

TRMT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026 - ISSUE 9

Batchworth Community Council Grant

We are delighted to have received a £500 grant from Batchworth Community Council towards the conservation of ten volumes from our collection of Kelly's Trade Directories for Watford and Rickmansworth. Covering the years 1907 to 1973, they have seen a great deal of use over the years and now need some repair. Once restored, they can continue to provide the valuable information about the past that they always have.

It will be a few weeks before we have them back, but once they return, they will be available for reference. We are very grateful to the Council for this support in helping us to continue 'telling the story' of the area.

Jars - Thank You

A note from Susan North:
(Trustee)

Thank you to everyone who has provided us with jam jars. We now have a lovely collection to use for our *Three Rivers Museum Preserves*. We are now busy making the preserves ready for the Christmas market, so pop the date - Sunday 22nd November - in your diary and come along to Watersmeet to say hello. You'll also have the opportunity to buy our jam, marmalade and mincemeat, as well as browse for gifts and Christmas decorations.

Connect with us on Social Media

THREE RIVERS MUSEUM TRUST

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A company limited by guarantee, no 2907154.
Registered charity: no 1164893.
Registered office: 20 High Street, Rickmansworth WD3 1ER

ACCREDITED MUSEUM

Harvest Weekend at the Chiltern Open Air Museum

We were very happy to join our friends at the Chiltern Open Air Museum for their annual Harvest Weekend on 26th and 27th September.

We were in the Thame Room, which is presented as a late-Victorian schoolroom, with a display of *Rickmansworth as a market town* 1840 - 1920. We also offered children a range of simple craft activities, led by Pat Hamilton, which proved very popular with around 200 children over the weekend.



Saturday was sunny and warm, so we set up outside. Sunday was cooler and breezy, so the group moved indoors, where things became even busier.
Sal Williams showed the children how to make a simple but fun straw twist, and, of course, we also had plenty of visitors interested in the history.

A very enjoyable weekend supporting COAM, and a great opportunity to reach a wider audience than we would usually be able to do.



You can become a member of the museum through our website:
https://trmt.org.uk/about-us/membership/

Artefact of the Month

Our Artefact of the Month for September is a glazed Clarendon School plate, donated to the museum in 2011 by Len Kerswill.

Clarendon School opened in 1951 and was named after the Earl of Clarendon, the first mayor of Watford. The school had four houses, each named after an important local figure: Morison House, named after Sir Richard Morison; Carpender House, named after Sir William Carpender; Altham House, named after Sir James Altham; and Capel House, named after Sir Arthur Capel.

The Earl of Clarendon's coat of arms is depicted in the centre of the plate, featuring a crowned lion and a shield bearing five escallop shells.

The plate is made of slipware, a type of pottery decorated by applying 'slip' – a liquid mixture of clay and water - to an unbaked or semi-hardened clay body before firing. Slipware became particularly popular in England during the 17th and 18th centuries and was used to create kitchenware and highly ornate commemorative pieces.

Weighing nearly 8 lb, it is believed to have been hung in the headmaster's office and was later rescued from a skip following the demolition of the school. Clarendon School eventually merged with Hampden School (which opened in 1950) in 1967 to form Sir James Altham School in Little Oxhey Lane. Sir James Altham School subsequently closed in August 1989 due to declining student enrolment.



The Swan Hotel

The Swan Hotel, a staple of Rickmansworth High Street for over 300 years, was originally a coaching inn on the road to Aylesbury and Worcester.

The earliest recorded date for business is 1659, when it was granted an additional licence to sell wines. The influential Skidmore family owned the Swan from 1692 until 1820, when their brewhouse in Goral Mead closed down.

Over the years, the Swan Hotel witnessed many notable events in the town's history.



It was the venue for town meetings, such as the one in 1804 to arrange for the removal of the old market hall from Rickmansworth High Street.

It was also here that the O'Connorville Estate was sold by auction in 1857, following the collapse of Fergus O'Connor's Chartist dream.

Many celebration dinners also took place here, notably the dinner for Lord Ebury and 100 guests to mark the beginning of the building of the Ebury Line from Watford to Rickmansworth.

The Swan was sadly demolished in 1964, causing much public concern.



This sign hung above the entrance to the hotel. Although it bears the date 1799, the hotel itself was much older. It can be seen in the black-and-white photograph above, taken around the turn of the 20th century .

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Sip at 9

Whilst we don't have a café of our own, visitors can enjoy a 10% discount at Sip at 9 on Church Street, just off Rickmansworth High Street – the perfect place to relax after exploring some local history. Discount vouchers are available from the museum reception desk.

Three Rivers Voices

You can now listen to the first recordings of our Three Rivers Voices podcast on our website, here: https://trmt.org.uk/local-history/three-rivers-voices. If you have experience of life in Three Rivers over the last 50 years and would be willing to share it, please email us at threeriversvoices@trmt.org.uk, and we'll arrange a date for an interview.

Dates for the Diary

Three Rivers Museum Trust

- Thursday 29th October: In partnership with Rickmansworth Library, we will be hosting a children's ghost hunt from 2pm-4pm. Come along and find out about the ghosts who haunt the area.

Abbots Langley Local History Society

- Monday 26th October: **Talk:** 'From a Hard Place to a Rock: First-hand accounts of BEF soldiers on the run in WW2'. Location: Manor House Sports & Social Centre, Gallows Hill Lane, Abbots Langley WD5 0DD.

Rickmansworth Historical Society

- Thursday 8th October: **Talk:** 'HS2 Archaeology'. Location: St Mary's Church Centre, Church Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1JB.

Watford & District Industrial History Society

- Tuesday 20th October: **Talk:** 'Michael Faraday Frogs to Fields' (Graham Neale Memorial Lecture). Location: The Stanborough Centre, 609 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL.

Chiltern Open Air Museum

- Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th October: Wild About Wool - Learn about traditional wool and textiles crafts.
- Saturday 17th October: Diwali Celebration - Family Diwali celebration.
- Tuesday 27th October: Terrific Tuesday - Autumn themed family activities.
- Friday 30th October: Halloween Spectacular - An evening of spooky fun. 5pm - 9pm.

If you are interested in attending these talks/events, please check details and timings with the individual societies. An admission fee may apply.