

AINA CASE STUDY

FAIRER, STRONGER AND MORE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Rickmansworth Waterways Trust



Batchworth Lock Canal Centre is a focus for educational activity in Rickmansworth

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“I had the best school trip ever!”

Rickmansworth Waterways Trust is a charity which brings together people who are interested in canals, education and the environment – as well as their local area. Formed in 1991, the Trust works to provide opportunities for people from all walks of life to experience and learn about our canals. It operates primarily as an educational organisation, but also runs the Batchworth Lock Canal Centre and helps organise the annual Rickmansworth Canal Festival.

The Trust is a voluntary organisation with one full time and one part time member of staff. All other support is provided by volunteers who donate their time without charge. Volunteers can gain nationally-recognised awards and gain real experience in a wide range of skills. The Trust finds roles for as many people as possible and encourages their supporters to take responsibility for their work.

'Learning at the Lock' is the name of their important education programme for key stages one and two, which includes activities such as dressing up, canal crafts and building models. Outside activities can include working the locks and taking part in special canal trips on board the Trust's own purpose built trip boat. More than 1,000 children take part each year and the programme is available to all local schoolchildren (plus some from further afield in Buckinghamshire and nearby London Boroughs) at nominal cost, with free transport provided to the teaching rooms at the Canal Centre, which is owned by Veolia Water.

Teachers value the opportunities the Trust provides: “Excellent, well planned and resourced. The children do not stop talking about it”; “My class had an amazing time and it was a successful trip”; “The content and the organisation was faultless”. Children seem to enjoy it too: “I had the best school trip ever!”; “Thank you for the fabulous time at the wicked Batchworth Lock!”

The Trust has also restored one of the last wooden narrowboats, built in 1936, which traded on the Grand Union Canal for use as a floating classroom and as a working boat for other age groups. The boat is displayed at rallies and festivals and is used to train new boat captains and crews, as well as having a growing role in providing greater access for young people and especially those at risk of social exclusion.

The work of the Trust has been recognised by the Waterway Renaissance Awards when their efforts won an award for best education project, as well as being highly commended in the community category.