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# INDEPENDENCE

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# Your Association Needs You



In the past year we have lost five members of our Committee due to relocation – almost 50%!

Are you prepared to help?

We need a Secretary, a Membership Secretary,  
and an Editor for this magazine.

We also need someone to run our website

We have also lost two distributors for Independence and, as always, we have a constant need for Road Reps.

## CAN YOU HELP?

The Secretary takes the minutes of our Committee meetings, which are held every two months and Officers meetings, which are held as required in between Committee meetings, and send out the Agenda for such meetings.

The Membership Secretary keeps a list of members and prints out a distribution list for the Road Reps twice a year to enable them to distribute our magazine.

The Editor of this magazine collects articles and adverts for the twice a year magazine and sends them to be typeset.

Distributors take the magazine round to about a dozen Road Reps twice a year once it has been delivered from the printers.

Road Reps deliver the magazine to members in their road (or one close by) – some longer roads have more than one and each Road Rep delivers to between 12 and 20 members.

In the spring they also collect the members' subscriptions although we are hoping to change to standing orders for this.

If you would like to help or want to know more, please e-mail me at [StimpsonM@aol.com](mailto:StimpsonM@aol.com) or ring me any afternoon on 01923 770425



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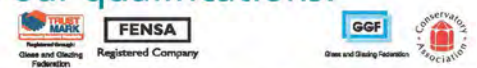
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Are you prepared to to be a road rep for one of these roads which involves delivering **Independence** and collecting subscriptions in the Spring of each year?

We desperately need to have someone to service these roads which contain between 6 and 24 members.

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Ashleigh Court     | London Road            |
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| Bury Lane          | Maxwell Close          |
| Bury Meadows       | Middleton Road         |
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| Chiltern Drive     | Shepherds Way (Part)   |
| Church Street      | Skidmore Way           |
| Clarkfield         | Springwell Avenue      |
| Church Lane        | Stockers Farm Road     |
| Colne Avenue       | St Peter's Close       |
| Coombe Hill Road   | Thompson Way           |
| Eastwick Crescent  | Trellusson Way         |
| Goral Mead         | Uxbridge Road          |
| Harriet Walker Way | Vine Tree Court        |
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## FROM THE TILLER

Your Committee has been very busy on your behalf since the last issue of Independence.

### GDPR

I expect you are all aware of the new regulations coming into force this month regarding data protection.

Your Treasurer and I have looked into this and it seems that we do not need to register as, although we have the names and addresses of our members and, in some cases, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, we do not share such any information with any third party so we understand there is no requirement to register.

For your further protection we have agreed to not keep this information on a computer but on a separate external device (we have ordered two, one for use and one for back up) which will only be connected to a computer whilst in use. This will mean that, should a computer become corrupted or go wrong, the information is protected and, of course, it will make it easier to transfer the information when officers of the Association change.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ring me any afternoon.

### Need For Help

I have highlighted the problems of a lack of people within our Association but repeat here that we are down in numbers across the board. Most of the vacant positions only require action twice a year.

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We still have only one third of members' e-mail addresses. We want to transfer the autumn edition of **Independence** to sending out by e-mail. We will still publish a paper version in the spring which will contain the AGM notice.

If you have not provided us with your e-mail address please can you send me an e-mail at StimpsonM@aol.com giving me your name and address and we can add you to our list. We have sent out some e-mails to members so if you have not received one then we either have your address recorded incorrectly (there are a few of those) or we have never had it!

### Standing Orders

We are going to trial standing orders for the collection of your annual subscriptions. Many Road Reps have to call three or four times to collect subscriptions. It may make it easier to recruit Road Reps if all they have to do is deliver Independence to you.

If you receive a form, please can you fill it in and return it to your Road Rep who lives either in your road or just round the corner.

### Local Matters

#### Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX)

Although the final date for raising the funding has yet to expire it is looking less and less likely that this project, first suggested in the 1980s, will now get the go-ahead. I have suggested an alternative route using the trackbed of the old Ricky Branch which joins the Croxley route in West Watford. It seems that the fact that this route would bypass Croxley means that it could not be considered although perhaps this could be solved by a shuttle service from Watford Met to either Rickmansworth or Chesham which could solve this.

As the major part of the cost of MLX would be the flyover at Two Bridges, the alternative route would save a considerable part of the cost and, as with the old Croxley branch, the trackbed is still in place.

One of the major benefits of MLX would have been an alternative route for travellers using the West Coast main line to reach London whilst the building of HS2 closes Euston but it could not now be built in time for this even if the funding gap is resolved.

## Chairman's Notes

### Car Parking

We have worked with our District Councillors to keep the Northway Car Park short-term – a battle won. Well done Paula Hiscocks. Sadly the short-term car parks have been changed from two hours free to one hour free and up to a further three hours paid for. OK if you know how long you are going to be AND have a credit or debit card on you!

Parking machines have been installed in the Aquadrome; however we understand that no charge will be made but there will be some sort of parking control – the idea being to stop the use of the car park by commuters.

### Batchworth Bridge

We have continued our battle to improve the dangerous zebra crossing over the dual carriageway on Batchworth Bridge. Yet another accident has resulted in further representations to the County Council through Frances Button, the relevant County Councillor.

There are two problems. At night, the bright amber lights round the beacons draw the eyes of the driver away from the crossing. More dangerous is the drivers speeding down the outside lane (both north and south) past traffic in the slow lane and hitting folk crossing the road.

We await the results of our latest attempt to make this crossing safer.

### Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

The annual Festival in the Aquadrome will take place at the end of Ricky Week. The Ricky Week Carnival is on Saturday the 12th of May and the Festival the following weekend, the 19th and 20th.

During the week, societies which are members of the Rickmansworth Society will be putting on events as part of the week. There are some changes this year with the Museum being the centre of the festivities.

Perhaps, jointly, the start of summer in Rickmansworth. This year the RWT will be raising funds to put toward the new education building being built by the lock on the old site of Jon's Stores, at present being used by the Little Union Canal.

Michael Stimpson

### RVS Hall

Late news indicates that the temporary accomodation may not now be built on the site of the Bury



## PETER'S PADDOCK



..... “But we return to our battle cry. The more members we have the more we can do and the greater authority we can do it with”..... Peter explains how the residents and the Association can be of mutual help to each other.

### Back in the '60s (continued)

In July 1962 the editorial of no. 31 of **Independence** was stated to be “a recruitment issue ... while we were telling other people all about ourselves, it might be a good idea if we had a good look at ourselves to and give ourselves a ‘State of the Union’ sort of message”. Some of the comments I reproduced in our last issue : here follow more that perhaps also still hold good (allow for the passage of time in the occasional references and linguistic usage) :

**“How does the Association work?** It meets once a year – at least those who can find the time to turn up meet once a year when the President takes the chair. The meeting elects a committee and officers to carry on the work for the coming year. This committee so organizes its own meetings so that the Council Minutes are available to it ... This is one way in which we can see what the Council is up to [these days planning applications et al. are accessible on line, of course] ... We also read the local papers ... Our means [not the only one these days with our website and other aids] of conveying information to our members is through **Independence** and it is here that that most vital body of men and women comes in, the Street Stewards [now called Road Representatives]. Their job is to distribute **Independence** [online publication as an alternative is now being explored, as read elsewhere] and to collect the annual subscriptions. They can also act as a channel for passing information back to the committee [most of the members of which are also road reps], though it would be unfair to expect them to answer all members’ questions ‘off the cuff’ since they don’t normally see committee minutes and get most of their information from the same source as you do – **Independence** [or via other media]. So **Independence** is a pretty important document as far as we are concerned and we are constantly trying to improve it [as alluded to above].

The Committee goes into action.

When the committee decides that some action should be taken, it usually instructs the Secretary to write the appropriate letter. This may be to the Clerk [now the CEO] of the Council, the Police, London Transport, the M.P. or almost anybody. Sometimes the unfortunate Secretary finds himself dragged from his fireside to go and see someone who has got a ‘case’. Often he forgets to charge up his telephone calls. Often our help is sought by neighbouring Residents’ Associations ... Sometimes the problems we deal with concern individuals only, more often a section of the membership. Occasionally a principle implicating if not actually involving everyone appears to be in danger of infringement ...

What can you, the member, do to help? There are a number of things and most of them easy. Firstly you can get more members. The subscription is so small [still true, whatever one or two may say!] that people don’t take a great deal of persuading to cough up once they are persuaded that it is a worthwhile object. Secondly you can let us know what your problems are – problems that is which affect you as a citizen of Rickmansworth. We do not claim to be marriage guidance experts or to be able to help you with the Income Tax, but we can represent you to the Council or any Public Authority and we can be your spokesman if we know what you want us to say on how our town should be developed. Whether we should preserve the Green Belt at all costs, or whether the Council and County Authorities should be encouraged to attract Industry [or, these days, an adequate range of proper retail outlets] to the district. What we want done with the Aquadrome [and] whether the public telephone system is adequate .... Some people think that the individual should be self-sufficient. So do we up to a point, but there are some things when it is good to have the support of one’s neighbours. Furthermore we think that the strong should help those who are not so easily able to fight their own battles. The

[subscription] entitles you, we think, not so much to get as to give. Your expressed support of us may be helping someone in a cause which may not seem very significant to you but may seem vital to him.

Above all, you can turn up at the Annual General Meeting. Here you will be able to shape policy, you will be able to help the Committee in deciding just what sort of thing we should be doing. Should we run more social activities .... or should we confine ourselves to seeing that we get our money’s worth from the rates? Are you in fact getting your views represented? We hope so but too often we have to assume that silence means consent. Then as the Association grows we shall need more Street Stewards [see above]. This is not a very burdensome job. It only means taking **Independence** round to a dozen or so houses three (sic) times a year and collecting subscriptions once a year. There really is very little else – perhaps once a year there may be some publicity to pass round and once a year there is a meeting of Street Stewards to attend [recently considered for revival]. It honestly isn’t hard work.

But we return to our battle cry. The more members we have the more we can do and the greater authority we can do it with. Let’s make a really super effort this [or any!] year and see if we can’t double the number. It only means each member getting one other person to join and there are plenty of plums for the picking!

We bet you can’t do it. Come on, just one member each!”

What do you, the reader 56 years later, think? Tell us at the A.G.M. or at any time!

### Grocer’s apostrophe

Just before Christmas I received, in my capacity as Treasurer of the Rickmansworth Society, a copy of a letter from Three Rivers D.C. to all such saying that “due to the transactional cost of receiving a cheque payment, unfortunately we will no longer be accepting cheque’s (sic!) as a method of payment with effect from 31st

January, 2018". While understanding the arguments for this decision, it is a pity that those responsible for this communication could not between them ensure that the spelling of "cheque" was correct. It makes me wonder.

#### Batchworth Bridge

Years ago I remember some local councillors congratulating themselves on having achieved a better lighting at the zebra crossing on the bridge of the dual carriageway part of Church Street (the A404) over the canal. My own experience as a driver at night in recent months, however is one that must be common to many. The illumination provided by the new street lamps (cold isolated pinpoints of light) is quite inadequate here as elsewhere, compared with that of their predecessors, to spot pedestrians crossing in the dark. Several times, even when driving with extra care, I have

had to brake hard at the last moment. (It does not help that some in dark clothes at night appear to be candidates for an epitaph reading "I had the right of way. R.I.P.", but one has to allow for this.) Cheapness would appear to come before safety as a bureaucratic priority. Should, Heaven forbid, somebody be knocked down and badly hurt, if not killed, what excuse will the County Council come up with?

#### Indicate – Please!

I fear that my previous gripe about drivers round here who don't bother to indicate where they are going still holds good. Drivers are not psychic and cannot be expected to sense another's intentions in advance without a sign, especially if the one at fault is in the wrong lane. Local roundabouts are prone to this, that by the station still the worst spot for this failing, the main sinners being those turning up the Chorleywood Road from Park Road.

#### Centenary Ahoy

This year the Association marks its 89th anniversary, and having now served on its committee for 37 of those years I hope that I shall be spared to help celebrate its centenary in 1929. In order to achieve this, however, we need a firm structure of committee members and street representatives (as well as members, of course!). This will not happen by prayer alone, and I hope that enough readers will come forward to respond to the calls elsewhere in these pages to do something for their Association on one count or another or both. We cannot leave it to new recruits to ensure success.

Peter Waters

## David Gauke Comments



It has been a little while since I last wrote for **Independence**, so I am delighted to have a chance to contribute in this edition.

At a national and personal level, the world of politics continues to be fast-moving. In the last twelve months, we have had a General Election and two Cabinet reshuffles. I was delighted to have been re-elected in June 2017 as MP for South West Hertfordshire with a record high share of the vote (although I would have much preferred a Parliamentary majority for my party). I was also fortunate to have been promoted in both reshuffles – first, in June, to Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and then, in January, to Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice. It is an honour to serve in those positions.

But I wanted to focus this article on a couple of local issues.

First, the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX). Sadly, the prospects for this project are looking very bleak.

Transport for London and the Mayor of London have walked away from implementing what had previously been agreed. TfL had promised to underwrite

any cost overruns for the project but then came back to the Government to say that their estimate for the cost of the project had increased by £73m.

Richard Harrington, the Watford MP, and I then worked with Government ministers to find a way of plugging the shortfall – which we did. The MLX would unlock so much extra housing that additional support from Government could be provided.

We also persuaded the Department for Transport to allow TfL to benefit from some of the 'air rights' from development on the route.

Even this, however, was not enough for the Mayor of London who has demanded that the Government picks up the price of any cost overruns incurred by the organisation he controls – TfL – in constructing the MLX. It is an impossible demand and it looks like we are getting nowhere. It also highlights the problem of the Metropolitan Line being run by someone who is politically accountable to Londoners but not Hertfordshire residents.

Second, housing and planning. Individual planning matters are for Three Rivers District Council, although

constituency correspondence means that I soon become aware of particular local concerns. There have been a few occasions of late where local residents have expressed considerable concern about particular proposals – often rightly.

There is a challenge here. We do need more homes in places where people want to live. It has become harder and harder for younger people to get on the housing ladder and we do have to respond to that.

If we are to build more homes (and I think we do), we need the infrastructure to support the larger population. That is why I am pleased we are making progress on new secondary schools but disappointed that we are not progressing the MLX.

Rickmansworth, as with many places, is changing. We need to do everything we can to preserve the best of the old whilst adapting to the new.

David Gauke



## LORD EBURY'S LINE

## Local History

Those who have discovered Rickmansworth in the last 40 years may not be aware that we used to have two stations, the present one served by the Metropolitan Railway and the Grand Central (now Chiltern) is the one we are all used to but the line to Watford used to end on the present site of Skidmore Way opposite St Mary's Church. This was the Watford and Rickmansworth railway

The line was proposed by Lord Ebury and it was intended to link the LNWR in Watford with the GWR at Denham and terminate in Uxbridge. Whilst the line to Uxbridge was authorised, the construction was dependent on a promised loan from the GWR of £20,000 to assist with the construction but this was withdrawn so the line was built to Rickmansworth and never got any further.

The line was built from Watford High Street and reached Rickmansworth which is as far as it got.

Powers for the building of the line



*Map of the railways of Rickmansworth & Croxley, (taken from an information plaque outside Rickmansworth Station).*

from Watford to Rickmansworth were granted in July 1860 and just over two years later, in October 1862, the line was opened. Later (in 1907) an act was authorised to run trains along part of this line diverging to Croxley Green. This branch opened in 1912.

The new line was electrified in 1922 and the same was provided to Rickmansworth in 1927. Passenger

services to Rickmansworth ended in 1952 but a peak hour service continued to Croxley with a third "prong" of the line, being a line off the Rickmansworth branch across Common Moor to Croxley Mill. Both these services were still in operation at the time of the Beeching Report in 1963.

Although initially a separate Company, the W&RR never ran trains. These were provided by the LNWR who paid the W&RR 50% of the income.

The railway had a number of branches built. Already mentioned are the line to Croxley crossing the Grand Junction at Two Bridges and the line to Croxley Mill to serve Dickinson's paper mill which was closed in 1983. There was also a branch to Benskins Brewery (closed 1956) and a branch at Brightwell's Farm to the Colne Valley Water Company where goods were transferred to a 2' gauge line which was built in 1932.

A steady traffic developed in the transportation of watercress to Watford Market.



*Goods train in Rickmansworth Station (taken from plaque outside Rickmansworth Station)*



The line, sadly, was never a commercial success and was absorbed into the LNWR in 1881.

The line from Croxley Green saw trains run into London via the south curve. The station was burned down in 1913 and Suffragettes were thought to have been responsible.

Electrification saw tube trains from the London Electric Railway run to both Croxley and Rickmansworth from 1917 but problems were caused by the power only being supplied from the Watford end of the line which caused voltage drop. The two lines were electrified by the LNWR (Croxley 1922 and Rickmansworth 1929) as part of the LNWRs "New Line Project".

Despite the line to Rickmansworth being electrified it could not compete with the Metropolitan and local bus services and, as a result, passenger services were withdrawn in 1952. Goods services continued until 1967. The line across Common Moor to the paper mill was closed in 1984.

The Croxley branch was due to be closed as part of the Beeching Report but consent was refused and the line hung on until final closure of services in 1996 although formal closure did not occur until 2003.

The station at Rickmansworth, known as Rickmansworth Church Street, was provided with a passenger platform and provided with (as was described at the time) a flimsy station building. This was replaced in 1922 with a brick built structure. Passenger services were provided by a push pull set of two coaches and an 0-6-2 tank locomotive.

There was a goods yard on the north side of the station with two roads one serving a small goods shed and the other an unloading dock and a third line behind the passenger platform. By 1894 four more sidings had been provided and a 1 ton crane



*Line leaving Rickmansworth Station*

had been installed. In 1912 the transhipment dock with the Town Wharf of the Chess arm of the canal had been provided with two further sidings.

Passenger services over the years went in the main to Watford Junction: however a few trains did, for a few years, go straight to London. Unlike trains from Croxley, which took the south loop direct into London, trains from Rickmansworth went to Watford Junction and then into Euston. In the 1930s the passenger service was provided by LU tube stock from the Bakerloo line but these were found to be slow in service and were replaced by standard underground stock (this is assumed to refer to sub-surface stock but is not clear!). The stock was eventually replaced by main line stock in 1939.

These trains were formed of Oerlikon saloon cars which were used on the line until passenger services were withdrawn. These three-car units were built for the LNWR London lines (Willesden – Earls Court, Broad Street

– Richmond and Euston – Watford) from 1914 and were added to under the LMS in 1926 and 1932. Built to operate on the same tracks as LU stock they were 4-rail 650 volt DC units. They were withdrawn in 1960 although a few sets were cascaded to the north after conversion to 25kv.

With the exception of watercress there is no evidence of any major goods traffic on the line other than general goods and building materials. Despite the large number of gravel pits around and close to the station there is no evidence of gravel being carried by rail.

It seems that, after closure, the station building was occupied by a printing firm in 1967 until 1974 when the site was cleared for the building of Skidmore Way.

**Michael Stimpson**

## The First World War and Rickmansworth's Waterways

## Local History

Everyone knows that the waterways came to a crashing halt in the winter of 1962/3, having been in some decline since the second World War under pressure from the railways.

Actually, the waterways' decline was a much more complicated picture, and it started to cause concern at the start of the twentieth century – and it accelerated during the First World War, affecting Rickmansworth as much as anywhere. The pre-eminent social historian of the waterways, Dr Wendy Freer, has described perfectly in her 1995 book "The Women and Children of the Cut" what happened to our own waterways across the country, and in the second part of this article we will see in more detail what happened in Rickmansworth.

By the outbreak of war in 1914 the great days of the canals as the facilitators and arteries of industrial growth and social change were already over. The speed, volume, coherence and certainty of rail transport were irresistible by a network which is, even now, often seen as a system, but actually never was: the canal owners and the carrying companies, and importantly the people who made it all work, had been up against it for some years. A Royal Commission had been considering the future of Britain's inland waterways from 1906 to 1910, but its recommendations had been set aside in 1910 in favour of more pressing political problems. So even before 1914 the whole structure and all its people were already in trouble. As war approached trade was already declining, and there was a steady trickle of people leaving the canals for better paid, less arduous work ashore.

Let's think about the sort of people we're talking about. There are two

groups: those who worked on the canal itself, static and with familiar jobs; and those who worked the boats, mainly but not only itinerant and part of a closed and very little known community of its own. The first group worked for the canal companies – such as the Grand Junction serving London from the north and passing through Watford and Rickmansworth – while the second worked for the carriers large and small – Fellows Morton and Clayton, the Samuel Barlow Coal Company, LB Faulkner, Harry King, Thomas Clayton – with even the owner-boatmen so prominent in this area usually sub-contracting from those bigger outfits.

The long-distance boatman, who will have been very familiar in and with Rickmansworth, typically had, and had had for 80 years, his home and his family in his boats, still almost entirely horse boats, and was truly 'itinerant'. He carried at no notice a huge range of raw materials from mines and ports to factories and farms, and manufactured goods from mills and factories to other plants, to town and city markets and to ports, and a great deal of this trade headed for and from London on the Grand Junction Canal. Because he was competing with the railways he did this under huge time pressure and for very small wages, and used skills applicable almost nowhere else but arcane enough to resist incomers very effectively even if the social structure had made them welcome – which it didn't. The long-distance boating 'community' numbered about 10,000 people across the country, largely remote from the general population and in a world which extended very little past the hedge or wall on either

side of the canal and the towpath on which they walked, daily and often for decades and unseen by anyone outside. The small settlement serving them at Batchworth will have been unremarked by most Rickmansworth people. And it was that community that was draining steadily away as war broke out.

One of the main priorities of the government at the outbreak was to gain control of the most important sectors of industry in order to maximise efficient use of labour and material resources to support the war effort, and that included immediate control of the railways. Canals were considered no longer of sufficient importance, and at first they were left alone. By January 1915 there were already reports of a shortage of boatmen, and canal company staff were also being called up. A recruitment campaign, quite unprecedented, was launched by the large Midlands carrier Thomas Clayton in November 1915.

The crewing of some canal craft was a 'reserved' occupation from August 1915, but only as it affected the transport of munitions and fuel to power stations and gas works: so not all boatmen were 'starred'. Then the Military Service Act of early 1916 abolished 'reserved occupations' and required those to be exempted from conscription to apply for a certificate. But while the presumption was that boatmen would be exempted they still had to apply, even if already in a reserved status: that was a considerable problem for a largely illiterate and in any case itinerant workforce, often self-employed and so without an 'employer' to do the paperwork for them. Even when a case got to a tribunal, there was no understanding



(or at least no sympathy) of how the boatman's profession worked, so when for example the son of an elderly boatman, the 'mate' of his boat or the captain of his second boat, was applying for exemption it was often suggested that a discharged soldier be recruited instead. The real difficulty and extraordinary levels of skill needed to operate a horse boat on (for example) the Rivers Thames, Trent or Severn almost always escaped the Tribunal, and needed very careful explanation – often unsuccessfully. Many men were therefore conscripted whose occupation should have exempted them, and canal traffic declined yet further.

This, of course, didn't apply only to the boatmen. The work force operating and maintaining the canal also suffered, with toll offices closed, maintenance and repairs not done, boats neglected and not built, and the processing of orders delayed. Between 1914 and 1917 the canal companies alone lost about 3,000 men to the armed services, and the carriers a large but unquantifiable number of boatmen: it's been estimated that the total available manpower declined by about 50%. So there was at the same time disruption of the traffic, obstruction of the waterways themselves, declining numbers of people able to keep the traffic moving, and enhanced competition from the financially-supported railways.

So the wartime position of people working on the waterways nationally was not good: in the next issue of Independence we will see what the effect of this was on the canal round here, and the local companies which used them.

We saw above 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 because 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 January 1917 (presumably but not certainly 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 (TWBs), 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 boatmen. 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.

The Canal Control Committee was also of some help in relieving other problems facing boat families, for example over getting food supplies: they got Travellers' Tickets issued to boatman so that they could get supplies, including feed for their horses, at various points on the canal routes – it sounds obvious, but didn't

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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 to the paper mills of John Dickinson making paper, a component of many munitions; but not all received such a payment. Dickinson's, 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. Coal and raw materials deliveries in and the transport away of the product 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, for example at collieries. 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 Dickinson's in 1888, and was no longer associated with the canal, although Croxley Mill certainly was. The main waterways business was Walker's, 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 Walker's: Tony Walker notes the letter to Walker's customers in March 1915 reporting their take over of the Town Wharf on the Chess arm 'to give them increased accommodation for larger stocks' in consequence of increased business; and it was there that they had their main builders yard. 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 apace throughout 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 the canals and their operations. 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 largely by the proximity of London, the seeds were already being sown for the eventual eclipse of canal carrying here, as elsewhere in Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Christopher M Jones, 'Boating through World War One', in *Narrow Boat Magazine* (Summer 2014) pp. 22-29.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Hadfield, *British Canals* (Newton Abbot, 1974), p.295.

**Fabian Hiscock**

## ARTICLES

**Are you able to write an article for the next Independence? It can be on any subject of local interest either current or historical.**

**If so, please e-mail it to me at [StimpsonM@aol.com](mailto:StimpsonM@aol.com) by the end of September 2018**

## Community/Diary Dates

### *Dates for Your Diary*

#### SPECIFIC DATES

##### **64th Ricky Week**

Saturday 12th – Sunday 20th May  
(including the **25th Rickmansworth (Canal) Festival** 19th – 20th May)

##### **Friends of Watersmeet Film Society**

(Thursdays at 2 and 7.45 pm)

##### **Three Billboards Outside Ebbing Missouri** 21st June (cert

15, 115 min)

##### **5th Rickmansworth Folk Festival**

Saturday, 14th July (no charge ; evening concert moved to October)

*Dancing and singing in the High Street in the morning. Other locations, The Feathers, The Lock and the Conservative Club.*

##### **88th Rickmansworth & District Residents' Association AGM**

(in St Augustine's Hall at Our Lady's Catholic Church, Park Road)

Monday 16th July at 8 pm

##### **Ricky Society Market**

(in Watersmeet, 10 am – 1 pm)

Saturday 13th October

##### **Julie Felix and Polly Morris in Concert**

Saturday 13th October

St Marys Church, 7pm

Tickets from 01923 770425

A Rickmansworth Town Team event

##### **Walter Harvey Concert**

In the Wing at the Feathers. 8pm

A story in song about Walter Harvey who went to the trenches and did not return.

A Rickmansworth Town Team event

Friday 9th November.

##### **Rickmansworth Society Quiz-Supper**

(in St Mary's Church Centre, 7.30 pm)

Saturday, 24th November

##### **Rickmansworth Winter Fair**

The Annual gathering in the High Street from 5 – 9

A Rickmansworth Town Team event

Friday, 23rd November

#### ONGOING EVENTS

##### **Friends of Watersmeet**

**Coffee Mornings** (in the Colne Suite, Watersmeet on Fridays, 10.30 am – 12 noon)

13th July ; 14th September

## Rickmansworth Library – 50th Year Anniversary – 1968 – 2018



**2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of Rickmansworth Library on its present site.** The Library was officially opened on Monday 27th May, 1968 at 7.30pm by C.G. Ransome Williams, Esq on what was probably his last civic duty before his retirement (Clerk of the Rickmansworth Urban District Council 1938 – 1968). The opening was attended by more than 200 people. The new library building was designed by Messrs. Clifford Culpin & Partners in co-operation with the County Architect, Mr G. C. Fardell, M.B.E., A.R.I.B.A. It replaced the branch which had been housed in a hut immediately behind the new building and had done service as a library since 1943. According to an article printed in the 'Watford Observer' (W.O. 17.05.68) at the time of opening this 'hut' had earned the reputation of being the County's worst library building! The article goes on to say - Mrs J. Woodward who has been branch librarian for all those years, said 'the new building has been designed as the first part of a future complex of civic buildings, and planned as a single-storey unit to allow a rising vista from the High Street to the proposed civic offices which will be at the rear of the library'. From the 'hut' being described as the worst building in the County, the new library was considered to be the best designed in Hertfordshire.

Construction consisted of sound-proof walls, sound-absorbing ceilings, double glazing on all the windows plus underfloor heating.

The estimated cost of the new Library, including site works & furniture was reported as £41,000. How costs have changed!

Taking charge of the new Library from Mrs Woodward was her former assistant Mr Rodney Stubington. Fast forward to 2018 and that proposed civic area of 1968 of which the library was the first part is now the reality. 'Watersmeet' Theatre/versatile venue, Three Rivers District Council Offices and the former Council Office building , the historic ' Basing House' housing 'Three Rivers Museum' are all here and serving the communities of Rickmansworth and its neighbours.

Alison Smith



# Rickmansworth Folk Festival

Saturday 14th July 2018



The Rickmansworth Folk Festival is run by the Rickmansworth Town Team CIC and organised by

**Phoenix Morris and Ricky Folk**

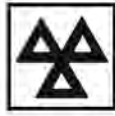
Free events throughout the day

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## Advice column from your local CAB



**I ordered some items online, and they have not been delivered. Is there anything I can do to get hold of them or get my money back?**

A) It is the legal responsibility of the company you bought the presents from to make sure the items are delivered.

Contact the seller explaining that you've not received the items. If you paid for named day delivery and it hasn't arrived on time, ask for the delivery costs to be refunded. You should receive the difference between what you paid and the standard delivery cost.

Set a deadline for when you need the items by (such as two weeks). The seller should contact the delivery company to make sure your item arrives.

If your parcel still doesn't arrive on the agreed date, you are entitled to a refund or a replacement. Contact the company in writing setting out what you want. Lodge a written complaint if they refuse. If that still doesn't work, check if the company is part of a trade association and see if they can help, or look for an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) scheme. This is an independent third party who can help you reach a resolution.

**For help understanding your rights, approaching the discussion with your boss or taking things further, contact your nearest Citizens Advice.**

**Rickmansworth CAB,  
Northway House (behind the library),  
High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1EH.  
New Telephone number -  
0344 245 1296**

**Monday  
Tuesday } 10.00am - 3.30pm  
Thursday**

**Wednesday 10.00am - 12.30pm  
Friday 10.00am - 12.30pm**

*Rickmansworth CAB is recruiting for volunteer advisers - full training given, free refreshments and lovely company! To find out more, either drop in during operating hours or email [training@castr.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:training@castr.cabnet.org.uk).*

**The Citizens Advice Service in Three Rivers receives funding support from Three Rivers District Council**





### Top ten Operation Chariot tips to help you protect your vehicle and the property within it:

Make sure you lock the doors and shut the windows and sunroof whenever you leave your vehicle unattended.

Always take the keys out of the ignition even if you're just stopping to buy a newspaper, paying for fuel, or popping back into your home to get something.

Be aware of your keys. Don't leave them lying around, visible or in pockets in changing rooms where they could be taken. Don't leave them visible on a window sill in your home or near to the front door, where they could be

"hooked" through the letterbox.

Never leave any valuables in your vehicle - not even in the glove-box or boot - and keep ALL other possessions out of sight. Even if you know that there is nothing valuable in your coat pocket or bag left on the back seat, a thief may try their luck.

Remove your SatNAV and its holder, and wipe away any suction marks as these could suggest to a potential thief that a SatNAV is stored in your vehicle.

Never leave vehicle documents in your car - don't make it easy for a thief to sell your car or provide a cover story if stopped by the police.

Use an approved steering lock or gear clamp, and remember to set your

immobiliser and alarm if you have them. Consider buying locking screws kits to secure number plates which are targeted by criminals.

Register your stereo, laptop, SatNAV and any other property on the free online property database [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).

**Daisy Jenkins**  
**Police Community Support Officer**  
**Neighbourhood Watch**  
**Email: [daisy.jenkins@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:daisy.jenkins@herts.pnn.police.uk)**  
**Tel: 01707 354192**

## Batchworth Community Council

### Patrick Heanen, Chairman of Batchworth Community Council, looks at the first year of the existence of the Council and looks at the future.

The Community Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people of the Parish. It is the level of government closest to the community, with the district authority above it in the hierarchy.

As it is the authority closest to the people, community councils are invariably the first place people will go with concerns or ideas. For this reason they are a vital part of any community.

It's true to say that on their own, community councils have limited powers to make decisions but they do have the ability to negotiate with, and the power to influence, those other organisations that do make the final decisions (such as the district, county council and police etc).

In this respect community councils are extremely powerful. The organisations that make the final decisions know that a community council gives the best reflection of how a community feels about something, and its views will be taken seriously.

Batchworth Community Council

has 8 Councillors who stand for election every four years although our current council was elected for just two years to synchronise us with future elections in the district. The duties and functions of a community council are many and varied.

The Council meets monthly and considers planning applications and any other matters referred to it by local residents. All meetings are open to the public and there is an opportunity at each meeting where members of the public can raise concerns and ask questions.

There is also an annual meeting which all parishioners are invited to attend. All meetings are advertised on the council notice boards and on the website. Residents can bring to the attention of the community council anything that concerns them, either directly or through the clerk. If matters raised are not the responsibility of the council, the clerk can bring them to the attention of the proper authority.

Batchworth Community Council has had a busy first year.

Starting from scratch, it was necessary for us to agree and set up policies, open an office and hire staff. We provided the Christmas lights for Rickmansworth High Street, flags for St

George's day and the Royal wedding.

Behind the scenes we are working to see where we can add value to services already provided by the county and district councils for example perhaps extending the street lighting to sync with the underground so residents are not walking to or from the station in the dark.

We have requested that our parish becomes a designated area which is the first step in creating a neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011.

We will be looking for residents to get involved in the process as it is essential that the plan is driven by local people. This will require a fair amount of work and substantial public consultation. For more information or to contact us please go to <https://www.batchworth-ecc.gov.uk/>

**Patrick Heanen**

## Aspects of Local Government: What do each of our Hertfordshire Councils do?

I am often asked why in Rickmansworth we have two, and in the town itself three, Councils for the same geographic area, and what is the difference between them?

Hertfordshire County Council covers 643 square miles and has a population of over 1.1 million. Three Rivers District, with 88,000 residents and covering 34 square miles, is one of the ten Districts or Boroughs in Hertfordshire. The others are Watford, St Albans, Hertsmere, Dacorum (which includes Hemel Hempstead), Stevenage, Welwyn Hatfield, North Herts, East Herts, Broxbourne

The County Council looks after 82 children's centres, 21 adult social care day services, 46 libraries (it has kept all its libraries open), 29 fire stations, 3,000 miles of roads, 3,250 miles of footpaths/pavements, and 113,000 street lights. It also provides services to 535 schools.

In addition to £870 million which was passed directly to Hertfordshire schools, the County Council last year spent £840 million annually directly on services, of which over £400 million was on health and community services for older people, people with physical and learning disabilities, adults with mental health problems and their family carers. It spent another £100 million on children's social care, helping safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children and young people. These huge sums of money on vital, caring services provide a lifeline to many people.

To complete the picture, Hertfordshire also spent £94 million on Early Years & Education, £70 million on Highways & Transport, £50 million on Public Health, £46 million disposing of Household Waste, £32 million on Fire & Rescue, £11 million on Libraries, and smaller sums

on Registration, Coroners, Trading Standards and Emergency Planning.

Three Rivers District Council is much more 'local' and District Councils have the same status as Borough Councils in other areas. In addition to collecting all the council tax for the county council, police authority, parish councils and itself, and passing on the relevant sums to each authority, the District Council runs our leisure services, collects our doorstep refuse, is responsible for environmental health including pollution, housing, planning applications and building control, street sweeping, litter picking and weedkilling. Last year its net budget (net of grants) was of the order of £10 million.

The new Batchworth Community Council (which, following the consultation in 2015/6 was set up in May 2017 and covers Rickmansworth Town, Moor Park & Eastbury, (but not Penn, Money Hill, Maple Cross etc) has a total annual budget of just over £100,000. It expects to have more in future, as a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') levied on new developments will pass to them. In Hertfordshire there are more than 100 Parish Councils plus ten Town Councils and one Community Council (all with the same status as a Parish). In addition, much of Hertfordshire is 'unparished' in which case the functions of a Parish Council are carried out by the local District or Borough Council.

Batchworth Community Council, in common with Parishes, has a variety of powers and duties. Its main focus is on improving its community, providing services that are often overlooked by the higher authorities. These services can range in scope from providing flowers and Christmas lights, to the building of community centres.



Parish councils can also create a Neighbourhood plan which can assist communities in shaping how their area develops by establishing general planning policies for the development and protection of the area.

So why do some areas for example the London Boroughs, only have one council instead of our two or three? Answer: they are known as Unitary Authorities and are responsible for the provision of all local government services within their area. In terms of how much they spend and in terms of geographic size, they are much smaller than Hertfordshire but larger than each of the ten Districts/Boroughs in our county. Hillingdon for example has 300,000 residents in an area of 42 square miles, and an annual budget of approximately £220 million. Unitary authorities generally cover or include city areas.

I hope the above helps clarify what can be a confusing aspect of local government.

**Frances Button**  
**Frances.button@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

The logo consists of the letters 'AGM' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a 3D appearance as if they are floating above a light blue rectangular background.

## 88th Annual General Meeting 16th July 2018

The 88th Annual General Meeting of the Rickmansworth & District Residents' Association is to be held on Monday 16th July at 8 p.m. in St Augustine's Hall, Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church, Park Road, Rickmansworth. Plenty of parking.

### AGENDA:

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To consider and if thought fit, approve the minutes of the 87th AGM held on 6th June 2017.
3. To consider, and if thought fit, adopt the Honorary Treasurer's Statement of Accounts
4. To appoint an Honorary Examiner.
5. To receive and, if thought fit, to adopt the Chairman's Annual report.
6. To elect the President of the Association.
7. To elect the Vice-Presidents of the Association – maximum three.
8. To elect the officers of the Association (Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer).
9. To elect the Association Committee for 2018/2019.

The Association for 2017/2018 comprised, in alphabetical order, Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz, Rachel Clarke (retired), Mike Ede (retired), Ruth Ede (retired), Nina Hosking, Laurie Irvine, Richard Mitchell (retired), June Mitchell (retired), Dianne Passmore (Retired), Michael Stimpson, Bob Templeman and Carolyn Venn

Peter Waters, who is President of the Association, also serves in a non-executive role ie. he has no vote.

There are eight Committee vacancies to be filled.

10. Any other business for which advance notice has been given.

At the end of the evening tea/coffee and biscuits will be available.





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# Town Centre Pedestrian and Cycle Improvements, Rickmansworth.

The Integrated Transport Projects team of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has been developing proposals to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and accessibility in the town centre of Rickmansworth. Phase 1 of these works is to provide a safe crossing through the Ebury Roundabout.

The proposals can be viewed in greater detail on drawing HC G-11700.66\_01 R1 enclosed with this letter. The key components are:

- New shared use pathway construction on the south-western side of the Ebury Roundabout.
- Two parallel cycle crossings adjacent to pedestrian crossings on the southern and south-western side of the Ebury Roundabout respectively.
- Refresh line markings.

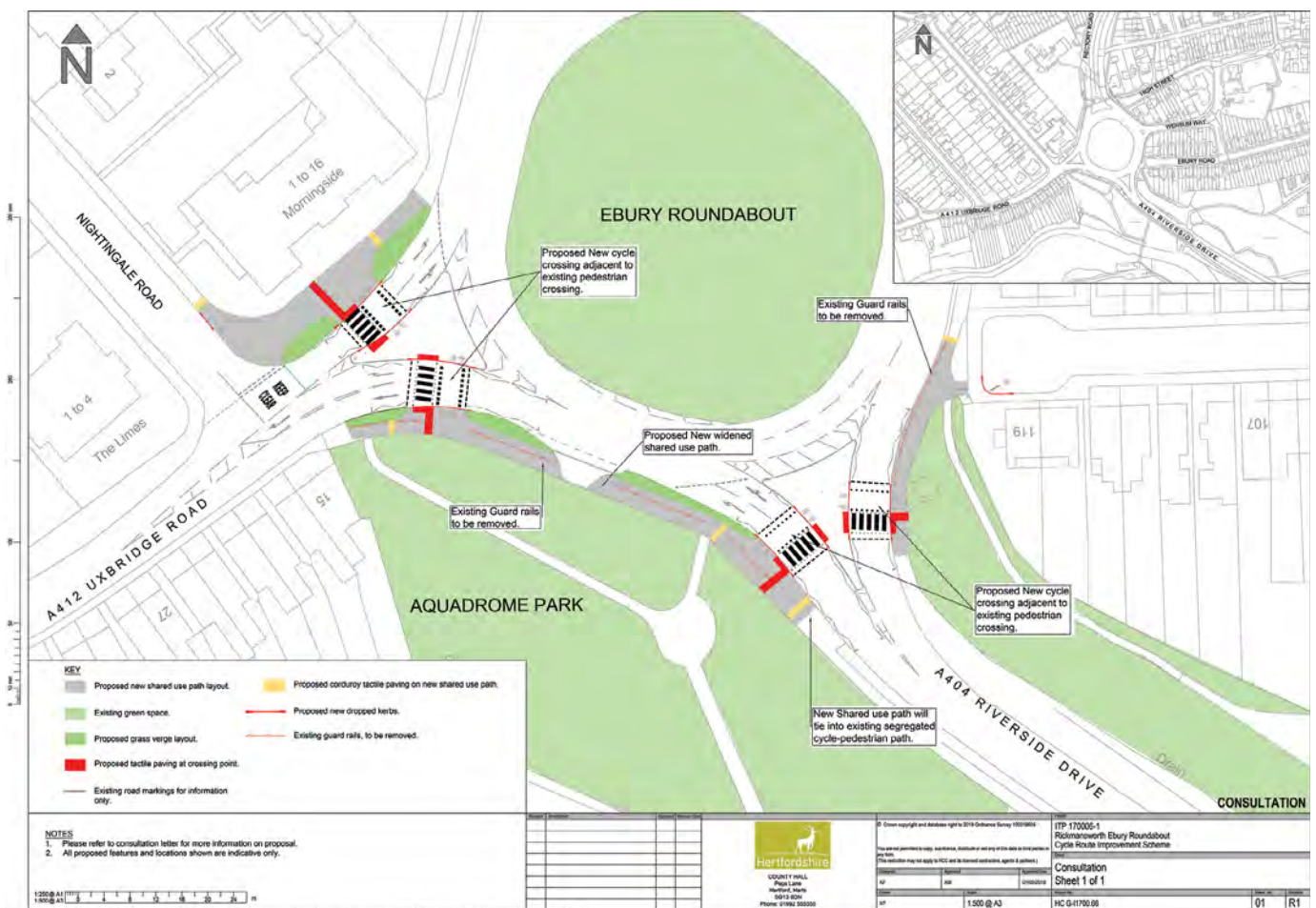
We now invite you to provide feedback you may have, specific to the outlined proposals. This can be done via an online survey tool using the following link and ask that it is submitted by 11 June 2018:

<https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/RickmansworthEburyRoundabout/>

Alternatively, if you would like a paper copy of the online survey, please make a request using the details provided above.

All comments received in relation to this scheme only, will be considered as part of the decision making process and our recommendations to the scheme sponsor within HCC. Please note that HCC may not be able to respond to all comments or questions individually. The information we receive will be treated confidentially and will only be used for the purpose of scheme reporting.

If you have any concerns regarding highway issues or wish to report a highway fault you can do so online via [www.hertsdirect.gov.uk/highwayfaults](http://www.hertsdirect.gov.uk/highwayfaults) or telephone 0300 123 4047.





## RICKMANSWORTH & DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

### COMMITTEE

<b>President</b>	Peter Waters	
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Tony Berry and Peter Crispin	
<b>Chairman</b>	Michael Stimpson	
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Position Vacant</b>	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz	
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Position Vacant</b>	
<b>Planning Officer</b>	Bob Templeman	
<b>Advertisement Manager</b>	<b>Position Vacant</b>	
<b>Editor</b>	<b>Position Vacant</b>	
	Carolyn Venn	Laurie Irvine
	Nina Hosking	

## Phoenix Morris

Phoenix Morris is based in Rickmansworth. We started off as a male Side in 1952. The Side moved to Rickmansworth in 1983 but we have now been dancing as a mixed Side for over 30 Years.

Mixed Morris was very much frowned upon back then and it would have been so easy to admit defeat, as we were not accepted by many single sex-Sides or Festivals. We persevered and danced on until eventually mixed Morris sides increased in number and now there are more mixed Sides than single-sex Sides within the World of Morris.

2017 was a very interesting year for Phoenix and we thought we would share a few of our highlights. We have danced at quite a few festivals, had some fun invites by other Sides, performed a couple of Ceilidh spots and did some filming for the Britain's Got Talent 2018 show ( not auditioning, we can assure you!) Whether our filming will be shown we don't know, but it was an interesting day and our dancing was very well received.



*Dancing "The Bell" at Adderbury*



*Phoenix dancing at the Oxford Folk Festival*

The most exciting moment for us last year was when we were on the Rose and Castle & Queens Oak wonderful weekend of dance, being able to dance our Adderbury Dance The Bell outside the Bell Public House at Adderbury in Oxfordshire.

So far in 2018 we have performed at two Festivals (Oxford and Rochester) and at Croxley Wassail, an Ale with Sandon Morris and a Ceilidh run by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust, as well as at a wedding of one of our Side members. We are looking forward to dancing at the Rickmansworth Carnival run by the Rickmansworth Society and the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust Festival in May as well as a number of events during May, June and July, including the Rickmansworth Folk Festival on the 14th of July with five other local Sides – a day of Folk Singing and Dance - an event not to be missed.

Phoenix Morris are a Mixed Fun and we will always welcome new Dancers or Musicians of all ages. So if you live in the area we would be pleased to see you -please come along and have a go or ring 01923 770425 any afternoon for further details.

Check out our web site ([phoenixmorrisdancers.wordpress.com](http://phoenixmorrisdancers.wordpress.com)) to see what fun we have.

**Sue Stimpson**



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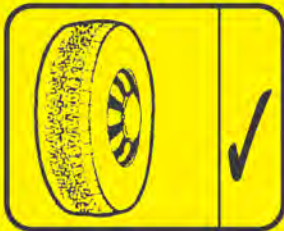
HERTFORDSHIRE'S WINDOW COMPANY



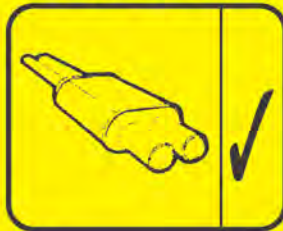
# FAIRWAY

THE ONLY WAY TO GO FOR:

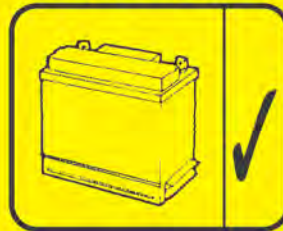
**TYRES**



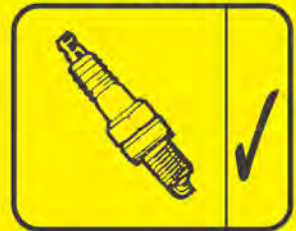
**EXHAUSTS**



**BATTERIES**



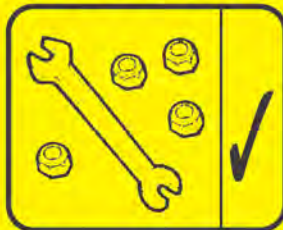
**TUNING**



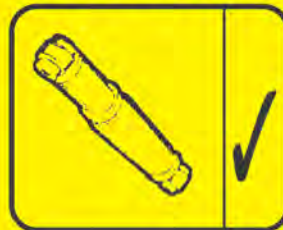
**M.O.T.s**



**REPAIRS**



**SHOCKS**



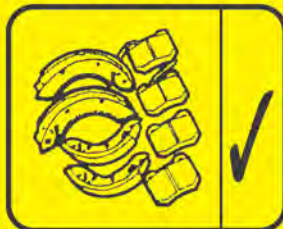
**ALLOYS**



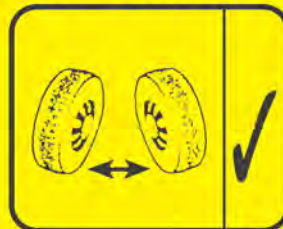
**CLUTCHES**



**BRAKES**



**ALIGNMENT**



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