



Annual Restoration Conference 2023

Speakers

George Rogers



George is a Development Manager at Chesterfield Canal Trust. He is trained as a civil and structural design engineer and has previously designed civil infrastructure for National Grid and water companies. He is now employed by the Chesterfield Canal Trust to manage all aspects of restoration project development, funding and delivery alongside all necessary legal agreements, stakeholder engagement and strategic positioning.

George has a long history with canals and particularly canal restoration. He grew up living next to the Cromford Canal and now lives close to the Derby and Sandiacre. He has volunteered extensively with Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) leading, cooking and volunteering on over 60 week-long canal camps and festivals and is currently a WRG director. He is part of the high-level panel for the Restoration Hub and has previously been a Trustee of the Friends of the Cromford Canal, establishing and chairing their Strategic Restoration Committee alongside spells as the work party organiser and webmaster.

Just occasionally, George gets to go boating, mainly by cherry picking the best opportunities to meet up with his parents who recently retired onto a narrowboat as continuous cruisers. Most recently he has enjoyed time on the Caldon, the Anderton Boat Lift, Standedge Tunnel and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal around Skipton.



Gemma Gregory



Gemma is a Countryside Service Manager at Derbyshire County Council. She originally trained as an ecologist and geographer, and has been involved in countryside management for her entire career, both in Local Authorities and for a brief stint in academia.

Gemma is now employed by Derbyshire County Council as a Countryside Service Manager for the Countryside Service, recently passing 17 years in the Service. She is responsible for the development and management of over 120 countryside sites across the county of Derbyshire, including woodlands, country parks, multi-user trails and, of course, canals.

In what has been a significant shift in expertise, Gemma has been involved in the management, maintenance and restoration of the Derbyshire section of the Chesterfield Canal for the entirety of that 17 years, supporting the day-to-day work of a team of site managers, project officers, rangers and wardens. Significant achievements include the ongoing development of Tapton Lock Visitor Centre in Chesterfield, increased and diversified boating on the canal and making the case for significant ongoing investment in the maintenance of the canal's infrastructure during times of austerity in Local Government. She is a member of the Chesterfield Canal Partnership.

Gemma has ambitions to learn how to pilot a stand-up paddleboard, and loves catching sight of a kingfisher as it whizzes past along the canal – a sign of successful canal management in her book.



Evie Challinor



Evie Challinor is an Ecologist and Environmental Scientist.

Evie recently joined The Trust as an Ecologist, supporting the Levelling Up Funded project to restore a section of the Montgomery Canal.

Having completed an MSc in Conservation & Land Management, Evie has worked in a variety of roles, including working on a nature conservation strategy with the National Trust and working in people relations with Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Before joining The Trust, Evie worked as a Countryside Ranger for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These roles have allowed her to follow her passion for nature conservation, improving and restoring some of the diverse habitats that we are privileged to have in the UK, alongside engaging people with nature.

The Montgomery restoration project piqued Evie's interest for the unique challenge that it presents in balancing the enhancement of some highly designated sites with the opportunity to reconnect people with the beautiful landscape around them. And to top it all off, the project provides the opportunity to really make a difference on her doorstep.



Richard Harrison



Richard is a Principal Project Manager at Canal & River Trust, working as part of a multi-disciplinary team to deliver significant restoration works on the Montgomery Canal.

Prior to this current project, Richard worked as a Project and Programme Manager on the Unlocking the River Severn project. He has been involved with a variety of countryside, community, environment and waterway related projects for over 20 years.

Richard first joined the Canal & River Trust (then British Waterways) back in 2006 as a Volunteer Co-ordinator to manage volunteering projects as part of the Cotswold Canals restoration, so he thinks it's great to be back undertaking further canal restoration work again, this time on the Montgomery.

During his time at the Trust as well as his Volunteering role, Richard has worked across both contract and project management, managing a wide variety of contracts, projects, programmes and teams across the South West, London and the Midlands waterways.



Mark Pring



Mark Pring is the Head of Temporary Works for Kier Group.

Mark has spent the latest 25 years managing the many aspects of Temporary Works on all types of construction projects. As well as managing a team of temporary works engineers within Kier, he also teaches temporary works courses.

He is a member of the Temporary Works Forum and is acknowledged to be as one of the UK's leading experts in this field.



Roger Clay



Roger Clay is Engineering Director at Avon Navigation Trust.

With a lifetime interest in boating right from childhood, Roger has experience on British and European waterways, sea sailing and pilotage, canal carrying, RYA training and more. He is trained and qualified as a Mechanical Engineer.

For over 20 years Roger was in manufacturing heat exchange and hydraulic equipment for the capital goods market for ships, rail traction, aircraft and power stations.

Roger switched to IT Manufacturing Systems, and has nearly 20 years' experience in Project Management, Training and Consultancy. He has been an Avon trustee for 30 years, both Upper Avon Navigation Trust and Avon Navigation Trust with a short break prior to amalgamation. He has developed the Engineering plan and estimate for the Extension to Warwick.

Roger is also involved in Local Government with good contacts at Stratford and Warwick District Councils.