

THE PORTAL



THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL
NUMBER 3

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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: editor@cromfordcanal.org.uk. Pictures for The Portal or the Web Site should be scanned at 200 dpi (dots per inch) and saved to a size of 600 by 400 pixels and may be sent electronically or sent on disk or CD.

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 alongside.

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Front cover: Our Chairman (complete with sandwich board) striding out for Cromford on the Sponsored Walk

Friends of the Cromford Canal
"Fairmead"
Derby Road
Risley
DERBYSHIRE DE72 3SS



Happy Christmas! Yes, this is the last edition of The Portal for 2002 as the next one comes out in the New Year. We've not had a bad nine months or so: from no members to over 400, a number of meetings held, a successful Sponsored Walk and more plans in the pipeline.

There's a Member's Meeting at Ironville Church Hall on Wednesday November 6th. This is more of a social affair, with a Pie & Pea Supper and a talk by our newly-appointed Archivist, Hugh Potter.

Early next year there's going to be Operation Ironville - A mammoth clean-up of the Ironville flight of locks: the intention is to clear a lot of the undergrowth so we can look at the state of the stonework in the lock chambers and to remove all the rubbish that's been dumped in there since it last got cleared out in 1976!

In the longer term, we've got to start thinking seriously in terms of a strategy to progress the restoration. The recent visit by Roger Hanbury of The Waterways Trust was most encouraging - he's written us a letter indicating how we should proceed and this is currently occupying most of the Committee's time. There will be "something definitive" in the next issue.

One thing that is becoming very clear is

that there is a lot of talking to be done before serious spades are put into the ground - we must approach the wildlife lobby, local authorities and landowners, listen to their points of view and get them all pulling with us so that when we present them with a set of concrete proposals there are not too many headaches.

To my mind, the first Big Practical Thing is to fund raise for a feasibility study. Though we **KNOW** the Canal can be restored, somebody without our sometimes rose-tinted spectacles has got to take a long hard dispassionate look at our plans and suggest ways of overcoming all the obstacles, which is going to cost us money.

Of course, it may be possible to do some restoration work before the "big push" to open the whole Canal: Operation Ironville is one example of a smaller scale project which can be done with relatively unskilled labour, as distinct from the rather more specialised skills which will be needed later.

I hope readers will note the improved quality of reproduction in this edition: an enforced change of printer (due to his holiday) has enabled an enhanced quality of photo reproduction (with a slight increase in cost). Please let me know if you like it!

Before closing, I must thank those members who have contributed to The Portal. Having been in the past the writer of a magazine as well as the

Editor, you've no idea how nice it is to ask for articles and get them by return email - it really does make my job a whole lot easier and more pleasurable!

NEWS UPDATE

In his Chairman's Notes Mike Kelley reported that Amber Valley Borough Council officers were to recommend that the Council safeguard the route of the Cromford Canal; we have now received confirmation of this. On October 18th. Amber Valley Borough Council placed the Amber Valley Borough Local Plan Review on deposit for public comment on the proposed changes. During the next six weeks the Revised Local Plan will be on show at major libraries and AVBC Council Offices or on its web site at www.ambervalley.gov.uk; any representations on those changes must be received by November 29th, on a form available from the Council.

FCC members are asked to send in a form to SUPPORT the proposed addition to Transportation Policy 12 (TP12) "There is also a need to safeguard the route of the former Cromford Canal" This may only seem a small step but getting it into the Revised Local Plan is vital in getting restoration of the canal. It is very opportune that this revision of the Local Plan came at such an early stage in the life of the Friends of Cromford Canal.

(John Baylis)

THE SPONSORED WALK - A SNIPPET

The youngest person to do the whole walk was 7-year-old James Pittham whose enthusiasm encouraged both his parents and his grandparents to complete the walk too. James had been sponsored by his teachers and "didn't want to let them down". The look of delight in his eyes when he saw that the ice cream van was still at Cromford Wharf when they arrived was wonderful to see!

(Hugh Potter)

ARCHIVES IN THE ATTIC?

Hugh Potter, FCC's newly appointed Archivist, is keen to locate copies of the long-defunct Cromford Canal Society's journal (which went by the name of Diggum). Anyone with copies is asked to get in touch with Hugh (details on back page) so that he can make copies for the FCC Archives. If any other 'Friends' have photographs or documents related to the Cromford Canal that they would be willing to share with others, then Hugh would be equally pleased to hear from you - any material could be copied and returned.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

by Mike Kelley

It was a great pleasure to meet up with so many of you on Sunday 8th September for our sponsored walk. I was able to put faces to names and generally chat about the reopening of the Cromford as we walked along. Let me thank all one hundred of you who turned out to take part in the walk. The committee worked very hard to organise this day and the many positive comments I received from fellow walkers demonstrated how successful they had been, in fact many told me how smoothly the day went, with the breakfast by the reservoir, the train ride between the portals of the Butterley tunnel, the assistance across the A610 and railway line, the coffee break at Hugh Potter's house and the open Lea Wood Pump House. I was asked by many, 'Will this become an annual event?' Well I don't see why not, do you? The path is now trod. So that we can get together and meet each other we will be having occasional member's meetings. The first will be a 'Pie and Pea' night with a short talk by Hugh Potter, editor of the *Waterways World*. You will see the advert for this elsewhere in this magazine. If you know of 'speakers' who would like to address our members at a social night please let me know.

After having to report in the last *Portal* magazine that a new house is to be built between the abutments of the partly demolished Bullbridge aqueduct,

some alarm bells were rung. So I was very happy to be informed that Amber Valley Borough Council officers have recommended the council safeguards the former route of the Cromford Canal under their new local plan. Not before time, I hear you say. Well, be that as it may at least now there is a new spirit of enlightenment aboard and one that we welcome. I am told this would not have happened without the FCC being formed and bringing our aims to the attention of the right people. A big well done to us all. When important issues such as this occur, or the sponsored walk, then I like to bring it to the attention of our membership immediately, via the medium of Email. I feel this is better than waiting for the quarterly magazine to come out. I know that not all of you have Email, but the majority do and this is to become as important to our daily lives as the telephone is today. If you have Email and like to be kept up to date with events then make sure we have your address. (Some that we have are incorrect and so the Emails are returned)

I am writing this before the visit on 8th October to the canal of Roger Hanbury of The *Waterways Trust*. I will report to you on this in the next *Portal*, or earlier, for those who have Email. We have also received a most welcome letter from Keith Noble of the *Inland Waterways Association*. He

states, "I have been asked by the IWA's Restoration Committee to enquire whether the Friends would be willing to host a meeting and visit. We meet every two months in different parts of the country and would be interested to learn about current developments and your aspirations for restoring the Cromford Canal. The date we have in mind is Saturday 25th. October 2003. (Well I guess you have to plan well ahead!) We have also had a letter from West Derbyshire's MP, Patrick McLoughlin, giving us his support, thereby adding to the number of parliamentary supporters.

We have stated in these pages before that as a new society, a very few individuals are carrying out a great deal of work. We have been able to welcome one more join our committee, Derek Dixon, but we are still seeking more. For example: one of the problems we faced this year, has been our inability to attend the many events around the country that have very kindly requested our presence. True we have been able to attend one or two events, and once or twice at Lea Wood, but nowhere near as many as we wanted to. This was frustrating, so during the Walk I was able to set the seeds for a sub-committee to be formed for the summer season next year. This will be a team of about six members from which one or two will attend events on a rotational basis, which will not place undue burden on one or two individuals trying to attend them all. We will have our own display boards and items for sale, for at the

moment the only money we are getting in is from the annual membership fee and the sponsored walk, so we need this other income. Derek Dixon and Andy Screen are to head this sub-committee.

We are getting good coverage in the local press, and have had a feature article in the Canal Boat and Inland Waterways magazine, but we will have to now look at reaching a wider audience. To help with this we now have a free handout to give to people, but these are expensive and we will be needing several thousand before next year. Our web site is taking shape very well thanks to Brian Dominic. You can click on any part of the map of the Cromford and then look at that area 'as it was', 'as it is', and eventually 'as the restoration takes place'. As well as this you also have a detailed history and pictures of the sponsored walk. Having said that this site is still under construction, which takes many hours of work to get do.

The secretary of the Ribble Link Trust said, as reported by *Waterways World* at the opening of Britain's first new canal for 100 years, the Ribble Link, that they were, "a bunch of amateurs who achieved the impossible dream: driven by an intense passion which generated immense determination to overcome incredible hurdles - monetary, technical and sometimes just sheer prejudice".

What a great time this renaissance of the canals is.

ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

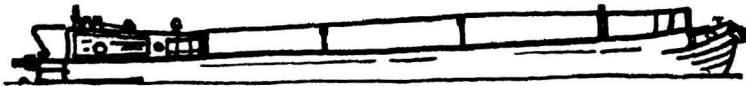
by Hugh Potter

As the newly appointed Archivist for the Friends, I'm delighted that material is already flowing in. Those of you with access to the Internet will have seen our excellent ever-expanding web site at www.cromfordcanal.org.uk on which are an increasing number of historic photographs. Some of the latest there came courtesy of Carol Taylor-Cockayne and the Jacksdale Heritage Group.

Arriving by more traditional means were a wonderful batch of postcards and other material relating to the canal from Friend and Sponsored Walker Pauline Mycock of Derby. Space permitting some of these will be published in future issues of Portal and will also be accessible on the web site.

If you have any photographs or documents relating to the Cromford Canal, then I should be delighted to see them with a view to possibly copying them for the FCC Archives. If

you think you may have something of interest to other Friends, please get in touch (contact details on back cover). This image is a really exciting find, as it is a very sharp copy of an old print of Robin Hood, the hamlet between Whatstandwell and Gregory Tunnel. The site was a stone saw mill, built there presumably because of its proximity to Duke's Quarries (which supplied gritstone for the construction of several well-known buildings in London) and the water power offered by the stream which runs through the hamlet before passing under the canal by a deep culvert. On a map of 1811, a Stone Wharf is shown, but no buildings. The original cast iron windows can be seen on the lower floor of the main building to the left. A steam engine was once installed here, but is thought never to have operated, possibly because of the stone traffic transferring from canal to railway. The canal is narrower now than it was, and the workshop to the right that is no longer there.





A PROFILE OF THE SECRETARY

by Jasmin Dowgun

I am the Acting Secretary of the Friends and I've been asked to tell you a little bit about myself - so here goes...

I have always enjoyed sports - I've won various bits and bobs in various events mostly at School level. I went to University to study languages and philosophy. I've worked and studied in both Germany and Russia and enjoyed meeting different people and sharing their way of life for a time. I loved flying so much I went for my PPL (private pilot's licence), Then I inherited my brother's customized 750

Bonneville motorbike, and since I did not want it to rust in a corner, I took my test to be able to ride it - it is perfect for riding round on nice sunny days. I also love animals - we have a few dogs and I support various animal charities.

I am a qualified Remedial Therapist and Kinesiologist: I became interested in natural medicine through my interest in the Chinese art of Lau Gar Kung Fu - by the time I'd got my first black belt I had also qualified professionally in Kinesiology. Kinesiology uses a combination of Western and Eastern

techniques to pinpoint and correct imbalance in the body, including massage, manipulation, counselling, herbs, vitamins, minerals and homeopathy.

My interest in canals came about when my other (not necessarily better) half took me on an old style narrow boat to Llangollen one August a couple of years back, we had such a wonderful time, I've been hooked ever since - I thought I would struggle if I did not have a million and one things to do each day, but funnily enough I thoroughly enjoyed the complete change of pace and way of life for 10 days.

I enjoyed it so much I helped out with the trip boat on the Huddersfield Narrow for a short time, but had to abandon this because I took up the fundraising banner for the Derby & Sandiacre Canal Society; they needed

money for a tunnel at Wilmorton so I enlisted the help of Pollyanna Pickering, who not only gave me three prints which I could run off as limited edition prints (which we would give to those who made a donation of £50 or more), but she also presented her illustrated talks for us at Trent Lock Golf Centre in Long Eaton (I chose this venue primarily for the lovely room and excellent food offered). Shortly after this I became involved in the ECP&DA (Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association) and it was through this group's enthusiasm for the restoration of the Cromford Canal that I was enrolled as acting secretary. So far we have done quite well and I hope you like our logo, and the car stickers, which you should have got free with the last issue of the Portal.

Well, that's about it folks, so cheers, see you around!

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS??

by Yasmin Dowgun

We now have some rather splendid sweatshirts and T-shirts for sale. The sweatshirts come in black or red with an embroidered logo in the left 'breast pocket' position and cost £17.50 each. The T-shirts are in two designs - one design features the embroidered logo (as on the sweatshirt and in the same position as on the sweatshirt) and comes in red or black and costs £8.99.

The other design has the logo laser printed (in black) in the centre on the front of the T-shirt, this one comes in various colours, including yellow, sky blue, red or white. Price £7.50.

We also have tote bags, again with the logo in black in the centre of one side of the bag and these are for sale at £3.50 and would probably make a very good collector's item. If you are

interested in purchasing any of these goods, please send a cheque for the amount of the item(s) required (plus £1.00 p&p) to me at the address on the back cover, and make it payable to "Friends of the Cromford Canal Society" (or F.C.C. for short).

On the subject of items for sale to

raise money and the profile of the Society, we also have maps of the Cromford Canal (A3 size) for £1.00 or the same maps laminated for £2.50. The Cromford Canal car stickers are also available to purchase at £1.00 each. I look forward to seeing a sea of Cromford Canal T-shirts / sweat shirts on the working party!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Yvonne Shattower

Great news - during September I registered our 400th member! We now have a member living in Spain, so we have gone International! I have been amazed at the speed with which our numbers have grown, and the lovely thing is that all our members are current and paid up - not like some Societies where the membership numbers seem high, but many of the members are no longer active. Your committee is looking at Life Membership, and we hope to have more news of this shortly.

This brings me to the subject of membership renewals. I know it is a long way off before you will have to think of sending me your first renewal, but I thought it would be a good idea to let you know how it will work. Your membership will be due for renewal annually on the first day of the month following the month in which you became a member, i.e. if you joined anytime in March 2002, your

subscription will be due on 1st April 2003. You should receive a reminder with the edition of the 'Portal' before your renewal is due. This will give everyone a full year's membership, and also spread the job of dealing with 400+ members' renewals! Of course, you could take out a Life Membership and forget the annual renewals!

I am very grateful to the members who have agreed to help with the distribution of the Portal. Postage is very expensive and this is one way that you can really help. We also publish a 'Noticeboard' edition for circulation to libraries, Parish Halls, etc. If you know of a community venue where a copy would be welcomed, please let me know.

Finally, and on a sadder note, I would like to pay a tribute to Bob Peck, one of our early members, who died recently. Bob was a 'one off' character, a talented Architect, a man with a great sense of humour, a

stalwart supporter and Treasurer of the ECP&DA for many years, and an instigator in the campaign to keep the Erewash Valley safe. He loved the canals, and had it not been for illness,

would have been as generous with his time and talents for the restoration of the Cromford Canal as he was with the Erewash. We send our sincere condolences to Joyce and his family.

OUR FRIENDS ELECTRONIC

compiled by The Editor

It was fairly quiet on the Mailing List for much of this quarter and I was beginning to think that there wouldn't be anything to publish! I suspect many active members were boating! However, things did start to pick up when Charles said:

"I was walking beside the Macclesfield Canal yesterday and was interested to see a narrowboat, Cromford No.5 registered at Ambergate Wharf, moored near Poynton.

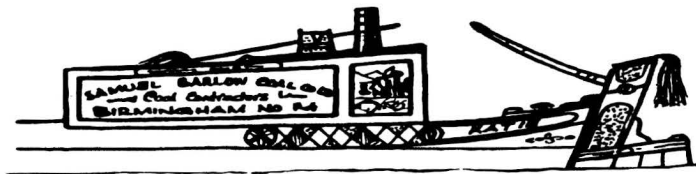
Being a complete novice as regards the rules and regulations relating to canals I was wondering who actually registers narrowboats. Is it the Inland Waterways Board? And why would it be registered at Ambergate Wharf?"

I replied:

"What you're seeing is an affectation of an old requirement. In the days

when narrowboats were used as family homes, they had to be registered by the local authority, and this information was painted on the cabin side. This requirement no longer exists, but some people (myself included) have "Registered at Watford Number XXXXX" on their cabin sides to quote our BW licence number (as required by BW themselves) (BW's Head Office being at Watford). You may find old boats still carrying their original registration number as part of their restored livery: is the boat a genuine old one, or a modern one with an owner thinking well ahead?"

In the course of a fairly busy Friday night, I'd asked for firm locations on a couple of pictures in the Hartshay area. As a result of this, Chris Morriss supplied a picture of Hartshay Wharf which was added to the Web Site (and which is reproduced on the next page).





Andy Screen asked:

"Patrick's picture looks like the picture hanging in the Gate Inn, described as (words to the effect of) "a branch of the Cromford Canal". The picture does make it look like a branch rather than just a wharf on a wide section of canal, yet none of the maps I've seen show any arm or side-dock - can we take it that there was something "arm-like" here?"

Chris Morriss replied:

"There was a loading wharf on the north side of the canal, between the old Hartshay Hill and the new (-ish) A610 embankment. This is now the garden of my parents' house. Perhaps Patrick can take a photo of the house as it now is, to show the changes. He also has (courtesy of Hugh Potter), a

section of a map clearly showing the old loading wharf.

The wharf originally took coal via horse-drawn plateways from an old colliery close to Pentrich village, but later a standard gauge line was put in to allow access to the Ambergate & Pye-Bridge branch of the MR, and also to the newer 'Pentrich Colliery' at Hammersmith. (Now the site of Geeson's scrap yard).

If anyone has other photographs associated with Pentrich colliery, or knowledge of the old mineral lines in this area, could they contact Patrick or myself?"

Howard Sprenger started off a thread about Butterley Tunnel:

"Now just how are we going to reopen Butterley Tunnel, whose bore is presumably significantly smaller since all the coal was mined from under it?"

Did you know that the Midland Railway paid the Butterley Company £15,000 in 1872 for the coal to be left under the Cromford Canal - plus another £9,000 for "leakage"? A grand total of £24,000. I don't know whether this was a once-and-for-all payment, or whether they made repeated reparations to the Butterley Company."

Chris Morriss replied:

"Was the subsidence due to the workings of the Butterley company, or to one of the local collieries? I know that workings from Denby Colliery certainly came out this far, and caused subsidence in the 50's and 60's in the Lower Hartshay area. Has any fearless cave-diver been into the tunnel to get a view of the damage?"

Howard came back with:

"Not sure which pit was actually to blame (Brittain's was the nearest), but the Butterley Company owned the collieries in the area, and more to the point, the coal! (I think it's fair to say that the Midland Railway wouldn't have given them £24K otherwise!)"

Pat Morriss said:

"Actually the nearest pit was Haslam's (Pentrich) which is now Geeson's Yard

(we went past it on the walk) probably not 100 yds in a straight line. Haslam's was independent until it closed and did not belong to Butterley or any other group. It was a relatively shallow pit as workings were exposed by opencast working to the east of the new alignment of the A610 when the A38 / A610 bypass was built in the mid 70's"

I chimed in:

"I suspect we won't actually know that until we've had a survey of some sort done - one of the things we've got to raise funding for in what could be called the "first phase" of the job - discovering exactly what we've got to do and costing it.

I suspect that the present water level at the eastern end is rather higher than it was when the canal was navigable: given that the existing portal is original, there's absolutely no way that any narrowboat would fit at present!

Operation when it is restored is going to be "interesting"..... Given that there are not the problems at Standage with parallel tunnels and the fact there are a good number of ventilation shafts, I could envision operation Harecastle - style: east to west from (say) 0200 to 1100 and the opposite way 1400 - 2300, with a 3 hour (?) gap to allow boats to clear the tunnel."

Les Gregory said of the survey:

"Re the comment about a survey of the tunnel, about 10 years ago (very roughly) British Waterways did a survey of the tunnel and found it to be in "remarkably good condition and a testament to the quality of the engineering".

The survey was reported in an article in the Daily Telegraph, does anyone have contacts with British Waterways who could get a copy of the report?"

Hugh Potter replied:

"I've spoken to one of the BW people who went in and whilst I've not seen any written report, the gist of it as I recall was that (from the Hammersmith end) they got as far as the wide hole (where Butterley Co had their wharf) but thought it too dangerous to go any further. Up to there it was pretty sound, but that's only a smallish fraction of the way in.

Beyond there it was piped in the 1920's and the wooden roof supports have now collapsed."

Hugh Caldwell said:

"For many years the water level at the Hammersmith end of the tunnel was held well above navigable depth by stop planks. I always assumed that this was to combat subsidence and encourage a flow towards the Golden Valley portal. From the Hammersmith end as far as the loading bay the roof is supported by arched supports made of heavy timbers and railway line. The

first airshaft which reached ground level in the Butterley works yard has a large pile of rejected castings below it. The brickwork in this section is in good condition as the tunnel was used certainly up to and probably during WW2 for moving coal from Lower Hartshay pit to the works. The loading bay has man shafts and a lifting shaft. All of these appear to be blocked. Beyond the loading bay the tunnel is filled to the spring of the arch by limestone chippings. Buried in these is a pipe to ensure a constant water supply to Golden Valley from the Butterley reservoir. This supply enters the tunnel via a side branch which it is possible to enter and which allows one to stand beneath the regulating valve. This leaks. The condition of the brickwork beyond the loading bay gradually deteriorates and the tunnel becomes subject to increased subsidence and gradually reaches a low point. Progress (already only possible by climbing over each roof support because of the infill) becomes impossible unless cave diving appeals.

From the Golden Valley portal mud is a problem. The free water forms a thin skin on top of semi-liquid mud. A sporty-yak to act as a bouyancy aid works. The brickwork starts out in fairly good condition but gradually deteriorates. There is what appears to have been a crossing at about 200 yds. This has as I remember four pointed arches and may well be the entrance and turning bay for Carr pit mentioned in the time line. After this point the roof gradually gets lower as the tunnel

subsidies. the brickwork is in very poor condition in places and appears to be a single skin. It is certainly possible to hear water sloshing around behind it. We calculated that only 600 yds of the tunnel was inaccessible owing to subsidence."

(Editor's note: since this was written, we have been given to reproduce this illustrated report [complete with pictures] on the Web Site. Do take a look - the pictures are spectacular!)

Hugh Potter asked about Sandiacre Lock Cottage - a bit "off topic" as Internet people might say, but near enough to be relevant.

"Perhaps a little off topic but I know there is a lot of cross-interest with Erewash Canal and ECPDA do not have advantage of email group.

I have been asked by someone researching the Cutts family:

"Who lived in the Lock and Toll House on the Erewash Canal at the junction with the Derby Canal at Sandiacre? It

was used by the Derby Canal Co, to 1832 when they built their own (now demolished) on the opposite site of the Derby Canal.

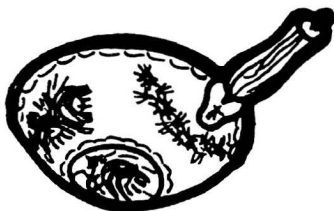
Is it possible to find out - I have a feeling it may have been a Cutts - possibly John before his death c1833/40 which I have not yet found....."

There is a direct CC link. I know that Henry Cutts was wharfinger at Cromford in 1811 because of the following newspaper report:

"Derby Mercury Thursday June 6th 1811. Wanted immediately upon the Cromford Canal: A Carpenter; one that is well skilled in making and hanging Lock Gates.

Such one being a good workman, may meet with constant employment and good wages by applying to Henry Cutts, Cromford Wharf (sic), Derbyshire

A single man may have preference. Cromford Wharf 4th June 1811"



EVERY LITTLE HELPS.....

by Steve Morley

The IWA / Waterways Recovery Group Stamp Bank aims to raise money for waterway restoration through finding a market for things which people normally throw away. Part of the trick is collecting together bulk - if you have enough of something, it can be worth a commercial organisation buying it - but sometimes it is a case of finding the right market.

Used postage stamps can be sold in different ways. For current UK issues, the value is only there in quantity - we can sell these by the kilo to dealers if enough are collected together. The rarer the stamp, the greater its value and overseas and older stamps are separated and sold to the trade or through philatelic organisations. The annual target for stamps is £1,000 and this has been consistently exceeded for the past few years. Money from the sale of stamps is normally donated to the restoration of the Montgomery Canal in Wales.

Although named Stamp Bank, we collect many items, and for some time we have been asking for post cards and phone cards, as we are aware that there is a market for these. Unfortunately, so far we have been unable to find someone with the necessary knowledge to turn these into cash, other than older postcards,

so the collection mounts in anticipation of finding an outlet. If anyone can help, please get in touch!

Many people think that the old trading stamps - Green Shield and the like - are no longer any use, but this isn't the case. The trading stamp companies still exist and will exchange stamps for goods - provided we can keep up with the frequent changes of address of the companies! We receive part filled books and loose stamps and put the two together to obtain items which can then be sold or used as raffle prizes to raise funds.

Vouchers which trade for items (remember 'Tiger Tokens?') can be collected together to buy worthwhile items. Unfortunately cigarette companies can no longer put coupons in their packets, but in the past we have bought substantial raffle prizes and even items like steel tape measures and spades which can be used directly for restoration. Just because a promotion has finished doesn't necessarily mean the coupons are useless; if a sufficiently impressive quantity can be collected and the right person in the marketing department found, a 'good cause' can often receive goods suitable for selling or raffling at events. There are likewise outlets for items of bric-a-brac - North West WRG, and Ipswich IWA are all expert

at relieving unsuspecting punters of their cash for all manner of things on their sales stands at rallies, and donations of such items are always welcome.

How many people come back from holiday with a pocket full of foreign coins and find that the travel agent will only exchange surplus notes? Stamp Bank collects such coins, and a contact in the Chichester Canal Society is able to make the necessary exchange into something more appropriate for spending in this country. Likewise discontinued sterling coins and notes are accepted.

The main bulk item is scrap aluminium in any form - foil trays, milk bottle tops, drinks cans, ring pulls taken off steel cans, old saucepans and various assorted items discovered on restoration sites! These are transported to York where the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society have an arrangement with a local scrapyards to handle what would normally be uneconomic quantities.

We have two new items for which we are acting as 'post office' - used computer print cartridges and die cast metal models.

Print cartridges can be sent to us to help the Wilts & Berks Canal; a contact with a recycling organisation can turn them into cash. Likewise, a collector/trader is offering us cash for old metal models - Dinky Toys, etc - in any condition; or even in bits! It's time to turn out your old toy cupboard!

Please address all donations to IWA/WRG Stamp Bank,
33 Hambleton Grove,
Emerson Valley,
Milton Keynes MK4 2JS.

Larger/heavier items can be dropped off if you are passing; alternatively, given time I can usually arrange for some devious means of transporting goods around the country - please call 01908 520090 or e-mail steve@morleytowers.org.uk. Goods can also be left in the Stamp Bank barrel at the National Waterways Festival and other events; again, check for details.

The amounts raised may not be spectacular, but there is often the need for small donations for minor projects and raffle prizes can be used to 'unlock' greater sums. Stamp Bank is a 'painless' way of assisting the waterways cause and all contributions are welcome.

**DON'T FORGET THE MEMBER'S MEETING ON NOVEMBER 6TH
AT 7-30 PM IN IRONVILLE CHURCH HALL**

**PIE & PEA SUPPER, (£2-50) ILLUSTRATED TALK BY OUR
ARCHIVIST (AND A BIT OF BUSINESS, TOO!)**

AN UNUSUAL VIEW OF THE WALK

by *The Table*

I'm the table which lives in the ECP&DA cottage at Langley Mill. I don't get out much at all: I get sat BEHIND and occasionally thumped (usually when there's some sort of meeting) I get sat AT (usually when there's grub about) and I sometimes get sat ON. People use me to put papers, magazines, (dirty or otherwise) and occasionally bits of boat or canal infrastructure on, though then I'm more of a bench than a table (though not the same sort of bench as you sit on - but on the other hand.....)

Anyway, on a Sunday morning not so long ago I was disturbed at the unearthly hour of about 8-15 - not the time WRGies or Canal Folk are usually about (especially if they've had a skinful the night before). The Editor carried me out and plonked me on the grass at the side of Langley Bridge Lock, where Sheila and Yvonne promptly sat on a pair of chairs behind me. I rapidly got filled with large sheets of paper, labels, tee shirts and sweatshirts and shopping bags, and Sheila and Yvonne started "booking in" as they called it. There were an awful lot of people standing around as if something was about to happen and eventually it did!

A strange man with a little banner over his head (like the sandwich men of old) set off and everybody followed him. It was then that I discovered that

everybody was doing a Sponsored Walk to Cromford Wharf.

I thought I wouldn't get to see any of this, but I found myself getting packed up (together with the chairs) and getting put in a Big Posh Van (which was called a Motor Home, though quite why a motor would want to live in it I don't know). After a few minutes I found myself getting set up again at somewhere called Ironville. I wasn't on my own here: there were half-a-dozen posey little plastic tables WITH TABLECLOTHS ON here, in front of a Not-So-Posh-Van without an engine, the occupants of whom were serving breakfast on plates and in cobs.

Yvonne and Sheila got all the paraphernalia out again and more people got signed in. Eventually Sandwich Man arrived with all the other people, everybody was checked in, The Editor made a flying visit and after that I and the chairs got packed up and stuffed into the Big Posh Van again.

After another trip I was dumped at somewhere where bulls went across a river (at least I think that's what they meant by Bull's Bridge). Here I was set up by a fella who does something big with ceramics - they all called him Huge Potter, anyway. In due course Yvonne and Sheila arrived and we



Here I am, by the reservoir at Ironville with Yvonne, Sheila, Val and Val looking after me.....

(Carol Taylor-Cockayne)

went through the whole rigmarole again, with the added ingredient of cold drinks (for the walkers) and tea and buns (for the helpers). I also got used to lean somebody's walking stick up against: he'd left it at Newlands Inn and the Railway Lost Property Service (which looked suspiciously like The Editor again, but in overalls) delivered it so it could be reunited with its owner.

After everybody had had their teas, I got loaded up again and shortly afterwar

ds arrived at Cromford, where I was set up in a nice green field by the Car Park. In due course, the walkers started to arrive, though some of them were not as sprightly as they had been when they'd left Langley Mill. In due course Sandwich Man arrived, everybody announced that the whole thing had been A Great Success and I was bundled back into the Big Posh Van to get taken back to the cottage at Langley Mill. The walkers came back on a bus.





Peggy (walking) Mike (also walking) and Panda (riding) on the Ironville Flight
(Jasmin Dowgun)

“TAIL END CHARLIE’S” WALK

by Yasmin Dowgun

Mick, Nicky, Panda, Peggy and I were "tail-end Charlie" for the Sponsored Walk. We had not walked from Langley Mill to Cromford Wharf before, although my brother and I had done it in sections to check that we were not going to lead the walkers astray on the day! When we arrived at Langley Mill, the brilliant red banner was already up to mark the start of the walk and there was a satisfying number of people

lining up to register (and pre-order their bacon butties!). We set off from Langley Mill at 10.15am along the road, because the start of the canal is too uneven and was deemed a bit tricky for walkers to follow safely.

We spotted the FOCC sign straightaway and, after we'd had our picture taken to prove we were there, we removed it and began the walk in earnest. The first section was mostly

across fields and seemed the longest to me, the sun was shining and it was very warm, Panda was flagging a little as we approached Codnor Park and we were glad of the chance to sit and have something to eat and drink. We stopped here for about ten minutes, admiring the view, and then set off for a relatively short stretch to Newlands Inn. The diesel train was waiting for us and we bought our special tickets and climbed aboard. Peggy allowed herself a big yawn, but was keen to look out as we trundled along, Panda was content to sit quietly between us. In no time at all we arrived at the Midland Railway Centre; a quick trip to the loo, then over to the shop (stopping to admire Thomas the Tank Engine outside it) to buy some ice-creams, a quick sit-down on the grass to enjoy them, before crossing to the platform to get on the train for the next part of our journey - to Hammersmith.

When the train had disappeared from view, we crossed over the tracks and made our way past Geeson's scrap yard; the canal is in water here and very overgrown, but also very pleasant. We looked back to the Western Portal, which looks nothing like it used to - it's just a pipe with a grid across it. The FCC logo is of the Western Portal as it used to be. Up a steep and long flight of steps to the A610. Mike and Val looked very official in their fluorescent jackets. Mike stepped out into the path of the oncoming traffic and to Val's surprise, they stopped! With everyone safely across and

accounted for at this point they went on their way. Down the steep steps on the other side of the road, and past the infilled bed of the canal by some cottages. The dogs were enjoying all the sniffing possibilities in the fields we then crossed. We came to Starvehimvalley Bridge No. 29 which is very nice and then the channel widened out to form a fishing lake, it is very picturesque. It doesn't last long before it is infilled again. We passed the Excavator Pub and walked carefully through Buckland Hollow Tunnel, as we walked along the line of the canal we noted the allotments on the canal line and wonder how much trouble this is going to cause us in the future.

Up and down again past Lockwood's, down again to cross the A610 at Bullbridge and up again after we've been seen across the railway lines. The middle section is very strenuous, but the most enjoyable. As we continued along the line of the aqueduct, we looked over the wall on the left side - it is very, very high! We stopped in Stevenson's car park for a drink of water, which Howard had ready for us. Also, two of our members had come to get a couple of FCC sweatshirts off me.

When everyone was happy we set off again, up and down and around the gas works. It is very steep going up by Stevenson's Dye Works, and before we got to the steep flight of steps upwards, Panda had to go in the rucksack. We removed the FOCC sign at the bottom of the steps and

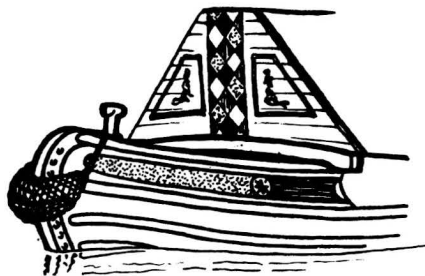
then removed the other one two-thirds of the way up - Mick wanted to know if "Jan was taking the P**s"!

As it flattened out again at the top, Panda wanted to walk, so we obliged. Shortly we arrived at the start of the third section. The canal is in water now all the way to Cromford Wharf. Hugh and Liz had laid on some squash, tea, and biscuits, so we stopped to partake and chat before resuming our journey. Panda started to flag again, so she was lifted into the rucksack and this time stayed there until she got home. This section is very flat and has a beauty of its own. We spotted a heron as we meandered along. As we passed the derelict cottage at the end of the Nightingale arm, some people with dogs asked us what the walk was about exactly, we told them and they seemed pleased to think that the canal would be restored again one day.

We passed the familiar Leawood Pumping Station - we've visited here many times - and on to High Peak Junction, another quick visit to the loo. Jan had walked back to meet us with Rex, a Doberman. Rex is about 17 years old and I was a little concerned about him walking so much (he'd done the various sections prior

to this walk and had been out the night before putting up the markers for the middle section), but he seemed fine. He'd been resting at Cromford Wharf since about 1pm and it was getting on for 5pm now. Panda opened one eye as she cuddled up in the rucksack and then closed it again. She had done really well, she walked about 11 of the 15 miles and as she is also very old - 100 years in human terms - she deserved her rest, as a by-the-way, she raised about £100 for the Cromford that day.

We finally arrived at Cromford Wharf 40 minutes later. Sheila and Howard were there, Yvonne and Hugh. There was also an ice-cream vendor, so Mick bought us all an ice-cream. It was pleasing to hear that everyone had thought the day was extremely well organised - the refreshment stops, the bonus of a train ride - brilliant. The signposting of the walk was excellent; Jan became a little embarrassed at the constant mentioning of this, but we all agreed that after all the worry and effort, it had been a great day out and a terrific success. Some people had asked if this could be an annual event!!!!!! Well done to everyone who took part, and thank you to all those who sponsored us.



(Advertiser's Announcement)

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Vice Chairman:

John Baylis
215 Clipstone Avenue West, Forest Town
Mansfield
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG19 0HJ
☎ 01623 621208
E-mail: vicechair@cromfordcanal.org.uk

Secretary:

Yasmin Dowgun
Fairmead
Derby Road, Risley
DERBYSHIRE DE72 3SS
☎ 0115 939 0615
E-mail: secretary@cromfordcanal.org.uk

Treasurer:

Sheila Smith
1 Millfield Road, Kimberley
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG16 2LJ
☎ 0115 938 4129
E-mail: treasurer@cromfordcanal.org.uk

Membership Secretary:

Yvonne Shattower
264 Bennett Street, Long Eaton
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG10 4JA
☎ 0115 946 4479
E-mail: membership@cromfordcanal.org.uk

Editor:

Brian L Dominic
22 Golden Valley
Riddings, Alfreton
DERBYSHIRE DE55 4ES
☎ 01773 605147
E-mail: editor@cromfordcanal.org.uk

Archivist:

Hugh Potter
Bankfield
Chase Road, Ambergate
BELPER DE56 2HA
☎ 01773 852009
E-mail: archivist@cromfordcanal.org.uk)