

# Source



Thames  
Water

## THE NEXT GENERATION

Trainees determined to bridge looming skills gap

### Our friends in the north

Inside Thames Water's Yorkshire customer service hub



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Could this be the greenest mosque in the UK... thanks to Thames Water?

## From the editor...



If you're of a 'certain' age – and I have to include myself in that number – you'll remember a time when getting a job after leaving school was like picking apples off a tree.

How many of that fortunate generation are now seeing their children go through almost the opposite experience?

Thames Water's radical new traineeship scheme – our featured story this month – aims to make the sometimes soul-destroying process of finding the kind of meaningful job many of us take for granted a little more straightforward.

It aims to get to the essence of what a job-seeker is about, focusing more on personality and commitment, drive and determination, and less on the sort of academic qualifications that, often through circumstances beyond their control, can elude some youngsters.

The scheme is backed by politicians but without a company like Thames Water putting its considerable clout behind it, there's a danger it could have been a pipedream.

The future of a significant number of new employees is hoping it's a new reality.



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# Court throws out Tunnel challenges

London's flagship 'super sewer' emerged the winner after a series of legal actions, reports **HANNAH SHROOT**

**T**he Thames Tideway Tunnel team has cleared another hurdle facing the project after the Royal Court of Justice refused four applications to raise Judicial Reviews against the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the 25km 'super sewer'.

After years of planning, the DCO was granted by the Secretaries of State last September, giving the green light for the project to go ahead. But a month later, four applications were submitted to challenge the Government's decision.

During a two-day hearing last month, applications from Southwark Council and the Thames Blue-Green Plan were refused for being out of time. Another two applications – from ThamesBank (more recently known as the Thames Blue-Green Partnership) and David Percival, who had argued for alternatives to the tunnel to be considered – were dismissed as 'unarguable' cases.

Mike Gerrard, managing director of Thames Tideway Tunnel, said: "This was a welcome decision and a big relief for everyone on the project."

"After the momentous granting of the DCO last year, this takes us yet another step closer to being able to get started on building the tunnel, and one step closer to cleaning up the River Thames."

"While there is still a long way to go, this is a positive start to 2015. We would like to



**Chambers Wharf, the focus of Southwark Council's objections to the Thames Tideway Tunnel**

reinforce our message of thanks to everyone who has been involved in this journey."

Tender evaluations are currently taking place for the main works contractors who will build the tunnel, and a process is also under way to select investors to finance and deliver the project.

Successful bidders are expected to be announced later in the year, with construction due to start next year.

## Changing facilities

Emcor has been awarded a five-year contract to take over Thames Water's facilities management services.

From April 1, the company will provide mechanical and electrical maintenance, manned security and helpdesk services, look after the fabric of Thames Water's buildings and provide cleaning services.

The new agreement also includes new tasks previously outside the scope of facilities, such as asbestos management.

Gary Hills, Thames Water's principal contracts manager – estates and facilities, said: "Representatives from Emcor will be visiting sites in the run-up to the handover so they can hit the ground running. We'd

really appreciate everyone's support in this."

In addition, informal drop-in roadshows will give staff a chance to find out how the new contract will work. Dates and locations are:

### FEBRUARY

- 23 – Swindon STW and Walnut Court
- 24 – Clearwater Court and Kemble Court
- 25 – Mogden STW and Ashford WTW
- 26 – Orpington WTW and Crossness STW
- 27 – Beckton STW and Deephams STW

### MARCH

- 2 – Maple Lodge STW and Hammersmith depot



# A show fit for an Emperor



Thames Water's legendary annual panto brought January to a resounding close in Swindon. **BECKY TROTMAN** grabbed herself a front-row seat

**H**eading down to Swindon on a cold January night, having not been to a pantomime since I was at school, I wasn't sure what to expect from the Thames Water amateur theatrical society's version of the Emperor's New Clothes.

What I certainly wasn't expecting however was a set and costumes equal to many a professional performance and

some singing voices which wouldn't have sounded out of place on a West End stage.

The story of the Emperor's New Clothes is a classic but this one had more twists and turns than a Thorpe Park rollercoaster and as the lines and songs from many a famous show (Who can resist singing along to Frozen?) were thrown into the mix, the delighted audience soon realised this was panto Swindon style. It ticked all

## 'IT TICKED ALL THE BOXES WITH LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPECTATORS TO GET INVOLVED'



Kate Northcott and Justin Hulbert

the boxes with lots of opportunities for spectators young and old to get involved by booing the baddie, sympathising with the downtrodden (everybody say aaahhhh) and engaging with some of the characters.

Even chief exec Martin Baggs came in on cue when called upon to shout out from his balcony seat.

Cameo performances by some talented young Irish dancers and a Michael Jackson dance-a-like added to the all-round entertaining show which every member of the cast clearly had the time of their lives being involved in. Even when things may not have gone exactly to script, their support for one another and immense sense of fun shone through.

Another brilliant show by Paul Aust and the team which had the audience giggling all the way to the end!

## 'Emperor' Kevin Lennon reflects on his first stage appearance... ever!

Was I nervous? Well I wasn't until I received a text from my dad. He said "go break a leg son. And make sure you iron out any errors before me and the family come on Saturday".

Immediately, I felt my blood pressure increase. This is actually happening, this is crazy! Around 1,500 people will see me talking and moving and even singing (I can't sing).

Everyone was so welcoming, from the professional stage crew doing their thing – sound, microphones, stages, lighting – to the rest of the performers.

Among the cast, we all hugged and kissed everyone saying "go and break a leg". Everyone said "you'll be amazing" and a special someone said: "You're emperor for a reason, just go and show them".

I didn't go on until scene two so I watched the first 15 minutes from the side and realised I couldn't remember my lines.

But then I came on and everything fell into place. The feel of everyone looking at me was so euphoric I just wanted to stay on.

I couldn't sleep after the first night – the buzz was so amazing that I'm addicted to this now. So you may see me in next year's panto... if I get cast again!



Caroline Tizard, Kevin Lennon and Chris Titcombe



**NAME:** Marc Vaughn

**AGE:** 21

**LIVES:** Aylesbury

**BASED AT:** Aylesbury sewage works

**WHY BECOME A TRAINEE?** I have a background in plumbing but there's a real shortage of jobs where I live so I've been registered with the local Jobcentre. They suggested this scheme to me and it made sense to get involved.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE?**

Ultimately I'd like to be offered a full-time job at the end of the six months but I'm also hoping working as part of a team will improve my communications skills.

**LEISURE INTERESTS:** I'm a keen cyclist and between the ages of 12 and 16 travelled all over the world including the USA and Australia to take part in cycling events. I've also completed the junior Tour de France



**NAME:** Fay Carmichael

**AGE:** 17

**LIVES:** Ascot

**BASED AT:** Little Marlow sewage works

**WHY BECOME A TRAINEE?** I started studying A-levels in sixth form but decided it wasn't for me and I'd rather be earning money than going to uni and getting into thousands of pounds of debt. I'm looking forward to starting from scratch and learning as much as I can.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE?**

I hope I can stay on in a full-time role, progress as much as I can and see how far I can get.

**LEISURE INTERESTS:** I play netball at club level and also for the England under-18s and under-21s. For me it's better than just running or going to the gym and we go on tour each year so I get to travel around. Last year we went to South Africa and this year we'll be in Australia.



Thames Water CEO Martin Baggs (with his leak detection listening stick) and HR director Janet Burr meet the new trainees during their induction day at Clearwater Court, Reading

# Career opportunities

**H**ard work and enthusiasm will be the key to securing a job at Thames Water, so CEO Martin Baggs told the firm's new trainees.

Mr Baggs, alongside HR director Janet Burr, welcomed the young people, aged between 16 and 22, at an induction day at Thames Water's Reading head office on January 21.

At the event the trainees learnt about the company's zero compromise approach to health and safety and received an outline

of their training schedule for the next six months.

"This is the first scheme of its kind in our industry and we're proud to be leading the way," said the chief executive.

"Opportunities for young people with little or no qualifications and experience are few and far between but if they're willing to work hard and learn from the many experts we already have, they deserve a chance to develop and shine."

Within the next five years more than 260 members of Thames Water's operational staff will reach retirement age, meaning a skills gap is fast approaching.

"Bringing in new talent now is important as we need an army of operational staff ready to take over from those who will inevitably

**'IF THEY'RE WILLING TO WORK HARD AND LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS WE HAVE, THEY DESERVE A CHANCE TO DEVELOP AND SHINE'**



A ground-breaking new scheme aims to give young people a chance in the water industry and bridge the looming skills gap, as **BECKY TROTMAN** reports



19-year-old Zack Churchill listens intently at his induction

retire in years to come," added Martin. "They hold a wealth of knowledge and we can't afford for them to go without passing that on to the next generation. We hope our trainees will soak up as much of their experience as possible in the coming months with a view to achieving the ultimate goal of a permanent role with us."

Each trainee is paired with an experienced mentor and will be hands-on in the day-to-day running of a sewage works, as well as maintaining equipment and problem-solving. They'll also have opportunities to brush up their maths, English and IT skills and receive help writing a CV.

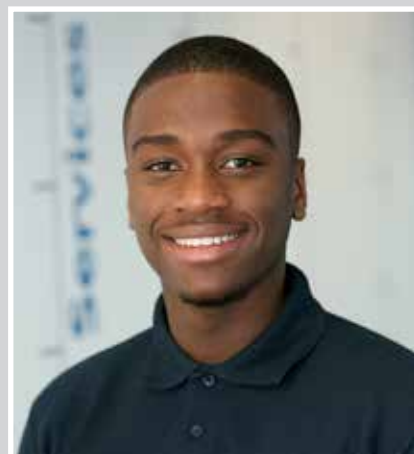
Trainee Calvin Mashala-Peter, 16, said: "I left school last year and have been looking for work since but not found anything suit-

able. This job interested me as there's scope to progress within the company and I'm looking to build a career rather than just take on a job with no prospects."

This scheme is the first of its kind in the water industry as it offers paid work to trainees while they learn the fundamentals of working in the waste sector.

For those who successfully complete the scheme, the offer of a permanent job is on the horizon along with an opportunity to work towards an industry-recognised qualification.

Another 30 trainees who'll take up placements in water production and networks will be recruited this spring, while the company's successful apprenticeship and graduate schemes will continue.



**NAME:** Calvin Mashala-Peter

**AGE:** 16

**LIVES:** Reading

**BASED AT:** Reading and Basingstoke sewage works

**WHY BECOME A TRAINEE?** I left school last summer and couldn't find a job that interested me so I registered with Connexions which suggested Thames Water. I'm looking forward to being in a work environment, taking responsibility for myself and being treated like an adult.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE?**

I'm looking to build a career rather than just having a job so hopefully I'll get to stay on and progress.

**LEISURE INTERESTS:** I play Sunday league football.



**NAME:** Ryan Forrester

**AGE:** 19

**LIVES:** Woodley, Reading

**BASED AT:** Wargrave sewage works

**WHY BECOME A TRAINEE?** I've been looking for paid work for a while and was doing voluntary work for something to do. Connexions pointed out this role to me and it's perfect as I can learn and be paid at the same time.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE?**

I'd like to stay with Thames Water beyond the six-month traineeship period and then carry on learning as much as I can.

**LEISURE INTERESTS:** I cycle and will be cycling to work from now on. I admit I do spend some time gaming too.



# Inside Thames Water

There is a corner of a Rotherham call centre that is forever Thames Water. **MARTIN WELLS** travelled north to see the agents at work

**I**f you've spent your life cosily cocooned in the soft south, the beauty and the grandeur of the landscapes north of, say, Leicester may have passed you by.

Driving up the M1, the flat, faceless conurbations of the Home Counties eventually give way to sweeping hills and swathes of lush farmland.

It's where the people who built Britain live.

And while the nature of their industries may have changed since the Industrial Revolution, the ethos of hard work that characterises the region lives on.

Nowhere is this spirit of enterprise embodied more than in the impressive Capita call centre in the Dearne Valley.

Housed in what appears from the outside to be a swish convention hall or exhibition centre – in a dedicated area about the size of a football pitch – you'll find the northern outpost of Thames Water.

As a workplace, it's recognisably Thames Water. The staff are grouped into manageable pods divided by typical Thames Water branding and informative posters. The uninitiated might be forgiven for thinking that you'd wandered into an annexe of Kembrey Park or Kemble Court.

It's an easy mistake to make. For 13 years, Thames Water has partnered Capita, recruiting it to work alongside existing call centres in Reading and Swindon. Some Capita workers have been with Thames Water throughout that time and if you ask them who they work for, they won't hesitate: "Thames Water," said one veteran agent.

"That's what it says on my Facebook profile."

And they're a vital part of the Thames Water operation, dealing with between 60 and 70 % of all the customer calls received by the company's helpdesk.



And operations manager April Nord and her staff buy into everything that Thames Water stands for.

"It's about being professional and appropriate to the person they're speaking to. This is a 'Here for You' centre," she said.

**'WHILE MANY WORK FIXED HOURS IT'S RARE TO FIND ANYONE NOT PREPARED TO CHANGE THEIR SHIFTS OR DAYS OFF TO HELP OUT AT BIG EVENTS LIKE FLOODS'**

It's an attitude that will find an echo in every Thames Water call centre and it shouldn't come as a surprise. While April and her 230 staff are employed by Capita, they consider themselves very much a part of the Thames Water team.

"We've been involved in Vision and Values sessions and we're giving our area here in Rotherham more branding and more investment."

"There'll be a coaching area, defined areas to do your work," she added. "We'll have internal walls that go from one outside wall to the other."





# er's northern outpost



The Thames Water area of the Capita complex in Rotherham. The area has received a makeover in 2015 – since this picture was taken – to modernise the branding. Below, some of the call centre agents at work

The man who is helping to make this happen is Neville Doughty, Capita's client relationship manager responsible for Thames Water.

"This is a really demanding time for the water industry and we have to keep improving," he said. "We're working with Andrew Connelly and Glenda Scott, the senior managers we deal with in Swindon, to help develop the service we offer. They have spent time listening in to calls."

And the partnership is having an effect. "Our customer satisfaction score at the moment is 4.5," said April. "We're now

working on getting to 4.6 then, when we're there, we'll aim for 4.7.

"But we were 4.3 at the start of last year and for us that 0.2 increase is massive. We're changing behaviour, increasing knowledge."

For the agents in Rotherham – from the working mums to the students paying their way through college, to the career agents – there's a passion here to deliver first time.

Certainly, they all embrace Thames Water's customer service philosophy and are committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure customers are dealt with promptly and courteously – at whatever time of day.

To that end, they recently picked up the responsibility for out-of-hours working on Saturdays, a huge plus for the company.

And while many work fixed hours, it's rare to find anyone not prepared to change their shifts or their days off to help out at big

**'IT'S ENJOYABLE, IT'S CHALLENGING AND IT'S GOOD TO PROVIDE A CUSTOMER SERVICE... IT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE WORK TOGETHER'**

events like last winter's floods or the burst main at Cold Ash Reservoir in November which left hundreds without water.

One such agent is Sarah Rose, 31, who has worked for Thames Water in Rotherham for 4½ years. "It's enjoyable, it's challenging and it's good to provide a good customer service," she said. "I've seen Thames grow and a lot of positive changes – it's what happens when people work together."

Andrew Connelly, Thames Water's outsource performance manager, said: "I am pleased to say that the level of communication, collaboration and sharing of best practice is increasing daily.

"This month we held our first joint service review for the two 'front-office' contact centres from Capita and Swindon which proved a great success.

"Our challenge is to facilitate the two contact centres becoming one, despite the physical distance, so that our customers have the same experience wherever they are and our agents get the same support, empowerment and engagement wherever they work.

"Before we achieve any of that, though, we have to be sure that the foundation for success is in place and it doesn't take a long time on the floor to see plenty of evidence of the passion and enthusiasm to do the right thing for the customer. In fact, the floor record for 'longest streak', that's CSAT 5s in a row, was 57, held by John Williams – 57 customers in a row received service they couldn't fault. I think we're in safe hands."







## Les's £2,000 golden farewell

IT trainer Les Bonnyman had an eventful last day at Thames Water – he won the £2,000 first prize in the WaterAid Christmas lottery draw.

For Les, 66, who retired at the end of last year after 18 years with the company, scooping the cash put the seal on a great career in operations, metering, developer services and, finally, IT.

"It was a wonderful surprise, especially coming at Christmas," said Les, who lives near St Neots with his wife Barbara, *pictured above*. "The money went on a special present for my three grandkids and it helped me buy my company car from Thames Water."

He now plans to spend his retirement fishing, indulging his grandchildren and visiting Spain... and doing a little part-time IT training.

Other winners were: £200 – Kevin Ireland and Ana Hughes; £25 – AM Chalmers and Keith Taylor.

■ **If you're not already taking part in the monthly WaterAid lottery, contact [ginika.okoye@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:ginika.okoye@thameswater.co.uk) for more information.**

## Top marks for Thames centres

The quality of four Thames Water education centres has been officially recognised with a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) quality badge.

The centres at Slough, Maple Lodge, Didcot and Hogsmill sewage treatment works now join almost 1,000 organisations, including museums, churches, art galleries and farms, to have received the award, which recognises quality learning and effective risk management.

The LOtC badge also makes it easier for teachers to identify providers of quality educational visits and field trips.

Thames Water's education manager, Paul Hampton, said: "We're thrilled to get official recognition for our efforts and look forward to welcoming even more children from the Thames Water area."



Members of the team working on the tunnel underneath Maida Vale celebrate the milestone

# Dorothy's big breakthrough

The Maida Vale flood alleviation scheme is one of Thames Water flagship schemes in London.

**REBEKAH KENYON** reports on its latest landmark

**T**he moment a giant tunnel borer makes its final breakthrough is always a cause for celebration.

And so it proved when 'Dorothy', the giant drill working on the Maida Vale flood alleviation scheme, completed her 395-metre journey between Westbourne Green and Formosa Street at the end of 2014.

Engineers took 55 days to drive a tunnel 2.44m in diameter underneath one of the busiest areas of west London, including the Grand Union Canal. The route, though, managed to keep a safe distance from all buildings, minimising disruption from the noise and vibration while Dorothy was at work.

By any standards, it was a remarkable feat of engineering but its success is typical of the whole £17.5m Maida Vale project,

**'PLANNING THE 30M STRETCH OF TUNNEL UNDER THE CANAL ALONE TOOK TWO YEARS TO COMPLETE'**

which has involved the Thames Water and Optimise team devising a number of innovations to minimise disruption for local people, while, at the same time, striving to reduce the risk of flooding for 200 homes and businesses.

Planning the 30m stretch of tunnel under the canal alone took two years to complete because of the consents required.

The work had to avoid not only the canal but a new electrical tunnel, the connection chamber between the Mid-Level and Ranelagh sewers (constructed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette in the 1860s), the council footbridge and buildings around the canal, including the Waterway pub.

To keep local people up to speed with developments, Thames Water hosts a monthly business and residents liaison group, giving it the opportunity to suggest ways of reducing the impact of the work on the community. The company has also established a community fund to support local groups while the work is under way.

Engineering innovations include the construction of isolation sewers to separate at-risk properties from the trunk sewer, reducing the storage volume needed at two new tanks under Westbourne Green and Tamplin Mews Gardens, and using boring techniques that reduce traffic disruption.

The next phase of the work involves building new manholes and sewers and the whole project is due to be completed by summer 2015.





# BOREHOLE

with media manager Stuart White

Each month **BH** drills down on the firm's biggest news and issues

## Bill's for re-use

Bill Gates has backed a new hi-tech water plant that could bring clean water to Africa – and has even drunk it, reported the Daily Mail last month.

The Microsoft founder is all for a Seattle firm's machine that uses a combination of steam and filters to convert human waste into water. The firm says it's indistinguishable from bottled water.

**W**ith dry January behind us, Thames Water is being hailed as one of the driving forces behind a new whisky distillery in the capital. Celebrity chef James Martin said the "business is heading south" on his meeting with Glaswegian Darren Rook, who set up London Distillery Company in 2011, for Martin's Home Comforts show on BBC One last month.

The owner said he "grew up around whisky" and that his spirit is made in Battersea with all locally sourced ingredients – including barley from Wiltshire and Thames Water, "which is

## FIRST LONDON DISTILLERY SINCE LEA VALLEY CLOSED ITS DOORS FOR THE FINAL TIME OVER A CENTURY AGO

already packed full of minerals and perfect for distilling whisky".

He claims that "no-one in the city is distilling like we are", and that his operation is the leader of a new craft movement – the first London distillery since Lea Valley closed its doors for the final time more than a century ago.

His first batch needs time to age, but will hit shelves in a few years. If you can't wait to taste, unaged liquor is being used in cocktails at Fera at Claridges, Gong at Shangri-La Hotel and London House, SW11.

# Tap's perfect for WHISKY



Darren uses tap water for his London whisky

## There's only one SOURCE...

You may think of this magazine as the one and only, but there are, in fact, quite a few other Sources on the table. If we are Heinz, The (other) Source is one of the leading international voices for the world of hip-hop music, culture and politics.

You've then got Scotland's self-proclaimed number one student magazine, Source, plus Brighton's "going-out bible" with interviews, gig and club previews, fashion and



"more". As is the trend, The Source went online only at the end of last year.

Source Photographic Review is a quarterly contemporary photography magazine featuring portfolios, interviews, news and exhibitions, and is published in Belfast.

Not finished there, Source also happens to be Newtownabbey Borough Council's "award-winning" full colour magazine, published three times a year, and Morzine Source covers "everything you need to know" about the French ski resort in print and digital form. Pretenders.

## Made tea, then bent spoon



Uri: 'A good laugh'

Uri Geller was warming up for his millionth spoon bend with a private show for the gang fixing a broken water pipe outside his Sonning home.

They said the 68-year-old "was a good laugh", made them tea and then bent the spoon using the power of his mind as they carried out the repair in the Berkshire village

last month.

Geller, who famously tried to heal David Beckham's crocked left foot at the 2002 World Cup, was in London's Westfield W12 on Saturday, January 24, attempting to bend his one millionth spoon as well as passing on top tips for those wanting to emulate his psychic powers. Legend.

## Close shave with TV

Among the more interesting media enquiries last month, one national TV station asked if it was true Thames Water clears one tonne of pubic hair from the London sewers every month.

I was also contacted by three

'associate publishers' of regional versions of the same family magazine on the same day, all wanting us to advertise our 'Bin it' campaign. They, not I, said mums are guilty of flushing wet wipes down the toilet. Cheeky.

# One man a

Frankie Tipton and Bentley are looking for your help. But, as **MARTIN WELLS** reports, it's not in the way you might think

**W**hat do you do at weekends? Head for the pub? Get a takeaway? Fall asleep in front of Match of the Day?

Or do you do what Frankie Tipton does and head down to Devon to go rock climbing on the tors? Or grab some mates, hire a 75-foot ketch and sail around the choppy waters off the south coast?

At 28, it's not surprising that he's so active and sporty. He's a qualified climbing instructor, an accomplished sailor and loves travelling to some of the world's most inaccessible and inhospitable places, like Mongolia and Tibet.

Nothing fazes him. Not even being completely blind.

Sat at his desk, absorbed in his work, there's little to distinguish him from his colleagues in Thames Water's corporate responsibility department. And as Frankie would insist, that's exactly how it should be.

He has all the computer software to enable him to do his job independently and guide dog Bentley, sat silently under

**“PEOPLE HAVE COME UP TO SAY I’M BRAVE FOR GETTING TO WORK ON MY OWN BUT I HAVE AN EASY WALK EVERY MORNING”**

his desk, is all he needs to negotiate Clearwater Court's labyrinth of corridors and alcoves confidently and safely.

But that's not to say he doesn't need your help – he does.

As the co-ordinator of the Give Someone a Start programme – the company's commitment to offer meaningful work experience placements to the long-term unemployed – he needs managers throughout the business to get involved.

The last intake spent three weeks in various departments at Walnut Court,



Frankie Tipton and Bentley on the steps leading up to Clearwater Court in Reading and,

Swindon, last month and the next phase will centre on west London. “Organisations like the Shaw Trust and the Government's Jobs Direct programme source the candidates,” he said. “But I need managers around the business to get involved and be prepared to host them while they're with us, showing them what the world of work is like and giving them advice on things like interview techniques and writing CVs. It can be challenging but it is also very rewarding.”

As someone who lost his sight suddenly eight years ago, when a manageable sight impairment inexplicably worsened, he's experienced his own difficulties

finding employment.

“At school I always had an ambition to be an RAF pilot,” he said. “I had the grades, I was the right height and I'd always loved flying. So when I lost my eyesight completely at 20, I found it frustrating.”

By then, Frankie had secured a place at New College in Worcester, a private school for the visually impaired. After A-levels, he deferred a place at university to stay on and learn Braille, vocational computer programmes and study other, more unusual subjects, like philosophy and critical thinking.

He also qualified as a climbing instructor,



# and his dog



inset above, Frankie at work and Bentley at his post under the desk

to complement his new-found passion for the sport.

At university in Cheltenham, he studied geography and geology with the help of a note-taker/library assistant and gained a 2:1. It was only then that he experienced the sad realities of the jobs market.

"I graduated in 2010 with heady ideas of a job. I had occasional work as an access consultant at the Natural History Museum but it was one or two weeks every six months or so, if they had a special display or exhibition. But I was looking for permanent work and found that if people see your disability first they assume you won't be able to do the job as well as a sighted person."

Nevertheless, he persevered, graduating to a paid internship back at the museum and spending almost a year with a shadowy government department, tracking the progress of defence contracts "to ensure the arms went where they were intended, not sold on to terrorists".

He found the time in 2011 to get married to Anna, a member of the GB Paralympic Goalball team (the top scorer at the London games!) but by October 2012 was again looking for work.

Anna's career as a physiotherapist helped pay the bills but he needed a job and, after time volunteering for a charity that monitors disabled access, joined Thames Water last December.

"Everyone has been very welcoming and friendly – a change from some places where people won't talk because they don't want to offend me," he said. "People have come up to say I'm brave for getting to work on my own but I have an easy walk every morning from my home in Didcot to the railway station and then a short walk from Reading station to the office. It's nothing special and I work 8am-4pm so I avoid the rush hour at both ends."

Disarmingly matter-of-fact about his disability, he's adamant that no-one has to make allowances for him. And if you see him bump into a chair and are tempted to laugh, go ahead. "If you don't it all becomes too serious," he said. "Some of my favourite jokes are about the blind... like 'how does a blind skydiver know when he's getting close to the ground? The lead goes slack'."

At that, Benson's ears gave a little flicker but that's all – he's probably heard it before.

■ If you want to get involved in the Give Someone a Start programme, email [francis.tipton@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:francis.tipton@thameswater.co.uk) or call him on 07747 640540.

## Say cheese... and Bentley's yours!

Bentley, a seven-year-old Labrador, has been with Frankie since 2009 and will be with him for a further three years, unless his work takes him to London.

"It's more stressful for guide dogs in big cities like London and they retire at eight instead of 10," said Frankie.

"They see their work as fun because they're with their owner all day and the stress only comes from noise, or lots of people, a new situation or new routes."

Before starting work with Thames Water, the pair were joined by a mobility trainer to learn the route to the office.

"I use bribery to train Bentley," explained Frankie.

"I put Primula cheese on strategic points, like lampposts where we change direction, and once he's had a bit of cheese two or three times he's remembered the way."



Pete and 'Vicky' in Andorra in 2013

## Euro-marathon no easy ride-r

Thames Water engineer Pete Tyler is planning a repeat of his marathon motorbike ride through Europe in aid of motor neurone disease.

Pete, who works at Latton water treatment works near Swindon, first tackled the journey to the northernmost point of Europe accessible by road in 2013 on his classic Harley-Davidson 'Vicky', completing 5,400 miles in the process.

He's now set to take a different route to the same destination – Nordkapp in Norway – next year, again for the Motor Neurone Disease Association which has provided great support for his wife Jan.

The new 6,000-mile route will take him from his home in the Forest of Dean, through countries including France, the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, and Norway before coming back via Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

## Cathy on her bike for charity

Community investment programme manager Cathy Purse is taking part in the London-Surrey 100, a gruelling 100-mile cycle ride along the route used by elite riders at the 2012 Olympics.

Cathy, a keen cyclist, is bidding to raise money for WaterAid at the event, which starts in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park before taking in the heart of London and Surrey's stunning countryside.

"I haven't done this distance before so I've been on a strict training regime since January 5," said Cathy. "You can sponsor me at <http://my.wateraidfundraising.org.uk/cathypurse> or, if you're feeling brave, why not join me!"

■ For more details on the event, visit <http://tinyurl.com/nlb59bm>



Haven in the heart of the city – Woodberry Wetlands and, below, the Gas House and an artist's impression of the new visitor centre

# Open season in Hackney

A wildlife haven in the heart of east London will soon welcome the general public, as **KIRSTY HALFORD** reports

A ground-breaking scheme to open Woodberry Wetlands in East London to the public is being supported by Thames Water.

The company, which owns the East Reservoir at the heart of Hackney, has joined the London Wildlife Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund to create new wildlife habitats, enhance existing ones and convert a formerly derelict Grade II-listed Gas House into a visitor centre.

The site has been closed to the public since it was constructed in 1833 but the London Wildlife Trust has run limited guided tours of this site. However, the new £1.5m development, including a £211,000 investment by Thames Water, will mean the public will be able to visit the site by summer 2015.

Key to the project has been Thames Water's operations team and the reservoir engineers who have helped to extend the reedbeds further into the reservoir along the northern edge, by excavating and moving silt in the water.

New boardwalks will allow public access at a safe distance from reed beds and other important habitats while screening and hides will allow closer access although some paths will be closed to the public at certain times of the year to prevent disturbance, for instance during the nesting season.

The reservoir is home to birds such as reed buntings, song thrushes, kingfishers and the occasional bittern, and provides valuable foraging and

roosting habitat for bats.

The Gas House, which once produced the chlorine gas used to treat the reservoir water, will feature a new roof terrace giving visitors spectacular views of both the East and West Reservoirs.

■ For more information, visit <http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/woodberry-wetlands>







Customer immersion kick-off workshop

## Thames goes customer crazy

New Chief Customer Officer **ANDREW REANEY** talks about the work he and his team are doing to feed into one of our transformation programme's BIG projects – Customer Immersion

**What is going on across the business to transform us into a business renowned for providing brilliant customer service?**

If we want to be renowned for excellent customer service, we need first to remove those things that make our customers dissatisfied and cause them to complain. Then we can focus on improving the experience they have with us, recognising their specific needs.

The issues customers face are mainly to do with a disruption in supply, which can't always be prevented. In these cases we need to make sure we avoid completely or minimise the effect that any disruption causes and be more proactive in our dealings with our customers. This should reduce the effort they then need to make and ensure that the process from start to finish is not a bad one.

How can we do more for our customers? In a nutshell, saying sorry might be the simplest starting point. The majority of customers we survey who contact us are satisfied, but close to one in 10 every week is not. Why? Because we're not resolving their problems quickly or fully and not keeping them informed. We have improved quarter by quarter on our customer satisfaction score (CSAT) during the first three quarters of this financial year. (Q1) was 4.20, (Q2) – 4.21, (Q3) – 4.28 and (Q4) to date is running at 4.34 which is a great start to the year. During the third week in January we achieved 4.38 so we know we can do it, we just need to keep it going.



**How did it feel to hit an all-time high in January with our CSAT score of 4.38 out of 5.00? And how did we achieve this?**

It was down to a lot of hard work by individuals and teams across the business caring about how we serve our customers. There has been a huge company-wide focus on customer satisfaction from the people that lead us, the managers that shape what we do and the teams that deliver for us. It just shows what can happen when we all have the same goal in sight. It felt great but we need to do it consistently.

**With such a heavy focus on changing how we all approach customer service at Thames through the customer immersion programme, what's going to be different?**

We have a strong focus on customer satisfaction and customer insight, as well as powerful new values and a fantastic brand. This 'ammunition' will enable us to immerse our people in the voice of our customer and our brand. Bringing that to life will be something that all the Thames family will see, feel and hopefully value as we progress on our journey.

We want to see our customers using less effort to deal with us and we want to deliver an improving and sustainable customer satisfaction performance, with fewer complaints. With the actions under way and the quality of our people across the Thames family who serve customers day in day out, there is no doubt we can do this. This will make me a very happy man!



Chief customer officer Andrew Reaney

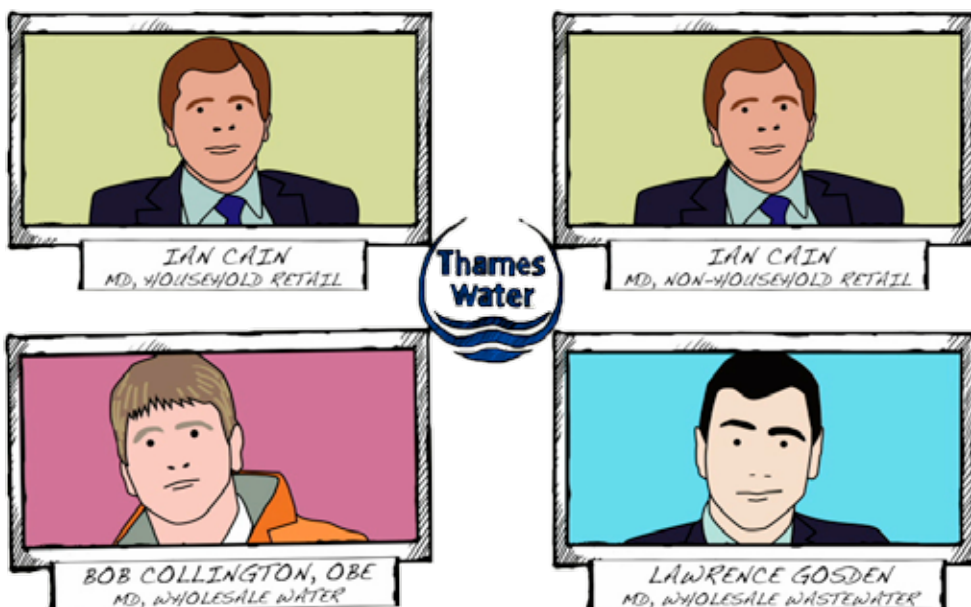
# The future is here

In the coming weeks we will all find out what the second phase of our organisation design work means for us

**B**riefings are under way to let people know the outcome of the second phase of our organisation design.

This is the work that people from across the business have been involved with to agree the structures, roles, skills and capabilities that we will need to deliver brilliant operational services and a fantastic customer experience in the future.

The process of letting everyone know is simpler in some areas than in others, depending on the size of the business area and its geographical spread. However, we are committed to working through the process as quickly as we can, in order to be able to provide everyone with the clarity they need about their own position and how we are going to work together.



If you're a manager, many of you will already have been briefed and, in some smaller business units the remainder of employees will have been told too. By week ending February 6, almost everyone in the business will have been communicated with, except for a few areas where they are still working through how they will organise their functions.

You can find lots of information about our

reorganisation on the homepage of the portal, including a Q&A and new roles and structures (which are being added as they are announced).

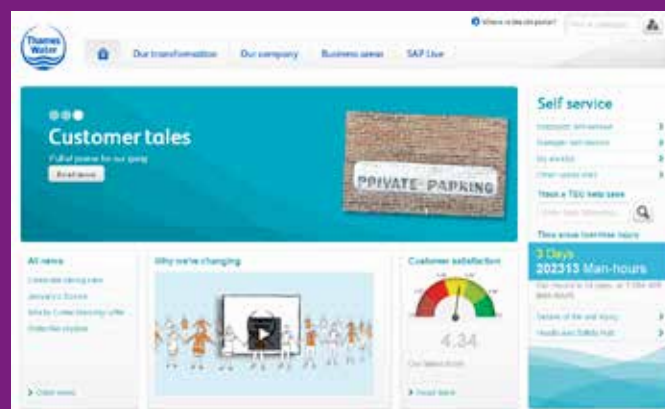
■ In the March issue of the FLOW, we will be taking a closer look at what our organisation design means for our four businesses, as well as our central support functions.

## Customer Tales

Understanding our customers and putting them at the heart of everything we do is one of the driving forces behind our transformation programme. This month's issue of the FLOW demonstrates the positive impact this is already having on our teams, our outputs, our outlook and our customer satisfaction score.

Sharing real examples of customer experiences – the good, the bad and the ugly – is an important part of understanding what we are doing right and what we need to improve. The customer immersion team, led by Jill Jones, has started publishing this feedback on the homepage of the portal. These 'customer tales' lift the spirits, pat people on the back, tell us what we need to do better and generally remind us of the importance of the work we do and how we do it.

So take a look on the homepage of the portal for the latest story and let us know if you have a customer tale to tell, by emailing [hereforyou@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:hereforyou@thameswater.co.uk).





# Transformation: What's next?

In 2014 we started to design and deliver the Thames of the future. But this year is going to be even bigger

**B**y the time you read this, it will be less than two months until the start of our new business delivery period – AMP 6 – which begins on April 1.

The business plan that people from across Thames spent so much time developing and which our economic regulator, Ofwat, has now given the go-ahead to, will start to be brought to life in many areas of the business.

Our partner alliances – eight2O and the infrastructure alliance – will soon be fully up and running and ready to work with us to deliver for our customers for the next five years.

So isn't it now time to sit back and enjoy the fruits of our efforts?

In a word – no.

Yes, we have achieved so much in the past year, from the creation and rollout of a new vision and values to agreeing how we will organise ourselves as a business, but there is still a tremendous amount of work for us to do to fully transform into the company that we need to be to thrive and survive in a very different world.



Thames people building our company for the future

In the coming months, some of the things we can look forward to working together on are:

- Deciding in detail exactly how we are going to deliver on our business plan over the next five years. More on this **from February onwards**
- Making progress with our BIG transformation projects – the eight initiatives that we have to be successful in, in order to really make a difference in the way we deliver for our customers and operate in a more competitive and technologically advanced environment. These include:
  - Getting closer to our customers and really putting them first in everything we think, say and do, through our customer immersion programme. We'll find out much more about this in **the spring**
  - Becoming more proactive in how we operate and maintain our treatment sites, breaking the cycle of reacting to so many unplanned events. These include those caused by equipment failing because we haven't maintained it well enough, which can lead to impacts like a pollution or supply interruption, not to mention the hard work required to keep the business operational. Look out for more news on four pilot sites to take this forward in **early March**
  - Making sure we are in the best possible position to take advantage of all the opportunities that increased competition



in the water industry will bring us from 2017. As this year progresses, we will really start to bring this to life for people, so that we all start to understand what increased competition will mean for the way we operate and do business

- Making real progress on our Magnificent 7 projects.

These are the initiatives that came from you during our vision and values workshops last year. Expect key decisions in the coming months on a scheme to give everyone a stake in Thames (share or bonus programme), upgrading facilities at sites and offices and improving our intranet (portal). Plus much more.

This is just a flavour of what's to come in the first six months of this year. As CEO Martin Baggs said recently in e-brief, 2015 is going to be 'a massive year' for Thames.

As always, we will be keeping you up to speed with what is going on at every stage.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about a certain aspect of our transformation programme, simply email [hereforyou@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:hereforyou@thameswater.co.uk) and we will get back to you.



# ‘I’m really proud of what we’re doing’

Eight months since they first started, the **Deephams monthly performance hub meetings** are proving to be refreshingly lively affairs

**I**f you put half a dozen network service technicians (NSTs) in a room and ask them to tell you all their problems, you might expect to get your ear bent for an hour or so.

At the monthly hub meetings at Deephams, where the Eastern North NST team is based, that’s exactly what happens – a lively, constructive discussion based around the frustrations, successes and disappointments they experience dealing with our customers at the sharp end.

And it’s delighting everyone in the team. As performance manager Rob Hales says: “If the issues which are preventing us from delivering excellent customer service weren’t being highlighted, I’d be worried, because it would mean NSTs didn’t see any point in raising issues. But now, since the new hub meetings started, everyone knows they’re being listened to and concerns are being acted on. I’m really proud of what’s being done here.”

The hub is a key strand of the transformation project at Deephams, replacing the old team briefings with a dynamic and focused session that’s being rolled out across all the NST teams.



Deephams field operations manager  
Adam Clifford chairs a hub session

In Deephams, the 38-strong team is split into four and each group meets once a month to hear performance figures from their field operations manager, as well as customer feedback from continuous improvement manager (FOM) Aoibhinn Lynch.

She passes on comments – good and bad – from the public and keeps the teams up to date with their customer satisfaction scores. What’s key is the breakdown of the poor performance, explaining that a ‘1’ score can often be explained by a failure in the communication chain instead of an under-par performance in the field.

“I think we’ve got a good relationship with the NSTs,” said Aoibhinn.

“They know that this isn’t about pointing the finger, it’s about learning and making sure the things we can change do change.”

Fuelled by a generous supply of cakes, biscuits and fruit, the meetings are always frank, never recriminatory and often sparky, thanks to a healthy sense of competition among the teams.

The hub is very much our vision and values in action – through hearing about their efficiency and performance, the NSTs believe they ‘reach higher, be better’. But they’re also motivated to share their expertise and drive improvements.

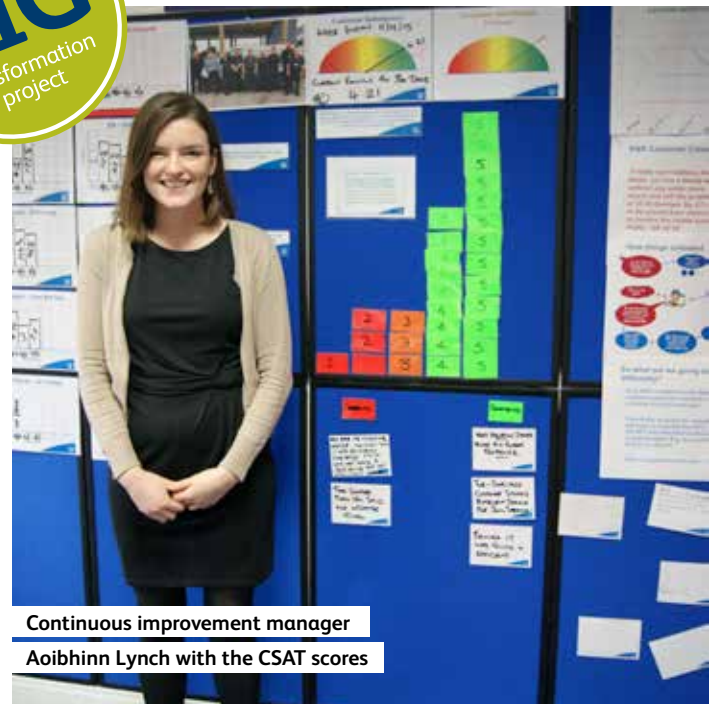
After a discussion about the need to improve how daily jobs are scheduled by planning and despatch, NSTs suggested organising their routes so they began and ended the day close to their homes, instead of – as often happened – going back and forth across London needlessly.

And when they suggested feedback from some of Thames Water’s alliance partners, Aoibhinn invited their senior managers to the hub meetings to hear their concerns and – as happened in Deephams – act upon them immediately.

Butch Healy, 61, has been a Thames Water NST for 28 years. Vocal and opinionated in the meetings, he nevertheless appreciates that his voice is being heard: “It’s handy we have someone like Aoibhinn to go to when we have concerns. She gets on to the relevant department straight away and we usually get an answer.

“The past few months since the hub started have been better. Before, we did a job and that was that. Now, because we’ve asked for it, we hear how problems are resolved after we’ve done our work.”

Scott Wilkins, Head of Water Transformation and Change, is overall sponsor and very passionate about our performance hubs. He said: “We have talked a lot and now performance hubs are living proof that working in this way is having a positive impact on our customers and what it feels like to work at Thames Water. A lot has been done in water networks, if you are interested in hearing about it then please get in touch, we are now planning where to go next.”



Continuous improvement manager  
Aoibhinn Lynch with the CSAT scores



# Healthy chest makes a difference



Volunteers working on the regeneration of Salmons Brook and, below, some of the plants replenishing the reed beds

Community projects are benefiting from £6.5m of Thames Water investment, reports **MARTIN WELLS**

**T**hames Water is to spend £6.5m over the next five years on community projects throughout the region.

Community investment project manager Cathy Purse said: "These are exciting times for our team. Opportunities to invest in long-term projects to help local communities do not come around often and we've already seen some of the first projects get off the ground."

One of the projects is the Salmons Brook Healthy River Challenge in Enfield. This aims to regenerate the brook and its wildlife using reed beds in Grovelands Park lake, part of the waterways connected to the brook and the Lea River.

The project will also set up information boards in the area, improve sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) in the area and



help local residents and schools appreciate urban water quality issues, encourage greener attitudes and train people in water quality monitoring, rain garden creation and SUDS maintenance.

"Thames21 is leading this project and I'm excited by the opportunities coming from it already," said Cathy. "The charity – one of the leading environment groups in the country – has a wealth of experience making this type of scheme work."

Another SUDS scheme in Slough will also

benefit from the community investment programme. Four key areas in the Salt Hill Stream catchment areas have been earmarked for SUDS and the project looks set to start in the first few months of this year.

Cash will also be spent on Moore Brooke, a tributary of Pymmes Brook, also in Enfield. This project will create a substantial wetlands habitat at Firs Farm playing field, improving the area and the water quality and encouraging plants and wildlife.

In October, Durnsford Mill, near Marlborough in Wiltshire, received funding from the programme. Led by ARK (Action for the River Kennet), this project is to improve the habitat along 700m of chalk stream upstream from the mill to the road bridge at Werg in Mildenhall.

■ **If you live close to any of these projects and want to know more, or to get involved, email Cathy at [cathy.purse@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:cathy.purse@thameswater.co.uk). The community investment team will keep Source readers up to date with progress in future issues so watch this space!**

## A million reasons to boost morale

Thames Water's Million Pound Challenge has proven to be worth its weight in gold when it comes to boosting staff morale.

The company made the cash available last year for workers who wanted to improve the appearance of their sites and thousands have already been spent on everything from bird boxes, to bulbs, rest room refurbishments and shower upgrades.

Mark Sims, head of the committee responsible for allocating money, said: "The

fund was created as part of a wide effort to make Thames Water a great place to work, covering every aspect of what that means – not just the standard of the accommodation."

To illustrate his point, he listed a few of the bids approved, including:

- New meeting room furniture at Fobney (£6,787)
- Bird nesting boxes at Bicester STW (£1,259)
- Internal redecoration at

Fobney (£23,928)

"We always wanted this to be a scheme owned by the workers and something that didn't fall under routine maintenance or health and safety – they have separate budgets for work," said Mark. "It was meant for things like revamping a restroom, creating a memorial garden in honour of a colleague or just planting bulbs to improve the environment."

Bids, from anywhere between £50 and £50,000, were made

by teams across the company who had to demonstrate they'd consulted other people on the site who agreed the improvement was required.

The bids were scored on cost, longevity and the number of people who benefit. "But," said Mark, "there is a secret score – the compelling back story, the indefinable element that, whether it demonstrates a site's commitment to vision and values or brings a lump to your throat, you can't ignore."





Education team leader Paul Hampton at the conference and, below, the Thames Water display

## Education team different class

The Education Team was out in force to represent Thames Water at the international Association of Science Teachers (ASE) conference.

The three-day event, from January 8-10, was hosted by Reading University, and saw more than 2,000 science education professionals come together to explore the latest ideas for the teaching and learning of science.

Liz Banks, Tracy Sacks, Deena McKinney and Paul Hampton from the Education Team each took a turn on the Thames Water stand, meeting teachers from pre-school up to university and beyond!

Armed with the aptly named 'poo pipe', the Network Challenge and a whole host of goodies to give away, the team chatted with more than 200 teaching professionals during the event.

Liz said: "As this was our first year at the ASE conference we weren't sure what to expect, so it was incredible so many people were really keen to find out more about us. We talked to people from all over the world and were really pleased to also meet teachers from nearer to home – we signed up more than 50 teachers for class visits to our education centres and talks which was brilliant!"



# Stockpiles are rising in advance of any wet weather

After last year's dramatic weather, Thames Water is making sure it can meet any floods head-on, reports **MATTHEW KNOWLES**

**T**hames Water has invested heavily in equipment which will help reduce the impact of flooding if there is a repeat of last year's continuous rainfall this winter.

More than £700,000 has been spent on having the right protective kit available to our teams so they can react much faster to any flooding incidents across the region.

Stock rooms are now bulging with more than 48,000 sand bags, hundreds of pop-up flood barriers, and thousands of pounds worth of temporary pumps.

The super silent pumps can be used instead of tankers, which can be a noisy way of removing flood water and are often too big to be used in some areas.

To ensure Thames is able to offer its customers the highest level of service it has invested in a fleet of Portaloo's with the ability to deploy these quickly anywhere in the Thames Water Region.

Contract manager Justin Lambourne said: "We have invested about £250,000 in the latest instant flood barrier protection available. This technology is fast to deploy and very effective, and can be used to protect our works and pumping stations as well as customers' properties and essential services.

"We have created three response centres in Slough, Iver and Kidlington to minimise

the time it takes to act.

"On top of this we have more than 10,000 flood sacks in stock which are ideal to protect customers' properties and a stock of around 48,000 sandbags with a further 40,000 in reserve ready to be filled if required."

The Water-Gate flood barriers use the weight of the flood waters to create an impenetrable barrier and can be installed in minutes.

One Water-Gate barrier is the equivalent of using 770 sandbags and they can be connected together for large areas of flooding.



Aldershot sewage submerged by flood waters





Some of the 48,000 sand bags, left, which Thames Water has stockpiled in case of flooding and, above, one of the Water-Gate barriers

Thames has also increased the numbers of available 4x4 vehicles to ensure access to all areas.

And contractors Lanes has bought the first 8x8 all-wheel drive all-terrain super sucker in the country which can get to sites and services which were previously inaccessible due to floodwaters.

Justin added: "We are meeting weekly to look at our level of risk with continued modelling relating to weather and resource and the mechanism where we can gauge our ability to react if faced with significant weather changes is in place."

The networks teams have also ordered 10

mobile sewage treatment tanks which can act as a filter for the already dilute effluent pumped from the sewer.

They contain naturally occurring bacteria which remove any harmful compounds

Recent trials in Marlborough saw around a 30 per cent improvement in the quality of effluent compared to wastewater that hasn't been through the process.

Justin said: "While we cannot control the

**'WHILE WE CANNOT CONTROL THE WEATHER, WE CAN BE AS PREPARED AS POSSIBLE TO ENSURE OUR RESPONSE TO ANY WET WEATHER IS AS GOOD AS OUR CUSTOMERS WILL EXPECT'**

before it's discharged back into the water course reducing any potential harm to the rivers and its inhabitants.

weather, we can be as prepared as possible to ensure our response to any wet weather is as good as our customers will expect."

## Proactive approach to customers

As part of the planning for a wet weather event, Thames Water has written to more than 2,000 customers who were directly affected by flooding last year.

The letters to homes in 18 hotspots from Wraysbury to Cirencester explain the extensive work we have carried out in their area to minimise the risk of a repeat and include a leaflet with all the information and contact details they might require if they suffer sewer flooding in the future.

The Thames Water website has also been updated with the latest information about tankers, sandbags and Portaloo's and there is an electronic version of the sewer flooding leaflet.

A video for all staff explaining how to work safely in flooded conditions has also been produced and will be available on the portal soon alongside a briefing pack for any volunteers who might go out into

the field to help support any customers.

And a series of public speaking training days is taking place to help the many

staff asked to represent Thames at the dozens of public meetings and flood forums following last year's events.



Wraysbury was badly affected by flood waters



It's tempting to think that London's first major water supply came courtesy of Sir Hugh Myddleton's New River. But, as **MARTIN WELLS** reports, its origins go back to the 13th century

# Historic fountain gets the honour it really deserves

**O**kay, hands up if you know what the Great Conduit was. Take a bow if you know its importance in the story of London's water supply.

Don't worry; it's understandable if you're blissfully unaware of what it is or where it is. For centuries its substructure has lain derelict and abandoned, concreted over by the march of progress in the City of London, rubble-strewn, largely forgotten.

Late last year, though, its place in history was sealed by a simple ceremony conducted by Thames Water chief executive Martin Baggs and Roger North, Master of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators, who unveiled a plaque on the side of a Tesco supermarket in Cheapside.

Its wording – "The Great Conduit Stood in this Street Providing Free Water 13th Century to 1666" – states its role succinctly. But its story illuminates the ingenuity of our

medieval ancestors and has echoes of the work Thames Water does today.

Essentially, the conduit was a large fountain established by Henry III in 1247 when he allowed the citizens of London to establish a gravity-based lead and timber pipe from the springs near the River Tyburn at Stratford Place to west London. Up to this point, Londoners had taken water directly from the Thames, its tributaries or a dozen natural springs.

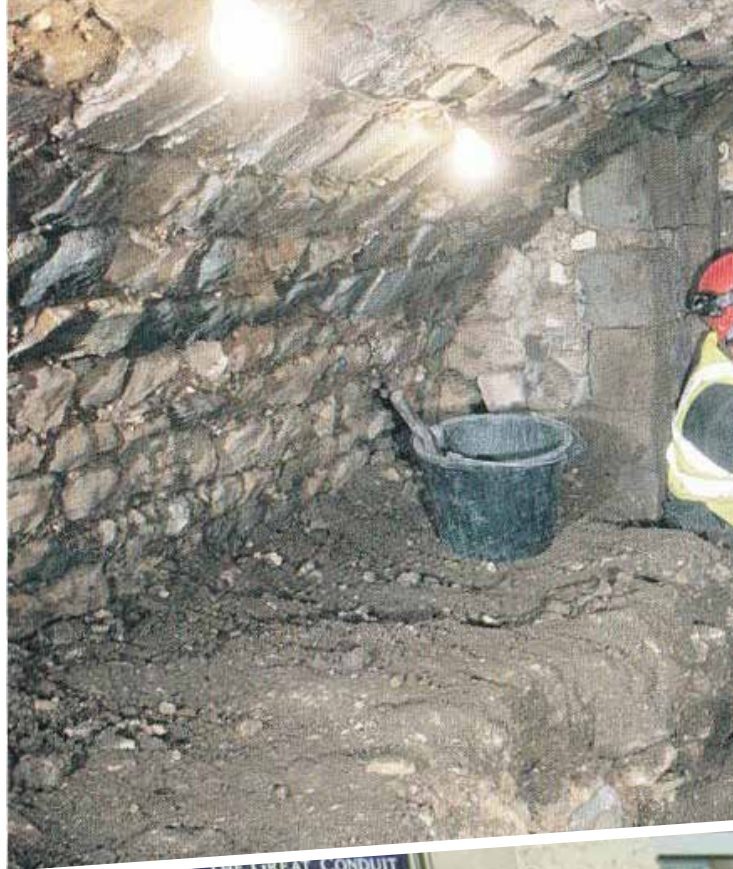
With the advent of the conduit, though, the city had a plentiful and, initially, free supply of clean water and the fountain quickly became a popular landmark, attracting businesses, like taverns and breweries.

Until the 1360s, the management of the conduit was the responsibility of four wardens. They maintained the pipes and were able to turn the flow on and off and charged tradesmen who relied on water, like brewers,

fishmongers and cooks. Professional 'water bearers', taking water away in six-gallon containers, were also charged but ordinary citizens were allowed to take water away for free in smaller pitchers.

**'TO THINK THAT EVERY DAY PEOPLE WALK PAST AN AREA WHICH WAS THE CENTRAL GATHERING PLACE FOR WATER 800 YEARS AGO WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING ABOUT IT IS AMAZING'**

Improvements followed, as did other conduits elsewhere in London. But the 'Great Conduit' as it later became known, was clearly as symbolic a structure as, say, the Cenotaph is today. In 1432, when Henry VI marched







**Clockwise from top left, the substructure of the conduit as it looked during the excavation in 1994; the Great Conduit hatched on a map of London from 1550 (copyright Museum of London Archaeology); a medieval etching of how the conduit might have looked when in use; Martin Baggs with Roger North (robed), Master of the Water Conservators, and Mehool Mistry, Tesco regional manager**

through London after being crowned King of France, the conduit was made to flow with wine and it also hosted other great royal pageants, such as the coronation of Queen Margaret in 1445 and the wedding procession of the ill-fated Anne Boleyn in 1533.

The end for the conduit came in 1666 when the Great Fire of London destroyed its lead tanks and pipework, rendering it unusable. In 1669 the upper parts were dismantled and its materials sold. By then, though, many houses in the Cheapside area had their own piped water, supplied from the New River.

For the next three centuries, the substructure lay derelict. But in 1899, a magazine article highlighted London's 'subterranean city' and included an illustration of what was believed to be a Roman subway. In fact, it was the

Great Conduit's substructure.

Instead of being preserved, the discovery was merely noted then abandoned, left to builders to use as a convenient spoil dump.

But almost 100 years later, in 1994, it was rediscovered during the sinking of an access shaft for BT. Despite being full of spoil, it was explored by archaeologists who carried out excavations and discovered its walls were two metres thick, more than capable of supporting the lead tanks and the water carried above them.

In the lead-up to the plaque unveiling, a team from Thames Water, led by field operations manager Daniel Brackley, has been down via the 1994 shaft, despite restricted access, trying to determine if more work can be done to survey the substructure.

Their work, though, indicates that a sewer in Cheapside, possibly constructed by Bazalgette, ends at the Great Conduit and work on it may have stopped when it reached it.

"We're searching our archives to see if there is any record of this," said Rob Casey, Thames' water modelling manager, assisting Ted Flaxman of the Water Conservators, who has made a study of the conduit.

And it's clearly a subject close to Martin Baggs' heart: "There are so many surprises about the history of London," he said. "But to think that every day people walk past an area which was the central gathering place for water 800 years ago without even knowing about it is amazing. It really does make you feel proud of what we do which even today is all too easily taken for granted."



# Sites for sore eyes

A monthly celebration of the best photographs of Thames Water assets



1. The Kempton Park triple expansion engine, by project definition engineer David Woolford

Email your picture of Thames Water scenes to [martin.wells@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:martin.wells@thameswater.co.uk)

## Company brainwave bank set to get new lease of life

What do 'nap pods', standing hotdesks, a singalong choir and free fruit Fridays have in common?

Well, these and dozens more were all suggestions how Thames Water could be improved, made in Innovation's radical eight-week MindHive project, rolled out across a sample group in the company and the eight2O alliance during the autumn.

Now, the results are being analysed and evaluated before, it's hoped, a new version of MindHive is rolled out, giving everyone the ability to make suggestions and – crucially – vote on the most popular.

Head of innovation George Taylor was pleased with how the project was received during the initial trial. "We had 1,000 users able to access the MindHive software," he said. "Around 250 logged on to take an active part

and we had a hardcore of about 100 getting engaged with it, which isn't bad."

From the 81 ideas submitted, 21 received enough 'funding' interest from the other participants to warrant further consideration.

"Some of the ideas were things the company is doing already, like subsidised gym membership," said George, "and that made us think about our communication. Someone also suggested an app for our customers so they can interact with us – that's also something we're doing."

With a fun element to as well as its ability to be a hi-tech suggestion box, George is hoping a new version could be up and running by March. He points out that a similar BBC scheme is a very successful generator of programme ideas and for Thames Water could be a huge benefit, especially in health and safety and customer service.



Do not disturb... the MetroNap EnergyPod

MindHive

as well as its ability to be a hi-tech suggestion box, George is hoping a new version could be up and running by March. He points out that a similar BBC scheme is a very successful generator of programme ideas and for Thames Water could be a huge benefit, especially in health and safety and customer service.

### Some more of your MindHive ideas?

#### Customer experience –

- Install Thames Water drinking fountains in public spaces
- A customer experience bus
- Thames Water 'mystery shoppers'

#### Health, safety and wellbeing

- Office garden greenery
- Volleyball court for lunchtime activity
- Exercise classes at work
- A more regular employee survey

#### And some other suggestions...

- Thames Water cycle club
- Build a five-a-side football pitch at Reading STW, Island Road
- Desktop 'drink water and move about' reminder
- Internal wiki
- Singalong choir (approved by Ministry of Information during World War II)





The grey water recycling plant is installed at the Wapping mosque and, below, the super-efficient washrooms

# Taking water efficiency to a spiritual dimension

A converted council depot in Wapping is helping its Muslim community embrace water efficiency to even greater levels, reports **MARTIN WELLS**

**F**or Thames Water, efficiency doesn't just mean targeting the company's millions of domestic and industrial customers.

It also means focusing energy and innovation on the spiritual centres of the community. After all, water is key to many of their sacred rituals.

In Wapping, at the heart of London's industrial and commercial Docklands, the company – in conjunction with the local Bangladeshi community – has helped to create what it claims is the world's most water-efficient mosque.

Created out of a former council depot, the Wapping Noorani Masjid (mosque) and Cultural Centre opened during Ramadan last summer and is in now in full-time use. The driving force behind its creation – and its efficiency – is former local councillor Abdal Ullah, who met Thames Water's sustainable water manager, Paul Rutter, to plan its innovations in early 2014.

"Abdal is a passionate advocate of sustainability," said Paul, "and he was determined to introduce this thinking into the new mosque. We met over a coffee and chatted about water efficiency and wudu – the ritual washing before prayer.

"We discussed collecting rainwater and recycling grey water and using this in the mosque," added Paul, "but some of the water used in wudu is ingested, so that ruled out using recycled water. The mosque elders were

clear only Thames Water's finest would do."

Added Paul: "In wudu, the water also has to be a clear and continuous stream of water – not aerated – so the mosque opted for infra-red mixer taps throughout, set to run at a low flow for a short time, minimising water use.

"We collect the wudu water and other sink waste in the toilets at the mosque and treat them using a grey water membrane recycling system, supplied by Aquality, and all toilet water comes from this recycling plant which benefits from Thames Water's expertise.

"Many systems fall foul of our regulation team

inspections because they quite often don't have well labelled pipework or introduce cross connection risks," said Paul. "No such problem here."

In addition to the green mosque, the local Muslim community will also benefit from a Thames Water efficiency drive.

"We know from analysing meter data that some Muslim families use more water," said Paul. "As part of our progressive metering programme we're offering all newly metered customers a smarter home visit. The water efficiency team wanted to make those visits as relevant and effective as possible. What better way to start than engaging with the Muslim community at the mosque."

Said Councillor Ullah: "Without Thames Water none of this would have happened. Thank you! It's great to see how the community has become more aware of their water use in the mosque."



By George!

## Innovation? That's not my job... is it?

All too often companies fall into the trap of having dedicated Innovation teams.

Now that might seem like an odd thing for the head of innovation to say but bear with me, my intentions are good.

Many companies can claim some significant successes from this type of approach – but does that make them 'innovative' companies?

We tend to think of small, start-up type businesses as innovative because they have to be successful or because it is innovation that gave them their break... but do they have innovation teams?

Unlikely – that's just what they do because they can.

The challenge for any large organisation is to ensure that everyone feels like they can innovate like a start-up does.

It's easy for us to put up our own imaginary barriers and think nobody will listen – but have you tried it?

The next time something jumps into your mind on the way to work or in the shower, write it down and share it with your manager or colleagues, talk about why you think it is a great idea and how it can help. I bet they will listen.

Innovation is fundamental to the prosperity of any company and we are no exception but innovation must come from the people who run it every day, the people who talk with customers, the people who unblock our sewers or fix our leaks – that is where we have the great ideas that will really make a difference.

Now I'm not saying we don't have great ideas – we do! But ask yourself if you have really tried out some of your ideas on your manager or colleagues.

If we can all say yes – then we're there. If not...

■ For examples of how innovative we all can be, see an update on the MindHive project on Page 22

George Taylor  
head of innovation





## It's a fat, fat, fat, fat world

We call blockages of fat and oil 'fatbergs' but a recent story about a blocked sewer in London showed us how they are described around the world.

When one clever journalist blamed the Whitehall blockage on the nearby Houses of Parliament the story quickly travelled around the globe.

More than 13.5 million people saw the story in November and here are some of the best descriptions of a fatberg:

- **Poland:** *blokda z tluszczu* = fat blockage
- **Wales:** *Mynydd braster* = fat mountain
- **Spain:** *Bolas de grasa* = grease balls
- **Mexico:** *Bolas de Manteca* = fat balls
- **India (Punjabi):** *Charbi da pihaar* = mountain of fat
- **Germany:** *Fettklumpen* = fat lump
- **France:** *Iceberg de gras* = iceberg of grease

## Race no obstacle to Lisa's fund-raising

Like most of us, Lisa Clarke made a commitment in January to get into shape after the excesses of Christmas and New Year.

But instead of the usual hollow resolutions, Lisa, *right*, is really putting herself through the mill in an arduous 'eliminator' race.

The five-mile run, at Pippingford Park in Sussex on February 7, takes the field through lakes, forests and hills to the limits of their endurance. And as well as improving her fitness, Lisa is raising money for Dingley Children's Centre at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading.

"My nephew Tyrese was diagnosed with cerebral palsy around six months ago and has been having physiotherapy there every week," she said. "The staff need new equipment and I want to do my bit."

■ **To donate to Lisa's cause, visit her website at [www.justgiving.com/Lisa-Clarke24](http://www.justgiving.com/Lisa-Clarke24)**



The new toilet block at the bazaar in Sakhipur, made possible thanks to Thames Water fundraising

# Community's clean machine

**T**hames Water's fund-raising is providing the materials and training so local people can build a ground-breaking co-composting plant in Rakibnagar.

When it goes operational next month, it will process human and poultry waste to generate natural fertilizer and treated clean water.

The project began in July 2014 and is due to be completed by the end of this month when 2,744 families from three different wards – 11,332 people – will benefit from the plant.

The local mayor, Abu Hanif Azad, said: "We would greatly benefit from such an initiative. In fact, this would be the first initiative of this kind in the

country in a town of this size."

Rakibnagar is surrounded by around 140 poultry farms where huge amounts of waste are generated and simply scattered to decompose. The town also has no proper system in place to dispose of human waste.

"These problems will soon be over when the plant operation starts," said Sumon Kumar Saha, the project co-ordinator of Bangladesh Association for Social Advancement (BASA).

BASA has been authorised to operate the plant and will arrange to collect, preserve and finally ship all waste, including perishables collected from door to door, poultry farms and local bazaars to the plant site for processing.

## New block means end to the bush trial

Every day more than 800 people use the Jail Khana Mor Bazaar in Sakhipur to sell and purchase goods.

The bazaar always had a mild stinking smell as the nearby bush was used as a toilet but last November the construction of a toilet block and water supply in the bazaar was

completed.

The toilets are now cleaned regularly and the female toilet is equipped with a bin for menstrual hygiene management.

Abdul Gafur Mondal, the secretary of the bazaar committee that monitors the overall maintenance of the toilets, said: "We have strictly prohibited the

use of the nearby bush as a toilet and we are raising awareness of the importance of good hygiene.

"Old habits don't change overnight but once someone uses the newly-constructed toilets and water source and notices the cleanliness, he or she prefers to use these new toilets."





# A festival of hardware!

If you're the sort who can't keep a car in the garage because you've only got enough room for all your jars of screws, Thames Water's equipment exhibition was just for you.

A two-day celebration of the hardware Thames' wastewater and water front-line staff can't do without, it brought users, suppliers and manufacturers together for a chance to share their professionalism, passion and knowledge.

Tool specialists Buck & Hickman and Brammer brought along the latest innovations along with their ranges while their regional representatives were on hand to answer specific questions.

One of the highlights of the exhibition were the specialist tool demonstration vehicles, tuck shop-style vehicles showcasing the latest hand and power tools as well as the Roebuck brand.

Delegates also saw a demonstration of a new e-procurement system, an online website built specifically for Thames Water which removes some of the bureaucracy involved in ordering equipment.

Thames Water's field operations specialist, Jasmine May, said: "I had a fantastic time at the event and had a chance to see all the latest equipment and understand how to

There's nothing maintenance crews like more than to wallow in a celebration of spanners and drills. **ANNIE CHINBUAH** went along to keep order

use the appropriate equipment according to the type of job.

"I feel we have new contacts and ways of ordering our equipment more efficiently."

Andrew Grant, Fobney site manager, added: "My team and I were pleasantly surprised by the whole event. We were able to try a number of different tools and give our feedback on things that may become standard across the company in future.

"It feels great to be consulted on decisions which affect us day to day and the technicians really like the autonomy of being able to order what they need, when they need it."

Marcus Grocutt, supply chain manager, said: "The event was a huge hit and our people provided meaningful feedback to be used going forward."

■ The event will be staged again in the spring, in the London area.



## Plumbing the heights

A company working on some of London's landmark developments has joined Thames Water's Approved Plumber scheme.

And by joining the programme, DG Robson Mechanical Services, which employs 150 plumbers and has been involved in helping to build the Olympic village and the Shard, has also become a part of the national WaterSafe scheme, also heavily supported by Thames Water.

WaterSafe, launched in 2013, recognises plumbers' knowledge of water fitting regulations and their qualifications.

Their certificates were presented by water quality and compliance manager Dave Reynolds whose team actively engages with developers and plumbers to ensure systems are installed correctly.

■ For more about approved plumbers, email Jim Rowsell at [approved.plumbers@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:approved.plumbers@thameswater.co.uk)

## £15k donation for open space

A public space in Brent is a better place to play thanks to a £15,000 donation for new playground equipment.

Part of Tiverton Green has been a construction site in recent months while work has been taking place on a sewer flooding alleviation scheme. Thames Water contractors Optimise agreed at the start of the project to refurbish the playground area but have been so impressed with the patience and friendliness of local people they went one step further and donated almost £15,000 to the council to spend on new equipment and railings to make the Green a fun and safe place for children to play.

Around 40 properties will benefit from the £6.1m scheme, many of which suffer sewer flooding internally. Work is expected to finish in May.

## Labs look to repeat awards success

The entries for the Excellence in Health and Safety awards 2015 are now in and, with submissions from across Thames Water and our contractors, it looks set to be bigger and better than ever.

Last year's winners included Thames Water Laboratories, which achieved zero health and safety

incidents for eight years, and Thames Tideway Tunnel for introducing monthly campaigns to promote health and wellbeing.

Martin Baggs, Thames Water's CEO, said: "I've seen many excellent initiatives that have really supported our business to improve and I'm sure this year's awards

will be better than ever, reflecting our commitment to health and safety.

"I'm looking forward to working with our judging panel to decide the winners."

The shortlist will be announced in April and all shortlisted entries will be invited to attend the awards ceremony in June.

## February

**9** – Silver Shovel event, Swindon STW, 10am-noon, **ground-breaking ceremony** to mark the CHP project, the first for eight<sub>2</sub>O.

**10** – **Network Challenge** for 100 students aged 14-19 at Fulham Studio School

**10** – 10am-4pm, Beckton Creekside Nature Reserve – **volunteer task day**, a post-Christmas work-out helping to clear scrub to create open areas for wildlife. Email peter.beckenham@thameswater.co.uk for details

**11** – Crossness Southern Marsh (Belvedere Road, Abbey Wood, SE2 9AQ) **volunteer task day** – reed clearance. Email karen.sutton@thameswater.co.uk for details

**13** – Thames Water **dress-down day** for WaterAid. Email claire.iredale@thameswater.co.uk for details

**13** – **Great Thames Bake-Off**. Bring in your home-made cake creations for the chance to be crowned Thames Star Baker

**17** – 10am-4pm, Beckton Creekside Nature Reserve – **volunteer task day**, a post-Christmas work-out helping to clear scrub to create open areas for wildlife. Email peter.beckenham@thameswater.co.uk for details

**21** – **WaterAid skydive**. Jump out of a plane to help some of the world's poorest communities. For details, visit <http://www.infiniteskydiving.co.uk/booking.html>

**27** – Crossness Southern Marsh (Belvedere Road, Abbey Wood, SE2 9AQ) **volunteer task day** – reed clearance. Email karen.sutton@thameswater.co.uk for details

## March

**11** – **Get Girls into Engineering!** Email liz.banks@thameswater.co.uk and tracy.sacks@thameswater.co.uk if you'd like to volunteer to help on the day

**13** – Thames Water **dress-down day** for Comic Relief. Email claire.iredale@thameswater.co.uk for details

**13** – **Comic Relief**. Volunteers needed to man the switchboards. Email katie.gibson@thameswater.co.uk or kevin.lennon@thameswater.co.uk for more details

**14** – Thames Water **Mud Run**. Log on to <https://surveymonkey.com/s/twmudrun> to register

■ **If you have an event you'd like to feature in this new column, just email [martin.wells@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:martin.wells@thameswater.co.uk). The deadline for inclusion is the third Monday in the month.**

# Alan wants to tell you a story

We've all got a book in us, apparently. But unlike most of us, Alan Riches has published his, as **MARTIN WELLS** reports

**L**ike any doting grandfather, Alan Riches loves to tell a cracking bedtime story. But in Alan's case, his colleagues at Thames Water love to hear them too.

For years, he's enjoyed writing and has even dabbled with a

novel but his dream was always to have a book published.

Now, to the delight of his two seven-year-old grandsons Ben and Leo, and his colleagues in the waste operations control centre at Kemble Court, his dream has come true.

At the end of last month, *The Forest Tournament* was published. The charming story of a family of mice who take part in the animal kingdom's secret Olympics, it features illustrations by Alan's partner Sue Newman and three very recognisable characters – a grandfather mouse and his two young grandkids.

"I've always loved telling stories, especially

to my two eldest grandchildren," said Alan, 55. "This one started to take shape after the 2012 Olympics and, of course, the main characters are me, Ben and Leo, but as mice.

"When I told people at work I'd written a story they had a look and persuaded me to try to get it published. Now it's out – on Amazon, as an e-reader download and as a glossy book. It's great bedtime reading for kids."

With his first book completed, Alan is now working on his novel, set around his time in the navy, just after the Falklands Conflict. And this time it has a very adult theme.

"One of the lads wrote to Cosmopolitan asking for penfriends and he ended up being sent literally thousands of letters from all over the world. There were obviously too many for him to deal with so the ones with pictures were pinned to the walls of the hangar of the aircraft carrier we were on and a lot of the lads picked their own women penfriends.

"The novel is going to be a fictional account of what happens when they finally meet up with their penpals – there'll be a romance, some seedy episodes... and you've got to have a murder, haven't you?"

He's also planning more adventures of the mice family ... so watch this

space for details.

■ **The Forest Tournament is available on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) but for a signed discounted copy, email [arichbrfc1@hotmail.com](mailto:arichbrfc1@hotmail.com)**



## Inside next month...

I don't know about you but the year seems to me to be flying by. Crikey, if fireworks, Halloween costumes and Christmas cards went on sale tomorrow I wouldn't be at all surprised.

But if it's a celebration you're after, we



can promise you some great reasons to raise a glass in next month's Source. We'll be covering the official beginnings of two landmark Thames Water ventures – eight<sub>2</sub>O and the infrastructure alliance – as well as the grand opening of the Lee Tunnel, left, the 150th anniversary of the inauguration of Sir Joseph Bazalgette's London sewerage system and the remarkable 50-year career of a Thames Water worker... who's still going strong!

All this *and* the man creating a fatberg art installation in Holland!



# chillout zone

Yes, we all know you've got a demanding, stressful job. But do you know how to ease off after work? Here, two Thames Water staff members go head-to-head as we rate their laidback credentials...



## Cliff Street,

31, is a consultant working on the credit and collection transformation (CCT) project in Walnut Court, Swindon. He's single and currently lives in Usk, South Wales.



## Flavia Macedo

Sludge treatment process engineer Flavia, 26, lives in Reading but hails from Brazil. She's single and doesn't mind being called a slacker!

1. What's the first thing you do when you finish work on Friday night?

If I'm going home I'll stop off for a swim as I'm about to start training for the Bosphorus Cross Continental Race. If I'm off to London to see mates, we'll have a lively dinner. As we're a mix of South Americans, South Africans and English we could end up at salsa clubs or do a late BBQ. **3**

I get a shower then go out with friends in Reading. I share a flat with two others and we'll often invite people round and cook and have a nice, relaxing time at home. I also like to run and cycle and I'm also a keen slackliner... it's like tightrope walking but the rope is not so taut. **3**

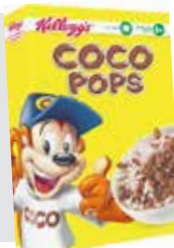
2. Tell us about the music on your iPhone?

At the gym I'll have some heavy drum and bass or metal (Rammstein). For driving I've got lots of Jack Johnson, Lana Del Rey and James Bay but at home or studying I like classical – the theme from the Old Spice advert is one of my favourites (*Carl Orff's Carmina Burana*). **3**

Coming from Brazil I've always been surrounded by music and dance and I like sambarock and bossa nova music and listening to Brazilian radio on the internet, particularly jazz and soul programmes. I like dancing to samba and forro (*a form of Brazilian folk music similar to Cajun*). **4**

3. Are you a great cook or a takeaway junkie? What's your signature dish?

I make a mean Sunday roast, great fajitas and I've been told I'm a master at poached egg, but I really excel at making a bowl of Coco Pops! I get the ratio of pops to milk just right! If I'm having a takeaway I prefer Thai cooking. **3**



I prefer cooking with fresh ingredients rather than ready meals. An aubergine lasagne is my favourite dish to cook along with what the French call Poisson d'Americaïne – a fish stew with tomatoes. If I eat out I like to go to Loch Fyne or the London Street Brasserie. **4**

4. Send us your favourite picture off your phone, and tell us why?

This picture is of my new niece and me looking after her. I'm probably not the best babysitter because I passed out as soon as she fell asleep! I've also got one of me pulling a baby croc' out of the water while I was piranha hunting in the Amazon! **3**



I love this picture of my parents at the beach near our home in Florianopolis in Santa Catarina. They're both retired – my mother Ana was a dentist and my father Antonio was a chemical engineer in a brewery but he now lectures a little and judges beer competitions! He's probably the reason why I'm an engineer... and like beer! **3**



5. What's your perfect holiday destination and why?

I like remote, interesting places with sun and beaches. I've travelled a lot in remote places like the Amazon, the Bolivian desert and gotten lost in Peru. My next trip, though, is to Antarctica where I'm hoping to go diving under glaciers. **4**

I worked in France before I came to the UK 18 months ago but I love Formentera, the smallest of the Balearic Islands, near Ibiza. Next I'm off to Costa Rica but, to be honest, I enjoy a place more for the people than the location. **3**

6. What's the best gift anyone could give you this year?

Healthy and happy lives for me and my family or a lifetime supply of biltong (*South African dried beef or antelope meat*). Or a talking lion... you can tell I've just watched *The Chronicles of Narnia*! **4**

If someone wants to renew my whole wardrobe, both for work and going out, that would be a good start! **3**

Total: 20

Total: 20

**The verdict:** Samba-dancing Flavia's so Brazilian she can probably take free kicks like Roberto Carlos, while globetrotting jock Cliff is so tough even his name suggests he's made out of granite – oh, and did we mention he's a water polo and rugby INTERNATIONAL! It's a tough call... so we declare it a draw?

# It's time to **rise** to the occasion!

**Are you better at buns than Mary Berry?**

**Or handier with wholemeal than Paul Hollywood?**

Now's your chance to prove it in the Thames Water bake-off  
– back for the third year.

- Bake some delicious treats
- Send a picture of your creations to  
**T4Beventsteam@thameswater.co.uk**
- Sell them to colleagues in support of WaterAid
- The best-looking cake wins!

Donate your proceeds to [justgiving.com/thamesbake](https://justgiving.com/thamesbake)  
Photos must be in by **Friday 20 February**

