

Dear Member/Supporter,

Welcome to the August 2022 issue of [Flow](#), the newsletter for **FoMW** members and supporters of the waterways project. Recent heat and drought conditions are stressing rivers and water courses everywhere, including the main River Thames and Maidenhead's restored waterways. Flow rates always slow at this time of year, but are now threatening the passes in the weir. Although the Green Lane weir holds up water levels through the town, the very high temperatures combined with slow flow has led to a major increase in weed in the waterway requiring special attention.

Landscaping Upgrade - Courtesy of Shanly Homes, the failed landscaping on the banks opposite the Library adjoining the waterway has been renewed. The nettles and thistles that had been allowed to establish there due to poor maintenance have been dug up, new benches installed closer to the water and additional beds and Silver Birches planted. At FoMW's request we now also have steps down the slippery grass banks to the existing safety escape ladders.



Our first Trip Boat - We are pleased to report the acquisition and launch of a small trip boat, Barrian (pictured), which has been gifted to the group. Barrian is a restored c100 year old 14ft long carvel planked wooden open dingy, with outboard and remote steering. It can carry 4 or 5 in comfort and will double as a service boat. Now moored at Chapel Arches, we are able to deploy her at short notice when needed anywhere between Town Moor and Green Lane.

New Workboat - Helped by a contribution from RBWM, we have on order a Seastrike 16ft by 6ft Heavy Duty flat bottomed aluminium work boat, to be used for channel maintenance. It will provide us with a stable and robust platform for working from the water. The new boat (yet to be named) will be based at Chapel Arches with our other craft and will be able to use the boat rollers at the Green Lane weir when we need to deploy it in Bray Cut.



Queen's Baton Relay - We were delighted and honoured to be asked to carry the Queen's Baton on Barrian along the waterway on 6th July, on its way to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The



Baton had visited every Commonwealth country before arriving in and touring the UK on its journey to the Games. A huge convoy of coaches, police and support vehicles accompanies the Baton wherever it goes, while 200 excited school children gathered in the amphitheatre to cheer the baton (pictured in Barrian) on its way to the next destination.



Marmalade 'in trouble' - We have unfortunately had to take Marmalade out of service due to accidental hull damage that was allowing water to accumulate between her two skins. We are hopeful of being able to repair her ourselves using fibreglass. As it is below the waterline it won't show.

Waterways Fun Day - Planning is moving ahead for the Fun Day on Saturday 17th September, centred around and celebrating the restored town centre waterway. We now have agreement to close the road above Chapel Arches, giving us much more space for stalls and entertainment on and off the water. We are going to need plenty of volunteers to help set up, man **FoMW's** stall and for the end of day clear up. If you are around then and can help for a few hours please let us know and if you have a canoe do come along and join the cavalcade which will start the day. More details to follow.



Weed Clearance - Despite continuing Byofix treatment, the drought and extreme heat has led to rapid weed growth on the waterway, clogging paddles and props and risking smothering plant life below.

A super team of over 20 volunteers started very early (to dodge the heat) at Chapel Arches on 13th August and worked from

boats and on the banks with our extendable long rakes, to remove a huge amount of excess weed from the waterway.

The removed weed (pictured) was initially stacked on the banks by the library to allow the invertebrates to escape back into the channel, but will be removed once it has dried out. A specialist weed cutter boat has been booked for early September - after the end of the nesting season - to clear the remaining surface weed down to the weir, in good time for the Fun Day.



Weed is not the only issue needing addressing in the restored waterway channels, as encroaching brambles and nettles in places reduce the clear width and create a hazard for canoeists. **FoMW** has bought a battery powered electric pole hedge cutter to allow us to tackle the job the only way it can be done - from the water. The new cutter is half the weight of a petrol unit and much easier and safer to use from a boat. Working from Barrian, Jordan Tolner (pictured) successfully trialled the new unit during the weed clearance.

2022/23 Subscriptions - While larger maintenance costs continue to be funded by RBWM, subscription income from **FoMW** members is important to help cover our running costs and improve facilities now the waterway is operational. 2022/23 membership fees are now due and have once again been held at just £10 per member and £15 for a family. If you can, please pay online to our Account 00015476, Sort Code 40-52-40, at CAF Bank, West Mallings, Kent, ME19 4QJ. You can also pay by cheque via our **NEW** registered office at Ground Floor, Arena Court, Crown Lane, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 8QZ using the form at <http://maidenheadwaterways.org/TopMenu/mwmembership.doc>.

Best regards,

Richard Davenport

Chair of the Trustees

August 2022