



# WaterWords

Waterworks Museum News  
Autumn & Winter 2024/2025



Welcome to the Winter 2024/2025 issue of WaterWords, which provides a round-up of news, key events and information between 1st July 2024 and 31st January 2025.

If you would like to contribute an article, or even just a few words, for inclusion in a future issue of our newsletter, please contact the Editor by post at the address shown on Page 8 or alternatively by email at [editor@waterworksmuseum.org.uk](mailto:editor@waterworksmuseum.org.uk)

## Unveiling in August was part of our continuing celebrations to mark the Museum's 50th year !!!

The Right Worshipful, The Mayor of Hereford, Councillor Kevin Tillett made a return visit to the Museum on Sunday 11th August, 2024, to officially open the Brockhampton Display and the Sissons Engine Set. Pictured on the right standing next to Jill Phillips, Chair of Trustees, Councillor Tillett said he was delighted to visit us again, and praised the work of the volunteer workforce.



Looking on, were a very enthusiastic group of visitors and volunteers who clearly enjoyed the banter between the Mayor and the Chair of Trustees whilst also basking in bright August sunshine. The day proved to be an enormous success, as were the six other Steam Days which were hosted at the Museum between July and October.

# Chairperson's Perspective

## Your Council of Management

*I thought I would share some details of how the Museum's Council of Management works:*

The museum has no paid staff and is wholly governed, managed and operated by volunteers. The Governing Body is the Council of Management; members being charitable trustees.

Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the forthcoming year. In 2024, the AGM took place at the museum on 9th July and a good turnout of members attended. Members approved the Annual Report and Financial Accounts for the year ending December 2023 and subsequently submitted these to the Charities Commission.

Trustees elected for the year (in alphabetical order) were:-

Paul Allen	Mike Harries
Neil Atkins	Peter Heaton
Kevin Burrows	Michelle Impanni
Diane Cammidge	Liam Kirkham
Adrian Eyre	Keith Munn
Carole Franklyn	Jill Phillips
Richard Glasspoole	Graham Prosser
Mike Glover	Fred Snelgrove

Since July, Chris Santry and Neil Turner have become trustee members whilst Richard Glasspoole has resigned due to commitments to another Arts-related Herefordshire Charity.

The Council meets four times a year to set the strategic direction of the museum, approve key policies and oversee arrangements for the museum to meet its obligations as a charity and a Registered Company. The financial position and long term sustainability of the museum is a key objective constantly under consideration by Trustees.

Day to day management of the museum is delegated to a smaller group of Trustees, elected as Directors and who oversee the activities of the museum volunteers.

The current Directors are:

Jill Phillips, Governance Director & Chair of Trustees;

Mike Harries, Financial Director & Honorary Treasurer;

Mike Glover, Engineering Director;

Fred Snelgrove, Director & Collections Co-manager, and

Diane Cammidge, Director & Collections Co-manager.

We are always seeking new trustee members, so do please contact Jill Phillips for more details. We would welcome those with business & fundraising skills in particular and are keen to appoint another Youth Trustee.

# Road Roller “Emma”

## Promises, Delays and a Final Push

On 30th October 2024, Emma the Road Roller and living caravan were collected and transported away from the Waterworks Museum - a sad end to this story.

Back in 2018, the Road Roller took pride of place outside the museum’s Victorian Building with experienced volunteers Ashton Cox and Henry Netherway taking on key roles in its care and conservation. At this point the museum community was excited about this new attraction and a promising partnership with Herefordshire Council; the museum providing the Road Roller with a new home and volunteer expertise on hand to advise the council. The intention was to restore and maintain Emma as a static display by our volunteers free of charge whilst Herefordshire Council provided the necessary funding for parts and inspections. A temporary agreement set out the principles for a longer term agreement between both parties.

Then COVID19 hit the world and the partnership conversations came to a stop. The museum continued to try to make progress but establishing who to reconnect to at the Council proved difficult and at this time the museum was also going through a change of the Chair of the Museum. Staff turnover and various changes in personnel at the Council had an impact - all of which led to a lack of progress.

It wasn't until December 2020 that a meeting took place between the original negotiator from Herefordshire Council and museum Directors. Emma by now was covered in tarpaulin and wasn't looking her best. The museum volunteers were concerned about her ongoing deterioration given the lack of progress and funding received. It took, however, a final push from individuals on the Trustee Board to reinforce the decision made in 2024; that the museum could no longer wait for funding decisions from Herefordshire Council and a request was made to remove her from the museum site.

The Road Roller, although working under steam, was never, from the onset of her story at the museum, part of the collection. It was seen as an additional exhibit as part of Herefordshire Heritage and local history rather than of *telling the story of water* and the museum’s charitable purpose. The museum supported Herefordshire Council at a difficult time when a new site for the Road Roller had to be found very quickly and the museum volunteers stepped in and offered their skills and experience to the Council at that time.

The volunteer community at the museum are pleased that the Road Roller is not mothballed but will be given a new lease of life elsewhere. Goodwill of the volunteers itself was not enough to make the progress needed and now, the museum volunteers are moving forward to face fresh challenges and exciting developments. Our doors are open throughout 2025 with a host of wonderful engines, pumps and artefacts and a refreshed WW2 exhibition - do come along and join us on Tuesdays and our steam Sundays.



# Engineering & Site Activities

Winter maintenance has been in full swing since November last year, so here is an update on some of the work done or nearing completion.

In the Visitor Centre a new freezer has been ordered, the Dishwasher has been moved, the serving counter extended and two sections of the floor painted in a very bright shade of blue.

The Workshop has received a re-vamp with new shelves fitted across the back wall to make it easier to find tools and there has been an investment in a range of new equipment allowing for the disposal of some older items.

A new boiler has been fitted in the mess room and the floor has been repainted in the Tangye House, with some of the exhibits repositioned to show them off to better effect. A small storage shed at the rear of the Tangye House has been "de-cluttered" and will be re-purposed as an oil store now it has been moved to the outside of Bay 6. In the meantime, the Blackstone Room has been reorganised to provide more space to operate the smaller engines.

The small Hot Air Engine in the Southall Gallery is under repair with new castings procured. These are currently awaiting machining and fitting. In Bay 6, "old" oil has been drained and replaced in the "Allen" and "Sissons" engines, and steam gland packing has been replaced on the Triple.

A drone survey was commissioned to examine the state of the Chimney and guttering of the main building and that confirmed all was in good shape. Parts of the exterior woodwork on the main building will be repainted by Contractors in the Spring.

As always, a heartfelt thank you to the large band of intrepid volunteers that make this happen and ensure the Museum is shipshape for the coming season.

## A tribute to Henry Netherway

The volunteer community were saddened to hear of Henry's death on 28th January but carry affectionate memories of his time at the museum. Ashton Cox shares his own personal tribute:

*I started to work with Henry when Emma the steam roller arrived at the museum. As he owned a steam roller and a steam lorry his knowledge and expertise were invaluable. He took the lead and oversaw all the jobs that needed doing, both on the 'roller and the Living Van. Under Henry's guidance Emma was brought up to a running state and made ready for her boiler inspection.*

*When in steam Henry asked me to open the Regulator. In what was a first for me, I did so a bit too enthusiastically. Although the engine turned far too fast, Henry didn't panic or shout at me and as I found out he always managed to stay calm when things went wrong.*

*Then in between lockdowns we did the pin stripping on the front wheels of Emma, which also demonstrated the versatility of his skills.*

*The next project was the installation and setup of the Sissons Instructional Steam Engines. Henry would carefully consider every stage of the operation and would listen to all suggestions. His easy going nature and logical approach made it a pleasure to work with him. Henry's last job for the museum was to get a new casting made for the 1h.p. Hot Air Engine, his last gift to the museum along with a Deadweight Tester. Throughout most of his time at the museum he was being treated for Cancer. Not once did he complain. Sadly, we say goodbye to a good friend and a good engineer.*

# Partner Briefing

The Hereford & Gloucester Canal Trust is one of a number of local partners that the Museum has had the pleasure of working with over recent years. Tony Higgins has been kind enough to provide us with a brief history of both the canal and the Trust that was formed in 1992.



The Wye was never an easy river to navigate and so it was no surprise that in the midst of the canal boom in the late 1700s the merchants of the region decided that a canal connecting Hereford to Ledbury and the River Severn at Gloucester, could be a lucrative idea... well nearly. In March 1791 a bill was put before parliament for 'Making and maintaining a Navigable Canal from the City of Hereford to the City of Gloucester'. The existence of coal at Newent was likely the clinching factor in the project going ahead but it was not until 1845 that canal boats finally arrived in Hereford and the coal was never the money spinner anticipated.

James Brindley's son-in-law Hugh Henshall was commissioned to survey the route which, passing through Newent, necessitated the digging of Oxenhall tunnel which proved the hardest part. Work commenced at Gloucester under the guidance of Josiah Clowes as chief engineer in December 1792 and later by Robert Whitworth who had earlier opposed the route through Newent. Whatever his misgivings, the canal was completed to Ledbury in March 1798 amid much celebration. The tunnel had however resulted in the need to raise further capital.

Having overspent but getting 'only' as far as Ledbury, the canal endured a hiatus until the appointment of a young Stephen Ballard whose energy, enthusiasm and skill led to a revival of building in 1839. Ballard lived near to the canal workings and designed many of the canal buildings that remain today at Staplow, Ashperton and Withington. It took him 6 years to bring the canal finally to Hereford. At first the canal did not even make enough money to cover the interest on the canal company's loans but by 1847 things were looking up and the canal became profitable.

However, the world was moving into the railway age and in 1853 the railways arrived in Hereford (along with a brand new shiny Waterworks in 1854). Canal trade dropped off and soon thereafter the Great Western and West Midland railway companies 'bought' the canal on a perpetual rent of £5,000 per annum. In 1871 the railway companies started building a railway along the line of the canal from Gloucester to Ledbury from which time there was no longer any barges on that stretch. From Ledbury to Hereford the railway company decided upon the different route leaving the canal to become gradually derelict.

A canal 'restoration' boom occurred and in 1983 the Hereford & Gloucester Canal Society was formed which became the Trust, with charitable status, in 1992. Following the nationalisation of the railways the GWR ceased and the land on which the canal ran was divided into over a hundred parcels whose ownership was taken up officially and unofficially by whoever was interested. Restoration continues as and when a combination of willing landowner, local council interest, enthusiastic trust member(s), and funding all come together. It can happen.

The book "Rescued from Obscurity 2" gives a complete and fascinating account of the history of the canal and of the Trust. It is available via the Trust web site [h-g-canal.org.uk](http://h-g-canal.org.uk)

# Alan Shaw remembered

Alan Shaw passed away peacefully on 24<sup>th</sup> January this year, at the grand age of One Hundred and Two.

When he left school, Alan studied for a Degree in Physics at university. He went on to become one of an elite group of 'Boffins' who worked at the top secret Telecommunications Research Establishment, Malvern, during the war and contributed to the continuing development of Airborne Radar and associated electronic equipment.

He first volunteered at the Museum in 1988 and was made an Honorary Life Member in 2006. Throughout this time he was involved in numerous projects and researched and wrote prodigiously about all things steam and water.

For example, Alan was involved with the reconstruction of our historic Leominster water-works building, the Tangye House. He was also heavily involved in the recovery and restoration of the Blake Compound Ram.

Alan wrote a number of rigorously researched articles for WaterWords , including items on both the Francis and the double-vortex water turbines.

In later years Alan moved to Yorkshire, to be nearer family. He created a new life there, getting involved in the Aireborough Historical Society archive room (they also made him an honorary life member!), the Aireborough Civic Society, and various campaigns in the area. He joined the various local industrial history societies and went to lectures across Leeds.

## Volunteer Viewpoint

### **Chris Santry shares his past and present experiences.**

I returned to Hereford in 2020 after my retirement. I had previously lived in the city in the '70s for three years and my first child was born here. On leaving Hereford I moved around the country to various places with my employer, the Legal and General Assurance Society, eventually ending up and retiring in Bristol.

In Bristol I volunteered at the Bristol Industrial Museum building museum exhibits. I also volunteered at the listed Curzon Cinema in Clevedon, working on the restoration and preservation of the structure, this was both before and after my retirement.

I have always had a practical nature, buying houses that needed doing up for example and when deciding where to retire, one of the draws of returning to Hereford, was the Water-works Museum and also a new house, which wouldn't need doing up - how wrong I was!

I had visited the museum previously on a Bristol Industrial Archeological Society visit. We were still in lockdown when I made enquiries by email, with a view to volunteering at Broomy Hill. Once we were out of lockdown I met the Chief Engineer, Mike Glover, and was shown around. That made my mind up that I would like to volunteer.

It has proved a great experience for me, learning new skills, from making leather washers to building loft hatches and restoring pumps! And I have met a great group of volunteers from all walks of life and I enjoy working with them.

I would recommend volunteering to anyone but especially younger members of the community who are our future. We have lots of fun in between dealing with some real challenges which keep us occupied, and there is never a dull moment. More often than not I get a real sense of achievement. If you can find the tools!

# Our newly refurbished World War II Exhibit

## A few words from Tom Quinsey.

Last October, the museum celebrated WWII Home Front Day by reopening the newly refurbished WWII display, which now houses a pair of re-creations, one of a 1940s evacuee bedroom, and another of a kitchen, filled with period appliances and food brands.

We were also very lucky to welcome two survivors of the war: Derek Duffet and Nancy Billings.

During the conflict, Derek was evacuated from London to Mountain Ash in South Wales. He vividly remembers the trains from the colliery passing behind the house at night, their wagons all clunking against each other as the locomotive came to a stop.

Whilst staying there, the elementary school down the road was destroyed by a bomb. Derek and the rest of the house's inhabitants had been hiding under the stairs when it hit. He was huddled at the back of the closet, being the smallest of the lot.



**Nancy Billings shares some memories with Museum Volunteer Tom Quinsey.**

Nancy was also an evacuee, having been moved from Coventry to Hereford after her sister and newborn niece were killed by a bomb. Whilst staying in Hereford, she worked at Rotherwas Ordnance Factory on the production line.

It was during one of her shifts that a bomb fell on the very shed she was in. Her friend Betty grabbed her hand, and they both ran out to safety just before the explosion. Nancy thoroughly enjoyed the WWII day at the museum, and was very glad to see the authentic war vehicles lined up in the forecourt. She even had the chance to handle an old helmet that had survived from Rotherwas.



**As part of the opening ceremony, Neil Atkins explains to visitors the enormous amount of work done by a small group of volunteers headed up by Carole Franklin.**

**Captain Mainwaring (below) cuts the ribbon to officially open the refurbished World War II Exhibition and “orders” some very willing visitors to step forward and see the improvements for themselves.**



# Other Snippets of Information

## Donations, Gifts & Grants

The following donations and monetary gifts were recently received:

- £305.00p donated with membership renewals in December;
- £362.07p from second hand books and jigsaw sales in 2024, and
- £1,471.88p in Gift Aid for 2024's donations.

## Collection Update

Over 100 donated items were added to the collection in 2024. A substantial number of documents, books and CDs/Images have been received from the Museum's previous Chairman including a postcard, date stamped 1905, with a view of Hereford from the Broomy Hill Water Tower; a Royal Engineers Supplementary Pocket Book no.6 - Water Supply dated 1946 and a book published in 1981 by G.M. Binnie entitled 'Early Victorian Water Engineers' - thank you Richard.

In addition, we are delighted:

- that a relatively new volunteer, Jon, has kindly donated an old City of Hereford sign stating: "Caution. The Water from this Well is not to be used for Drinking Purposes. By Order Sanitary Committee."
- with a donation of 10 Stirling Engine models (and associated paperwork) - all made by the same person - they include a Rider-Stirling Engine (No.25); a Robinson pattern Stirling Engine (No.34) and a Rotative Manson cycle Engine (No.67).

## Welcome to our new volunteers

It's a great pleasure to welcome the following new volunteers, who have joined the Museum since 1st July, last year:

Neil Turner;  
Tom Quinsey, and  
Simon Tyler.

The Museum continues to seek new volunteers, and if anyone would like to know more about current opportunities, please email us at:

[volunteerng@waterworksmuseum.org.uk](mailto:volunteerng@waterworksmuseum.org.uk)

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## Key dates for the Diary

Here's a re-cap of our planned Sunday Steam Days for 2025:

6th April  
20th April  
11th May  
25th May  
15th June  
29th June  
13th July  
27th July  
10th August  
24th August  
14th September  
28th September

We open at 11.00am through to 4.00pm, but to give visitors every chance to see our exhibits, last entry is 3.00pm.

## Contact us:




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