

THE WORKS



Newsletter of the
Friends of Twyford
Waterworks Trust
December 2025



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TWYFORD WATERWORKS

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The Twyford Waterworks Trust
Company limited by guarantee 1904919.
Registered Charity No. 291720

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Tea Room & Catering: Carol Jones, Caroline Hawkins, Jim Jones

Steam Team: Alan Down

Internal Combustion: Paul Fairbrother, Chris Fairlie

Lime Kilns & Water Softening: Graham Feldwick

Wildlife: Neil & Lynda Smith, Graham Feldwick

Twyford Waterworks Railway: Graham & Lesley Feldwick, Matthew
Feldwick

Welcome to the Works!

125 years of the Waterworks and 40 years of our Trust. What an achievement, and one which we've celebrated throughout this year. At our AGM in October we thanked four of our trustees who had stood down, all after many years of loyal service to the Trust, and we welcomed five new trustees who now join our Board to play their part in steering and developing the Waterworks to ensure that we'll be celebrating many more milestones and achievements in the years ahead.

Looking back at the long list of trustees that have steered the Trust to where it is today there are over 65 names – those of us who are trustees today and those who have served their term – names well remembered and those not quite so now, those who remain as active volunteers, those who are still Friends of the Waterworks, and those who are no longer with us – all playing a vital part in developing and safeguarding the Waterworks, with a shared aim of making it a key Museum of Water Supply.

So thank you all – our Trustees who we appoint to lead the Trust, our volunteers who make it all happen, and our Friends who support the Trust to enable it to keep going. All of us are volunteers, and we are all proud to do our bit.

On behalf of the Trust, thank you for all that you do, and here's to the next 40 years – or even the next 125! Wishing you a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.



Graham

Museum Accreditation – the start!

In the April 2024 edition of 'The Works' we announced our aim to become an accredited museum, and we planned to start working towards this last winter. I was leading this and we had several preparatory meetings, but when my eyesight failed it was decided to put everything on hold. In August we started to move this forward again by setting up a team to manage it all, and on 24th September met at the Waterworks with Sheila Pott and Philip Claris from Museum Development South West, and Rob Symmons who is the Curator of Fishbourne Roman Palace, which is an accredited museum. Rob has subsequently agreed to be our mentor, and attended our AGM to meet everyone.

So what is Museum Accreditation? We are already classed as a museum, and this next step will enable us to look at everything we do and ensure that we always manage our administration, our care of all the items in our collection, and all our volunteers, supporters and visitors in the right way. Much of this we already do well, but we can see areas where we need to spend some time considering how we could do things better. In summary, being accredited will demonstrate that we are a professional museum, which will help considerably when looking for support and funding in the future. It will also safeguard all that we, and all those over the last 40 years, have worked so hard to achieve, and make sure that everything we have is properly managed and cared for in the future.

If you would like to join in or find out more, do please contact me.



Graham

Internal Combustion Team

This year has been a good running season with the large Ruston Diesel Engines attracting a lot of interest. They have run well for all of the Open Days and didn't require any real attention over the year. Since the October Open Day the engines have been drained down and winterisation has commenced prior to starting work on the winter works list. Over the winter they will have their regular inspections and routine maintenance in preparation for next season.

In the last article we detailed the issues with removing the flywheel on the lister CS in the Filter House and since then we have refitted the flywheel with the new key, and ran it on Open Days. One visitor said that it was the best running CS he had seen - a testament to the effort the team put into overhauling it.



A busy workshop as various engine parts receive care and attention

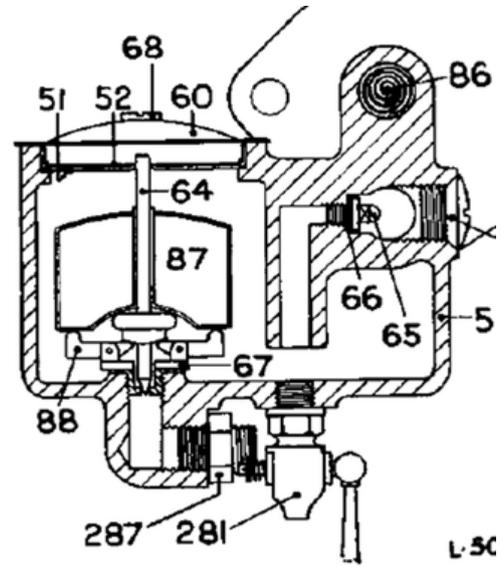


Piston under inspection



Lister LR cylinder head prior to decoke.

While the large engines performed well, we did have issues with two of the smaller engines towards the end of the season. The performance of the Lister LR that powers the Johnson pump set deteriorated to the point where it was stopped to prevent any potential damage. After the September Open Day an investigation showed that it was in urgent need of a decoke, which was completed in time for October.



The Ruston PB also had issues, with fuel leaking from the carburettor. An investigation showed that the carburettor, which is very simple as can be seen from the images (right), was sticking almost certainly due to our nemesis of modern fuel cleaning dirt out of the system causing it to malfunction. A through clean-out remedied the situation so it was back in action for the final Open Day.



Paul Fairbrother

Drawing of the Ruston PB carburettor and the internal components.



During the latter half of the 2025 successful firing trials were undertaken with a bio-fuel as possible alternative to the use coal in the future.

News from the Steam Team

In the corner of the Boiler House is a small electrical generating room installed in 1935 to provide lighting to the main building at Twyford Waterworks. Prior to this there was no electrical supply whatsoever, and lighting was provided by crude oil lamps, and at some time a petrol/air gas plant was installed, much of this is in the Lime Kilns building where it can be viewed.

The generating house has two large DC generators, one driven by a small single cylinder Reader steam engine fed from the boilers and the other, to provide electricity for when the boilers were not available, driven by a twin cylinder Russell Newbery diesel engine. Sadly, when the Boiler House was quarantined off due to the asbestos removal programme in the early 2000's, the diesel engine was not drained of water, and the cylinder block suffered severe frost damage.

The engine was stripped for assessment, but the damage will necessitate a replacement cylinder block, and it has lain in pieces for the last decade. The decision was made this summer to carry out a cosmetic repair on the damaged block and reassemble the engine to keep all the parts safely together, and it can now be viewed as such.

The Reader steam engine is regularly run on open days, driving its generator, but it can no longer supply power for lighting as our modern light fittings and wiring will only accept 240v AC power.



Alan Down

Butterfly Counting Results for Twyford Waterworks

(from the Butterfly Conservation Organisation Database – Twyford Waterworks transect)

Here are the results of counting butterflies during the counting season. This requires the transect (a defined route through the site) to be walked each week (where possible) and all butterflies seen are recorded.

After last year’s low numbers it has been good to see a much greater number of butterflies at the Waterworks this year, which was in line with the national trend. Many of our butterflies have their entire life cycle here, so it is vitally important that we manage the site to give the best conditions for this. We noted 23 different species, which shows the importance of the Waterworks for butterflies, and for insects generally.

This data (and with the data collected over the last 17 years) indicates that we are managing the Works’ wildlife areas in a way that enhances the environment for butterflies to flourish.

Neil & Lynda

| Butterfly species | 2023 Total | 2024 Total | 2025 Total |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Small/Essex Skipper | 73 | 13 | 21 |
| Large Skipper | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| Brimstone | 207 | 81 | 188 |
| Large White | 69 | 23 | 165 |
| Small White | 275 | 91 | 492 |
| Green-veined White | 12 | 7 | 52 |
| Orange Tip | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| Green Hairstreak | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Small Copper | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| Silver-studded Blue | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Brown Argus | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| Common Blue | 76 | 33 | 73 |
| Holly Blue | 18 | 0 | 3 |

| Butterfly species | 2023 Total | 2024 Total | 2025 Total |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Red Admiral | 89 | 35 | 38 |
| Painted Lady | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Small Tortoiseshell | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Peacock | 143 | 27 | 78 |
| Comma | 37 | 9 | 37 |
| Speckled Wood | 8 | 7 | 20 |
| Marbled White | 211 | 105 | 125 |
| Gatekeeper | 357 | 170 | 217 |
| Meadow Brown | 505 | 502 | 426 |
| Ringlet | 130 | 75 | 125 |
| Small Heath | 14 | 7 | 22 |
| Total (Summary) | 2254 | 1197 | 2107 |

Tales from the Tea Room

As 2025 closes, it's time to put our mixers away and reflect upon the past year, and what an odd year it was with no two Open Days the same!

The toasted sandwich made a come-back and was once again very popular. This, together with our made to order sandwiches, soup, quiche and scotch eggs offered great alternatives to our barbecue for our hungry visitors. It is really important to us that everything is homemade wherever possible and all these things come fresh from our kitchens! Of course, Cake continued to be the star of the show with people exclaiming that they were spoilt for choice, and in many cases they opted for cake to eat and more cake to take home. Some people said that our cake was so good they wanted to lick the plate, and we even spotted this happening!

This year we expanded our repertoire of dairy-free, gluten-free and vegan cakes, and these were all very well received. (Who knew that a flax egg is a suitable alternative for a hen's egg).

We have identified areas of the Twyford kitchen that could be improved to allow us to give a better service, and these changes should be in place by the start of the new season.

It just remains to thank everyone who helped both in the tea room and on the barbecue this year. Without all of your contributions we would not be able to cater for the visitors to Twyford Waterworks. We really hope that you will all be able to join us again next year!



Carol, Caroline & Jim



Wildlife at the Works

As always when considering wildlife the weather becomes the first topic and this year it has had a significant impact on the wildlife at the Waterworks.

The Spring started well and early, and many plants and insects were invigorated with the fine weather. Everything was progressing to be a very good year but the change to a very dry early summer and an increase in the temperature put a break on the continued progress of all of our wildlife. Plant growth was slowed by the lack of water and insect development also slowed considerably with a knock-on effect to the bird species that need them as a source of food. The heatwaves that followed continued this detrimental effect with a number of butterfly species, for instance, not able to survive the heat, and some of our wild flowers lacked their usual vigour and variety.

However, overall our meadows still managed to produce quite an abundance of flowering plants and grasses which helped to sustain many flying insects. We even counted a visit from a couple of migrant Jersey Tiger Moths and the butterfly count was better than last year.

Our pond became quite an oasis during the summer, and we have had nocturnal badgers, foxes, muntjac deer and rabbits visiting for a drink. Here the plants have grown vigorously, and the purple loosestrife looked most impressive. The pond provided a haven for many flying insects, dragonflies and birds, with even a reed warbler seen by the hide. A trio of Mallard ducks and a Mandarin duck came for a visit in early spring, but decided not to stay, and maybe we'll be luckier next year.



On our Open Days the pond dipping remains hugely popular, and a big variety of insects have been found by our enthusiastic visitors. The newt population seems healthy but once again the tadpoles had already matured before the Open Days started and none were found. The hedge we planted last winter has survived the summer drought and will provide more habitat for our wildlife as it grows and matures.

Neil & Lynda

Guided Tours

I've been taking tours around Twyford Waterworks for the last two summers and have found this both interesting and rewarding. Although when you visit us you can walk round and enjoy looking at everything and reading all the information we have on the site, it can be easy to miss out on more interesting facts unless there is someone there to guide you through it all and make the story come alive.

There is an enormous amount of information available, including dates, facts, and figures about the Waterworks, but my approach is as a story teller, weaving the story of the Waterworks through its 125 year history and making your experience both enjoyable and memorable. If you want to learn more about the story behind Twyford Waterworks, why it was built, and how it has supplied water for the past 125 years, including all the leading edge technology changes that have happened during that period, plus interesting and amusing anecdotal background, please come along and join in one of the free guided tours of the site. I'm sure you will enjoy it, and to quote one of our recent visitors "I never realised that 'pumpy things' could be so interesting".

It's not just at Open Days! We are happy to welcome private tours of the site at other times too. Please see the website or contact us for details, and if you'd like to join in and become one of our Tour Guides yourself, please get in touch. I hope to see you on a tour soon!

Dave Wallis



The gate to Southampton's covered reservoir.....rediscovered – Part 1

Southampton's early water supply was a municipally controlled system established in 1290 by the Franciscan Friars, who piped water from Colewell spring in Shirley to their friary and the town. In 1420, the system was transferred to the town council, making it one of the earliest municipally owned piped water systems in Britain, parts of which survive to this day.



Rapid population growth in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to concerns about the inadequacy of the town's water supply. A number of remedies were considered, including the sinking of an artesian well on the Common. Works started in 1835 and eventually reached a depth of 1317 feet, however the expected flow of water was never realised and the project stopped.



Under the powers of the Southampton Waterworks Amendment Act 1850 a pumping station was set up at Mansbridge to take water from the River Itchen and transfer it to a pair of reservoirs on Southampton Common.

Construction of the reservoirs started in 1851 to hold water pumped from Mansbridge and originally consisted of two separate reservoirs. By 1895, due to the high cost of maintenance, these became one single covered reservoir.

Since the beginning, the reservoirs were fenced, complete with a gate for entry. Dated back to 1853 the gate was said to be Southampton's oldest piece of dated street furniture still in its original position.

In more recent years the gate was removed as part of a security upgrade and its whereabouts lost. Roll the clock on to 2025, and in a chance post on social media someone was asking for information about a gate they had found in their mother's garden. The writer immediately recognised it and reached out to the owner. After a couple of emails and a telephone call it was donated to us at the Waterworks and collected the very next day.

The gate itself contains two large shields, one on each side. On the front is the crest of "Southampton Water Works" and the other the initial "J.L M1853" and showing the possible maker as being Saunders Southampton.

The shield on the back was a puzzle which the writer solved back in 2013. The initials are those of Joseph Lankester, Joseph was the 627th Mayor of Southampton, standing from 1852 until 1853. Lankester, as many will know, is a well-established local family who owned a chain of ironmongers' shops in the City as well as an Iron Foundry. He died on the 21 July 1857, and is buried in Southampton's Old Cemetery, also on Southampton Common. As for Saunders Southampton, more research is needed.

The gate is currently undergoing restoration by a specialist company in Dorset and it is hoped will be back on public display at the Waterworks shortly.

Rob Fish

Friends Update

It's been yet another good year for The Friends of The Twyford Waterworks Trust! So far 47 new Friends have signed up during 2025, and we've also welcomed more Friends into our ranks of volunteers. The Friends are always the backbone of the Trust, and your support is vital to everything the Trust does.

A warm welcome to new Friends who have joined since the last newsletter: Ian & Elizabeth Balmer, Colin & Rebecca Binstead, Byron Bucknall, Gary Darrock, Julian Duck & Susan Broughton, Bruce Doswell & Jackie Rapley, Justin & Suzanne Lovegrove, Howard Mason & Jenny Wood, Jamie Smith, Robert & Julie Smith, and Malcolm Webb. We hope you enjoy being part of Twyford Waterworks, and look forward to seeing you again soon. Special birthday congratulations go to Anna Bispham, our Board Minute Secretary and volunteer, who shared the same 40th celebration as the Trust in October.

Our celebrations of 125 years of water pumping at Twyford, and 40 years since the Trust was formed, were very well attended. It was wonderful to be able to share this special event with so many Friends. Thank you if you came along! This year has been very different from what Graham and I imagined this time last year, and I'd like to thank everyone who stepped up to support us in so many ways.

As 2025 draws to a close, we can look back on another successful year for Twyford Waterworks, and forward to another year full of new opportunities, development and progress. Let's all wish each other a Happy Christmas and New Year, and here's to 2026!

Lesley

Thank you and Welcome!

This year has seen some changes within our Board of Trustees, and we record our grateful thanks to those who have decided to step down – Ray Caine, Andy Dickson, Alan Down and Steve Smith. All will be continuing as active volunteers – Ray is our archivist and can also be seen busy in the car park on Open Days, while Andy, Alan and Steve are all members of our Steam Team.

At the AGM we welcomed five new trustees to our Board – Paul Fairbrother, Tom Frost, Chris Harvey, Duncan Russell and Richard Willock. We thank them all for stepping forward to join the rest of the Board to whom we also record our thanks – John Atherton, Colin Billingham, Richard Broadway, Sue Cook, Graham Feldwick, Matthew Feldwick, Rob Fish, Jim Jones, Pam Moore, and our Minute Secretary Anna Bispham. If you feel that you could serve the Trust as a trustee then do please get in touch for a chat about what's involved.

Graham

TWYFORD WATERWORKS

www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk

2026 Open Days

3rd & 4th May

7th June

5th July

2nd August

6th September

4th October

Save the Dates!



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