



THE PORTAL



THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

(Registered Charity Number 1100700)

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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

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or missing pages in this magazine - if you have any, please return it to the Secretary at the address below.

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Front Cover: A drawing of Leawood Tunnel

The Friends of the Cromford Canal are Corporate Members of:

IWA The Inland Waterways Association



We've spent an awful lot of time in the last two years raising funds: the Sponsored Walk, stands at shows, pledges. Now, at long last, we're starting to spend some, though as yet not on physical restoration. You will already be aware that we have a number of important studies which have to be done before we start major restoration. - the Environmental Study, the Engineering Study and the Economic Study.

I'm pleased to be able to tell you that the first of these is now under way, thanks to a funding package including input from the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership (£7,500), the Inland Waterways Association (£5,000) and the Friends of the Cromford Canal (£2,500). In addition the Friends are pleased to announce that the contract for the ecology study has been awarded to Black & Veatch of Leeds, after a competitive tendering process.

Mike Kelley, Friends of Cromford Chairman said "We are delighted with this award from the Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership this will enable us to accumulate the professional reports needed for start the full scale restoration of the Cromford Canal" Steve Parish who had negotiated the grant said "The funds come from a small residue in Amber Valley's allocation of DDEP's 2004-5 budget, this money might not have been available in 2005-6 and we had to take advantage of the very fortuitous timing".

John Baylis, Vice Chairman Friends of the Cromford Canal said "The ecology study leads on from the engineering feasibility study carried out by Binnie & Partners

some years ago and seeks to look for the most appropriate and least environmentally damaging restoration route from the various options selected. Black & Veatch were selected from five companies following competitive tendering. The study will cover all four seasons of the year and is not intended to report until early 2006, it will look at opportunities for improving the wetland habitat of this part of the Erewash Valley as well as sensitive areas to be avoided and environmental mitigation proposals."

This ecology study will be one of number of studies required to compete for the larger sums required for restoration from the national Lottery or from European Funding. Restoration of this section of the Cromford Canal could form part of Amber Valley ?? Derbyshire CC ?? initiative for the Ironville Renaissance. The Friends are already discussing with UK Coal and others the possibility of restoration of parts of the Pinxton Arm of the canal as part of the restoration of the Smotherfly open cast coal site; this part of the canal would allow access to the Pinxton Branch.

There will be much more about the Study in the next issue of The Portal and I hope to be able to spend a day out in the field with the survey team so I can tell you exactly what we're going to get for our £15000!

It's always nice to see new blood (not literally, I hasten to add) and I'm pleased to be able to welcome Bob Bullock as our new Treasurer: Merry Metcalfe has also joined our (very small) team of contributors: I'll let you try and work out which bit's hers!

The Black Country Living Museum & Dudley Tunnel Boat Trip

Saturday 7th May 2005

Adults	£22-00
Seniors	£20-50
Children	£18-00

THERE ARE STILL SEATS AVAILABLE!!

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: Bulwell, Langley Mill, Ripley Market Place & Derby Motor Boat Club.

Please pay Sheila or Val as soon as possible!

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



CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

by Mike Kelley

At the AGM I seek to review what we the FCC have been doing for the last year. First we regretted the passing of our Patron the late Duke of Devonshire. As yet we have not been able to find a new Patron.

Our Treasurer for the last two years, Mary Bellamy, is not putting up for re-election tonight, so we thank her for all the good work she has put in on our behalf.

So what have we been doing for the last year? Last year we set ourselves certain 'Aims and Objectives' so now I will look at what they were and see how we measured up to them.

(Italics denote the Aims and Objectives we set ourselves)

1. Initiate the required Ecological Studies as soon as resources permit.

Earlier in the year the IWA donated £5,000 towards an ecological study for the section of canal from Langley Mill to Ironville. Then a grant was applied for and obtained from the Derbyshire Economic Partnership (DDEP) for the amount of £7,500, with the FCC finding the £2,500. This will now enable us to commission a ecological study. I would like to thank Steve Parish his considerable help in obtaining this grant and for all the paperwork that this entailed. The specialist firm 'Black & Veatch' will carry out the 12-month study they were selected from 5 tenders.

The ecological study will be the second feasibility study of this section, an engineering study was carried out some years ago by Binnie and Partners.

2. Establish and build relationships with all potential members of a Cromford Canal Partnership – Local Authorities, BW, IWA, Community and Environmental groups etc. and their councillors / managements

This is an on-going exercise, but so far we have become part of the newly formed Derbyshire Waterways Partnership. We have good links with the IWA and BW. The local councils of Pinxton, Ironville, Langley Mill & Aldercar and Selston are affiliated members of the FCC and we are building on relationships with local councillors and meeting them. Two local history societies of Pinxton and Heanor are affiliated members, plus the Midland Railway Trust at Ripley. So yes we have worked hard to established and build relationships.

I am delighted to say we are now part of the Amber Valley Borough Council's 'Me&U' Action Plan. This is a project that looks at what actions they are going to work toward for the future development of the Heanor, Loscoe, Aldercar & Langley Mill, Shipley, Mapperley and Smalley areas.

On page 18 of this Action Plan it make the following statements:

"Whilst the Great Northern Basin and its links to the Erewash Canal are only a remnant of the former water and associated transport links within the area, they are nevertheless a major asset to the area. The heritage links and growing popularity of water (canal) based leisure are all positive elements in looking at the future development of the area.

In the short term, focus must be on the development of the asset, making it a more accessible and attractive visitor location, for both narrowboats and other leisure users.

In the longer term, the potential exists for re-opening canal network as far as Cromford, linking Heanor/Langley Mill with the Derwent World Heritage site. This will provide added attraction to water users and the potential for the town to be viewed as part of a wider attraction.

AIMS: To support development of the Great Northern Basin into a tourist attraction and to work with various agencies with the longer term aim to re-open the canal to Cromford.....”

It goes on to state that they will be, 'Working with the Friends of the Cromford Canal to enhance and promote the area, and to support the work already being carried out to open a canal link to Cromford.'

This is all very encouraging to see the FCC linked to well and long established groups and agencies, and we are happy to see this progress.

3. Establish & build relationships with the Midland Railway Centre, Arkwright Society etc.

I have briefly discussed common aims with Midland Railway Chairman and a meeting has been arranged with Chris Charlton of the Arkwright Society with a view to forming closer ties.

4. Seek positive outcomes at the Smotherfly opencast site

We wish UK-Coal to keep the river diversion they made in place so that it can become part of the restored Pinxton canal. We have held meetings with UK-Coal and sent several letters to

them. We have obtained detailed surveys from UK-Coal that confirm the river diversion channel can be readily converted to take the restored canal. The hold-up is now UK-Coal who will not meet with us until May! By this time it could be too late to affect any change to their plan to fill in the river diversion.

I offer our thanks to John Boucher our Honorary Consultant Engineer for his work in this matter. I am currently on a campaign to get UK-Coal to listen by meeting many local and district councillors and DCC managers; an MP has also come to our aid. This is a now or never situation, if the FCC had been around when this site was first mined we would have sought to have the river diversion become part of the restored canal then, which would have been much easier than trying to change an existing agreement between UK-Coal and DCC.

1. Contest the Butterley Works development proposals

A year ago we were concerned that the planning permission for development over the Butterley tunnel would be detrimental to the tunnel. Along with several others the FCC successfully lobbied for any building work to not impede on the tunnel in any way.

6. Establish an interim towpath / public footpath route between Langley Mill Basin and Stoney Lane

I am afraid we took no action on this, due to pressure of work from other directions.

7. Establish a membership & publicity team responsible for a manageable programme of events, publicity stands, Sponsored Walk, a regular programme of social activities. Produce a stand and road-show that can travel to appropriate events.

We now have a display tent, boards, photographs and maps. A team got things together and we had our first presence at last summers IWA Festival. Our special thanks go to Val Roberts, Yvonne Shattower and Patrick Morris and all the team who helped in getting this together.

Our sponsored walk had was another successful event with 110 walkers plus a team of supporters. Our special thanks go the Shelia Smith for all the work she put into this. Also we now have regular social evenings which help greatly in our contact with the membership. Our thanks go to Val Kelley and Brian Dominic for organising these events.

8. Make full use of the Waterway Recovery Groups (wrg) resources

Two clearance events with wrg were carried out along the Golden Valley and Codnor Park reservoir carried out, one was between Christmas and New Year. We thank John Baylis for organising this.

9. Put together a standard slide show that can be used by members for publicity

We now have PowerPoint presentations and we are seeking funding for an FCC laptop and multi-media projector. Our thanks goes to Dave Ratner for this and his other fund raising work so far.

10. Establish FCC notice boards at key places along the canal

No action was taken on this and I am acutely aware that we need to raise our public profile and one of the ways I seek to do this is with notice boards along the line of the canal.

11. Further develop the FCC website and use of the Yahoo group

This has been successfully done mainly

through the efforts of our webmaster Brain Dominic. Just check our website to see for yourself.

12. Seek commercial sponsorship

A detailed presentation and approach has been made to a local company, but the outcome is not sure as yet. If you know of any commercial enterprise who would be willing to sponsor the FCC then please let us know. Peter Stone and Yvonne Shattower put a great deal of work into this.

So all-in-all we did carry out most of the 'Aims and Objectives' we set ourselves last year. To do all these things requires a lot of hard work, such happenings do not happen by themselves, it requires a labour of love from dedicated people. So all of our committee deserve our thanks for this hard work and dedication. What I would ask you (the reader) to do is to say you can help in a small way. Maybe by offering to work at a stand for one weekend a year, such things go a long way to ease the load on a few.

So what should we set ourselves to target for this year?

- Continue to press UK-Coal to reinstate the Pinxton Canal
- Seek outline Planning Permission for Langley Mill to Stoney Lane and Pinxton Canal/Smotherfly Site
- Raise funds for a full time Project Officer
- Make the next Sponsored Walk as successful as the last. (From both ends?)
- Raise our public profile more with more publicity. Establish FCC notice boards at key places along the canal
- Establish an interim towpath /

public footpath route between Langley Mill Basin and Stoney Lane

In conclusion let us reflect on the work that was carried out by the Erewash (ECP&DA) group. Without their work that was done in the 1970's we would not have an FCC. We owe them a great

debt for the protection and development of the Erewash canal. The logo of the FCC is two men legging through the Butterley tunnel. One could not do this by himself, so if we liken one to the Erewash group and one to the FCC group together we will get this project through.



Alwyn & Pauline Ambrey gave a demonstration of rope making after the business of the AGM.....
(Editor)





Dave Ratner and John Boucher examining the work in progress. John took the cotton rope as a sample for handrails for a windmill he's restoring. English Heritage have approved it, so now the Ambreys are going to Lincolnshire to make the rope on site!
(Editor)

PLEDGE UPDATE

by Dave Ratner

Over two hundred years ago, a group of people just like us, met to discuss the possibility of creating a canal to link mills, mines and factories with the markets in

Nottinghamshire and indeed the rest of the world beyond.

The problems were immense, They had neither the advantage of computer

systems, heavy machinery, mobile phones nor all the trappings of modern construction that are taken for granted today. They didn't even have roads that allowed easy access to the construction sites.

They were obliged to use the technology of the day, which, was essentially, large quantities of manpower and basic tools. But, despite the obstacles, difficulties and setbacks, they did it. And amazingly, enough of it remains over two hundred years later, to make its reconstruction a viable proposition.

We need to save it, not just because it's possible, but because it is such a vital part of our heritage. It's a monument to the men who built it. It helped to shape our lives and the environment we live in. It brought prosperity to the locality with goods, services and communication.

Its new purpose is not only to link the leisure and heritage facilities of the Derwent Valley to Nottingham and the country beyond but also and much more vitally, to sustain a green corridor for another two centuries.

Our forebears were no less enthusiastic than we, the members of the FCC are today, and they probably faced similar barriers, and, although more than 200 years have passed, the problem is still, basically the same as it was then, **MONEY!**

Today, there are possible sources of funding that are being actively researched by your committee, but the wheels of bureaucracy grind slow and the applications are irritatingly complex. Then, even if the funding is awarded, it is often a requirement that you spend the money before receiving the grant. We are already at the stage where we are approaching professionals to undertake studies. Our current funds can just run to this and still provide for the day to

day running of the FCC.

But to make any real headway at all, we need a larger fund that can be called on. As a charity we need to be in a position to take advantage of any offer, whatever it is and whenever it is made. For example we may be offered a source of funding that has to be made use of by a certain date, but that source may be subject to the FCC matching the amount offered.

Even when voluntary groups offer their services free, we should, at least acknowledge their contribution with a donation in support of their efforts.

In almost the same way that the Cromford Canal Company asked its list of 'names' or subscribers to pledge funds, and certainly for the same reasons, we are asking the FCC membership to pledge funds now.

When the idea was launched a few months ago, we were pleasantly surprised at the response. Pledges of more than £3,000 have come in up to now. But we do need more. If, for example 250 members were to pledge, this would make available £25,000 which, if we add in 'Gift Aid', would make it more than £30,000 and if 'matched' funding was also available, would take it to well over £60,000.

This kind of money would demonstrate to would-be fund providers that we are serious as well as passionate about our canal. It would help your committee to raise the profile of the 'Friends' and bring the canal to a wider audience which in itself, could attract further funding.

So what would you get for your money? Firstly and mainly, the knowledge that you did that bit extra towards re-opening our canal, Secondly the gratitude of future generations. And thirdly a Certificate along the lines of

those presented to those bold 'Names' of yesteryear and of course any other benefits the FCC committee has in its power to bestow!

Of course, not everybody can commit themselves to £100, so how about a Joint Pledge? A group of four for example could chip in £25 each, or five

members contribute £20 and so on. This can easily be accommodated if it means more pledges. But, please, don't take too long to think about it. The target date is the IWA Festival in August.

Please ask for a pledge form, or email your pledge to me at: Ratty@berkeley2000.f9.co.uk

THE ROYAL COMMISSION

by Hugh Potter

The most comprehensive study of the waterway system of the British Isles began almost a hundred years ago when the Royal Commission on Canals & Waterways was set up in 1906. It presented its 'Fourth and Final Report' to the Government in 1909. Amongst the millions of words, a considerable number relate to our own canal and some interesting facts emerge from them.

No less a person than Henry Rodolph de Salis gave evidence on 15th May 1906. We know that he visited the Cromford Canal in the hired Fellows Morton & Clayton horse boat Tipton in 1897. He says he found the canal "in very bad condition between Langley Mill and Butterley Tunnel, including also the Pinxton Branch; and the state of Butterley Tunnel also I found unsurpassed by any other I have seen".

When asked "Is it now passable for traffic?" he replied: "I am informed that at the present time it is quite impassable. I have photographs of Butterley Tunnel if the commission would like to glance at them [*these were 'handed in'; I wonder whether they still exist at the National Archives at Kew - HPJ*]. I went through in a boat such as you see here and the headroom was so low that even the

cabin stovepipe which was unshipped, and inadvertently left on top of the cabin, was crushed in the passage. Of course all the gangplanks and the cloths of the boat were down; it was impossible that they could pass."

Traffic on the Canal

On 11th July, Mr S.J. Sanders of the Mining Association campaigned for more dredging. He said that, in the Midlands, coal traffic was impossible because "owing to the action of the Midland [Railway] Company" the Cromford Canal was "made derelict practically". He suggested that "if it was thoroughly dredged it would save fully 2s [10p] per ton on all coal for vessels in the rivers Mersey, Thames and Humber . . . 50 or 60 ton boats could work well to join the main route at Trent Lock".

On 6th November, Gordon Thomas of the Grand Junction Canal Company said that the Cromford was a source of their traffic but was now "practically derelict, and for a long period of the year boats cannot navigate that canal even with 8 or 10 tons". He believed that if the canal were reinstated then traffic would flow again. However the GJCCo had "taken no steps to compel the reinstatement of the Cromford Canal by the Midland

Railway Company". When asked why not, he replied that there was "a very great deal of risk of one independent canal to endeavour to compel a railway company to reopen its canal or to make it navigable".

On 12th March 1907, Mr W Guy Garnet, General Manager of the Midland Railway, owner of the Cromford Canal, was asked about boat traffic. Hardly surprisingly, he saw the canal in an entirely different light from the previous witnesses.

As to the total number of boats passing he says "I have put in my proof 6 or 7, but on looking at it again I find that the average is only 5". These, he 'clarifies' are "on both sides of the Butterley Tunnel in both directions". However as he does not give the time scale this is not very enlightening! However, looking at the total annual tonnage below, it suggests a daily number of boats, assuming around 20 tons per boat. The traffic consisted mainly of coal with a "certain amount" of pig lead loaded at Lea Wharf onto boats for the short journey to the High Peak Railway. The remainder was principally bricks, but the only brick wharf on the canal was that of the Stoney Lane Brick Company.

The tonnages carried for 1905 were:

Species	Local	Through
Coal	19,067	11,726
Lead	3,302	—
Pipes	2,171	—
Other traffics	470	3,153
Total	25,010	14,879

Making a grand total of 39,889 tons.

Local traffic was that loaded and unloaded on the canal, whilst through traffic was from or to the Nottingham or Erewash canals.

The pipes were "a special consignment

used in connection with the Derwent Valley Water Board Scheme, which were barged from the High Peak Railway Depot to the Lea Wharf (ex Butterley Co and Staveley Co's works by rail)". The Derby branch of this pipeline crosses the canal today close to the end of the DCC section at Ambergate and the Nottingham/Leicester branch crosses the line of the canal within Stevenson's Dye Works.

The other traffic "was principally tar and gas water from the Erewash Canal to Pye Bridge [Kempsons] and bricks passing from the Nottingham Canal to the Erewash".

"The 11,726 tons of coal were from the Pinxton, Portland, Codnor Park and Beggarlee collieries."

Butterley Tunnel

There then followed an extensive debate about the repairs to Butterley Tunnel, and why the expenditure continued after the second collapse in 1900. Between 1889 and 1893, £8,000 was spent repairing the tunnel after mining subsidence, but it continued to prove troublesome and expensive. After the collapse of 1900 it was decided that it was too expensive to repair. However the Midland Railway had to continue work to maintain the flow of water from the west to the east, and for this they were applying for a parliamentary Bill. When asked why the MR needed a Act of Parliament, two relevant clauses were mentioned. Clause 16 was for powers to construct two conduits to feed the water through, and Clause 17 was for the abandonment of Butterley Tunnel to enable this work to be carried out.

There were 12 petitions against these clauses, each calling attention to the shortage of water in the eastern section of the canal, one representing 42 traders and associations and one representing 6 canal companies. There was some confusion as to why there was so much

opposition to closing the tunnel, and why the petitioners did not apply to the Board of Trade earlier to force the MR to undertake their statutory duty to keep the tunnel open, which did not seem to reach any conclusion.

Mr Garnet stressed that the closure of the tunnel had not significantly affected trade on the canal as it was effectively operating as two separate canals before the tunnel collapsed, through traffic being minimal. *[But we have to recall this is the General Manager of the Midland Railway which has a Bill going through Parliament to close the tunnel!]*

(Figures for traffic through tunnel)

Year	No of Barges	Tons
Half-year Ended December 31 st		
1893	122	2,181
1894	196	4,001
1895	155	3,193
1896	169	3,434
1897	245	4,960
1898	200	4,093
1899	156	3,129
Half-year ended June 30 th ,		
1900	40	827

The figures for 1899, the last full year of operation of the tunnel, were analysed in more detail. Of the total of 3,129 tons, 2,431 tons were coal from collieries on the east side of the tunnel to Cromford and Lea. 33 tons were gas water and tar consigned to Messrs Kempsons & Co Chemical Works on the Pinxton Branch from Lea Wharf. The balance, 665 tons,

was stone from Whatstandwell, 608 tons of which passed to the Nottingham Canal and 57 tons to the Erewash.

Mr Garnet goes on to deny that the canal (apart from the tunnel) was in bad condition. In total contradiction to the previous witnesses, he says "Between Langley Mill and Butterley Tunnel it is in very good condition" as well as the Pinxton Branch. He said that the Board of Trade were conducting a survey into the condition of the canal which he was sure would back up his statement. *[Perhaps this is why so many photographs were taken of the canal in 1907.]* This was being undertaken under Section 41 of the Act of 1888 because of complaints about shortages of water in 1906. *[I am not sure what this act was, but the report should make interesting reading if we can locate it.]*

The questioning turned to the Midland Railway Bill, 1907, which Mr Garnet claimed had two objects: to get water from one side of the tunnel to the other; and to rid MR of their liability to maintain the tunnel. He claimed that the latter would facilitate the former and they would install pumping plant and conduits. He is somewhat castigated by the Commission chairman for depositing a Bill whilst the Commission was sitting, but was subservient to the chairman and said he would do what the Commission requested, even to withdrawing that section of the Bill concerning closing the tunnel and limiting MR to securing a decent supply of water. The Chairman suggested best way to do this was to "Clear the room and consider the matter now". There was then debate about whether the operation of conveying water through the tunnel prevented its future restoration and it seems the answer was no, except that Mr Garnet claimed the existing tunnel could not be restored anyway: "You would have to build a new one". However after the room was cleared of

public and MR and the public then invited back in, the chairman stated that as regards the MR Bill, they "have decidedly unanimously to leave the question to the Board of Trade and to Parliament". – Which seems something of a cop out after all the questions, and leaves me thinking that if only the commission had had the guts to say "you cannot close that tunnel" then the MR would have had to restore it and we might have had a fully functioning tunnel today.

Mr Garnet categorically denied other witnesses' evidence (including that of de Salis) that the canal needed dredging, but he admitted that no improvements – wharves, cranes etc – had been made to assist traffic on the canal, such as were carried out on the railway. He also claimed that most of the Butterley Co's products went out by rail. When asked if this was because the tunnel was blocked he claimed "It never sent any through the tunnel before – not an ounce". The chairman's answer is a restrained "That seems very strange". Not only strange – a downright lie as the entire purpose of the 'wide hole' in the tunnel was to enable boats to load and unload directly beneath the works!

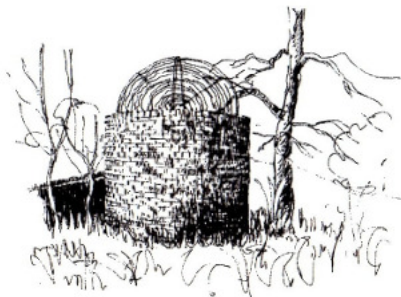
So, what did the Commission say in its Fourth and Final Report in 1909? Well, nothing too startling! They seem to have been unduly influenced by the Midland Railway, for they highlight Butterley Tunnel and state "This tunnel from the beginning was a defective one. Its width is only 7ft 3in and its height above water level 4ft 6in. There has been, for many years past, very little traffic through this

tunnel, and since 1900 none at all." Only later does it go on to remind the reader that this lack of traffic is because the tunnel is closed and the MR refuses to open it! It even sympathises with the MR for having spent so much money already on it!

It then goes on to state that the two clauses in the MR Bill concerning the tunnel (one of which is to close it, you will recall) have been "rejected after a debate by the House of Commons". The deadlock arising from this caused the Commission to actually visit the canal and tunnel. Sadly this visit, no doubt escorted by MR officers, "did not result in the discovery of any sufficient evidence that the interests of trade call for insistence on the obligation of the present owners to reinstate the tunnel, or to maintain the navigation to the west of it – provided always that, on reasonable terms, the water-supply of the rest of the canal is secured". This eastern section, it suggested, should become a feeder to the main canal routes.

So there we have it: 3 years of Commission, seven volumes of report. And what was done with it? Well, you've guessed it: absolutely nothing! No major changes came about until nationalisation in 1947.

However, a mystery remains. If the clauses 16 and 17 of the MR Bill of 1907 were rejected, under what powers did the MR install water supply pipes into the tunnel in the 1920s, and render the tunnel totally impassable?

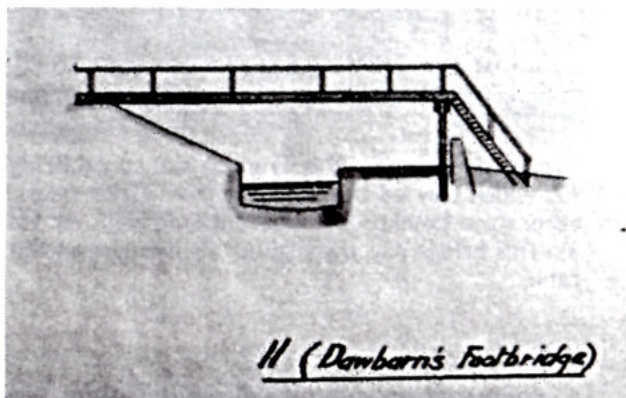


ROYAL COMMISSION DRAWINGS

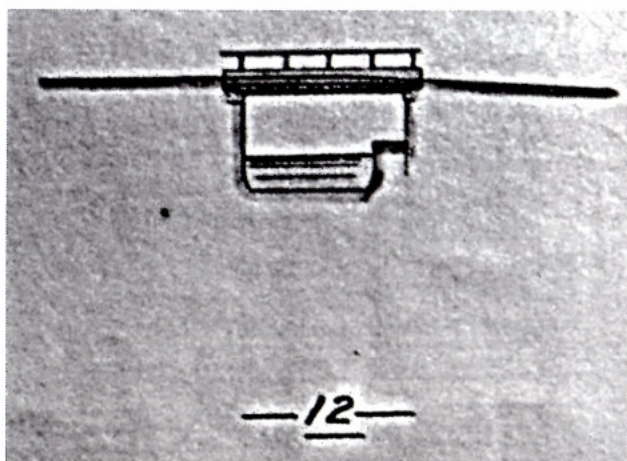
by Hugh Potter

One of the most fascinating aspects relating to the Royal Commission (1906–1909) held at British Waterways Archives in Gloucester is the 'Evidence', much of which is in a large book and comprises drawings of every structure on the canal and cross sections at frequent intervals along the entire canal.

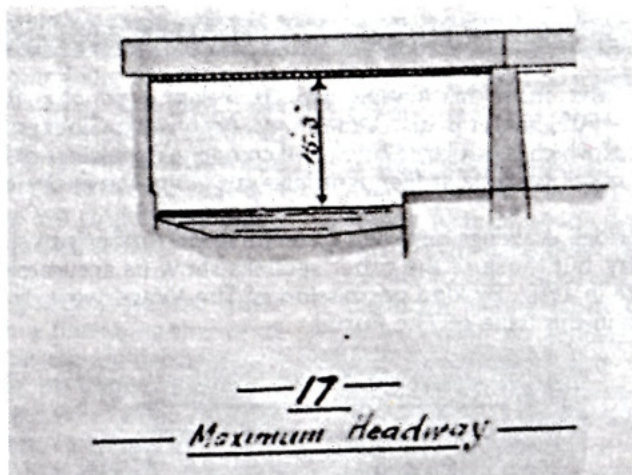
Most of the bridge drawings between Cromford and Ambergate show the structures we know today, but those of the other sections show us accurately what the bridges etc looked like in 1907. By kind permission of The Waterways Trust, we reproduce some of these in this issue of The Portal.



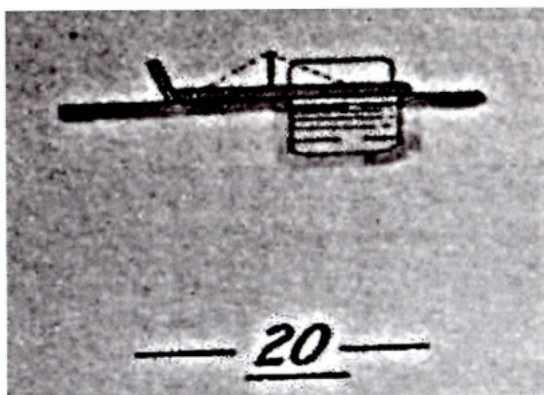
One bridge that no longer exists on the Cromford to Ambergate section is Dawbarn's footbridge II.



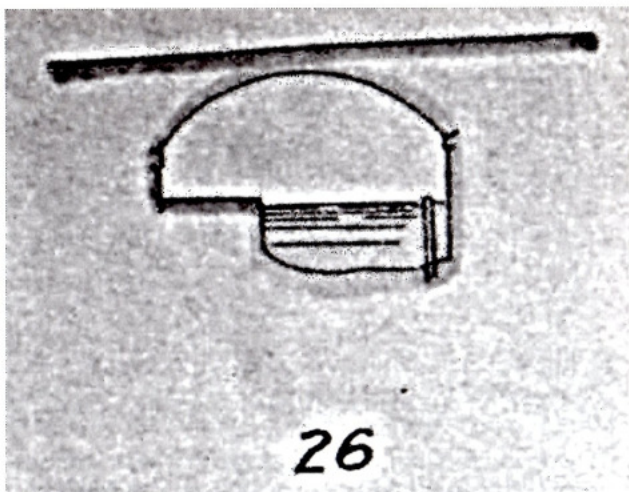
The original railway deck of Simm's Bridge 12 shown here was replaced by the present structure which carries a footpath.



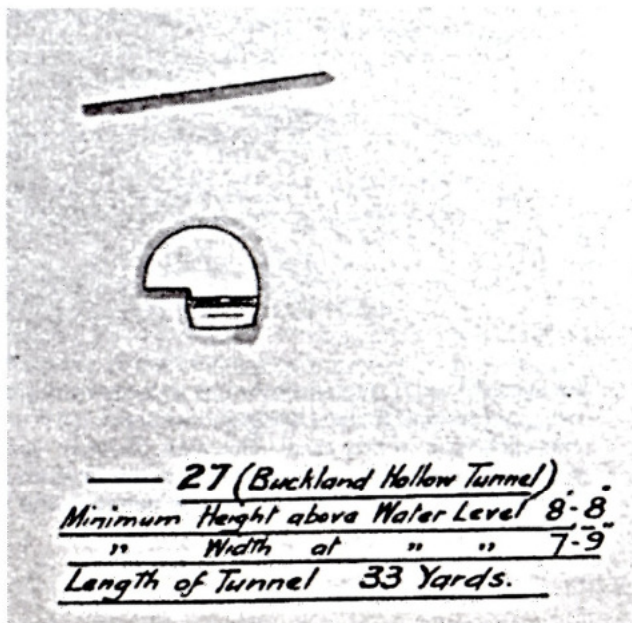
Within what is now the Transco site stood Bridge 17, which carried the tramway from Crich quarries across the canal to the adjacent lime kilns. At 15ft 3in this bridge had the highest air draught on the canal.



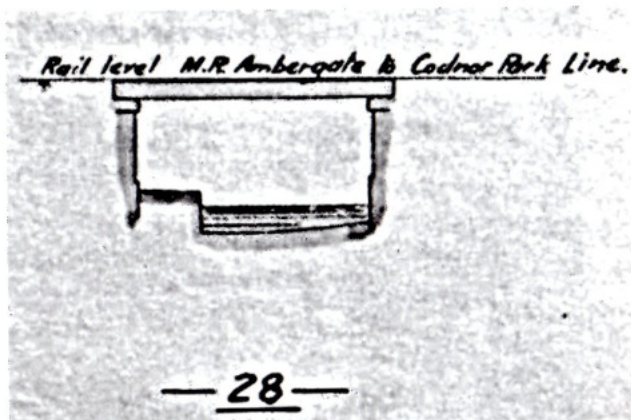
Bridge 20 was the swing bridge at Bullbridge Aqueduct, the remains of which are now lying on Cromford Wharf



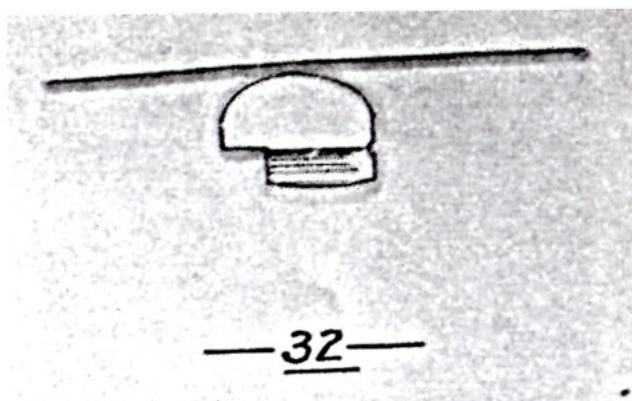
Bridge 26 is 'Lockwoods' bridge, still in situ, but no longer with water beneath it.



Bridge 27 is Buckland Hollow Tunnel, still in situ, but with the canal infilled.



Bridge 28 is the railway bridge that now crosses the car park for the Excavator pub on the A610 at Buckland Hollow



Bridges 30 to 32 are all shown as the conventional original Jessop/Outram bridges that are characteristic of this canal. This one, 32, was replaced by the present structure at the bottom of Hartshay Hill when the road was widened in the late 1920s



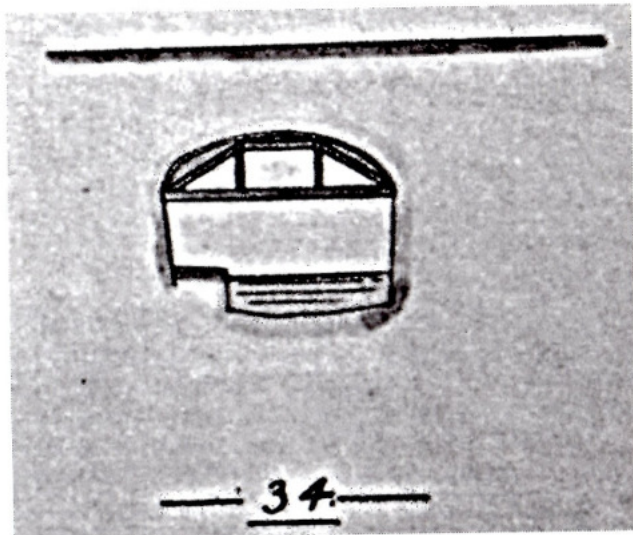
Butterley Tunnel. East Face.
Highest Ground line 147-0 above Water Level.
Length of Tunnel 3063 Yards.



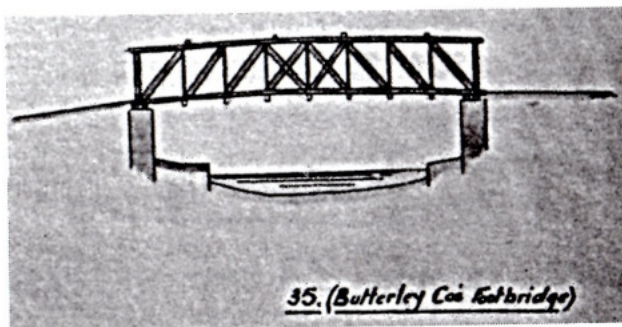
Butterley Tunnel. West Face.

— 33 —

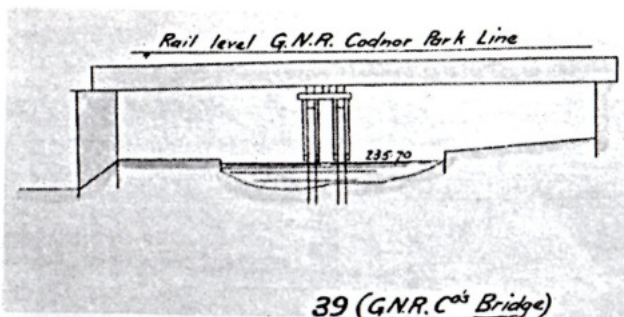
The west and east faces of Butterley Tunnel show only the opening, but an interesting note states that the "Highest Ground Line" is 147ft above water level.



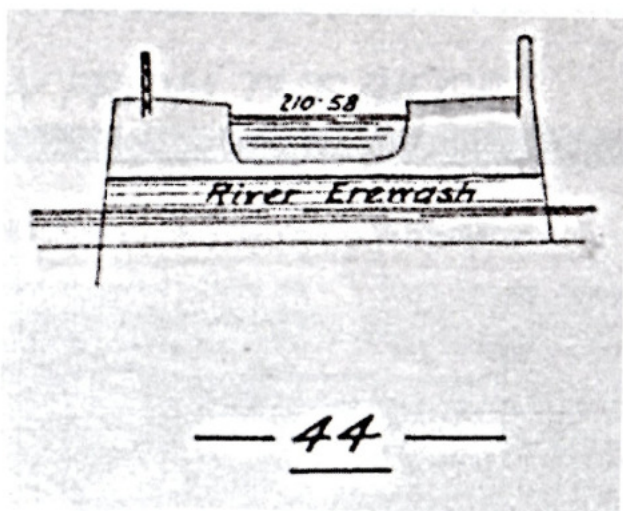
Bridge 34 by the Newlands In at Golden Valley shows the supporting timbers put in place to shore the bridge up prior to strengthening in brick. This can be seen on page 78 of my book 'The Cromford Canal'



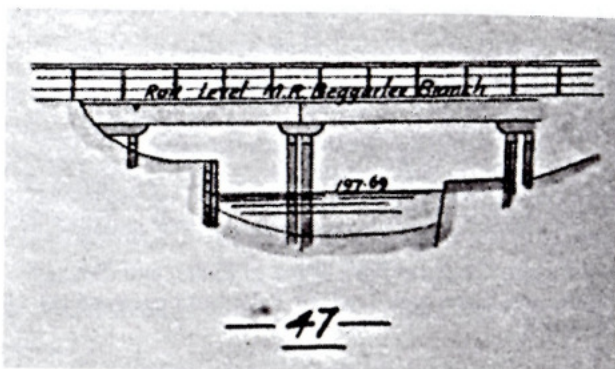
35. (*Butterley Co's Footbridge*)
Bridge 35 is the original Butterley Co's Footbridge that was replaced by the present structure in the 1940s, and which itself is now in a sorry state of disrepair.



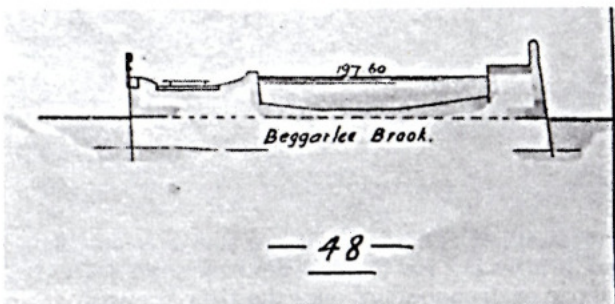
Below the Codnor Park flight of locks, the Great Northern Railway's Codnor Park Line crossed on Bridge 39



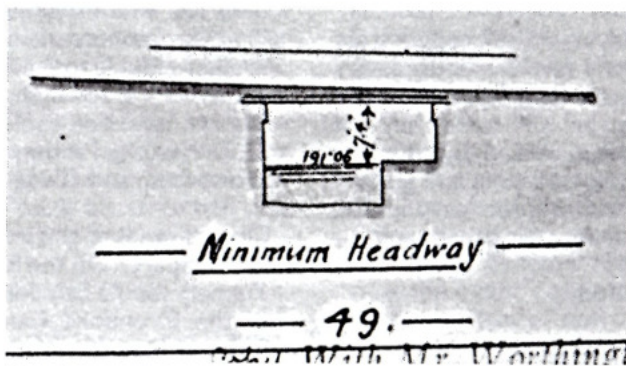
Bridges 40, 41, 42, 45 and 46 are shown as standard arch bridges but for the first time ever, we get a glimpse of the aqueduct over the river Erewash (Bridge 44). This does not give much of a clue as to what this looked like, but does show that there was very little difference in water levels between the canal and the river as they crossed, which must have been interesting in times of flood.



One of the bridges below Ironville to survive longest was the Midland Railway's Beggarlee Branch which used to cross the canal by Bridge 47 below Lock 13.



Where Beggarlee Brook passed under the canal at Bridge 48, a railway is clearly shown running alongside. This would have been the one by which coal was brought in more recent times from Moorgreen Colliery to load into narrowboats, forming the last traffic on the Cromford Canal.



Finally, on the main line, we come to Langley Mill Bridge 49, which interestingly is shown as having the Minimum Headway (air draught) of 7ft 4in, although elsewhere these figures appear not to have taken into account curvature of the arched bridges.

A VIEW FROM THE BILGE

Dear Aunty Melody,

Could you please suggest a suitable gift for my wife? She has hinted that she'd really like something to keep her warm on those 'early start' mornings. Any ideas?

Yours, Henpecked Howard, Eastwood

Dear Henpecked Howard,

A small travel kettle and a "Friends of the Cromford Canal" mug would be perfect. Better still, buy her two and she can bring you a cuppa in bed whilst she sorts out the mooring.

Dear Aunty Melody,

I'm looking for a stylish look this season and was wondering, now that we're virtually part of Europe, whether a stripy matelot shirt and a straw boater (with ribbon trim) would be acceptable on the

Cromford?

Yours, Scraggy, Ambergate

Dear Scraggy,

Well, you could try it and see what kind of response you get from your neighbours but, if you want to look really up to date, may I suggest you get one of those really tasteful and smart maroon sweatshirts from the 'Friends' complete with our logo? Now, that's what I call class! Oh, and drop the sandals!

Dear Aunty Melody,

Please settle an argument for me. How long is the Butterley Tunnel? Different sources quote 2,966 yards, 3,000 yards, 3,063 yards, 1.7 miles and even 2 miles. I'm confused. Didn't anyone ever measure it accurately?

Numbers, Ironville.

Dear Numbers,

I'm sure they did, but I don't suppose the boat people really felt it was necessary to be more specific than "ay, m'duck, an' it's a big bugger an' all" once they got their breath back, that is. May I suggest you stop worrying over this and get out into the fresh air as soon as possible, you've been looking a bit peaky lately.

Dear Aunty Melody,

My doctor has suggested that I take more exercise. I've been advised to take up walking, but have no idea of suitable walks to take. Can you help?
Chubby, Golden Valley

Dear Chubby

Might I suggest you take up towpath walking? They're nice and level, generally

have a good surface, and pubs seem to crop up with monotonous regularity! One good source of walk routes is "The Walker's Guide to the Cromford Canal", available from the FCC Sales Department. You could also take part in FCC Working Parties, instead of writing about them and taking pictures!

Orders and enquiries for the above items (apart from the length of Butterley Tunnel) 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.

WE NEED TO GET NOTICED! *by Dave Ratner*

We don't need to be convinced about re-opening the Cromford Canal, we are doing our bit by being members aren't we? Well, up to a point yes, but Most of you reading this will be members of the Friends of Cromford Canal already. but if the FCC is to advance, we need to get the message to a wider audience.

We desperately need to let a lot more people know about our activities and one of the ways of doing this is to advertise. We need to advertise in the villages and communities near the canal to make those groups of people more aware of the gem that is on their doorstep.

One of the ways of doing this is with leaflets and posters. Posters need to be in places where folks are for more than

five minutes. Places such as Town Halls, Libraries, Doctors, Dentists, playgroups, garages, Post Offices, Food Outlets, (I hate that title!) Supermarkets and stores that have public notice boards, the list is endless. Which is why you are needed to help.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

If enough of you could spare the time it takes to call at 6 places in your vicinity, we could ensure that any and every event attended or organised by the FCC has the widest coverage where we need it most. We need a team of members who are prepared to put posters up (and take them down after the event) in 5 or 6 places near where they live.

We also need someone as co-ordinator for this group. Someone who will keep a list of the volunteers and the sites they will post, and who will distribute the posters to the volunteers. This position is vital but does not necessarily have to be a committee post, nor require any other involvement. But at present, the committee are just a bit stretched and can't pull this vital job in as well!

What else can you do?

As part of the promotion of the FCC, your committee try to get to as many social evenings and canal based events as their personal obligations permit, so please, do your bit, attend these events such as the Chesterfield Rally and the National Festival and bring along your friends and relations. A well-attended stand helps to raise the FCC profile, and

it's a great day out too! If you can spare an hour to help on a stand, please let us know. You will be made most welcome and your efforts appreciated and recorded.

We definitely need a second FCC stand team. The present team do all that they can but obviously they cannot get to every event. As above, a stand at a waterways centred event can help to raise the public's awareness of the FCC. Can you spare one or maybe two weekends a year? That's all it takes to make a difference.

Think about how you can do your bit and write to the secretary now.

Meanwhile, take a look at the "What's On" page Put them in your diary now and have your self a great day out.

BOAT INN PINXTON FUN DAY

by Dave Ratner

Ian McNeill, the landlord of the Boat Inn at Pinxton would welcome anyone who is interested in the restoration of the Pinxton Arm to get in touch. Ian is keen to help promote this restoration and would like to hold a meeting with any interested parties, but particularly with the residents of Pinxton itself.

As Ian says, 'The Pinxton Canal is an unused and neglected asset of the people of Pinxton. Its value to the community is yet to be exploited'.

The redevelopment of the canal and Wharf area could be of great benefit to Pinxton by attracting tourists, and waterway users, and of course, jobs.

Ian wants to hold a Fun Day in support of the group and invites helpers and contributors to get in touch.

If you would like to give your support or just to find out more, give Ian a ring at the Boat Inn on 01773 - 810344



MORE ON "THE PENNY TIN WHISTLER"

by Andrea Chell

I am a relatively new member of The Friends of the Cromford Canal. I was motivated to join because much of my childhood was spent on and around the canal. Reading through 'The Portal' I was most surprised to find the article 'The Penny Tin Whistler'. This was of particular interest to me because 'Bickley Mill' is where I lived as a child, and the author of the book is my mother.

The article commented on some of her memories and events on which the book is based. I can confirm the reality of those incidences, and recall the embarrassment I felt as a young teenager when I first read her book. How dare my mother base so many events on me, and my brothers! How dare she use that quotation that came straight from my mouth! Fortunately those feelings are all in the past and my embarrassment has

since been replaced by pride!

Those childhood years spent living 'on' the canal were wonderful, and I wish I could give the same to my own children, now teenagers themselves.

Your article has motivated me to read the book again, having not read it for many years. Yes I do have a copy, but I don't know of any others in existence - I have a feeling even my mother gave away her copy!

Thank you Hugh, for your kind comments about the book, and in particular the willow tree, which gave me great pain when I discovered it had disappeared - along with the plank that spanned the canal, over which we walked on our daily route to school - but that's another story!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Yvonne Shattower

This has been another busy year for me as your Membership Secretary, and it is good to be able to report that our numbers are still increasing slowly but surely.

The Inland Waterways Festival at Burton on Trent was a little disappointing in boosting our numbers, but word certainly seems to be getting round and I am receiving a lot of applications by letter, rather than on the membership form, so we must be doing something right. I think that Burton was, in a way, a trial run and we certainly learnt a lot over the three days we were there. Hopefully we will do better at Preston

Brook this year. It is gratifying though, to have received membership applications from visitors to some of the local displays that we attended.

On going to press our Membership stands at 631 annual members, 17 life members and 10 corporate members, of which 8 are charities and two are businesses, making a total of 655 members. Renewals are coming in fairly well, but as usual there are some members who have not renewed despite posting and E mailing reminders. We have learnt of the death of several members during the year, and we send their families our condolences.

Some members have asked to pay by standing order, and this is something I will be discussing with our new Treasurer, as I feel sure that this would keep some of our lost members with us. We have also implemented the Gift Aid scheme, and I understand from our Secretary that some 50 or so members have signed up for this. We do not as yet have accurate figures, but it should mean at least an extra £100 for our coffers. Gift aid on a single membership earns us £1.68, and on a couple's subscription we get £2.52. A joint life subscription brings in a healthy £42!

Several Members help the Friends by delivering magazines to addresses in their areas, as well as libraries and other places where the public gather. Some also take membership forms and leaflets, and I would like to thank all these people for spreading the word that the Friends are here. I would also like to thank the Committee members who save us a lot of money by taking the magazines for their own area.

Finally, may I thank you, the members, for continuing to support us, keep up the good work, and tell all your families and friends to come and join us.

WHAT'S ON

April 25 th	FCC Public Meeting at the "Red Lion" Public House, Crich Tramway Village
1 st & 2 nd May	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
28 th - 30 th May	National Trailboat Rally - Tapton, Chesterfield
4 th & 5 th June	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
2 nd & 3 rd July	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
6 th & 7 th August	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
27 th - 29 th August	IWA Waterways Festival - Runcorn
28 th & 29 th August	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
26 th September	FCC Public Meeting - Cromford Wharf Warehouse
1 st & 2 nd October	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
November 7 th	FCC Social Meeting - venue & speaker to be conformed
December 5 th	FCC Social Meeting - venue & speaker to be conformed

If YOU have an FCC-related event taking place, **PLEASE** get in touch with the Editor and we'll publicise it for you!