

The Worshipful Company of Water Conservators

*Promoting a diverse and sustainable
environment*

News Update



April 2026

Issue 55

Message from the Master



My previous newsletter note focused particularly on national water and environmental challenges, suggesting that our Livery Company is well suited to address them. Despite businesses striving for sustainability, these issues are nevertheless losing prominence in national politics. We can assist by continuing our pressure on decisionmakers, increasing our membership and drawing in new expertise to strengthen our voice.

Closer at hand, there have been some achievements for our Company to celebrate. Our cutter, Water Forget-Me-Not, secured an impressive victory during its first event of the year, which took

place ten days ago in the Oxbridge Challenge Race.



The team (pictured above and below), comprising three men and three women, outrowed the nearest mixed team by several hundred metres over the six kilometre course from Putney to Chiswick, and nearly matched the time of the winning men's team. This was a remarkable accomplishment! You will have the opportunity to see our cutter again in the Tudor Pull as part of a vibrant flotilla on Sunday, 26th April. Further details, including where to view Water Forget-Me-Not and other historic vessels such as Jubilant, are available on the Company website. Later this year, with our doughty Bargemaster Stuart Smith's assistance, there will again be opportunities for Company members to row the cutter for fun, no experience necessary, and lifejackets provided.... and I hope to arrange another wild swimming event too, for the braver souls.



When I began my tenure as Master of the Company, I established several key priorities for the year. Chief among these was increasing our membership numbers. Expanding the membership allows us to achieve more, to influence environmental practices in the City and beyond, and maintain greater visibility. Thanks to the efforts of Liverymen and Freemen who have won over colleagues with interests in water and environmental management, we are making considerable progress. Recruitment is a collective responsibility, but Thames Warden Tom Flood plays an important role in promptly following up on enquiries. Financial security is also essential, and growing our membership contributes to this goal. Treasurer Ken Marsh and Past Master Peter Hall have been instrumental in monitoring and supporting that activity.

Another priority has been to increase the proportion of women in the Company, and we are seeing positive results here as well. Kathryn Pharr, Company Freeman and Founder of Women in Water, has assisted and following her guidance, our efforts continue. Many new recruits continue to have aquatic interests, but there is now greater diversity in backgrounds, including those with expertise in air quality, purchasing, finance, and sustainability. This broad range strengthens our Company and enhances our chances of success in our mission of 'Promoting a Diverse and Sustainable Environment'.

Our impact is evident through many externally-facing activities.



Well-attended Debates, such as the recent City Water Debate (pictured below), feature distinguished panels and attract large audiences, sometimes leaving only standing room. Past Master Colin Drummond manages this annual event with support from a small team, and also oversees our 'Chatham House' dinners often with visiting politicians. Upcoming events include another City Environment Debate, and a free discussion between two prominent sustainability professionals - Dame Polly Courtice and Peter Simpson - organised by Walbrook Warden Allan Barton and hosted at Arup in Fitzrovia.



Increasingly, these meetings garner sponsorship, and we are grateful for the support of companies and individuals, including members such as Court Assistants Lee Morton and Afzal Ginwalla. Past Masters Mark Lane and Peter Hall have been successful in winning over corporate and individual sponsors. Our monthly specialist webinars continue under the coordination of Past Master Rob Casey, and are open, influential and free for anyone to attend. The Associates programme provides career advice and mentoring for younger members, ably managed by Freeman Ramon Bravo. Policy papers and personal viewpoints are regularly produced, with significant contributions from Past Master Peter Matthews and Court Assistant David Lloyd Owen. The Company website is also attracting interest, overseen by Past Master Martin Bigg. See that at <https://waterconservators.org/>, of course. New Liveryman Eileen Bigg acts as our photographer.

Members may be less aware that our administrative systems

are undergoing extensive modernisation, thanks to Fleet Warden Alex Money. You will see this when the quarterage request comes in, when booking for events, or buying merchandise.

As most members will know, we also organise a range of other social events, some noted later in the newsletter, and our charitable Trust does excellent work too, under the guidance of Past Master Roger North. If you are interested in supporting any of these activities, or initiating others, please reach out to one of the individuals mentioned above, or the Clerk, and join one of these winning teams.



Finally, the Master's Weekend held in Stratford-upon-Avon in April was very well received by approximately forty members of the Company and friends (see above). The session with William Shakespeare's schoolmaster left a strong impression on some attendees (not literally, although Freeman Georgina Hall reportedly came close!). I want to thank my husband Stephen, for organising that. Participants in this and in other Company events might echo the sentiment expressed by King Hal in Shakespeare's Henry V, when he addressed his small but ultimately victorious army at Agincourt on St Crispin's Day: 'And gentlemen in England now a-bed shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here'. Ladies too.

*Professor Carolyn Roberts
Master Water Conservator*

Future Events (see website for details)

21 Apr 2026 – Associates Webinar, Adam Donnan

24 Apr 2026 – Treloar's Gala Dinner, Guildhall

26 Apr 2026 – Tudor Pull, Hampton Court

12 May 2026 – Sustainability Discussion, Arup Offices

13 May 2026 – Barts Charity Event, St Bartholomew's Hospital

14 May 2026 – Webinar on Water Resources

10 June 2026 – Webinar, Treasuring our Planet

1 July 2026 – Installation Court Lunch, Plaisterers' Hall

Tudor Pull

Taking place this year on April 26th and starting at Hampton Court the Stela is handed over by the Custodian of the Royal Palace with great ceremony. Then it is rowed by the King's Barge master and crew of the Jubilant to Richmond. After being re-energised with refreshments, the Jubilant is escorted by Livery Company cutters down to the Tower of London. The climax of the day is the handing over of the Stela to the Governor of the Tower for safe keeping for the year. We then all retire for refreshments. Click on the following link to register for the event: [Tudor Pull – The Worshipful Company of Water Conservators](#)



Webinars

Our Associates webinar at 6pm on 21st April 12, 2026, is titled "Navigating the Future of the Environmental Profession". In this webinar, Adam Donnan, Chief Executive Officer of the Institution of Environmental



Sciences, will outline the radical uncertainty facing the sector and the strategies you might use as an early-career professional to navigate that and ensure you have the skills for future employment. After the presentation, the floor will be open for questions. Click on the following link to register - [Navigating the Future of the Environmental Profession](#)

Our next Company webinar will be on Thursday 14th May at 6pm when Deborah Feldhaus, Head of Water Resources, Yorkshire Water will be talking about "Future Water Resource Challenges". Further details will be on our website and circulated to members shortly.



Finally, Walbrook Warden Alan Barton (pictured above) will be presenting "Sustainability - Treasuring our home (planet earth)" for our webinar at 6pm on Wednesday 10th June 2026. Alan will consider the impact we have had and are currently having on the planet, possible future impacts, and the need to consider circular ecologies and an overall circular economy.

Sustainability Discussion

On the 12th of May Dame Polly Courtice, founder of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership and Peter Simpson, former Chief Executive of Anglian Water will lead a discussion on sustainability at Arup's Offices in London. This will be a free-flowing conversation between two exceptionally experienced people in the field of sustainability, and they are both members of the Water Conservators. Polly

and Peter have been working in this area for over thirty years and during that time have seen the dramatic evolution of the sustainability debate in terms of politics, economics and corporate responses.



The discussion will be followed by an opportunity to network, with drink refreshments provided. The event is free and by invitation only. Places are limited and available on a first come first served basis. Tickets can be booked online via the events page on our website: [A CONVERSATION ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY](#)

Charity Update

River Holme Connections

The Water Conservation Trust is proud to help fund the Year In Industry Student of River Holme Connections, a river catchment charity in Yorkshire. An important part of the job is to support engagement sessions in local primary schools, teaching young children about the importance of healthy river ecosystems. Click on the following link if you would like to read more about the current Year In Industry Student Kyal Pick outlining some of his recent activities - [Water Conservation Trust – River Holme Connections](#)



Urbanwise London

At the meeting of the Trust on Tuesday 28th January, we discussed an approach from Urbanwise London and their projects on Greener Canalside and the River Westbourne Project. Greener Canalside had asked for assistance in developing a water quality monitoring protocol. It was agreed that the experience from River Holm Connections would be shared and the Trust would allocate £1,000 against a request for monitoring equipment. Also, Past Masters Martin Bigg and Rob Casey visited Urbanwise for their Open Day on 26th March and presented them with 9 pond dipping kits including nets, sample trays, magnifying glasses and identification guides to support their educational activities with schools and young children.



Click on the following link if you would like to learn more about the amazing work of the Trust - [Water Conservation Trust – Latest Schools Programme Update](#)

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 click on the following link: Invest in your Future – [Help us support education and research in water and the environment](#) or contact the Treasurer Peter Hall (peterbhall@hotmail.com) for the relevant forms.