



# THE PORTAL



THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

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

The Friends of the Cromford Canal is a Registered Charity (Number 1100700) which exists 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 preferably by e-mail to the Editor at:

Pictures for The Portal or the Web Site should preferably 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, however the Editor can scan good old-fashioned prints if need be and slides can also be accommodated!!

For all the very latest news, plus loads of other information and pictures, don't forget to visit our Web Site:

[www.cromfordcanal.org.uk](http://www.cromfordcanal.org.uk)

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

The Friends of the Cromford Canal are Corporate Members of:



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Front Cover: WRG volunteer Claire "Dippy" Bedford demonstrates the "real" use for a wheelbarrow on the Big Chop between Christmas and New Year  
*(Editor)*



# IT'S (NEARLY) ALL HAPPENING!



I've been constantly been harping on in these Editorials that it's going to be a long while before we put serious spades in the ground. That basic truth may still hold true, but there's an awful lot going on at the moment. We've gone out to tender for our Environmental Study: one of the first "bits of paper" we're going to need before applying for serious funding. This has meant that the fabled Binnie report has been dragged out of the Archive - read about THAT elsewhere in this issue.

We've also been taken under the wing of the Waterways Recovery Group's London Group, who came up to do tree clearance at the eastern end of Butterley Tunnel on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November and

enjoyed it so much that they came back for much more of the same between Christmas and New Year! Let's hope that this is the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial relationship for both of us.

There is (inevitably) a downside. Planning permission was applied for some time ago for opencast mining at the Langley Mill end of the Canal. This included planning permission for canal restoration, creation of a Marina and associated buildings. We heard just before Christmas that the applications for all but the mining have been withdrawn by the applicant. What this means is unclear at present.



"Oh look - there's a canal there" Well not quite, but the post-Christmas tree bash has revealed that the canal bed by Codnor Park Reservoir still holds water.

*(Editor)*

# **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is given that the Third Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Cromford Canal will be held at 7.30pm on Monday, 7th March 2005 at the Church Hall Ironville.

1. Introduction                      Address by the Chairman of the Friends of Cromford Canal. Outline of the evening's agenda.
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of previous AGM        The minutes of the Second Annual General meeting held on March 15th 2004 will be presented. (A copy should be enclosed with this issue).
4. Matters Arising (not covered by the Agenda)
5. Chairman's Report                The Chairman (Mike Kelley) will review progress and problems of the last year.
6. Treasurer's Report                A copy of the balance sheet for financial year-end 31st December 2004 will be circulated at this meeting.
7. The Election of the Committee    In order to meet the rolling committee structure suggested by the membership and to comply with the Constitution, Derek Dixon, Yvonne Shattower and Mary Bellamy have offered to retire by rotation. Derek Dixon and Yvonne Shattower being eligible have offered themselves for re-election. They have been proposed for re-election; Mary Bellamy has indicated that she will not be standing as Treasurer.
8. Membership Secretary's Report
9. Archivist's Report
10. Portal Editor / Webmaster's report
11. Any other business

The Secretary needs nominations for the committee (and election by vote if needed) in writing 28 days before the AGM. We also need a volunteer to take over the job of Treasurer.



# **The Black Country Living Museum & Dudley Tunnel Boat Trip**

**Saturday 7th May 2005**

<b>Adults</b>	<b>£22-00</b>
<b>Seniors</b>	<b>£20-50</b>
<b>Children</b>	<b>£18-00</b>

Take this opportunity to visit one of the "Wonders of the Waterways" including the newest canal tunnel in the UK - also the Living Museum is not to be missed: take a ride on a trolleybus, tram or vintage bus and visit the houses, shops, pub and chip shop and school (especially the school!) of times past.

All inclusive price including coach travel and entrance fees  
Pick up points will be arranged at a later date.  
A £10 deposit per person is required on booking  
Balance to be paid by the 31st March 2005

For further details contact:  
Sheila Smith 0115 938 4129  
Val Roberts 01773 760758

Please use the booking slip included with this issue



I was delighted to see that Revised Plan of the local Bolsover District Council has some very positive statements about the Pinxton branch of the Cromford canal. We have strong support from most of our local councils, many of whom are affiliated members. For this we are very thankful - indeed several councillors are individual members of the FCC but Bolsover have been particularly proactive in their encouragement of our aims.

In Bolsover's Revised Plan they state in section TRA 1 - 'Protection of Rail and Canal Routes', "*Planning permission will not be granted for development which would sever or otherwise prejudice the re-use of the following railway and canal routes.....* (namely) Item 2, Pinxton Branch of the Cromford Canal." Then in section COM 10 - 'Existing Countryside and Water Recreation Facilities', it states, "*Planning permission will not be granted for development which would materially harm the character, or prejudice the use for countryside or water recreation, of the following sites.....* (namely) Item 1 Pinxton Wharf and Item 11 Erewash Trail." So thank you Bolsover, we appreciate your actions.

So the part of the Pinxton canal in Bolsover's hands now appears safe, all we need now is to get the bit of this branch reinstated that crosses the open cast area known as the Smotherfly Site, and contacts with UK-Coal continues to try and find an agreed way to reinstate the canal across this open-cast site.

What a pity that such caring forethought shown by Bolsover, was not in place when permission was granted by another local council to build a second

house on the 200 year-old abutments of the historical Bullbridge aqueduct. Fortunately this other council has, since then, shown similar concern for our canal; this heritage masterpiece of ours.

The Derbyshire Waterways Partnership had their inaugural meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. This group has been formed from all the major waterway groups in the county, and includes the Cromford, the Erewash, the Derby, the Chesterfield and Bugsworth Basin. It was felt there is a need to form a political lobby group, being as these canal groups have good local support, but lack a united voice at county level. There are not enough local politicians who clearly understand the benefits that canals can and do bring. So this united voice is required if we wish to attract national and European funding.

Tourism is a major commercial activity in Derbyshire, yet the county tourist board do not generally support individual canals, but will, it is felt, support "Themes", such as 'The Derbyshire Waterways'. The objectives of this group are to:

Promote the various restorations and to link with other organisations as is deemed appropriate.

Increase both public and political awareness, it is vital that more politicians understand the issues and reach out to both MP's and MEP's

Establish a direct relationship with the regional development agency and other major funders

Co-ordinate our funding strategies

Share information and intelligence around the DWP group



Develop a relationship with British Waterways, and others, that reflects our status as an equal partner in future waterway developments

Potential, but not yet confirmed, activities of the group are along these lines:-

Establish a rotating annual waterway festival

Produce a "Canal Forum", an open day for politicians

Attend National events as a united body

Press and PR skills – to discuss with Derbyshire press officer

Advise IWA of our activities

South Yorkshire and Dukeries Branch to be contacted

Investigate corporate branding

Exchange of Information to be co-ordinated through the secretary

So in other words the Derbyshire waterway societies will soon be able to speak as one body, which will give us a much more political lobby for our waterways.

Our archivist, Hugh Potter, asked for volunteers to help transcribe photo copies of the original hand written script from the Cromford Canal Company. I volunteered to do my bit; and what a thrill it gave me. Here was the actual handwriting of Francis Beresford and Benjamin Outram and Co., not only that, but their signatures were there also. I was transcribing from the year 1795; all very difficult to read but wonderful, fascinating stuff. For example, it revealed what a difficult man Richard Arkwright could be to deal with. Then in one 'wheels within wheels' section, Messrs's

Beresford and Outram's coal digging activities were considered to have damaged part of the Butterley tunnel, so the Company committee promptly fined them £100 on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1795. Then at that same meeting they agreed to compensate these gentlemen for the coal they could no longer now dig, to the tune of £72..4s, plus expenses. (Say a total of £100?) Which was then later increased to £90 .. 5s at another meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1795. Good deal eh!

I was recently reading from a study prepared by Groundwork Erewash and Amber Valley Borough Council, written in 2000. In this it states, 'The wider Cromford Canal corridor is currently under developed, under valued and under utilised.... The area has potential for a major integrated investment programme combining recreation and leisure with environmental enhancement and employment provision.' OK great, we all very much agree with this, but that was four years ago so how much longer must we wait for some action? We all know that the canal can be used as a spine for major local regeneration, so let's do it then. If the authorities have been in possession of these findings why is it then left to charitable groups such as our own, to get things moving?

We are sometimes so keen and eager to get our canal reopened that we can easily forget, or overlook, that there is opposition to us. Yes, it does seem incredulous that some would oppose what is such a noteworthy project for so many of the communities along the way, as well as restoring this great historical and early engineering heritage marvel of ours; but an email I received brought it home to me that we should not only acknowledge there is opposition, but also prepare ourselves to deal with it. The email concerned said in part; "Your aims to restore the canal are irresponsible in the extreme with regard to both the environment and current



(Cromford) canal users." It then rambles on with a whole list of spurious 'facts', some of which would be laughable for their bliss of sheer ignorance, were it not for the realisation that some people actually believe this drivel.

The canal is a man made structure, not a natural course of nature; if it is left to its own devices it will silt up, become choked with weeds, (as it already has done in many places) with the water becoming starved of oxygen and light, and then it will eventually disappear as many of the Medieval fields and water courses in Britain have already done. Our canal will then be waiting for some

twenty-fifth century archaeologists to 'discover' the dry track where once ran a canal. No! Not as long as the FCC exists.

From the beginning of the FCC we have encouraged members to write to us via email, and many do contribute to our Mailing List where many and varied topics are discussed, it is also used to bring up to date news when it occurs. However, if any member feels like writing to us through the medium of this magazine then please do so, your letter will be published. We would like to hear your views.

## ***PHOTO FEATURE I - TREE BASHING AT GOLDEN VALLEY***

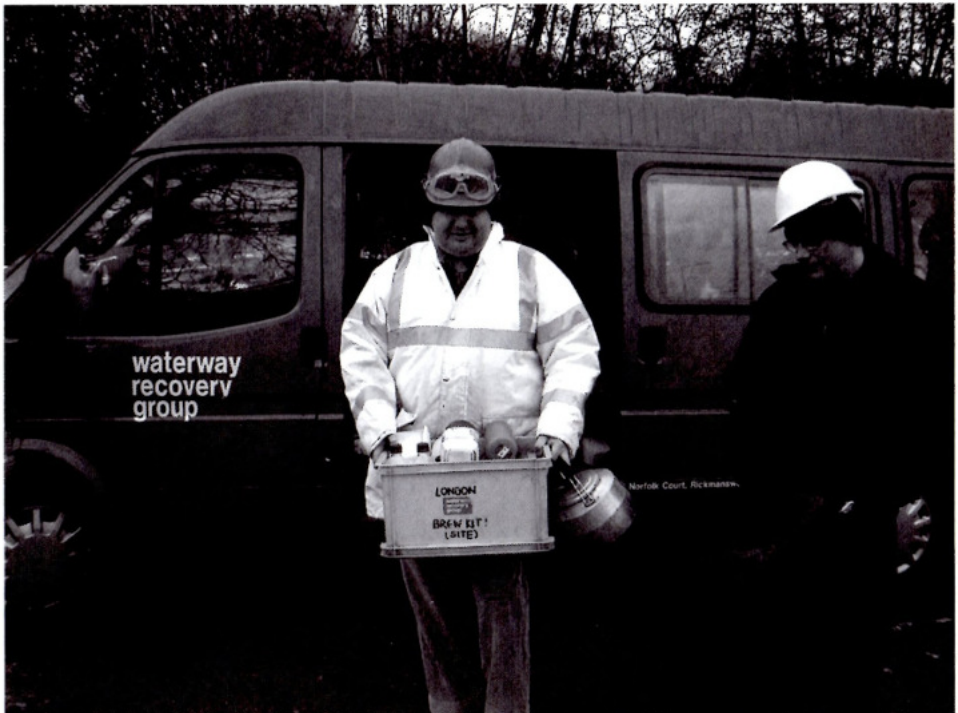
*by the Editor*



The WRG Working Party made their base at the Newlands Inn - highly appropriate!



Marcus doing the Site Briefing: "OK Chaps, this is the Cromford Canal - the water can be anything from 5" to 5' deep, so DON'T FALL IN!!!"



The most important part of the WRG Tool Kit - the Mobile Mashing Facility - arrives on site.





Cutting and pulling tree trunks was the order of the day.....

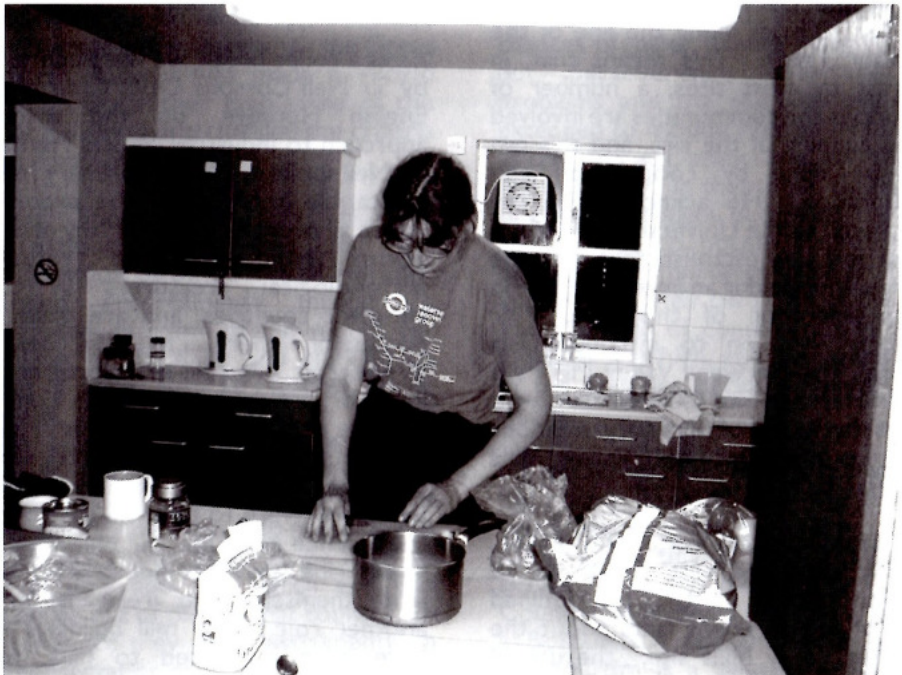


..... with logs being stockpiled for removal by narrow gauge train.





Whilst all the brushwood was burnt on a WRG “small, well-controlled” bonfire.



Meanwhile, back at Waingroves Community Centre, Maria was getting stuck into catering for lots of healthy appetites (and making coffee for a cold photographer!)

# WORLD HERITAGE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

by Yvonne Shattower

On behalf of the Friends of the Cromford Canal, I attended the conference to mark the twentieth anniversary of the United Kingdom's ratification of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2004. This was held in the entirely appropriate Cromford Mills, and covered two days of talks and visits to the World Heritage sites. Although the focus was on the sites in the United Kingdom, reference was made to sites and meetings in other countries throughout the world.

In his introduction, Bob Faithorn, Chairman of the Arkwright Society, told us that the Derwent Valley Mills site runs for 20 miles along the line of the Derwent Valley. This means that, in contrast to most sites, a number of authorities and communities are involved in the running of the site, and this can only be done by cooperation and collaboration. He acknowledged the part played by the University of Derby - a relatively new establishment, but one which is undertaking an important role in the regeneration of the area. Mr Faithorn went on to introduce Isla Macneal, the Derwent Valley Mill Mills World Heritage Site Coordinator, who told us that a total of thirty organizations make up the Derwent Valley Mills Partnership.

The next speaker was John Payne, recently appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Derby. He outlined some of the pertinent facts about the Derwent Valley Mills site; the use of water as a source of power, the birth of

the factory system at Cromford and Richard Arkwright's part in the nascence of the Industrial Revolution. Jonathan McLeod, a Board member from EMDA, referred to Arkwright's genius, and his early days as a hairdresser and tooth puller! Arkwright had come to Cromford where the livelier Bonsall Brook had given him the conditions he required rather than the slower River Trent. Mr McLeod also paid tribute to our former President, the late Duke of Devonshire, who had given unstintingly of his support and hospitality. Bob Faithorn summed up this first part of the meeting with the words 'to understand where you are going you need to know where you come from'.

After a coffee break, we were addressed by Sir Neil Cossons OBE, Chairman of English Heritage, on the changing approach to Industrial World Heritage. Sir Neil spoke of Britain's primary role in mercantile history, and the export of goods all over the world. Many of these goods have become valuable archaeological treasures in their recipient countries, and are treasured possessions there. In 1857, Bennett Woodcroft, a textile manufacturer and inventor, set up a museum in London, here he displayed such items as 'Puffing Billy' and Stephenson's 'Rocket', which together with items from the Great Exhibition were to become the core of the Science Museum. Sir Neil went on to describe how some industrial buildings lend themselves to rejuvenation in another role, citing mill buildings that have been converted to flats, their construction being substantial enough to



make this a relatively easy process. There have even been cases of new flats being built in the guise of old mill buildings, such is the attraction of these structures. Sir Neil said that in his opinion, we demolished poor quality design of the sixties, replacing it with poor quality design of the nineties, which we would probably demolish in the next twenty years or so! He told how more groups of buildings are bidding for recognition and touched on the popularity of open air museums, such as Ironbridge and Beamish, which bring a group of sites together under one location. Referring to bids for World Heritage recognition, Sir Neil mentioned the bid made by British Waterways to have the whole of the canal system listed - an impossible task considering the fragmented state of the system. Sites bidding for inclusion in the future will include Manchester, Liverpool and the Cornish tin mines - like the Derwent Valley site these tin mines are a complex system of immense importance spread over a wide area. Of course, not all sites meet with the universal approval, and many people were upset when the Great Western Railway was made a World Heritage site rather than some of the other railways which fulfilled the criteria in one way or another.

Stuart Smith, Secretary of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage galloped entertainingly through a description of some of the venues for meetings of TICCIH, and showed us slides of places such as Moscow, Spain, Canada, Rumania and London. At all these places, especially the more 'backward' countries, they endeavour to imbue the local 'powers that be' with the enthusiasm and foresight to preserve the sites which, to us, seem to be from an era of long ago, but which are just becoming out of date in that country. In one instance they were instrumental in the conservation of a radio station which

dated from 1923, and which is unique. Japan, before the opening of the country to the west, nonetheless acknowledged the west's existence by building industrial units from text books, and some of these are now worthy of protection.

Dr Christopher Young, Head of World Heritage and International Policy, English Heritage, spoke on the subject of managing World Heritage Sites. He emphasised that it has to be a co-ordinated approach to work, and a management system is essential. Barry Joyce, Chair of the Derwent Valley Mills WHS Partnership Technical Panel concluded the morning's programme by recounting the creation of the Derwent Valley Mill Heritage Site - he described the acquisition of the buildings in the early days, when there was so much debris that you could hardly see the original buildings. At that time, Strutts Mill at Milford had been described as being 'of no importance' and 'no tears would be shed over its departure'. Originally the buildings at Cromford were listed as Grade 2, this reduced the chances of major funding being granted, but perseverance overcame the problems and the site was eventually extended to include Masson Mill as well as the mills at Darley Dale, and the Silk Mill at Derby. In their time, these mills, of course, brought people to the area, and this led to houses, churches and other ancillary buildings which are just as important in their own right as the mills. The standard of construction of these buildings was high, and they were some of the first fire proof buildings in the world.

Mr Joyce described how a 'buffer zone' has been created to protect the immediate area of the Valley, and in some cases this is from 'skyline to skyline'. No less than thirteen Parish Councils are involved in the area, as well as Borough Councils and private owners, and tourism is a valuable employment



source. However, all this costs money and he touched on the need for core funding in the near future.

After lunch, we were to have been addressed by Lord McIntosh of Haringey, Minister for Media and Heritage, but apparently John Prescott required his services elsewhere, so his speech was read for him by Sheila Evans. We heard that there were 611 sites throughout the world. The United Kingdom has 26, with 21 cultural and five natural. Lord McIntosh's address touched on the problems of a worldwide but disparate group of buildings, each with its own needs, and the importance of a sound management plan for each site. Some sites are happy to be a small, individual area, others, like the Derwent Valley are more comfortable being in a group of like members - part of a large family. Our organisation is, in many ways, far ahead of that in continental countries. It is important to remember that they are WORLD Heritage Sites, and not just for one country, so the world has a duty of care for them. There are also cases

where other listings such as ANOB and SSSI impinge on a WHS. The address also touched on the restrictions of being a WHS - for instance in Cologne, where the Cathedral is a WHS, the city authorities had to amend the plans for a new building in the shadow of the cathedral because it (the new building) was too tall.

The last part of the afternoon was a series of workshops. I had hoped to be included in the one which was discussing sustainable tourism, but unfortunately this was full, so I found myself in a small group discussing the English planning system. Among the topics we discussed in the brief time available was the problem of marrying modern planning constraints with the requirements of Heritage sites - not always easy by any means.

The second day of the Conference was a tour of the individual sites included in the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site, and this will form the basis for an article in the next 'Portal'.

## ***GETTING TO GRIPS WITH BINNIE***

*by The Editor*

**Y**ou will have seen references to "Binnie" or "The Binnie Report" in previous issues of "The Portal" and at our various meetings, so I decided we ought to know more. I went to see the Hon Archivist, who handed me a massive loose-leaf file, crammed with masses of investigations and conclusions: far too much to reproduce here. However, there is an Executive Summary which has been issued as part of the tendering process for our Environmental Study which was a much more manageable document. I've added comments in italics. The Report was commissioned in 1994.

### Introduction

1 The Cromford Canal was opened to traffic throughout its length in August 1794, which means that this year, 1994, is its 200th anniversary.

2 1994 also marks two other anniversaries in the canal's history: It is exactly 50 years since an Act of Parliament was passed which formally closed the canal (although there was limited navigation as far as Ironville for another 2 or 3 years afterwards), It is now 20 years since the campaign to re-open the canal was started by the

Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association (ECP&DA) and the Inland Waterways Association (IWA).

3 A lot of time and energy has gone into exploring the prospect of restoring the canal over the last 20 years, and various papers and reports have been produced in support of the case. It is therefore perhaps appropriate in this anniversary year to build upon what has gone before and consider the current feasibility in a wider sense.

#### Terms of reference

4 Binnie & Partners' brief is to study three main aspects of restoration:

- Engineering issues (including geotechnical)
- Water supply requirements and hydrological survey
- Environmental appraisal

*(which is much the same as we're going to have to re-do for the whole Canal.)*

The issues identified in each case are to be assessed, reported upon and used to select a scheme which balances their respective problems and merits.

5 The environmental appraisal was highlighted as an important consideration, not only because the Erewash valley is now recognised as holding ecologically significant habitats, but also because issues are raised which have never previously been assessed in the context of restoring this canal.

#### Brief history

6 Such was the demand for a canal to serve the mills and coalfields of the Derwent and Erewash valleys that when William Jessop presented his survey and estimate in December 1788, half of the money was raised on the spot and the other half within two weeks.

7 Work started soon after parliamentary consent was given in 1789 and took 4½ years to complete under the direction of Jessop and Outram. The "main line" from its junction with the Nottingham and Erewash Canals at Langley Mill, was 14½ miles long and there was a 2½ mile spur known as the Pinxton Branch leaving the main line at Ironville. All the locks were in the first 3½ miles to Ironville, beyond which came the Butterley tunnel and two major aqueducts at Bullbridge and Wigwell.

8 The canal flourished in the early nineteenth century, carrying coal, limestone, gritstone and a range of other raw materials. Coal was by far the main cargo, accounting for between 65 and 75 per cent of traffic up to 1840. The canal's fortunes declined after the middle of the century and Butterley tunnel was finally closed in 1900 due to subsidence. Total closure of the canal followed in the 1940s except for a short section at Langley Mill which was used until the early 1960s.

9 Much of the route was filled in during the 1960s but the section in Golden Valley remains in water, as does a section near Jacksdale. Six of the seven locks in the Codnor Park flight have also survived but their gates have gone and the intermediate pounds are almost dry.

#### Progress towards restoration

10 The story of "the lower Cromford" in the last two decades seems to be punctuated with periods of committed lobbying, intense speculation and even mild optimism that the canal would be restored. Throughout the 1970s local enthusiasts and volunteers, led by the ECP&DA, were vigorous in their efforts both by championing the cause and by demonstrating the success of physical effort through the restoration of the Great Northern Basin and Langley Bridge Lock.



11 This activity and enthusiasm continued in the 1980s, albeit prompted from time to time by proposed changes to planning policies affecting the canal corridor. Just such an occasion was the Broxtowe Local Plan review of 1984 which generated a detailed objection from the IWA in an effort to safeguard the route north of Langley Mill.

12 Nevertheless, despite these determined attempts to maintain interest in restoring the canal it seems that obstacles were still being put in the way. The most obvious of these is the A610 Langley Mill by-pass which has severed the canal route without any specific provision for its reinstatement or diversion. A culvert through the embankment was discussed and costed but did not materialise.

13 Another blow came in 1984 when British Waterways carried out remedial works to Codnor Park Reservoir to satisfy the flood safety requirements of the Reservoirs Act 1975. These works included building a new overflow weir, dropping the top water level and filling in the canal along the southern shore of the reservoir. The associated enlargement and deepening of the canal channel to create a spillway for the reservoir necessitated the demolition of the top lock (No 1) and the removal of the cill from Lock 2.

#### Route assessment

##### The original route

14 Binnie & Partners have examined all three aspects of the study and have reached the conclusion that, notwithstanding the physical obstacles and environmental constraints, it is feasible to restore the canal.

15 Taking each aspect in isolation draws one towards different preferences regarding the route that the canal might

take. One thing is certain however; it is no longer feasible to reinstate the canal precisely along its original route all the way from Langley Mill to Ironville - a distance of 5.5km. The main reasons for this are:

a) The route has been severed by the A610 road embankment and it is not practical to form a new culvert or build a bridge without closing the road during construction.

b) The route has been partially lost in the flashes north of Langley Mill which have developed as a result of mining subsidence; restoration would be difficult in engineering terms and would cause an unacceptable loss of wildlife habitat.

c) Further north, approaching Stoneyford, the original route is very close to, or within, ecologically sensitive sites in the river flood plain; construction would again be difficult and the canal would be liable to inundation when the river is in flood.

d) The original aqueduct over the river has disappeared and its site is no longer considered to be suitable.

e) The route north of Stoneyford is easily distinguishable but is considered to be too close to the wetland habitats around Brinsley Flash, unless major screening embankments were to be raised and other measures were taken to shield bird life from the disturbance generated by activity on the canal and its towpath.

f) The top lock in the Codnor Park flight cannot be easily replaced in its original position without prejudicing the free discharge of surplus water along the spillway at Codnor Park Reservoir.

##### Alternative routes

16 A number of potential



diversions have, therefore, been considered. One utilises the river bridge under the A610 then takes a westerly course via Aldercar and Stoneyford. Another takes a parallel route to the original canal and crosses the River Erewash at a number of possible places around Stoneyford. The most radical, in relation to the historical authenticity, takes an easterly route and stays on the Nottinghamshire side of the Erewash valley as far north as Jacksdale before crossing over the valley to join the flight of locks towards Ironville. All these routes have been subjected to an initial selection process with their relative merits, in terms of water supply, the environment and engineering, being weighed one against the other. The "Preferred Scheme" is perhaps not the only one which is feasible but it has been chosen to strike a balance between the different, and sometimes competing, issues. Furthermore, once approved by the client's steering committee, this route has now been investigated in sufficient detail for us to be reasonably certain about its feasibility.

17 Before describing the "Preferred Scheme" it is worth noting that alternative routes could be investigated further if required. The "Green Route", for instance, which follows the east side of the valley and crosses either at Jacksdale or further south on the northern edge of an old railway embankment is a strong contender for ecological reasons. In this respect it is favoured above the 'Preferred Route' because of its natural screening from Brinsley Flash. The 'Green Route' also provides an opportunity for joint development of the 'Long Distance Trail' identified in the Broxtowe Local Plan. However, ground levels along this route may preclude the steady descent along the canal from north to south which is necessary to utilise the upstream reservoirs and avoid a second 'summit pound'. Water supply

problems are, therefore, thought to militate against it as a suitable route for the canal.

*(And from our point of view, there is no great point in creating a new canal, because then it ceases [in our view] to be a restoration and becomes a new build - NOT what we're in this for!)*

#### "Preferred Scheme"

18 The "Preferred Route" starts at Langley Mill Basin, utilises the disused mineral railway bridge under the A610, crosses the colliery spoil tip in a cutting then emerges north of Stoney Lane on a higher but parallel line to that of the original canal. A new aqueduct, south of Stoneyford, would carry the canal across the River Erewash to the west side of the valley. This would require consent from the National Rivers Authority who are concerned that the flood plain is neither obstructed nor diminished in size. The canal would briefly rejoin the original route at Boat Lane, Stoneyford, before diverting to the west again to keep away from the wildlife habitats around Brinsley Flash - 170m is recommended as the minimum distance. After coming close to the BR main line, then skirting around the archaeologically sensitive site of Codnor Park Wharf, the route would turn east again to avoid an area of old mine shafts. The route then joins the surviving section of canal, some of which is still in water, and proceeds via the Codnor Park flight of locks to Ironville.

*(Quite why we'd want to skirt an archeologically sensitive area, I don't know: far better to combine restoration with archeology and restore or interpret the remains for the benefit of visitors. I think I'd also take issue with keeping at least 170 metres away from the wildlife - there might be a little disturbance in the short term, but I take the view that much wildlife is far more robust than we*

*give it credit for being)*

19 The proposed "destination" would be a terminus basin with modest capacity for overnight mooring on the former Pinxton Branch adjacent to Codnor Park Reservoir. Marinas for long-term mooring might be located on the Eastwood side of the A610 and at the north end of the former ironworks site near Ironville. The latter would be in the area which British Coal has earmarked for sediment lagoons if their application for the 'Forge and Monument' opencast site goes ahead.

*(And which has now happened - plans for a possible marina here appear to have foundered.)*

*(If it were to turn out that it isn't possible to restore Butterley Tunnel in the medium term, this is the likely scenario for a "first stage" restoration for us. However, Binnie never looked at going any further)*

#### Engineering issues

20 The 'Preferred Route' is 5.5km long and would rise 22.71m from Langley Mill Basin. The six surviving lock chambers in the Codnor Park flight are considered to be sufficiently sound to be restored. Seven new locks would be needed, one at the top of the flight, the others at intervals down to Langley Mill.

21 Deep mining in this area ceased in 1986 and it is generally accepted that subsidence caused by modern longwall methods is complete within two years after extraction. Many of the fields have also been subjected to opencast mining and the natural settlement of the backfill is more difficult to assess. Fields which were restored more than 10 years ago are unlikely to present any problems, but those on the west side of the river have been reinstated more recently and may require some pre-consolidation if work

on the canal starts soon. No site investigation has been carried out for this study but it would be essential before proceeding to the design stage.

*(Which of course we'll have to do, but the opencast should have settled sufficiently to no longer be a problem.)*

#### Water supply issues

22 Historically, there were as many as five different water resources for the Cromford Canal. The two biggest, Butterley Reservoir and Codnor Park Reservoir, still belong to British Waterways and are technically available as sources of supply for the restored canal. Both reservoirs come under the provisions of the Reservoirs Act 1975 and are classified as 'impounding' reservoirs. Modifications were carried out at Codnor Park Reservoir in 1984 to improve its ability to pass flood flows safely. The most recent statutory inspections of both reservoirs were carried out in 1985.

23 The water demand generated by an operational canal is a combination of lockage consumption, lock leakage and leaks, seepage and evaporation losses from the intermediate pounds. This has been thoroughly evaluated in the context of the specified number of boat movements per annum and the peak levels of activity.

24 It has been calculated that Butterley Reservoir alone might meet the demand but this depends on the rate at which water is lost from the canal, and on two other very important factors. One is the unknown condition of the water supply route via Butterley tunnel; the other is the acceptability of drawing down the water level in Butterley Reservoir significantly every year and by as much as 3.0m for the 1 in 10 year drought condition.



25 This drawdown would be substantially reduced by operating Butterley and Codnor Park Reservoirs in tandem, which may mean raising Codnor Park Reservoir again to optimise its contribution. *(which would be a very good idea!)* Alternatively, the total demand placed upon the reservoirs could be limited by introducing supplementary supplies from elsewhere. Various options have been explored, including pumping from the River Erewash, gravity supplies from Bagthorpe Brook and Moorgreen Reservoir, groundwater extraction and back-pumping from the Erewash Canal. Groundwater is probably not available in any significant quantity, but one or two of the other sources might make a small contribution depending upon circumstances.

*(Of course, restoring the Pinxton Arm will also help, in tapping into further water supplies and increasing the storage capacity of the summit pound.)*

26 However, only the two main reservoirs are high enough to provide a gravity supply to the top sections of the canal. This is where the water is needed first before being re-used over and over again in lower locks. Butterley and Codnor Park Reservoirs in conjunctive operation are therefore recommended as the most appropriate sources of supply.

#### Environmental considerations

27 The Erewash valley is a broad, open valley surrounded by undulating topography with gentle slopes rising to levels of 130m to 150m OD. The tributary valley known as Golden Valley is relatively narrow, opening out as it joins the flat floor of the Erewash valley. Ground levels along the canal route fall from about 83m OD at Codnor Park Reservoir to 73m OD near Jacksdale then very gradually continuing down to

about 59m OD at Langley Mill. The only major drainage feature is the River Erewash which follows a meandering course in a narrow channel within a flood plain typically 230m wide.

28 The area has been much affected by industrial activity over the last 250 years, but this activity having largely ceased, the Erewash valley is quiet and rural once again. A notable legacy of the deep mining activity is the waterlogged valley floor with its succession of ponds and flashes in areas of subsidence.

29 These wetlands are now very important habitats for birds such as water rail, little grebe, great crested grebe, grey heron, teal, snipe and redshank. Altogether there are twenty sites of Critical Wildlife Interest within the study area supporting a wide range of flora and fauna. Each has its individual value but the wetlands, in particular, are essential as a chain of sites along the flightpath up and down the valley. The principal water bodies are Brinsley Flash in the north and Langley Flash in the south (the latter now being split into two areas by the A610 embankment). *(which proves that wildlife habitats CAN be disturbed by major civil engineering works. I wonder what conditions the road builders had to comply with? Silly me, it's a ROAD, so "do what you like!" [cynical mode off]).* These flashes together support at least 178 species of birds, of which 21 are waterfowl.

30 The restoration of the canal is considered to pose a threat to the security and development of wildlife habitats in the natural environment. *(but only in the short term.)* If the Erewash valley is to maintain its conservation value, the most sensitive areas must not only be avoided but must remain unaffected by the presence of the canal. Great care is needed when choosing a

route for the canal and when bringing reservoirs back into service as they too provide extremely important wildlife habitats. However, by anticipating the impacts it should be possible to design the scheme in an environmentally sensitive manner which minimises the perceived threats.

31 Screening banks, marginal planting and other mitigating measures will be necessary. Watercourses which currently supply the wetland meadows must not be intercepted and water quality must not deteriorate as a result of restoring the canal. Other measures might include the creation of new habitats, one of which would be canal itself.

32 If restoration goes ahead, the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trusts must be closely involved at all stages, not least in the construction stage, where a range of precautions will need to be properly implemented if the quality of the environment is to be conserved.

Costs and resources

33 If the whole restoration project was to be undertaken by civil engineering contractors the cost of the works (at 1993 prices) is estimated to be £6.5 million. However, with the exception of major earthworks, most of the restoration could be done by volunteers led by the Waterway Recovery Group. A more reasonable compromise would be to divide the project up into packages for contractors and volunteers according to the type of work and its location. A reduced budget for this might be approximately £5.7 million and, with the necessary advance planning, it is likely that complete restoration could be achieved within 5 years on site.

### Recommendations

34 A full topographic survey and site investigation are needed before proceeding any further with a design: In the meantime, consideration should be given to establishing a Trust specifically to promote and co-ordinate the restoration of the canal. Before work could begin an Order will have to be sought from the Secretary of State under the Transport and Works Act (1992).

## ITEMS FOR SALE

**W**e now have a range of clothing with our logo embroidered on it. It all comes in one colour - you can have any colour you like, so long as it's Burgundy! This (of course) means that all of you who bought red, black or white items in the past will now have to buy new ones and if Santa didn't remember, come along to any Public Meeting.

The range and prices are as follows:

T Shirts .....	£9.50 plus £1.50 P&P
Polo Shirts .....	£13.50 plus £1.50 P&P
Sweat Shirts .....	£17.50 plus £2.50 P&P

All the above are embroidered with the FCC Logo and are available in the following sizes: Med; Large; XL; XXL



We can also now offer:



Tea towels ..... £5.00 each plus 50P P&P  
100% cotton, the FCC design printed in full colour inside  
a black border

Mouse Mats ..... £4.50 each plus £1.30 P&P  
A quality rubber backed mat printed with the FCC design



Shopping Bags ..... £7.50 each plus £1.50 P&P  
A heavy canvas bag with generous handles, having the  
FCC design printed in full colour on one side. Size :18  
inches wide and 17 inches deep.

Tote Bags (not illustrated) ... £6.50 each plus 50P P&P  
A smaller lighter bag than the shopper described above  
having the FCC Logo printed in black on one side. Size:  
15 inches wide and 16 inches deep

Mugs ..... £4.75  
Look out for these on the sales stand, or they may be  
collected from Langley Mill Boatyard, by arrangement with  
the sales officer.

A Walker's Guide to the Cromford Canal - £3.50 plus 50p  
P&P



Orders and enquiries for the above items should be addressed to: Friends of the Cromford Canal, Sales, Mrs V Roberts, Langley Mill Boatyard, Derby Road, Langley Mill, Notts. NG16 4AA. Tel: 01773 760758

Cheques should be made payable to Friends of the Cromford Canal, to be sent with the order please. Remember to state size required if applicable, and allow 28 days for delivery.

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

by Hugh Potter

A contributor to *Waterways World*, Robert Davies, who I know from the 'day job', recently sent in a fascinating selection of prints and negatives from the 1950s and 1960s of the canal and the Cromford & High Peak

Railway. Two of the most interesting are reproduced here. They were taken, probably in the 1950s, by Ray Manning, who is now 94 years young!



A view of Langley Bridge Lock 14. The Lock Keeper's and Toll Collector's house is to the right of the lock, and the entrance to the Nottingham Canal is on the left.





High Peak Junction. To the right is the Wharf Shed, taken at a time when the Cromford & High Peak Railway was almost certainly still running. Of particular interest is the beached boat on the left. This is a former ice boat, which appears in several photographs of this area, usually in a more decayed state than this! It was built to break ice on the canal, but in later years was probably used as a maintenance boat. The water level must be low in this photograph as the boat was usually semi-submerged. The section above water rotted away but that below was preserved. After the canal had been drained for dredging in the 1970s and then refilled, the boat floated and was towed to Cromford Wharf where it was taken out of the water. Here, sadly, it was allowed to rot away and today only some ironwork remains.

## ***“CANAL HOUSE”***

*by Hugh Potter*

A large number of 'permit books' for the Cromford Canal can be seen in the Derbyshire Record Office at Matlock and elsewhere. These show details of what cargoes the boats were carrying onto and off the Cromford Canal at Langley Mill. They were a record of the tolls charged to the boat master, which was calculated at so much per ton per mile travelled on the canal. However, it is something of a puzzle as to how tolls were charged for boats

carrying cargoes but not leaving the canal itself. A map of 1811 shows a 'Collector's House' at the Pinxton Branch Junction at Ironville, and another near Bullbridge. Cromford Canal Company Minutes record passage of 'internal' traffic at Bullbridge.

Just east of Bullbridge at Sawmills, there is a distinct narrowing of the canal; in fact it looks very much like a lock. However, there was no need for a lock

here as the canal did not change level between Cromford and Ironville top lock. This stone built narrows was to enable the boats to be 'gauged' to assess the weight of cargo carried, and thus the tolls to be paid. As this was a full time job, the toll collector had a house alongside, and photographs of this have recently come to light, thanks to a Richard Davies in Canada.

He recalls it as 'Canal House' which he visited in August 1964. He describes it as follows: "The front of the house ran parallel with the canal, right beside the towpath. There was an office with a glass window front which was shaped as two sides of a triangle. The house was three stories, the middle floor being on the level of the towpath, and the lower floor being on the level of the rear drive. This

lower level drive was above the houses which faced the road, which was lower than these houses. The house was owned by Miss Gladys Simpson, the daughter of James Howitt Simpson. In 1964 a new bungalow was being built for Miss Simpson and my aunt, Miss Dorothy Heaney. They moved into this house in 1964-65. Perhaps Canal House was demolished. I can't recall hearing of this but they moved because the old house didn't meet certain regulations."

Well, the old stone house certainly was demolished, for it is not there today! I have also heard it called 'Gauge House' in line with its original purpose. Do any Friends recall this house, or any of the occupants? If so, I should be delighted to hear from them.



The view of 'Canal House' at Sawmills from the towpath, showing the distinctive triangular bay window which would have enabled the toll keeper to keep a watch for approaching traffic.

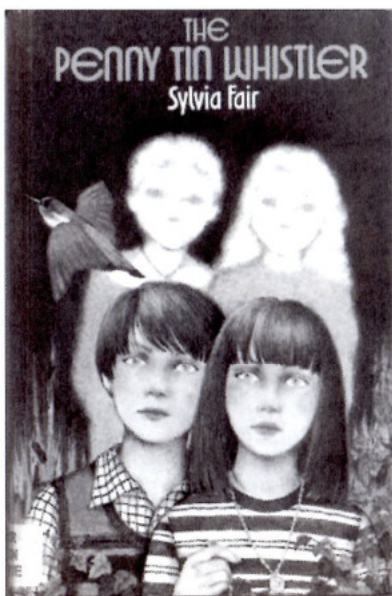




The gate posts to Canal House and the fencing still exist!

## ***THE PENNY TIN WHISTLER***

*by Hugh Potter*



**T**he Penny Tin Whistler by Sylvia Fair is an enchanting children's book published by Victor Gollancz in 1976. It tells the story of telepathic twins who move to Bickley Mill beside the 'Bickley' Canal. The canal no longer has trading boats, it is shallow and weed-grown, but the twins explore in an old work boat. They befriend the resident 'canal-man' and together contrive to keep the canal open against the wishes of the powers-that-be who want it closed. Now where have I heard that before? They also become aware of echoes from the past – from twins who once lived there but were separated as children by the Second World War. By devious means they track down these twins and at the end of the book are about to reunite them. The uncanny thing to me is not the telepathic connections, but the fact that

this story is accurately based on the Cromford Canal. Bickley Mill is the Old Sawmill at Robin Hood (you know, the house you'd love to live in!), but sadly the willow tree that once stood in the garden, and which features prominently in the book, is no longer there. Gregory Tunnel, Derwent Aqueduct, Leawood Pump, the railway aqueduct, the house over the railway at Whatstandwell, all feature. If you are in any doubt, look at the map reproduced here, one of three that illustrate the book!

David Spray, who currently lives at 'Bickley Mill', brought the book to my attention and says that the author wrote the book whilst living at Robin Hood. I've yet to find any second-hand copies for sale, but Derbyshire Libraries hold a couple in stock. It may be a children's book, but I enjoyed it greatly, and can thoroughly recommend it. In an act that uncannily resembled the story in the

book, I contacted the publishers who gave me the author's last known address – from 1982 – and I hopefully wrote a letter. Imagine my surprise to get a letter back by return. The author lived with her family at The Old Sawmill, Robin Hood, from 1964 to 1974. She confirms that much of the story is based on events that happened to her and her children. She recalls: "Once, when the canal leaked, Mr Thorpe the 'canal-man' sealed the hole with his own coat. Another time, after complaints that canal-water was seeping through to the foundry, he dyed the water green to prove that the flooding was caused by the river, not the canal. When the canal had to be drained for maintenance, my eleven-year-old son rescued a shoal of gasping fish and put them in our pond." If you get the chance to read it, you won't be disappointed. And if you see a copy for sale, do let me know!



One of three maps in *The Penny Tin Whistler*, showing Leawood Pumphouse, the Derwent Aqueduct, the Nightingale Arm and the and railway aqueduct.



# MARJORIE "A"

by Hugh Potter

The horse-drawn trip boat *John Gray* was so popular in the 1970s that in 1980 the Cromford Canal Society brought in a second boat, named *Marjorie A*. However, this was never used much and her fate was unknown until an email arrived from Ian Rodger on Anglesey just the other day, with these pictures attached. Ian acquired it from Dr Desmond Stoker of the CCS.

He says: "I had her moved from

Cromford to Sheffield Canal Basin and spent a year or so replacing soft plywood panels, including a complete bottom. The construction was interesting - half inch marine ply over a Dexion frame. I sold her soon after (had an offer I couldn't refuse) and she took off towards Tinsley powered by an old Seagull outboard. 'The Queen of the Cut' Desmond used to call her. I wonder if she's still afloat?" So does the FCC Archivist! Does anyone know?



Hauled out of the water at Cromford.....



..... and on her way to Sheffield.

## **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

*by Yvonne Shattower*

I hope you have all had a good Christmas and are ready for another year of working towards the restoration of our lovely canal.

2004 was a year when we started to spread our wings with our attendance at the Inland Waterways Festival at Burton on Trent, and other waterway associated events. Unfortunately we did not enroll as many new members as we would have liked at these events, we still have a lot to learn in this area. Let's hope that 2005 sees us increasing our numbers. Don't forget to book the August Bank Holiday for the next Inland Waterways Festival.

Until now, we have held most of our Members' meetings at Ironville, but we would like to hold some in other areas along the line of the canal, especially at Ambergate and Cromford. However, Val Kelley has had very little success in finding a venue for us. Do you know of a suitable hall, or room for a meeting? It would need to hold up to 70 people, and have a bar available, and in view of our limited finances, be cheap! Can you help us? We want to give all our members a chance to come to some of our meetings, and we realise that not all of you want to travel, especially in the winter.

New memberships continue to come in slowly, and our numbers of active members



our members who have taken out Life Membership since the last edition of the 'Portal' are Mr and Mrs W Spence, Allestree and Mr and Mrs P Stone, Nottingham and we welcome their continuing support. There are still a few Members whose renewal remains outstanding, so if you have received a

green renewal form recently, please send it back with your cheque if you have not already done so. I would like to thank all those Members who pay so promptly, it makes my job so much easier and saves us money on posting reminders.

Wishing you all a good New Year.

## **PHOTO FEATURE II - POST-CHRISTMAS TREE BASHING BY CODNOR PARK RESERVOIR**

*by The Editor*

(Written on 27<sup>th</sup> December)

It might be the middle of winter, but that doesn't stop canal restoration: in fact for some jobs, it's the best time! It's certainly proving so on the Cromford. After straggling up from London yesterday, work started at the WRG Christmas Bash on the stretch of the Canal between the bottom end of Golden Valley and "just above Ironville Top" - in reality the topside of the car park that was created above the site of the latter when the reservoir water level was lowered.

Perhaps a word about WRG (or the Waterway Recovery Group, to quote their "posh" title) might not come amiss at this point. They have a Web Site at: <http://www.wrg.org.uk/>. They are a subsidiary of the Inland Waterways Association who are of course the national body for all canal users and restoration efforts like our own. They have a national organisation which acts as an umbrella for a number of local groups: our Canal Camp has been populated by the London Area Group, who appear to be adopting us! The national umbrella is involved in fundraising and publicity on a national

scale, holds considerable stocks of equipment, from plant such as diggers and dumper down to hand tools, like the bush saws and slashers in use on this Camp and also organises the efforts of WRG, both at Canal Camps like ours, and National Waterways Festival, where a team is involved with providing the infrastructure (power, water, security fences, moorings, roads) (including repairs when the field "cuts up" as it did at Burton) and so on.

Anyway, back to today. I took myself down to the car park, passing a number of WRG trademark bonfires on the way. Having made myself known to "Moose", who's in charge of this Camp, I was able to see what was going on. The main aim of the Camp is to clear as much as possible of the filled-in canal of the trees that have grown up since the canal was filled in in 1985. However, the local council have become involved and have imposed a limit on which trees can be totally removed which is being scrupulously observed by the WRG party. It is interesting that the Council representative wasn't wearing wellies when she carried out the survey of work to be done: there are no trees marked

for clearance where there's any water!  
The work is being done with bow saws, as today there were no licenced chain saw operators on the Camp. Quite a lot of clearance has already taken place and I'm sure by the end of the week we'll see a real difference to this stretch. It's interesting that all this work is going on alongside the towpath, which is a public footpath. The WRG party have to watch to ensure the towpath is kept clear and at times ask towpath walkers to wait whilst a tree is felled across the path, then rapidly cleared: this can take as little as a minute as I saw whilst I was there today. I'm also informed that some residents thought the WRG party were prisoners doing service in the community.....

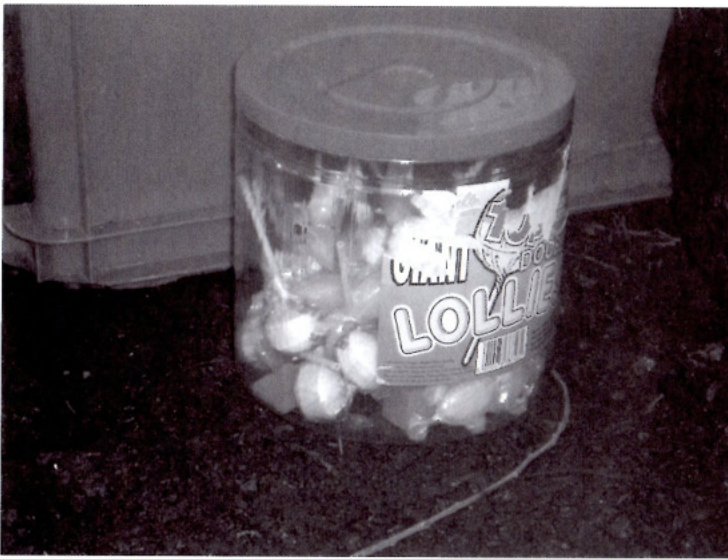
Whilst I was there, we were visited by a BW Supervisor (the third today, I was informed) who was able to add another piece to the "jigsaw of history" as he was on site when the Canal was filled in with sludge and dredgings from the reservoir works, so there was no bulldozing and no actual destruction of the canal itself: important information for when we contemplate digging it out again.

I left the lads and lasses to finish off for the day before retiring to the Community Centre at Waingroves to get cleaned up, eat and head off in search of beer. It's not going to be a long search - there are two pubs within staggering distance!



The "base" for this operation was the topside of the car Park, where essential supplies were stockpiled.....





..... including lollipops???



By the time I got there, the first section had already been cleared.....



..... leaving one WRGie to tend the bonfire of small stuff.



Further up, there was much more evidence of work in progress.





"Can this one go, too? YEAH!"



Everything stops for tea - particularly on a cold winter's day.



On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, it was possible to see where the water's lying in the canal much more clearly.....



..... and the locals were very appreciative of the work put in.



# WHAT'S ON

- January 17<sup>th</sup> Public Meeting - Ironville Church Hall, starting at 7-30 pm - speaker Steve Haywood on his book "Fruit Flies Like a Banana", together with a possible vision of the future of our waterways.
- March 7<sup>th</sup> 2005 Annual General Meeting at Ironville Church Hall, starting at 7-30 pm - after the meeting, a demonstration by the Ambeys of Matlock - the biggest twisters in Derbyshire!
- 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> March Steaming at Leawood Pump House
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> May Steaming at Leawood Pump House
- 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> June Steaming at Leawood Pump House
- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> July Steaming at Leawood Pump House
- 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> August Steaming at Leawood Pump House
- 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> August Steaming at Leawood Pump House
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> October Steaming at Leawood Pump House
- If YOU have an FCC-related event taking place, **PLEASE** get in touch with the Editor and we'll publicise it for you!

