I wish Martin and Eileen, who have done so much in the past year to support Georgina and me, every success in the coming year.

Colin Drummond OBE DL,
Master Water Conservator, 2007/08 and 2022/23

Key Events 2023

WCWC Webinars

The company has continued its programme of monthly webinars in 2023 focussed largely on water and environmental topics organised and hosted by Past Master Rob Casey. These included fascinating presentations by two Company members, "Preparing for Combustion Transition: A framework for accelerating our transition to Net Zero" by Professor Simon Spooner and "Sustainable Resources, Treasuring the planet's resources for the future: What you can do" by Allan Barton. Most of our webinars are recorded and available on our website.

We will be starting a new programme in September with a talk by Guy Ledger of WS Atkins on the National Underground Asset Register project followed by "Sustainable Resource Management – delivering Net Zero, a sector in transition and the need for new green skills?" by Adam Read of Suez UK in October.

Annual City Pancake Races



The City Pancake Races took place on Shrove Tuesday in Guildhall Yard before a throng of spectators. The Water Conservators' team comprised the Master, Master's Consort, Fleet Warden Dylan Barker and Court Assistant Andy Williamson, supported by a strong and vocal group of fellow Conservators. Dylan was the overall winner in the Liveryman section. Andy, for the second year running, was a deserved winner of the Novelty prize, competing this year as an illuminated St Paul's Cathedral - the stork on the roof was particularly commended.

City Water Debate

The topic for the Company's City Water Debate, held in March, was "Does the governance of the water sector need to change to meet the requirements of the 2020s and 2030s, and, if so, how?" To discuss this, we welcomed expert speakers: Sir Dieter Helm CBE (Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Oxford), Alan Lovell DL (Chair of the Environment Agency), Iain Coucher (Chair of the Office of Water Regulation), Lila Thompson (Chief Executive of British Water) and John Hirst CBE (Chair of Anglian Water).

Views were many and varied, however there was agreement on many points: (i) something needs to be done, (ii) action is required by water companies, regulators, farming, industry, the general public and government, and they need to work together, (iii) a significant amount of investment will be required and (iv) we need to think urgently how this will be provided.

Whittington 600 Celebration

A service was held on 14 March at St Michael's Paternoster Royal to commemorate the 600th Anniversary of the death of Dick (Richard) Whittington. The service was led by The Rt Rev and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London. At the close a wreath was laid at Dick Whittington's memorial in the church. Afterwards there were presentations on the life and legacy of Dick Whittington by Professor Caroline Barron OBE and by our Walbrook Warden, Professor Carolyn Roberts, highlighting Whittington's great contribution to public health in the City.

Climate Change

The second Livery Climate Action Group Annual Conference was held at Merchant Taylors' Hall on 3 July 2023 with the theme "Bridging the gap between knowledge and action". Water Conservators had a stand at the conference supporting the City Corporation's "Bin It Don't Block It" campaign. Past Masters Rob Casey and Peter Hall are working on a draft Water Conservators' implementation plan as a follow up to our Climate Action Plan.

Admiral of the Port Challenge



The event was held on 13 June and the route goes from HQS Wellington to Westminster Boating Base and is contested by traditional Thames Watermen's Cutters supported or crewed by Livery companies. For the Water Conservators' cutter Forget-me-not, Thames Warden Martin Bigg and the Clerk Christine Duthie took the role of the obligatory passengers. The prizes were awarded to the winning Water Conservators' crew by Sheriff Andrew Marsden.

Water Conservation Trust

A separate newsletter will be issued to members shortly highlighting the successful activities of our charity the Water Conservation Trust promoting water related science and environmental learning in schools and universities.

Future Events

- 24 September Sheep Drive over Southwark Bridge and Livery Fair
- 25 September Associates Webinar: Skills and Learning
- 27 September Michaelmas Court and Lunch
- 1 October Water Conservation Trust Sponsored Walk
- 1 November Associates Mansion House Tour
- 8 November Annual Banquet
- 11 November Lord Mayor's Show
- 22 November City Water Debate (Water Liquidity: How to finance the required investment in the water sector to 2050?)
- 29 November Associates: Recent Developments in the Environmental Sector and Opportunities for Career Development
- 6 December Tour of St. Paul's/ Westminster Abbey
- 12 December Court only Lunch
- 14 December Carol Service (All Hallows by the Tower)
- Late January 2024 Associates Tower Bridge Tour

