



The Conservator

July 2025 | Issue 68

The Newsletter of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators

A Message from the Master



Opening a newspaper or a news website in the last couple of years has been a salutary experience for those of us with environmental interests: global warming, biodiversity loss, air pollution, flooding and drought. Amongst these horror stories, the UK's water sector has its own special place. We currently face complex challenges related to river and beach pollution, the financial condition of both the public and private institutions involved, and notable public anger regarding these issues. UK residents are wanting more to be done to protect their water heritage and that of their children – our children and grandchildren. There are relatively few organisations able to help with this situation in a meaningful way, to offer genuinely independent advice, and to showcase the importance of the environment to society's health and wellbeing. We are one of them. Being sufficiently trusted to become Master of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators is therefore not only an honour in our 25th Anniversary Year, but a responsibility.

As a Company, we are able to secure insights into national-level thinking, to bring together decisionmakers and influencers, to promote public debate, and to offer informed opinion. We have been advocating change at an increasing scale as the national water situation has become clearer, and over the next twelve months I intend to continue to add our voice to the calls for transformation. The Company and its members have excellent links with

government, industry, professional bodies, voluntary agencies and environmental charities, and we can provide neutral space for some difficult conversations. We must do so. Our annual 'City Water Debate', our new 'City Environment Debate' series, and our 'thought pieces' are of huge relevance here.

My own priorities for the year include increasing our membership further, particularly amongst those less well represented in the Company such as women and ethnic minorities and those whose principal interests lie in environmental management. We have already grown our numbers significantly over the past couple of years, but this must continue at pace, exponentially even! As well as redressing past inequalities, growth will bring new talents and perspectives, will promote innovation and allow us to amplify our impact further. I hope everyone will give some serious thought to who they personally could introduce to us, and the expertise across all environmental sectors that they could add to our portfolio.

Christine Jarvis takes up a new role as Chair of our 'social group', bringing together a big team of Company volunteers who have offered to initiate and manage an exciting and extended social programme. Meeting each other at formal and informal events is important to our identity as a friendly and welcoming organisation. There is also an urgent need to update our administrative systems, to take some burden from our gallant Clerk, Chris Millett. The automated booking and payments system managed through our website is fundamental to this and is an urgent priority. Whilst there will continue to be paper-based ways of engaging, we have to avoid large numbers of cheques in the post, letters and phone messages.

With these views of a bright future, I also want to touch on the past year's accomplishments. The number of individuals who have stepped up to take on specific roles within the Company has been stunning, and there are too many to document individually. My predecessor Master, Dylan Barker and his Consort Sharon have overseen sterling work by the Company and promoted a wealth of

fascinating social events that bring Members into closer fellowship, too; their investment in our cutter 'Water Forget-Me-Not', is notable. Outgoing Deputy Master Martin Bigg has continued to promote us across the City and to ensure that we are seen as 'punching above our weight' amongst the Livery. Tom Flood, Fleet Warden then and Thames Warden now, will continue to focus particularly on membership growth and our links with charities and non-profit organisations. Alex Money, formerly Walbrook Warden and now Fleet Warden, brings his expertise in international relations into view. Allan Barton, our incoming Walbrook Warden is already masterminding the new City Environment Debate series. Peter Matthews and David Lloyd Owen are still hard at work bringing together Company views on specific government consultations and ensuring that they are effectively presented to national decision-makers. Colin Drummond will, I hope, continue to oversee our 'Chatham House Rule' Discussion Dinners and the City Water Debate, as well as reprising his frequent appearances on national radio. Ramon Bravo will continue to draw in new Associates, people at an earlier stage in their professional careers but who will be the movers and shakers of the future; there are now well over thirty of them. Our charitable Trust, ably chaired by Roger North, has made thousands of pounds worth of grants to individuals and organisations, and again this will be maintained. Tom Morton will continue as my Bailiff, welcoming guests at our events, and offering support (and the occasional lift in his car) to me. Many apologies to those who I have not named individually here, but I am really grateful to all of you.

In conclusion, Stephen and I want to thank all of our Liverymen and Freemen for their comradeship over the last years, and to look forward to your continuing active support over the next twelve months and beyond. At the risk of sounding like the fat lady who often appeared unexpectedly at the end of the Morecombe and Wise TV Show, 'Thank you, and I love you all!'

Professor Carolyn Roberts
Master Water Conservator



Our Wardens 2024-2025



Thames 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 2021, 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. In July 2024 he was reappointed for a further three years as chair in which he will lead the disseminating of the Hidden Dorset report which highlights the social inequalities in Dorset. He is working closely with the Lord Lieutenant for Dorset to develop a £1m fund promoting 'Harmony' linking the outdoors with culture and active engagement. He is a member of 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.



Fleet Warden

Alex is the Founder and CEO of Watermarq, an early-stage firm working on new approaches to valuing water through the application of shadow pricing. He is concurrently a senior academic (part time) at the University of Oxford, where he works

on water, finance, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. He is a principal investigator for Climate Compatible Growth, a £100m research programme funded by FCDO.

In January 2025 Alex was appointed as the first Founder in Residence at the Oxford Smith School, where he works with students and staff to support for-purpose entrepreneurship. He also teaches on various undergraduate, postgraduate and executive education courses within the department, and supervises a small number of doctoral students.

Formerly an emerging markets fund manager at Citi, Alex has around 30 years of experience in finance,

enterprise and academia. His other external appointments include Chief Investment Advisor to the Africa Water Investment Programme, and Member of the Global Water Partnership's Technical Committee.

Alex holds a master's degree with distinction in water science, policy and management, and a doctorate in water risk; both from the University of Oxford. He is an author of papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals including Science and Nature.

He joined the Water Conservators in 2010 and has been a Court Assistant since 2023.



Walbrook Warden

Allan's career has led him towards being passionate about this wonderful planet we live upon. His particular focus is on sustainability and the resources we use to sustain our way of life and treasuring them for future generations. For the past 17 years he has worked for Arup as their Global Business Leader for Resources and

Waste. This has allowed him to travel the world, helping people understand how they can better handle the planet's resources in a better way.

Prior to this he worked for 20 years at Shanks, which at the time, was one of the leading Waste Management Contractors. He held various positions concluding with being Managing Director of Shanks East London, a company building and running a large a waste PFI business. He has worked at Director level for the past 27 years. Allan now has a portfolio of activities in addition to Arup. These include being a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers Process Industries Board, leading their working group on Sustainable Resources, a Warden of the Company of Water Conservators and Trustee of the Bournemouth Heart

Club. He is also passionate about promoting personal development, leadership, and encouraging society to be more thoughtful about the way we live on our planet.

Previously he has been: Non-Exec Chair of SEaB Power Limited, Chair of the Advisory Board to the Sustainability and Resource Efficiency Knowledge Transfer Network (Part of Innovate UK), Member of the Agri Food Technology Council, Director of Ecology of Care Network CIC, Non-Executive Chairman of London Remade Solutions Limited, Non-Executive Director London Remade Ltd and Non-Executive Director Chemical Industries Association and member of its sustainability panel. He is FIPlantE, FSOE, MCIWM, MIMechE, FIOD, CEng, CRWM, FIOD



Reflections on my year as Master 2024-25



It has been both an honour and a privilege to have been Master of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators. What a year it has been, I certainly hit the ground running. Just 2 days after my installation the country had a new Government and one of my first jobs as Master was to write to the new ministers and offer our companies knowledge and expertise. Also, that month our technical team produced a think piece to Defra on the need for a Water Commission and a think piece to the EA on catchments. In August our technical team put together a response to Ofwat on water efficiency and a response to MHCLG on planning. In September members of our company enjoyed a visit to a Somerset willow factory, then at our Michaelmas Court we signed a concordat with the Society for the Environment (pictured below) to work more closely together for the benefit of greater good. Also, the technical team produced a think piece for Defra on the Water Bill.



October commenced with our City Environmental Debate which proved a huge success followed

by a Discussion Dinner with special guest Allan Lovell, DL. We also gave Honorary freedom of the Company to Lord Deben and delivered a think piece for CIWEM on charging. In November we had our Annual Banquet with principal guest Lord Chris Smith and at a special Court meeting we gave honorary freedom of the Company to Baroness Barbara Young. There was also a submission to UCL on ecosystem accounting by Vic Cocker. In December we had a company technical visit to CERN which was enjoyed by many, then January saw two responses to Defra and MHCLG on planning, and two responses on storm overflows to Defra and the EA. This was followed in February a think piece on monitoring for the Water Commission and a think piece on the circular water economy for the UK Water Partnership.

Our social event in March was a technical visit to the Neutron Scattering for Materials Research Facility at Harwell, then our annual City Water Debate later that month was a great success and we thank our sponsors deeply for contributing. We also responded to Defra on land use strategy followed in April by our technical team's principal submission to the Water Commission. In May we had a Discussion Dinner with Kate Baker from the New Towns Taskforce, plus Sharon and I thoroughly enjoyed our invitation to the Royal Garden Party (pictured below). Our technical team produced a response to the EA on enforcement levies and a response to the environmental audit committee on PFAS. Finally in June they produced a think piece to the New Towns Taskforce on water and housing.



We introduced sponsorship of our lunches and banquet which proved a great success. Our company cutter with its mixed crew of volunteers (pictured below) never lost a race, a real credit to both them and our company. The cutter underwent a major refurbishment, and we set in place a friends of the cutter group to help support and maintain it for the future, details of which can be found on our revamped website. At my address at my Installation Lunch, I called on all to shout from the rooftops the virtues and benefits of our company. You heard and acted on that plea, a staggering 31 new freeman joined this year.



Although I had spent a considerable time on the Court beforehand it is not until you become Master that you fully understand the reach the Company has, how it operates and all that it does. The efforts of our Clerk, Past Masters, our Technical Team, the Court of Assistants, FMGP committee, plus the teams who produce our monthly newsletter and update the website, along with our general members have been outstanding and have re-energised our company to such an extent that it has the vim and vigour of a teenager. I thank you all deeply for this and for making my year a most memorable one. I would also like to thank my wife Sharon for her support especially in my absence from work which has enabled me to do this. Our sponsors have been most generous this year and lastly a big thank you to our principal guests who have made our debates, our discussion dinners and our lunches extra special.

Dylan Barker, *Deputy Master*.



Recent Company Events

Our Election Court Lunch in April was held at the Tallow Chandler's Hall. Guest speaker Natalie Prosser, chief executive of the Office for Environmental Protection told her audience at Tallow Chandler's Hall in the City of London that the government is failing "pretty comprehensively" to meet its own legally binding targets for environmental standards. She described the conclusions of her office's annual review of government policy, published in January, as "a pretty despondent finding".



In June the traditional Master's Dinner was held at the London Museum of Water and Steam in Kew. We sat down to dine in the main Steam Hall (pictured above) surrounded by the energy of the ancient working steam engines. The Master reflected on a successful year, and thanked members of the Company, especially for their efforts on recruitment. Past Master Colin Drummond then thanked the Master for his achievements and contributions, particularly for the refurbishment of the Cutter.

Guest speaker for our Installation Court Lunch in July was Mark Lloyd, chief executive of the Rivers Trust (pictured below). He gave



two cheers for the interim report of the government's Independent Water Commission, chaired by Sr Jon Cunliffe, for its focus on the importance of a new collaborative, catchment and nature-based model for water management – something the Rivers Trust has long advocated.

Social events for 2025 included a visit in March to the Neutron Scattering for Materials Research Facility at the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), and the onsite water treatment arrangements at the Harwell site. Conservators (pictured below) saw at first hand the Neutron and Muon Source which is central to research in the physical and life sciences and the suite of neutron and muon instruments which give unique insights into the properties of materials on the atomic scale.



In July Water Conservators joined the Caversham Princess at Reading for the annual cygnet count on the River Thames known as 'Swan Upping'. Swan Upping is an annual ceremony, dating back to the Middle Ages, that these days involves catching, counting, examining, weighing and ringing mute swan cygnets, primarily to assess their population and health.

New Members

The Company extends a warm welcome to the record number of new members that have joined us so far this year, individuals from various backgrounds and professions who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our company. In addition to those listed in the January issue of the Conservator, at the Election Court the Company welcomed Tom Morton, Michael Nates, and Cherry Parker as Liverymen, and Penelope Banks, Sharon Barker, Eileen Bigg, Susannah Clements, Polly Courtice Dbe Lvo DI, Karyn Georges, Dr Karen Murrell, Caryn Novak, Matthew Sparkes, and Craig Turner as new Freeman of the Company. At the Installation Court we were joined by Lina Nieto as a Liverymen of the Company along with Barrie-John Lancaster, Jessica Kahl, Abdullah Al-Ausi, Duncan Margetts, and Leonie Cooper as Freeman of the Company. Also, Graham Edwards was installed as a Liveryman and Peter Simpson as a Freeman at a special court meeting held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in May (pictured below).



Government Consultations

Past Master Peter Matthews reports that the Company continues to respond fully to consultations with a thank you to all who contribute. Recent responses include those to the EA consultation for enforcement levies on water companies, and the Defra consultation on exemptions in discharge permits. An important issue in both responses is the need for absolute clarity in the definition of permit non-compliance.

The Company also responded to the EAC Call for Evidence on PFAS. It supported the need for more research in the quest for evidence-based bans. It pointed out the consequences of legacy presence in the environment and legacy uses for water conservation. Once more it drew attention to the overwhelming contribution of particular PFAS to the zero chemical status of rivers under the WFD and the continuing misconceptions linking this to other issues of concern on river quality.

The Company also prepared a Think piece on some consequences for water management arising from the New Towns programme and sent this to the Task Force.

The Report from the Independent Water Commission, chaired by Sir Jon Cunliffe, has now been published. The Company submitted a comprehensive response to the initial consultation by the Commission and will be submitting a further response when the draft white paper is produced in the autumn. Click on the following link for further details on all our consultation responses - <https://waterconservators.org/consultation-responses/>

Webinars

The Company has continued its successful programme of monthly webinars in 2025. Topics this year have included "Valuing Water" presented by Fleet Warden Alex Money, "Data centres, cloud computing and the rise of generative



AI: what are the implications for water sustainability?" by Tom Cheesborough from Vantage Data Centres, "Leadership lessons from the ice" by Sue Stockdale (pictured above), the first British woman to ski to the magnetic North Pole, "Restoring chalk streams and improving water management" by WCWC member Jonathan Fisher, and "Farmers and rivers: working with farmer groups for river restoration" by Teresa Dent, CBE.

The Company also hosted two successful Associates Webinars on Career Development and Leadership. If you missed any of these webinars, most are recorded subject to the presenters permission and are available to view on our website via the following link - <https://waterconservators.org/events/past-webinars/>

Climate Action



Our thanks go to members for their generous support of our Crowdfunder fund raising page for our annual Carbon Compensation Scheme with River Holme Connections. This is part of our commitment to meet the City Corporation's target for Livery Companies to achieve "Net Zero" by 2040 but also helps RHC to improve the river environment in the River Holme catchment (pictured above). The scheme agreed by the Court involves raising £420 (plus inflation) per annum to compensate for our remaining Company and Trust carbon footprint. We successfully achieved this target ensuring we remain as one of the leading Livery Companies in implementing our Climate Action Plan.

The Worshipful Company of Water Conservators has also broadened its Climate Action Plan into a Sustainability Policy with objectives that are consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Whilst all seventeen goals are relevant and important, the Company will concentrate effort on eight, reflecting the breadth of knowledge, skills and expertise in the Company. The eight goals being focused on are: 4 Quality Education; 6 Safe Water & Sanitation; 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure; 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities; 12 Responsible Production & Consumption; 13 Climate Action; 14 Life Below Water and 15 Life on Land. Each will be addressed over different timeframes.

The Company will promote public, private and professional-sector lectures and debates on specialist topics and work closely with its Trust. The Company will also stimulate and respond to UK Government policy formulation, primarily in environmental resource protection and improvement. For further details click on the following link :- [Sustainability Policy](#)

Water Conservation Trust

The Water Conservation Trust CIO has continued to support the enhancement of learning and research in water related science and the environment through our university, schools and young people's programmes, funded largely through member's giving, our investments and sponsored events. The Trustees of the Company's charity met in May 2025 to review progress on education projects and to consider what should be included in the five-year plan 2025-2030. Trustees agreed that the priority should be on education, with a review of the University Bursary Programme in the light of reduced UK



postgraduate student recruitment, and an expansion of our successful Schools Programme.

Universities Programme

Last year the Trust has supported bursaries to MSc students at 15 universities where there is a strong commitment to water and environmental management e.g. through involvement with the Society of the Environment or IES, with the aim of building up a dialogue on cooperation, mutual support and membership. The total number of students supported through our bursary programme is now over 200. Students are annually invited to receive prizes for their MSc dissertations at our Myddelton Lunch in January, as reported in the Winter Conservator.

In April Past Master Martin Biggs, our lead of the Universities Programme, attended the graduation ceremony at the University of Surrey to catch up with Ruth Leslie our bursary award winner and Raven Mammadov our dissertation prize winner. They were both awarded Master of Science in Water and Environmental Engineering. In June Martin attended the graduation ceremony of Hanzhi Chen (pictured below) at Imperial College to present him with his dissertation prize.



Schools Programme

The Trust continues to grow its schools programme which includes successful bursary schemes supporting educational visits to Spitalfields City Farm near Whitechapel where children learn about food production, growing

vegetables and fruit, pollination, natural pest control and animal welfare, along with educational visits to the London Museum of Water and Steam to learn about water supply and public health. Both schemes target schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged children who might not otherwise be able to afford the visits.

The Trust also makes an annual award to Ysgol Y Gogarth School to support children with special needs on craft-based projects and workshops and supports a Year In Industry Student to deliver the “mayfly in the classroom” project as part of the river education programme led by River Holme Connections working with around 20 schools in the Huddersfield area.

Other Trust activities include support to projects at schools to encourage water related science and environmental learning with 3 projects currently in progress. The first is at Northease Manor Special School, near Lewes, to support a makeover of their horticulture garden involving rainwater collection and the reconstruction of a pond. The students are neurodiverse, most of whom have diagnoses of autism/ADHD.

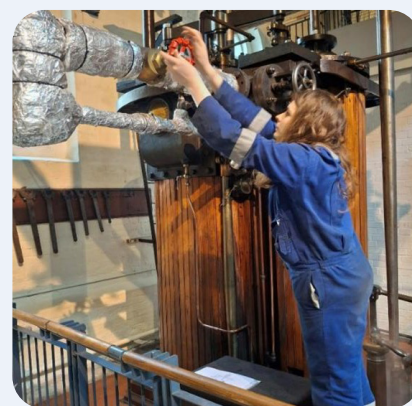
Our second project is at Cranbourne School at Potters Bar where the school is currently developing a part of the site into a wildlife haven including a pond to provide the children with the opportunity to learn more about nature, its wildlife, and their habitats.

Our third project supports the new Quentin Blake Centre of Illustration in Islington to enable children to learn about the history and development of water technology utilising the power of illustration. The Trust has agreed to fund the development of a pilot course which will then facilitate the development of a major learning programme with schools, aimed at engaging with 6,800 pupils and

740 teachers to 2027.

Young People’s Programme

The Trust has continued its support for Maidstone Sea Cadets and is currently funding Steam Explorers STEM courses at the London Museum of Water and Steam where young children aged between 11 and 16 can learn about water supply and get actively involved in maintaining the steam engines at the museum. We received a lovely testimonial from the mother of Theo (pictured below), one of the STEAM Explorers, in which she explained that the experience has been life-changing for Theo giving him a renewed sense of purpose and direction.



Treloar’s Funding Appeal

Treloar School and College is a residential and day special school and college for disabled children and young people, aged from 2 to 25 originally set up by the Lord Mayor in 1907. The Trust has agreed to sponsor new water efficient shower heads at the college, reducing water use by up to 60% as many of the existing shower heads have been in use for



over forty years when they were first installed.

Click on the following link if you would like to learn more about the amazing work of the Trust - [All our news – The Worshipful Company of Water Conservators](#)

Charitable activities are an important function of all Livery Companies, and charitable giving is an important part of Livery Company membership. Our Water Conservation Trust is largely funded by our members through a process of regular giving. If you would like to join many of our members who regularly contribute to the Trust please contact the Treasurer Peter Hall (peterbhall@hotmail.com) for the relevant forms.

Obituaries

It was with deep regret that the Company was informed earlier this year of the sad death of James Lodge who was a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators. James (pictured above) was taken ill very suddenly and succumbed to medical complications from a suspected infection. James worked for law firm Linklaters, as lead for business continuity, resilience, and crisis management, globally.



From his first contact with the Water Conservators, when he joined the Thames Tideway visit in September 2024, James's interest and enthusiasm shone through. Having obtained his Freedom of the City of London, James joined as a Liveryman in December 2024, and set about recruiting his work colleague Matthew Sparkes, who joined as a Freeman at the Election Court in April. James had a passion to learn about environmental issues, water management, and sustainability.

Future Events (see website for details)

WCWC Functions:

Wed 24 Sep 2025: Michaelmas Court Lunch onboard HMS Wellington. Flyer circulated.

Thu 6 Nov 2025: The WCWC Annual Banquet. For our 25th year of the grant of Livery and 20th year of our Royal Charter, we will dine in the historic and beautiful Apothecaries' Hall. Flyer coming soon.

Sat 8 Nov 2025: The Lord Mayor's Show. For this, our special year, the Master has entered our Company Float (& Magic Water Tap!); This promises to be a fun-filled occasion not to be missed.

Thu 11 Dec 2025: The Christmas Court Lunch (Court Members & partners only). Invitation to include all New-Joiners to the Company since Jul 2024, and their partners, at Bakers' Hall. Flyer coming soon.

Thu 11 Dec 2025: The WCWC Christmas Carol Service. Following last year's success, we will join the Community Service at All Hallows by the Tower (AHBT) for candlelit carols; follows the Court Lunch.

Mon 26 Jan 2026: The Service of Re-dedication of the Livery and Company Cross and the Myddelton Lunch; AHBT Church,

followed by lunch at Trinity House. Flyer coming soon.

Social and Sporting:

Sat 20 Sep 2025: Sailing. The Inter Livery Sailing Challenge is taking place on 20th September; LINK: <https://www.cityliverysailingchallenge.co.uk/> Contact Deputy Master Dylan Barker.

Fri 10 Oct 2025: Golf. Past Master Roger North is organising a WCWC Company Golf Day at the Royal Automobile Club in Epsom. In addition, please be aware of a new concept called the Square Mile Golf Society (SMiGS); Info at this LINK: <https://squaremilegolf.co.uk/>. For info on the WCWC Golf Day, please contact Past Master Roger North.

Wed 5 Nov 2025: Real Tennis. The Inter Livery Real Tennis Competition to be held at Queen's Club, West Kensington. Company member Jonathan Fisher has agreed to be POC for all Racquet Sports.