

THE PORTAL




THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL
NUMBER 4
NEW YEAR 2003

CONTENTS

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.

All articles and contributions are copyright © the contributors. Opinions expressed (apart from the Chairman's Column) do not necessarily represent the policy of the Friends.

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: . 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 on disk or CD.

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.

EDITORIAL	5
NEWS UPDATE	5
CHAIRMAN'S CHAT	8
WILDLIFE OF THE CROMFORD CANAL	11
ARCHIVIST'S REPORT	13
A PROFILE OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN	14
MEMBERSHIP MATTERS	17
OUR FRIENDS ELECTRONIC ...	18
BOOK REVIEW: "PENNINE DREAMS"	28
HARTSHAY PIG-STY LIBRARY ..	29
"POTS N' PIX"	31
OPERATION IRONVILLE	31

Front cover: The First Bite - the Slightly Smaller Machine makes a start on the extension north of the present head of navigation at Langley Mill
(Photo by Val Roberts)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

FRIENDS

of the

CROMFORD CANAL

will be held on

THURSDAY 13th MARCH

at

IRONVILLE CHURCH HALL

at

7-30 PM

**Nominations for Officers should be received
by the Secretary by no later than
27th February, 2003**



Few new societies can expect to make much headway in their first year: getting properly established as a body generally takes all of the energies of a new (dis)organisation and it's not until it's been in existence for a while that good things start to happen.

We appear to have broken all the rules: we've not got our charitable status approved yet - there are a number of hurdles and hoops to jump over and through before THAT piece of the jigsaw finally drops into place. However, we have started our campaigning and Amber Valley Borough Council have

agreed to protect the line of the canal: other local bodies are aware that we have an interest in preserving the Canal - we've fund-raised by having a sponsored walk which IS going to get repeated this year and on 1st and 2nd February we start work on practical restoration - not bad, eh?

Work has also started at Langley Mill under the auspices of the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association's Development Arm., so I think we can all be justifiably proud of what we've achieved.

NEWS UPDATE

Wednesday 18th December - An Inch Too Far!!

Well, the friends of the Cromford Canal have gone from not even being in existence to almost starting active restoration work on the Cromford Canal! Well, almost..... (and the fact that the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association would have done the work anyway is neither here nor there - never let the facts get in the way of a good story, say !!)

The ECP&DA is starting the next phase of digging out the Cromford from the end of the present moorings at Langley Mill towards the A610 bridge. This involves getting in a Big Machine which has got to go over the river bridge onto the site from Cromford Road in Langley Mill. Unfortunately, the Big Machine that arrived on site this morning was in fact a Too Big machine and was a whole INCH wider than the bridge, which means that they're coming back tomorrow morning with a Slightly Smaller Machine which should fit.

The trial holes which have already been dug have revealed the nature of the problem in this area. The object of the exercise has been to locate the original wall which formed the offside of the canal. this has been found in a number of places, but it is now between one and six feet below the present water level. In some cases the wall will be rebuilt and made higher - in some cases piles will be put in so that the canal will be in the same place but the original features will be hidden under water. A spokesman for the ECP&DA said that they hope to have more moorings available "sometime next year" - subject to permissions the work to clear the site of the new marina will take place next spring - watch this space for details!

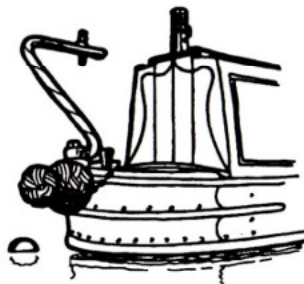
Thursday 19th December - "We've Found a Wall in Trench One!" (as quoted by Tony Robinson in "Time Team")

After yesterday's oversized digger farce at Langley Mill, today all was sweetness and light (though the weather was much worse than yesterday - dank and foggy). The Slightly Smaller Machine had been on site for a good while when I arrived at about 0930, and the operator had already exposed the top of about a third of the 200 yards-odd of offside wall. One problem is that

as the ground has sunk somewhat, the top of this wall is some four feet lower than the one in the bit of the canal that is in water, so a new wall is to be built in concrete - the shuttering's already made.

As I was taking pictures (on the Web Site and front cover) the machine operator finished his breakfast and carried on with his task. The site of the canal was something of a dumping ground when the commercial units alongside were built - this became evident when the machine suddenly reared up when its bucket caught on something underground. Another "pull" by the bucket saw quite a large area of ground starting to heave up, so the operator removed the soil from the top and had another go, eventually pulling up a slab of concrete about 12 feet long, five feet wide and a foot or so thick: I suspect some "left over" ready-mix that had been tipped out of the way.

By this time I'd got all the photos I needed, so I potted back down the cut, stopping for a welcome cup of tea and cleanup at a Friend's boat before heading off to work, happy in the knowledge that things have started to happen and with the worst of the mud off my shoes and trousers.





The difference in levels between the present canal and the top of the (sunken) old wall is obvious here. *(The Editor)*

The visit by Roger Handbury, The Chief Executive of the Waterways Trust on October 8th was both constructive and helpful. Roger stated his support for our work toward the restoration of the Cromford. Indeed at the Inland Waterways Association's 'Waterways Society Conference' at Sandwell on November 23rd Dave Fletcher, British Waterway's Chief Executive, announced that the Cromford Canal was in the fourth Tranche (step or stage) of the UK's restoration projects in about 10 years; but this time could be reduced if the FCC could generate earlier funding. For us to get onto this priority list is amazing in itself, considering we have only been active since last March, but the priority clearly is to find funding and move out of their 'Fourth Division'; but please note, we are no longer a 'non-league' team. Only a year ago the Cromford Canal was frequently referred to as two separate and distinct canals, 'the northern and the southern sections', as though they were not even the same canal. Thanks mainly to the activities of the FCC during 2002 we have now made it to the restoration stages. Yes the Cromford is now listed by the IWAAC as a canal for restoration. This is great news in itself, but we now have to work toward moving up their priority list.

We have begun to get a little more

publicity with several articles in the Derby Evening Telegraph's special supplement on canals and an article in the Reflections magazine. Our web site is being linked to from other sites and we are hoping to have our own section on the Derwent Valley Trust's web site soon. We have featured on Radio Derby and addressed the Arkwright Society.

You will see elsewhere in this magazine that we have invited the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to contribute an article to this magazine, which they have kindly done. They were of the erroneous opinion that the preservation of wildlife was a low priority for the FCC. Admittedly the DWT still have too many reservations about our project and feel they cannot as yet support us, but both the DWT and the FCC are keen to preserve, not only this great historical heritage of Derbyshire, but also protect and improve the natural environment, which the restoration of the canal will certainly do, especially around the areas that are currently nothing more than linear rubbish tips. So with that in mind I invited them to put their point of view, even if it may differ from ours.

How the restoration of the canal will help the environment was bought to the fore by the following quote from "Focus" the Environment Agency Newsletter for the Derbyshire



"Hey lads - we've found a canal wall in trench one!" (As Tony Robinson would say on "Time Team" *(The Editor)*)

Derwent, September 2002.

'Alien invasive plant species are posing a huge threat to the UK's aquatic biodiversity. They are taking over rivers, streams, canals, lakes and ponds. In Derbyshire, much of the Cromford Canal has been swamped by parrot's feather. These alien invasive species can block waterways preventing navigation and fishing, choke out submerged plants and aquatic animals and strip oxygen from the water creating biodiversity deserts.'

The parts of the canal still in water are being choked not only by Parrot's Feather but also by huge areas of Himalayan Balsam, from Whatstandwell northwards. Neither the Friends of the Cromford Canal, nor the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust want to see 'biodiversity deserts'. Nor do either of us want to see linear rubbish tips, which is the current state of much of the central sections of the canal; the aims of the FCC will certainly be of considerable help in this matter. Where there is a nature reserve or an SSSI, then numbers of boats and/or moorings can be limited, either seasonally or throughout the year. Where there is shallow water needed, the canal can be sectioned parallel to the bank where half can remain shallow while the deeper water can allow for greater movement of fish and aquatic life. We also can help with the Water Vole situation by having 'hazel faggots' along parts of the banks to encourage them into, what will be,

large new areas that are now just waste land, thereby providing a new habitats for this threatened specie.

The restoration of the Cromford will provide an approximately 16-mile long corridor for wildlife, (including the Pinxton Branch) which will afford educational benefits that would accrue from having a defined towpath, giving access to schools and students. Major wildlife benefits would avail themselves by enabling plant and aquatic communities to migrate along the canal, after all this was how the plants arrived in the first place. There will also be a much better zoning of plants with a greater variation of water depth that would be provided by navigable channels.

So the restoration of the Cromford Canal will create additional wildlife reserves and the enhancement of wildlife values.

The first sod has been dug at the current terminus of the Cromford at Langley Mill, not by the FCC, but by our neighbours and fellow canal society, the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association (ECP&DA). It is these who gave birth to the FCC, as we were originally a sub-committee of the ECP&DA. In fact if they had not preserved the Erewash there would be no FCC and no 'Derby' canal societies. This excavation is to uncover the stonework of the canal retaining, small beginnings, but it is a start.

I have pleasure in welcoming to our first honorary member of the FCC, Professor R. B. Schofield, he is one of the foremost experts on the life of Benjamin Outram. He also has considerable knowledge of the Cromford, and was involved in the

campaign to protect the Bullbridge aqueduct. I found his book called 'Benjamin Outram', and printed by Merton Priory Press, to be inspirational as well as extremely informative.

WILDLIFE OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

by Jo Taylor

I would like to start by thanking the Chair of FCC for inviting me to contribute an article to your magazine. The Trust appreciates this opportunity to comment on the importance of the canal for nature conservation.

The Cromford Canal includes some of the most valuable wildlife habitats in lowland Derbyshire, and these harbour a wide range of plants and animals, so summing its importance up in a single article is not easy! However I will start in the south and work northwards, trying to give a flavour of the wildlife of the canal.

The Trust's Erewash Meadows Nature Reserve includes the southern section of the canal between the A610 and the railway bridge at Ironville. It is one of the best examples of wet meadowland in the county, and regionally important for wetland birds such as lapwing, snipe and gadwall, which need areas relatively free from human disturbance to over-winter and/or breed. The canal

itself, as well as providing a vital water supply for the reserve, provides a habitat for amphibians, a wide variety of dragonflies and other insects, and plants such as the grey club rush which are rare in the county.

Moving north, most of those stretches of the canal between Ironville and Ambergate that are still in water are designated as county Wildlife Sites (sites of county importance for nature conservation). These include Codnor Park reservoir and the section of canal to the west, the length at Hartshay and a further site near Bullbridge. These sites have been designated primarily for their importance as wetland habitats. Because of agricultural drainage and floodplain development over the last century, shallow marsh and open water habitats of the type present in the canal are now extremely rare. This rarity means that many of the species which depend on them are now also rare or declining. Species recorded on these stretches of the Cromford Canal include the nationally

rare marsh stitchwort and the county rarities marsh woundwort and white water lily.

Although the canal may appear to be overgrown, it is this type of habitat, with open water areas interspersed with patches of reed, bulrush and reed sweet-grass, that makes it so important for wildlife. Invertebrates such as water beetles, dragonflies and moths abound, and larger creatures such as kingfisher, bullfinch and grass snake thrive. Furthermore, all of the remaining watered sections of the canal provide excellent habitat for the water vole, Britain's (and Derbyshire's) most threatened mammal.

The northern section of the canal is probably the most important for wildlife, and this is reflected in its designation as a national Site of Special Scientific Interest. Again it is the rarity of the wetland habitats and species (particularly plants and invertebrates) which is the reason for designation, although the site is also very important for birds, grass snakes and water voles. The canal provides a vital opportunity for local people and visitors to

experience wildlife, and for this reason much of it is managed as a Nature Reserve by the Trust.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust supports in principle the restoration of canals where it can be clearly demonstrated that this will benefit local communities and wildlife. In the case of the Cromford Canal, however, we consider that restoring the canal for navigation would destroy the important wetland habitats. Many of the plants and animals which depend on these habitats would not survive in a restored canal, even if features such as soft banks or shallow margins were incorporated. Therefore, while we have great respect for the drive and enthusiasm of FCC, we firmly believe that the existing value of the canal for wildlife and people outweighs the potential benefits of restoration for boating. Before any decision is made, however, detailed studies will be needed on the social, economic and environmental implications and, notwithstanding our views, the Trust has already offered technical help with the brief for the environmental study.



The first picture is from a negative belonging to Fred Copeland, who lived in the area until moving to Devon 20 years ago. It was taken by his father, possibly on a camera with plate negative; the marks on the top left may be from scratches on this plate. The

location is not known, but comparison with the later photograph, taken by Brian Lamb in 1963, of Poyser's Bridge, which carries Chase Road over the canal at Ambergate, suggests that it might have been taken here.



It shows a typical icebreaker on the Cromford Canal, although it was apparently in use for maintenance to judge by the tools and clay in it. Presumably it was taken at a weekend when there was no work taking place. The letters LM&SR on the bows refer to the London Midland & Scottish Railway which owned the canal after 1923.

The boat would have been built of

wood, and sheathed with metal to protect it from the ice. When in use as an ice breaker it would have been towed by a team of horses and rocked from side to side by men on the boat to help break the ice. A similar boat lay sunk opposite Leawood Pumping Station for many years until it was lifted out and placed on Cromford Wharf where the wood rotted away, but its few iron remains can still be seen there today.

If you can throw any light on where the picture was taken or who the children on board were, then Hugh Potter would be delighted to hear from you and can be contacted on

01773 852009. He is also interested in seeing any other old photographs of the Cromford Canal and in hearing reminiscences of when the boats were still trading.



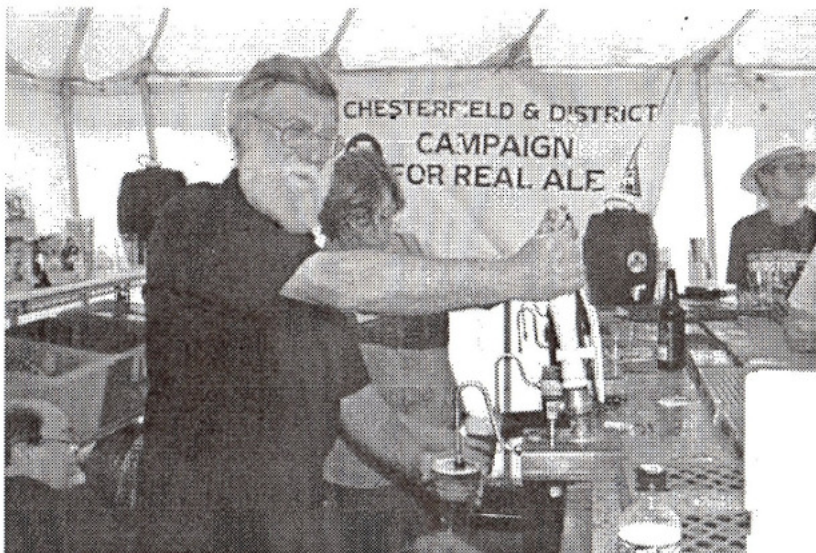
A PROFILE OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN

by John Baylis

John was born in Mansfield in 1940 and educated at Brunt's Grammar School. He joined the Research Department of the Boots Pure Drug Company making organic chemicals for testing as drugs and agricultural products, during his first 3 years studying for a Higher National Certificate. After 13 years in organic chemical preparation he transferred to

the newly formed Gas Chromatography unit where he analysed organic chemicals for purity and worked on the extraction of drugs and derivatives from animal and biological systems. For the last 25 years he was a safety representative for the Association of Technical, Managerial & Scientific Staff looking after fire and safety provisions for a

large laboratory block. He was made redundant in 1994 and took early retirement.



John preparing to carry out a chemical analysis..... *(The Editor)*

John became interested in the Chesterfield Canal through a friend in the mid-1960s and then took a hire boat holiday on the River Thames in 1968. John and his wife Christine joined the Inland Waterways Association in 1969 after a holiday on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. In 1969 he joined the committee of the North Midlands Branch of IWA based at Sheffield and was harbour master of the Sheffield Rally in 1970. In 1972 they launched their first boat, a Springer hull, which he fitted out, and cruised, much of the Midland Canals network. A second boat followed in 1976 and the present boat in 1981. Since then they have cruised most of inland waterway network much of it many times.

In 1974 he formed an IWA and Retford & Worksop Boat Club initiative to restore Morse Lock on the Chesterfield Canal to create a winding hole above Worksop; this led to the creation of the Chesterfield Canal Society in 1976. British Waterways are now finalizing the restoration from Morse Lock to Norwood Tunnel having restored 25 locks, built 4 bridges and opened a marina in a redundant colliery site. John joined the committee of Waterway Recovery Group with Graham Palmer and became a Director of Waterway Recovery Group Ltd. when it was first formed. He was WRG Vice Chairman for some years under Alan Jervis and leader of WRG East Midlands.

In 1975-6 John worked with the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association Clean-up of Ironville Locks driving a lorry and a JCB excavator. In 1979 at Graham Palmer's request, he took over the restoration of Frankton Locks on the Montgomery Canal and, after travelling for thousands of miles to work parties by car and by boat, was the first boat down the locks in 1987. He then started the restoration work at Aston Locks passing this on to Mike Palmer after the completion of Lock 2. During this time he spent nearly £200,000, which with the volunteer work was valued at about £1M.

In 1980 he was elected as Chairman of IWA East Midlands Region and a Council member. After several years on the Navigation, Technical & Amenity Committee he became Chairman in 1990, a post which he held until 2001. Following an illness in 1999 he gave up the Region Chair for a break of three years during which time he was elected to Council. From the AGM in 2002 he has once again taken over the Region Chair, and is at present a director or IWA nominee of several canal societies or trusts in the East Midlands.

In 1994 John was an IWA representative on the Groundwork Trust initiative which resulted in the Binnie & Partners Engineering Feasibility Study for restoration of the Cromford Canal between Langley Mill and Ironville. The IWA Honorary Engineers having a great input in the detail and the final report. He was later involved in the Groundwork Trust attempts to find funding to restore the locks through Ironville and advised the Midland Railway Centre on dredging the section of Cromford Canal from Newlands Inn to Butterley Tunnel.

For many years since 1974 he was involved with IWA National Rallies on the installation of water and toilet systems; this year the interest was renewed by working on site services at the National Trailboat Rally in Chesterfield and the National at Huddersfield in August. In addition to work for the Friends of the Cromford Canal he is working with the ECP&DA on the current restoration work from Langley Mill Basin to the A610 embankment.



I hope you all had a very happy Christmas, and made a New Year's wish for success for the Friends of the Cromford Canal in 2003! 2002 was an incredible year for us all, and now we have to build on the success of our Membership and start to make a real impression on all the people who will be in a position to help us in the forthcoming months. Our membership now stands at more than 450, with forms still coming in at a steady rate.

With this copy of the Portal, some of you will find a coloured renewal slip for your Membership subscription. These are going out to all the people who joined us in March last year, (most of you at the Ironville meeting) and whose Membership is due for renewal on 1 April 2003. I know this seems very early, but the next edition of the magazine will be too late to send out the forms. Please pay promptly, as this will keep our costs down. Receipts will be sent out with the following edition of the Portal, unless I receive a SAE. If your subscription is not paid, we will send you one more 'Portal', but after that

we will consider you as a lapsed member, and you will not receive any more magazines or have access to the E mail Mailing list. Payment can be sent to me, with cheques or postal orders made out to 'Friends of the Cromford Canal'. Please do not send cash through the post. I will also be able to take payments (including cash) at the Annual General Meeting, details of which will be elsewhere in the magazine.

Apart from the election of Officers, the AGM will deal with subscription rates for the forthcoming year, so if you pay now, you will get your year's Membership at the existing rates of £5 single, £8 for a couple. After 13th March, we might be asking you for more, so you have been warned!

It has been good to meet some of you in person over the last year, and I am hoping that I shall get to know more of you at the forthcoming events we have arranged.

With very best wishes for the New Year.



OUR FRIENDS ELECTRONIC

compiled by The Editor

We start off where we left off last issue, with Butterley Tunnel.

Hugh Caldwell commented on a trip he made:

"The last trip we made into the tunnel was in 1980. this was from the Golden Valley end and we had to boat out a large quantity of broken timber before we could make any progress. On reflection this was probably decayed roof supports. Very shortly after this BW prevented entry. There was an article in *Waterways World* about a tunnel trip but I think this was before ours which as far as I know was the last to make any significant progress, certainly beyond the loading bay. Were BW to allow entry there would be no problems involved in reaching the Carr pit turning bay which as far as I know is a unique survivor in British canal tunnels. If tunnels exist behind the brick infill then this could be a good lever for funding and an attraction on a par with those in Dudley."

Somebody asked Hugh if he'd taken any photos. His answer:

"Yes I took photographs. The film is still in the camera. The camera is still where I dropped it in the loading bay. Almost anywhere else it would have been recoverable. Sorry. As far as I

know no one else had a camera on any of our trips. I don't know when Robin Witter went in but I remember we had a long chat at the 1980 Tameside canal festival when we compared notes on tunnels attempted. If you have not already done so ask him to show you the photographs he took in Brindley's Harecastle."

Mike Kelley asked:

"Curious, and curiouiser! Please enlighten my darkness and tell me what, 'the Carr pit turning bay which AS FAR AS I KNOW is a unique survivor in British canal tunnels', is?"

Hugh Caldwell replied:

"On the time line published on the FCC web site mention is made of a short lived colliery access to which was possible only from the tunnel. A short distance from the Golden Valley entrance is what is best described as a "crossing." the canal tunnel has as I remember a normal semi-circular section but the arches to either side which have been bricked in have a pointed shape. I imagine that if this pit existed it needed access from one side of the tunnel only so the arch on the opposite side would allow what must have been smallish boats to back in and swing into the main tunnel. A lot of this is supposition but it seems to be

a good fit for what is visible. I didn't know about Carr pit until I read the time line and I had thought that the tunnel served Brittain pit as of course it may have done though I would have expected some record of that."

Hugh Potter added:

"Picking up this thread again, I've spoken to Des Greenwood who works at Butterley and has researched the tunnel's history quite a bit. He says that a cross shaft at the Golden Valley end would almost certainly be for the outlet from the Codnor Park Pumping Station, which drained various coal pits in nearby Tanyard Wood, South of Newlands and also one right at the top of the hill High Holborn pit owned by Butterley.

He confirms that Carr (Wood) pit closed 1813, location not exactly known, and access was probably by boat from around Butterley Wide Hole."

Hugh Potter had more information on Carr Pit:

"There's been some debate about Carr Pit, possibly having access to Butterley Tunnel some 200 yards from Golden Valley end. 200 yards would be about 9 chains

A report by Eustace Mitton (Colliery Agent) in 1907 to A Leslie Wright, MD of Butterley Iron Works, describes entering from E end. The first item of interest he reports is at

13 chains, 47ft 6in (precisely!) where he mentions "mouth of out-let for Butterley Park pump. This is only a small opening in the south side of the tunnel about 2ft 6in high, 3ft wide being knocked out through the wall of the tunnel"

No mention of any major crossing (but may be that was because everyone knew it was there?)

At 30 chains he notes shaft at Woolley's Farm.

At 40 chains, he chickened out owing to obvious recent tunnel movement.

Frustratingly, he mentions taking 3 photos at this point, but although he didn't drop the camera in, I do not know where the photos went, likewise the sketches that he refers to having made. My copy is a typescript only obtained from Brian Key.

If anyone knows the whereabouts of the missing illustrations, please let me know

However . . . Butterley Carr Pit is mentioned on a diagram of the Butterley Wide hole (the widening of the tunnel under their works where they loaded boats via shafts) and correlates directly with Robin Witter's exploration 1979 from the W portal which says:

"At approximately marker 40 [ie 40 chains] (900 yards), the tunnel increases to about three times its



Derbyshire County Council have now kindly provided a handrail to assist the up & over at the A610 crossing, that should make next years sponsored walk a little easier!
(Patrick Morriss)

previous width (ie 25 ft) and increases in height to some 12 feet for about 40 yards length. On the south side is one dry tunnel of substantial dimensions and a second probable Tunnel of similar dimensions, with the entrance bricked off and at the extreme east end of the widened area a low tunnel in water if possibly for drainage or possibly a previous tub boat tunnel. [This ties in with diagram above last tunnel is shown as 4ft 6in wide and 8ft deep and carrying water from Butterley Carr Pit.] The whole area was deeply coloured red ochre and was obviously the underground loading area for the Butterley Company located above at this point. The whole area is considerably silted and all, including what could be seen of the side tunnels, is brick lined."

So, it seems that Carr Pit was Butterley Carr Pit and had some kind of outlet at the Butterley Wide hole, for water at least, and may be for small boats.

In "The Butterley Co 1790-1830", Philip Riden refers to "a new pit at Butterley Carr" being sunk in 1794, the year the canal opened throughout.

He says "Coal-mining ceased at Furnace Rake during 1802, leaving only Carr Colliery, a small pit about half a mile south of the works. This was the only coalmine on the estate which lasted any length of time and even it was comparatively short-lived. In 1813 it was described as 'nearly worked out' and in 1817 disappears from the

accounts. It was at first worked by a tunnel for small boats leading off Butterley Tunnel, but later, like the other pits both on the Butterley Hall estate and elsewhere, relied on railways to carry away its coal. Most coal from here would have gone into the works on a short railway through Carr Wood, while any that was sold outside the firm was carried on James Fletcher's railway from Ripley Colliery to a wharf near the west end of Butterley Tunnel, which passed to the south of Carr Colliery. This arrangement was unique in the company; in every other respect Butterley's internal railway system was self-contained."

Does any of this help anyone?"

Discussions were held on the possibility of running a trip boat from Cromford Wharf again. I'd suggested a small powered boat, which suggestion got slung out in short order.

Yasmin said:

"The only skill you would need regarding a horse powered boat is to be able to work with the horse and the person on the boat, it is not rocket science, it would be a fabulous opportunity and Mick and I would love to take part in this particular project. I think a longer, more stable boat with the added attraction of a horse would do far more for our cause than a "water-rat" type thing! A horse powered boat is already acceptable to everyone on the Cromford - most

people have asked about it, including me, as it was supposed to come into effect last year, but the foot and mouth put paid to that.

Tourist appeal is paramount here, I know on the Huddersfield that the larger trip boat was far more successful than the smaller one. It was also far more stable, which was reassuring to folk getting on board, and those already sitting - i.e. they did not have to be told where to sit according to weight, children only here or there, groups split up 'cos there wasn't enough room, nor were they scared to move a limb in case the boat rolled - which they can do, quite alarmingly - all of which is very off putting, especially if this is their first experience; they will tend to think all narrow boats are that unstable, etc."

Tim & Jill Sharpe commented:

"When the trip boat does arrive, if the volunteers are to wear traditional costume, my friend and myself would be glad to provide spider's web belts and bonnets etc (we have made them before for our friends wedding). Also if the Arkwright Society wanted any costumes, examples of cabin crochet or rag rugs for their museum on the wharf, we would be glad to help."

John Harwood commented on some questions which were raised.

Will DCC allow us to operate a trip boat?

Can we loan/hire a boat and a horse?

Can we find people with the required skills to operate this?

Will these same people be able to commit themselves to several summer weekends. (Maybe retirees?)

With respect only DCC can answer that! I would suggest that a little time is allowed to elapse before this is brought up until it is clear (to doubters, not me) that the 'Friends' is here to stay and can show a track record of steady progress.

As others have said Sue Day is the one to start with here.

I have 'horse led' and 'steered' and would happily share experiences with others but I fear that in this litigious age we could not restart this service on the happy voluntary basis that it once was. Boatmen's licences, risk assessments, Public Liability insurance etc etc."

(regarding a powered boat)

"The only powered boat used on the restored length was paddle driven and for maintenance only. Restoration was not to a depth that we would consider normal nowadays because the horse boat only had a draught of inches. It is doubtful that any powered boat would be acceptable with the depth as it is due to the amount disturbance caused by the prop."

An offer was made by Rick Muir:

"I haven't met any of the FCC yet as

I'm a new member from the (fairly) distant Cotswolds. So; Hello everyone,

I have read with great interest all of the messages on re-introducing a trip boat at Cromford, which I could perhaps sum up as initial enthusiasm tempered by a few wise words of caution on practical and political grounds. The general assumption so far seems to be for a volunteer run weekend type of operation such as is operated by many other trusts and societies, as indeed we do here on the Cotswold Canals. Could I suggest another approach? I have been looking into suitable locations for a full-time commercial horse boat operation and was thrilled to bits when I read about the launch of the 'Friends'. I believe Cromford Wharf to be possibly the best location in the country, if the canal is going to be maintained and restored.

This could also be a very useful option for the FCC, the canal (including it's wildlife) and the greater community. A few pros and cons;

- a.. A higher public profile and 7 day a week promotion of the canal, the FCC and their aims. Greater potential for fundraising and membership recruiting.
- b.. A new boat, built to meet current legislation, including disabled access etc. Trained and licensed crew.
- c.. Full time admin and marketing.
- d.. Job creation.
- e.. More use of the waterway helping to maintain a clear channel.

f.. As great or even greater financial contribution to FCC as a part time operation. (charitable donations are very tax efficient!)

On the down side, several members have already expressed interest in helping to run boat trips, and what could be more enjoyable than helping to restore your local canal by spending a few summer days boating? I see no reason why casual or volunteer crews could not be used by a commercial operator, if properly trained. You'd even get paid! PROBLEMS! Yes, Plenty. We've spent a few days looking at the whole 5 1/2 miles. Yes it's shallow, although not as bad as it looks in places. Shove a stick into six inches of water over weed e.g. at Cromford Wharf and it goes down 3 feet into soft mud. Clearly though, selective dredging is required especially in the reeded sections. BUT If the will exists amongst e.g. DCC, the wildlife groups and the 'Friends' then the project is definitely do-able.

Since we are somewhat "outsiders", and being mindful of Hugh Potter's warning about treading on toes, we have not yet approached DCC beyond obtaining a contact name and address. Instead I would like to present the idea to yourselves first. I would welcome your reactions, ideas, comments and views. What do you think?"

Mike Kelley replied:

"Nice to hear from you Rick, you are most welcome. Clearly if you are able

to help us raise the profile of the Cromford this has to be good for our cause, especially from someone like yourself who can dedicate more time to it than willing part-timers can. I understand though that others are also looking into such a venture, but it will be up to DCC to agree or disagree to this. We in the FCC committee are finding this takes a great deal of our time and effort, so we would not be in a position to run this ourselves, indeed we could not find members who were able to attend many of the events through the summer that we had been invited to. Therefore if we can't take this on then the next best thing is for a member of the FCC to do this.

Speaking personally, and not for the committee, I wish you well. We could use this venue to increase our membership and increase our funds from possible sales etc. The Arkwright Society are thinking of making the building at the end of the wharf into a museum of the canal, so all this together should really bring the Cromford to the attention of the general public as well as the authorities.

Keep us informed of progress."

Hugh Potter added:

"In the absence of any obvious progress by anyone else, I'd say 'go for it'. As Mike says, the Friends do not have the person power to run such a venture, and anything that highlights the canal has to be a good thing. What

it needs is someone to take the bull by the horns . . . but may be that's not quite the right metaphor."

Carol Taylor said:

"Welcome . I am not a boating person at all - and know very little about the workings of a canal in action. But I do know how enriching and positive the restoration of the Cromford Canal will be for many, many people, some of whom who may be perhaps only 'spectators' or 'Sunday Drivers' like me.

One thing I really picked up on in your email is the mention of the mud which is 3ft deep ! I don't think I have heard anybody from the FCC mention this mud before and the safety issue it presents.

My father in law, who walks his dogs every day, down the stretch of the Cromford leading to Ironville, every morning, actually fell in last Winter! He is 68, quite a large man and not so good on his knees and this is how it happened. One of his dogs fell in, and Alan tried to rescue his dog. Despite calling the dog it just didn't seem to be able to get out! Alan, edged towards the bank, on a slope and to steady himself held on to quite a large branch on a nearby tree. He continued to try and coax the dog out to no avail. Within a few minutes, the branch he was holding onto himself, snapped and Alan careered into the water! When he surfaced he found he was stuck in

freezing cold mud up to the thighs and there wasn't a soul in sight. He tried to move back in towards the bank but with the suction he found he could hardly move at all. Luckily a young man came along within 10 minutes or so and was able to lend an arm and some muscle power to get him out again. In our family, it is now a funny story my husband, Martyn (Alan's son) calls him 'Al from Atlantis'..... but there is a more sinister side too. Surely, if our local canal remains in its present appalling state is there an issue of public safety too ?"

This led onto a series of posts about dredging.

Malcolm Bridge said:

"BW mostly use 'Land & Water' who, from what I saw of them on the Rochdale, seem competent, efficient and well equipped. However, I don't suppose they are cheap and it is worth remembering that dredging is well within the scope of volunteers. The Surrey & Hants CS dredged many miles of the Basingstoke and the Chichester CS have also done quite a lot on their canal. Nearer home, the Huddersfield CS purchased a dredger from BW some years ago and used it in the Marsden area. I don't know whether they still have it and, if so, whether it is still required. If it becomes of interest I can certainly find out."

John Harwood came back with:

"On the subject of dredging there is a great need to make haste slowly. I seem to remember reading somewhere that the BW schedule for dredging runs something like this:-

- 1) Identify the area to be dredged and assess the volume to be produced
 - 2) Find somewhere to put the spoil (usually canalside farmer's fields)
 - 3) Obtain landowners permission
 - 4) Take dredging samples for chemical analysis for nasties
 - 5) Arrange access to site
 - 6) Apply for planning permission
- If granted start dredging - the big problem is that we are now five years on from (1).

All this of course on BW waterways and as DCC own the upper section do they want it dredging or will they allow it????"

Back to the tunnel:

Giles Metcalf asked:

"Does anyone know roughly how deep the canal lies at the two air vents on Coach Road? The one at what used to be Woollacott's farm, and the one at the end of the Police HQ playing field?"

I am investigating the idea of lowering a camera down the shafts to get some pictures of the tunnel."

Patrick Morriss replied:

"The air shaft near the Police HQ is at 4066 5152 and has a spot height of 417 feet close by. There is an air shaft marked at Butterley Park House at

4128 5143 midway between 411 feet & 386 feet. There is also a shaft marked near Butterley Park Farm at 4152 5139 between 386 feet & a Bench Mark of 373.24 feet on the farm yard wall (I think). I do not know if this was Woollacott's Farm. This info is from SK4051 & SK4151 1962 Part surveyed 1950."

Hugh Potter commented:

"So with the canal at around 270ft that gives us a shaft depth of between 100 and 150ft. Have you got a long piece of string, Giles?"

Another work party?

Hugh Potter told us:

"Friends might like to know that the recent rain has caused DCC problems at Ambergate with water not being able to get away to the weir at the southern end of the canal owing to silting. Water is escaping to local land, particularly between bridges 15 and 16, owing to silt, brought down over the years by the rain, blocking the channel.

Whilst the canal is part of an SSSI, it shows that maintenance is still needed to keep it in a suitable state to protect the species that it was designated to protect.

It is a man made structure, and just leaving it 'to nature' is not sufficient!"

Trevor and Dorothy Robson commented:

"Another work party? Yes, we saw how extensive the overflow had been (as evidenced by duck weed deposited along the towpath). Thank goodness someone cleared a channel to allow an outflow to the weir. We are all for protecting wildlife but not at the risk of neglecting the canal to the extent that the bank gives way - an event that wouldn't do a lot for the wildlife in any case. We agree that where the canal is in water then it needs to be maintained and we shall be more than willing to help, if only we are permitted to do so. We don't want SSI to mean 'Sorry, Site Inundated'."

Another Arm

Hugh Caldwell commented:

"There is of course another arm. This comes off below Stoneyford lock just up from the site of the aqueduct and runs as far as the railway and was probably shortened when this was built as a footpath continues the line through an accommodation bridge. It is in remarkably good condition and still holds some water at times. It is easy to miss if you are walking the line as it was stanked off many years ago and is now partially hidden by a hedge line."

Finally John Boucher asked:

"Have you seen German Wheatcroft's large display advertisement on the wall in the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester?"

Headed G Wheatcroft and Sons,

Carriers by Vans, Waggons and Flyboats to and from the undermentioned places, it goes on to list a large number of places all over the country from Newcastle on Tyne and Yorkshire to London, the Midlands and Bristol, all parts of the West of England and South Wales. It has illustrations of narrow boat 'accommodation' (?), a sailing trow, a covered waggon and a (?) stage coach.

The part I like is " Ms GW and Sons (...?) Yorkshire and other Waggons meet their London Fly Boats daily at

Buckland Hollow in Derbyshire from whence goods are immediately forwarded to and from London, Derby, Nottingham, Loughboro' and all places on the line of canal.


It is undated but it looks to be about the turn of the century. I presume it predates the turnpike road down the Derwent Valley, in the days when the mills in Belper used to dispatch their goods across through Heage down to Buckland Hollow to forward them South. Buckland Hollow was obviously the major port in those days!"



SOCIAL MEETING!!

22nd January 2003 at Ironville Church Hall
at 7-30 PM

Film show on "Leisure Boating"
given by John Lower



BOOK REVIEW: "PENNINE DREAMS"

by John Harwood

Keith Gibson, a director of HCS Restoration Ltd., and a long time member of the Huddersfield Canal Society has just produced a book 'Pennine Dreams' which contains a concise history of the building of the Huddersfield and (more importantly for us) the story of its restoration from day one to opening. Having been a member of the said Society for some time I have watched as the blanks in the map of the canal came closer together and read in 'Pennine Link' how it was being done.

To be able to read the full story now confirms and adds to the admiration and respect I feel for those who have been steering this almighty project, granted some of the story is now dated - not in an historical way but in the variety of government Job Creation schemes that have come and gone and are now no longer available to us, but the persistence of those in the Society and it's various associated companies in for ever learning new schemes which replaced old ones and keeping pace with changing sources of funding - all those with any interest in the canals of this country owe a great debt of gratitude to the HCS.

Indeed their efforts are not just available to canal enthusiast but walkers, anglers nature watchers and (not least) those residents of the

valleys whose lives have been transformed and enriched by rejuvenation of town centres and provision of leisure interests and jobs.

Did you realise that an agreement with the Millennium Commission and English Partnerships for funding would require - Principal and Supplemental Agreements with the Millennium Commission, Deeds of Dedication and Certificates of Title, an Operation and Maintenance Agreement with the Millennium Commission, Gap Funding and Expenditure Agreements with English Partnerships, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Huddersfield Canal Co and each of the partners and individual agreements between British Waterways and the local authorities for each contract to be let on the canal? Less still have you (or I) any clue what they are or what they cost?

If there are any grumbles about the book they are that the print seems exceptionally small (or is it my eyes) and an odd bit of colour would have been nice otherwise this book must be compulsory reading for all involved in future restoration work. Every officer of the Cromford needs this on their shelves ASAP.

Huddersfield Canal Society Sales, 239 Mossley Road, Ashton under Lyne, Lancs, OL6 6LN 01613391332

HARTSHAY PIG-STY LIBRARY

Hugh Potter discovers how Lower Hartshay residents made a silk purse out of a sow's ear

For the following somewhat bizarre story relating to the Cromford Canal, I am indebted to Heather McKeurtan of the Old School House in Lower Hartshay, who has done much to co-ordinate local memories of the area, which are published in a booklet called Hartshay Historical. The rather surprising information that follows comes from no less an authoritative source than Country Life for 26th July 1902 and is largely repeated in the even more erudite Assistant Librarian for June 1961.

Towards the end of the 19th century, some of the Hartshay locals used to meet at the canal bridge in preference to local taverns "to smoke their evening pipes, to discuss the topics of the day, and to listen to extracts read from the newspaper". When the weather was "unfriendly" this little club descended to the towpath to continue their "conversazione" under the shelter of the bridge.

One of the members owned a pig-sty on the banks of the Cromford Canal, "the normal inhabitants of which had

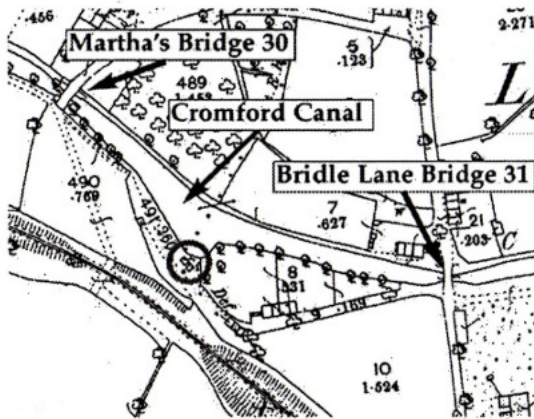
just been slain for conversion to bacon". So it was that in November 1894, the 6ft square 'room' was cleaned out and furnished with boxes as seats. There were no windows, so candles had to be used even by day. To enter, it was necessary to double up through the low doorway. Rules were drawn up under title "Lower Hartshay Reading-Room". A daily newspaper was bought, and books were read aloud on two nights a week.

Two years later with 20 members, a second, adjacent, pig-sty was acquired, a full-height entrance door built, and a skylight put in the roof. There were shelves for books, pictures on the walls and a small round table.

The location is not given but there is a photograph of 'The President' outside the door with the canal adjacent and a sunken boat just behind. The text says "Crossing the canal you pass along the row of cottages and down a little path, where, on the very water's edge, stand the pig-styes. The Reading-room is the farthest." The Assistant Librarian suggests the location as where "the canal widens out into a basin on which there was a wharf, and there are two bridges over it in the village." From this I judge the location to be as indicated as shown on the map.



"The President" outside the 'Reading Rooms' with the canal adjacent and a sunken boat just behind. As the door behind him is 'proper' height it suggests that he is outside the newer extension, with the original door in the foreground to the left.



The OS map of c.1880 with the suggested location of the Reading Rooms ringed.

Have any Friends ever heard of this wonderful institution? If so, I'd be delighted to hear from you via the

Editor.

"POTS N' PIX"

The Pots & Pix weekend on 23/24 November organised by FCC Archivist Hugh Potter (by name) and his potter-by-nature partner Liz Tatam attracted a large number of members and non-members, particularly on the Sunday when quite a social gathering took place!

The dining room and garage of the canalside house were taken over by a selling exhibition of Liz's handmade stoneware ceramics. Meanwhile, the lounge had displays of historic photographs from all along the canal,

presented on large boards. The remainder of Hugh's collection was available for viewing in over a dozen ring binders. Full points for stamina to the couple who stayed around 5 hours and looked through every file!!

Generous donations from visitors, plus a percentage of pottery sales and subs from two new members, kept the FCC treasurer happy! And hearing new tales of former years on the Cromford Canal kept our Archivist happy, as well as being able to meet so many members.

OPERATION IRONVILLE

Don't forget our first real crack at doing some real restoration work on the Cromford Canal. Please turn up at Ironville by 0930 on Saturday 1st February - you need to be at the King William Street bridge over the Canal at Ironville (off Waterside). Come in old clothes - you're going to get DIRTY! Wear wellies as the bottom of the Canal IS still wet - bring hand tools (including bow saws) and barrows. If the place you are working dictates you need a hard hat, which

we can supply, please bring your own if you've got one.

Hot drinks will be provided, as will toilets. Skips are being provided, as are rubber gloves for dealing with possibly infected items. The intention is to work down the flight, clearing as we go, with the intention of getting as far down the flight as we can with clearance. If we don't get done on Saturday, we all come back on Sunday to finish off - will we see YOU there?



..... *AND FINALLY*.....



"Y'know, I reckon we could make a suction dredger out of a Dyson.....
Mick Golds in "domestic" mode at Sandiacre Lock Cottage on New Year's
Eve *(photo by the Editor)*