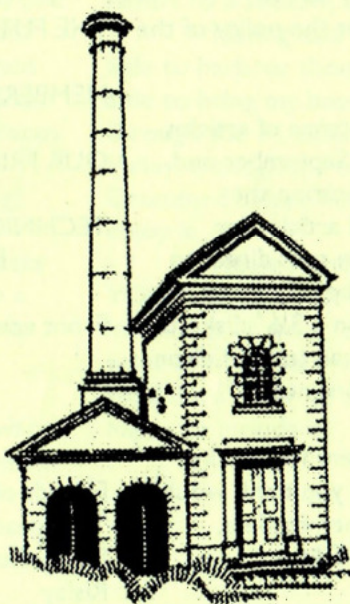
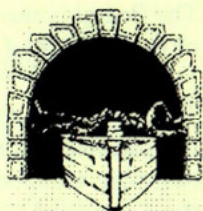


THE PORTAL



THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL
NUMBER 1

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The Portal is the quarterly magazine of the Friends of the Cromford Canal.

The Friends of the Cromford Canal exist to promote the restoration to navigable condition of the whole of the Cromford Canal.

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Last dates for acceptance of articles - end of March, June, September and December, for publication the following month. All articles for publication should be sent direct to the Editor, and can be submitted on paper, as text files on a 3½" diskette or preferably by e-mail to the Editor at: XXXXXXXXXX

If YOU have any talent for writing, drawing or anything you think would be of interest to other readers, PLEASE contact the Editor.

The Editor is NOT responsible for blank or missing pages in this magazine - if you have any, please return it to the Secretary at the address below.

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Front cover: Lea Wood Pump House



Me and my big mouth..... I foolishly offered to help out with the Web Site and Mailing List and I've ended up with THIS job too! I have edited magazines before, but never actually started one off, so this is something of a "first" for me. I do realise how important having high quality communications are for any organisation, so I'm happy to do this: I'm better at word processing than I am at shovelling!

As a boat owner with a cottage whose garden actually backs onto the Canal I have more than a passing interest in seeing the Canal restored and I'm aware of the economic benefits that canal restoration can bring. I'm also aware (from bitter experience) that there's

absolutely no point in just restoring a canal to "look pretty". The **ONLY** thing that will keep a restored canal open is boat traffic. Without it, any expensively-dredged canal will quickly revert to a shallow, useless ditch.

Having said that, I am now able to harbour thoughts of being able to bring my boat Rumpus up through the 14 locks and into Golden Valley, through the tunnel and on to Cromford before I'm too old to enjoy it.

Please remember that this is **YOUR** magazine: let me have articles, 'cause I can't write 'em all! if you want to make your views known, send me a letter or email and I'll be happy to include it.

NEWS

Since the public meeting was held on March 13th in Ironville Village Hall, things have moved on apace, though it will be some time, I suspect, before work actually starts on the ground. There have been a number of planning matters in the Ironville area brought to the attention of the nascent committee: discussions on these matters are

ongoing.

More interestingly, Hugh Potter attended a meeting of the Arkwright Society recently. This body is heavily involved with the Cromford end of the Canal and is currently restoring the wharf buildings and setting up an exhibition about the canal there. They are all for what we are trying to do and would wish to

join as corporate members once our organisation and structure permits. I think it's fair to say that to get such a long-established and prestigious body

on our side at such an early stage in our life can do us nothing but good and we await developments in this front with interest!

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

by Mike Kelley

Greetings to you all and welcome to this the first magazine of the Friends of the Cromford Canal. So much has happened over the last few months, I hardly know where to begin. Indeed it was only last autumn that I was searching through the Internet to try and find a group who were working toward the reopening of the Cromford Canal and was somewhat amazed to find that no such group existed.

"How could this be?", I wondered. The Cromford must rank as one of the most beautiful canals in the country and has the potential to be among the most popular. Not only for its natural beauty, but also for its significant historical value. The Cromford Canal originally served the Arkwright Mills at Cromford, which have now been designated as part of the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site by UNESCO. These mills were in effect the world's first factory systems and hence of significant importance in the historical development of mankind during the Industrial Revolution. So the Cromford mills now have been given their rightful place, but the canal that

served them has not.

No one group was looking after the interests of the Cromford Canal. In fact the canal was officially regarded as two separate items, the northern section and the southern section, as though they were not the same canal. In my search to find people of like mind, people who wanted to see the whole of this 'Sleeping Beauty' revived I was put in touch with the Chairman of the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association, Mr. Howard Smith. Through Email correspondence I became a member of the E C P & D A and found that Howard had already written in the Erewash 'Outlook' magazine, that it may now be time for them to start looking at the Cromford.

The E C P & D A have successfully preserved the once threatened Erewash canal and they have been functioning as an Association for over 33 years. Indeed they were responsible for the restoration by volunteers of the 'first' lock on the Cromford Canal, Langley Bridge Lock, adjacent to the Great Northern Basin. (First is a relative term, it is lock number 14 counting

down from Cromford) Now they were considering pushing north from their head of navigation and into the Cromford, but only so far. The opening of the whole of the Cromford was not being considered at that stage.

In November 2001 a sub-committee of the E C P & D P was formed, 'The Friends of the Cromford Canal' (FCC) An intensive letter writing campaign in December of over 100 letters resulted in some amazing, fast and encouraging responses. The support was there, just waiting for someone to motivate it. British Waterways sent their Operations Manager Stewart Sim to look at the whole length of the Canal with us and The Chief Executive of The Waterways Trust, Roger Hanbury is due to visit us in April. Local Councillors, MP's and MEP's have also expressed an interest in this project, but none more so than the people of Ironville.

These wonderful people have been so actively behind us by correspondence, phone calls and personal visits that I have really been made to realise that this project

means so very much to them: so much so that I now feel we have to succeed if only for the sake of these dear people. The first Public Meeting by the FCC was at Ironville Church Hall on Wednesday 13th March. Over 200 people attended with over 70 standing throughout, so much enthusiasm was demonstrated that we heard not one negative comment through the whole evening. That was the first day the FCC was officially 'launched' and just one week after this meeting approximately 180 had become members. Yes from 13 to 180 in one week! So now we are working hard to get an infrastructure in place worthy of such membership. You will see from this magazine who are our officers and how you can get in touch with them.

At a meeting in London on 19th March where British Waterways and the Waterways Trust released their 'Unlocked and Unlimited' campaign for the future of the inland waterways, the Cromford was not mentioned, but we are now in The Renaissance of the Waterways, so the Cromford will be there soon, with your help.

THE FUTURE STARTS HERE!

by The Editor

It was "Standing Room Only" at Ironville Village Hall on March 13th, for the first public meeting on the proposal to restore the Cromford

Canal. A mixed audience, mostly local, with a few representatives from local government and about a third boaters heard Mike Kelley outline the

history of the canal, with the increased prominence thrust upon it by the designation of the Derwent valley as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A description of the three parts of the canal: the lower section from Langley Mill to the top of Ironville Locks, the central section through Golden Valley and the Butterley Tunnel and the northern section to Cromford itself indicated some of the problems the restoration will throw up. The tunnel itself is regarded as an important tourist attraction in its own right, linked with a trip by heritage standard and narrow gauge railways to produce a unique circular trip.

The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council report, listing the northern end of the canal as having more importance than the rest was mentioned, as were the things that need to be done before work can begin on the ground: a feasibility study, investigation of water supply, an environmental impact report, an assessment of the benefits (or otherwise) that the restored canal might bring and proposals on the sustaining the project once complete - maintenance and the like. All this takes time, we were told, but one essential was a strong member base, hence the meeting.

This ended the formal presentation, the rest of the meeting dealing with questions and answers from the audience. The following points were raised:

Ownership of the canal,

both now and in the future - the section between Langley Mill and Jacksdale will have to be bought back but landowners can usually be persuaded that the restoration will be a Good Thing.

Why should the northern end have a higher priority? This is only at the moment because of the Heritage considerations and the intention is to restore from Langley Mill up - the mistake made with the Grantham Canal is not to be repeated! However, work at the northern end could be used as a lever to get the rest done.

With regard to water supply, back pumping up the locks is one option to be seriously considered. Derek Newton, the local BW Manager, said that though things were in an early stage, BW were positively supporting the restoration effort.

Butterley Tunnel's state was mentioned, as was the Bullbridge Breach, but given the expertise just over the hill at Butterley Engineering, a steel aqueduct both here and for the River Erewash crossing (the latter built broad) would not be too much of a problem.

Any possibility of getting the trip boat operation from Cromford Wharf going again? Yes, providing the operation doesn't upset the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) - possibly a horse-drawn or electric boat option. There is one possible problem, glossed over a little in my opinion: it might be necessary to restrict public boating access to the

top end to avoid disturbing the SSSI too much. However, it has been suggested that as part of a "living museum" an environmentally-friendly water bus service would be provided over the last mile or so of the canal, enabling boaters to reach the end.

It was also suggested that the earthmoving contractor who blocked a good section of the canal in the Ambergate area might be "persuaded" to unblock it again.

With regard to a timescale for all this, we could be looking at rather less than the 15 years that was suggested at the meeting. Possible sources of finance were discussed and it was indicated that the canal would revert to BW once restored, as most others have. There were concerns expressed about the soon to be constructed access road to the opencast site alongside the canal, but this is only temporary and the plant could be used to do some digging on the canal's behalf.

There is no problem with the diversion at Langley Mill: what appears to be a single span bridge is in fact a 3 span one, the other two being filled in, so a potential conflict

with a road scheme which may not even go ahead can be avoided.

It was considered that once things start happening, the current low priority for the southern section might get revised: once again it was stressed that restoration has to start from the Langley Mill end, so a navigable waterway can be created from day one. It is now widely accepted that the "vandalism" of Codnor Park Reservoir was grossly overdone, but that restoration work at Ironville could result in a "prestige site" which could act as a spur to progress the whole restoration.

Expressions of support were received from representatives from the Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust, the Cotswold Canals Trust, the Melton & Oakham and Rochdale Canal Societies, also from the Waterways Recovery Group. There were many photos on display, including those taken the last time the Ironville flight was cleared. Over 100 members were signed up at the meeting and the Chief Executive of The Waterways Trust is visiting later this year, so the sleeping beauty could be awakening!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Yvonne Shattower

A very warm welcome to the Friends of the Cromford Canal. I have been amazed at how quickly news of our activities has spread. We now have more than 200

members and new names get added every day. It has been very interesting to see the different areas of the country that are represented - our membership reaches from

Southampton and Budleigh Salterton in the south to Warrington in the north, as well as a wide range from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. If you have borrowed or otherwise "come across" this copy of The Portal, then how about joining us and getting a copy of your own? Membership only costs £5 for individuals and £8 for couples. If there isn't a form with this copy, ask the person who lent you the copy, contact me on the address on the back cover, or email the editor and we'll get one to you PDQ!

Many members have given an email address. This is appreciated as it will greatly help us with providing information to members at

no cost to the Friends, but can I PLEASE make an appeal for these to be carefully and accurately written on your form. As you will appreciate, one wrong letter or full stop can make all the difference to your address, and whilst your friendly local postman might be able to make sense of it, as far as I know, email can't! If you are a member and go online in the future, please contact the Editor so he can put you on the mailing list.

Keep those membership forms coming in - remember that the more members we have the more influence we can exert to get this project under way, and awaken our "Sleeping Beauty".

**IMPORTANT NOTICE!
PUBLIC MEETING!!
RIDDINGS COMMUNITY CENTRE!!
THURSDAY 25TH APRIL!!!
7-30 PM!!!!**

AGENDA

Membership

Constitution

(A copy of the constitution can be obtained by e-mail from howshe@supanet.com)

Report on meeting with Derbyshire Wildlife

Future Activities

OUR FRIENDS ELECTRONIC

by The Editor

Those members who gave an email address on their Membership Application Form will have discovered that they are suddenly getting emails from the Friends. This is because we're in a modern electronic age where it's possible to communicate more-or-less instantly with people all over the world: Khartoum or Kegworth, it makes no difference!

It was decided very early on that members should have a forum where they could freely exchange ideas, debate thorny problems and talk about the work of the Friends - hence the Mailing List. This is a "closed" list - in other words, you can't "just join" - you have to be on

the membership list. Yvonne sends me a list of new members' email addresses and they get added to the list.

A summary of goings-on in the List will be published here each quarter. So far, there's not been a great deal of discussion, other than one on the dimensions of the restored canal west of Butterley Tunnels and one on Hartsay Wharf, which has yielded a picture for a future issue of *The Portal*. If you don't want to be on the Mailing List, you can unsubscribe yourself: it's not compulsory to be on it, but you WILL get to hear about things before they get into print (like the Riddings Public Meeting).

A PROFILE OF "THE BOSS"

(Editor's Note: I asked Mike to supply me with a "profile" as I feel it's important that the membership gets to know something about the officers. I'm going to ask all the Officers of the Friends to do the same: consider yourselves duly warned!)

Mike Kelley was born in Alvaston, Derby. His school was by the side of the of the Derby Canal during its declining

years. He has hired boats for holidays since 1963 when to hire a boat for such a holiday was a rarity.

He trained as a mechanical engineer at Rolls Royce, later obtaining his Teacher's Certificate of Education from Nottingham University. He taught at the secondary comprehensive schools of Somercotes and Swanwick Hall for about eight years.

At the age of 40 Mike the wanderlust struck and he's currently

the Head of Training for the newly producing oilfields in Sudan. He specialises in "making things happen" where such was considered almost impossible - ideal attributes for our Chairman! In Sudan he set about establishing a technical training centre for people in a war torn area that had never had such before. They now have an established, fully equipped Training Centre and workshops, catering for the needs of over one hundred trainees.

Similarly, prior to Sudan, he carried out a similar job for Canadian Occidental Petroleum in Yemen, a post he held for six years. When he arrived in Yemen there was again no training taking place at all for that company. Then within three years of his arrival (even though a local civil war there interrupted progress) he had designed and had built, three separate training centres, with classrooms, libraries, laboratories, training workshops and three

computer instruction rooms. There was a staff of twenty-two instructors, all working under Mike's direction.

Before his work in Yemen, he worked in Abu-Dhabi as assistant training co-ordinator for three years. While there he was in charge of the construction of a large training machine shop. Also he spent one year as a senior lecturer during the Gulf War in Bahrain.

Mike has faced many hardships and difficult situations, for example he was in the city of Tripoli, Libya, the night the Americans bombed it, he was assigned to the construction of an American Field Hospital during the Gulf War, he was caught up in the Yemen Civil war and had to be evacuated off the beaches there by the French Foreign Legion and was at a gas plant in Libya the night it blew up. So he says, 'Working to open up the Cromford Canal will be a light relief.'

TECHNICAL TERMS EXPLAINED: BACK PUMPING

by The Editor

Those of us who use the waterways are already aware of the strange and often unfathomable terms and expressions which form part of the boater's specialised vocabulary. In this series of occasional articles I will try to explain their meaning and relevance.

In the report of the Public

Meeting earlier, mention was made of back pumping at the locks to save water. What does this mean?

Every canal constantly loses water: through evaporation (though this tends not to be significant in Derbyshire!) through leakage through the canal's puddle bed (puddle is the canals term for soft clay, used to seal

the bed) or through use of locks. Every time a lock is used, one lock-full of water goes downhill: more on our canal than most as she was built with broad locks, rather than the narrow 7' wide ones in the main part of the system.

This has to be replaced at the summit level, which accounts for the reservoirs at Butterley and Codnor Park, the abandoned one above Butterley Tunnel, the stream feeder at the Cromford end and the pumping station at Lea Wood - all there to put water into the summit level.

We've already effectively lost one-and-a-half of these: the Butterley Tunnel reservoir was abandoned long ago, though we still get the water which drains down from the Midland Railway Centre's Country Park - a not inconsiderable flow on occasions. Codnor Park reservoir was "vandalised" in the name of flood prevention a few years ago, so one problem (particularly if the canal gets really busy) is going to be water supply.

Rather than let the water run away to "waste" downhill, it is possible to instal back pumping - large, automatic pumps which are triggered into operation by a difference in the "normal" water levels. The pumps run to restore the water level, thus effectively cutting

down the amount of water flowing downhill at any one time.

Though there is an installation at Langley Mill, this one is fairly well hidden (as they should be). A much more visible local installation can be seen at Trent Lock near Long Eaton. There are two pubs and a Tea Room and usually a fair amount of boat traffic in the summer, so it's worth a visit anyway. If you stand on the bridge below the lock, looking at it, there's a small brick building to the left of the lock, which is where the pumps live. You can clearly see the two black inlet pipes going into the River Trent end of the building, whilst the flow from the pumps usually washes the bows of the pair of working boats that usually moor there.

Installing something like this up the 14 locks would very effectively reduce our water loss to the rest of the system and help us not be totally reliant on the reservoirs. Other canals have done this with great effect: the Basingstoke Canal has no reservoirs, relying on springs on its summit level to feed the canal. Because of this, it suffered from major water supply problems once it was restored. The installation of back pumping has meant that it is now open all summer, rather than when the springs are flowing fast in the winter.

