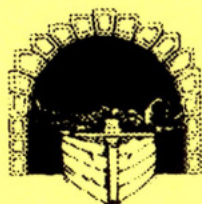


# THE PORTAL



THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

(Registered Charity Number 1100700)

NUMBER 14

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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:

Jubilation at Langley Mill as we receive a cheque from Hardys & Hansons (see first article) (*Mike Harrison*)





*(From Peter Stone)*

FCC is delighted to welcome Hardys & Hansons p.l.c. as our first corporate sponsor – a 'win : win' well worth drinking to!

In 1832, in what was then cheerfully known as Cuckold Alley in Kimberley, Nottinghamshire, a craftsman brewer converted an old bakehouse into a small brewery, complete with cellar hewn from solid rock. This was the beginning of the brewing enterprise that was to become Hardys & Hansons – now one of England's oldest and most respected regional brewers

The Hansons and then the Hardys moved into the town in the mid-19th century and by 1861 there were two new and competing breweries [rail connected – first to the Midland and then to the Great Northern Railways!], sharing the same pure water from the Holly Well. Thomas Hardy was a pioneer of the 'tied house' arrangement, when he bought his first pub in 1870. The two breweries amalgamated in 1930 and for years, under its green banner 'Kimberley Ales', the combined company was as much a part of the Notts & Derbys scene as coal, iron and textiles

Since 2002, its corporate history has been recognised in the smart 'Hardys & Hansons' re-branding of its pubs and beers, in pursuit of the Company's aim – to become 'first choice locally'. Its progress has been recognised with the designation 'Nottinghamshire Company of the Year 2003', followed by the even more prestigious national award 'Regional Brewer of the Year 2004'

Hardys & Hansons continues to be a Kimberley-based brewer and is now owner of over 250 pubs, predominantly in the East Midlands. As such, it is totally committed to the region and its continued prosperity – and the FCC is delighted to be a beneficiary of that commitment. Anyone following Val Roberts' Walker's Guide cannot help but notice the legacy of canal-side pubs, left us from the days of the boatmen and miners. It's vital to the success of our plans, for the restoration of the Cromford Canal and regeneration of local communities, that we get as many responsible tourists as possible visiting the Canal – and it's also important for the prosperity of the local hostellers.

We all want to rebuild the Canal as a delightful 'alternative leisure route' to the Peak District. So, when next you and your friends fancy a break and a few hours in the countryside – whether strolling, jogging, dog-walking, cycling, fishing, or just watching the dabchicks and water voles – combine your visit with refreshment at one of our Sponsor's excellent pubs ... and mention this article!

Hardys & Hansons are owners of the following pubs along the route of the Cromford Canal. (F) indicates that food is regularly available:

Bell Inn, Cromford (F)  
Greyhound Hotel, Cromford (F)  
Homesford Cottage, Whatstandwell (F)  
Derwent Hotel, Whatstandwell (F)  
Canal Inn, Bullbridge (F)  
George Inn, Lower Hartshay (F)  
Sun Inn, Pinxton  
Three Horseshoes, Pinxton  
New Inn, Riddings

Black Horse, Somercotes  
Great Northern Inn, Langley Mill (F)

In addition, The Boat Inn, Cromford, Gate Inn, Lower Hartshay and The Boat Inn, Pinxton – where Landlord Ian is a driving-force behind our efforts to save the Pinxton Arm of the Canal – are also stockists of our Sponsor's fine ales

Incidentally, Hardys & Hansons' prize-winning brews include 'Olde Trip', 'Cool' and 'Dark' – so maybe they know more about boating through the Butterley Tunnel than we do ...

*[I plan to feature our Sponsor's various pubs in Portal over the coming months. If you'd like to write about one of them – that you know well, or have visited as a result of this news – don't hesitate to get in touch. Editor]*

## LANGLEY MILL UPDATE

*(from the Chairman)*

As arranged I attended the Aldercar & Langley Mill Parish Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June, along with my wife and Dave Ratner. A press handout was prepared beforehand by Steve P and handed to me by Brian D.

The meeting was addressed by Derek Stafford, Head of Planning for Amber Valley BC. About thirty local residents were in attendance who were there to oppose the proposed development of the Hall Road area with new housing and an access road under the A610 that would impede the canal progressing northward.

During this address Mr. Stafford stated the Amber Valley Council's position toward the restoration of the canal was

to give every assistance to its restoration and that they would do nothing that would compromise this.

He stated it was never clear if the proposed A610 access was needed.

Residents gave examples of this proposed housing area being needed as a flood plain and quoted many examples to prove this. Others stated that this site had been used for many years for the dumping of illegal and toxic wastes and had photographic evidence to support this.

I stated that the old railway bridge was the only way north for the canal, unless the developer was inclined to make an access bore through the A610. Also that mis-information had been circulated that stated the canal could share access through the access bridge and that this had been refuted by the DCC engineer and our own engineer Mr. John Boucher. Mr Stafford concurred with this statement.

Later Mr Stafford went on to say that the canal was very much a factor now, but that when the inspector's report was set out more than two years ago in 2003, the FCC's aims were not a known issue at the time. Now however that has changed and the FCC are a known factor. At the time of the inspectors report they were not aware of the FCC's plans, but now they are very much aware of them and the AVBC strongly supports their aims.

So things look good so far, but there will be a follow-up meeting on 29th July when these findings will be considered and reported on.





# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I am aware that for many members it is The Portal that is the main source of information as to our progress and activities we are pursuing towards the reopening of the Cromford Canal. Indeed there has been a great deal of activity from your committee, plus our consultant engineer John Boucher and our planning colleague Steven Parish concerning the Smotherfly site situation. You may recall that UK Coal was set to remove the River Erewash by-pass channel that was dug to divert the river when the site was excavated for coal. Now that the river has stabilised in roughly its old course UK Coal were to put the diverted water into this course and landscape this site which meant filling in this diversion channel. The diversion channel actually follows close to the original line of the Pinxton branch of the canal. It is now generally accepted that had the FCC been around when UK Coal signed an agreement with Derbyshire County Council we would have been able to influence the decision not to fill in this diversion, but to use it as part of the restored Pinxton branch of the canal. As it is we are now trying to change an existing agreement between these two bodies to leave much of this diversion channel in place so that it can actually become part of the reinstated canal.

UK Coal gave us only a short time of just three weeks to present a Business Plan to them and also for us to apply for planning permission for this required change. Through a great deal of work from our secretary, Patrick Morriss, we have now submitted a Business Plan to UK Coal and are discussing what is actually required for us to apply for

Planning Permission. The latter is not that straight forward as it would seem. We have to check on the Environment Agency's view and to see if we need an Environmental Impact Assessment, all of which requires much searching and extra work. The fact of the matter is, that at the time of writing, the channel has not yet been filled in as it was scheduled to be this spring; so it would seem someone is listening to us. UK Coal will not have so much earth to move under our proposal and this is attractive to them, but the spoil has to be moved somewhere and any solution other than filling in the diversion channel might cost more money.

The Environment Agency (EA) has also sent us an encouraging letter concerning the potential flood relief for lower Pinxton, around the Wharf area, that the restored canal could bring. So all-in-all at the moment we are talking to UK Coal, EA, local councils and a local Member of Parliament.

If one on-going planning situation is not enough to deal with, how about having two? Around mid-May it came to our attention that proposals were being put forward for new housing in Langley Mill, off the Plumtre Road area. In itself this is of no concern to the aims of the FCC, but this same proposal discusses using the currently unused access bridge north of the Great Northern Langley Mill canal basin, as a new road between this proposed new development and the A610 road. And this certainly concerns us, for this is the only way northward for the canal.

Such issues are difficult enough when

dealing with just one governing body, but this is at the juncture of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County Councils and Broxtowe and Amber Valley Borough Councils. So you see it is not straight forward; but then again nothing ever is, is it! So your team have been making our case, and at the time of writing we are in the thick of it, so watch this space.

I was privileged to deliver a series of talks during April and May; the first was at Crich Tramway Museum, where a goodly number turned out. The second was at the Midland Hotel near Derby Railway station, where I addressed a large group of heritage tourists who were staying at the hotel for several days while they were conducted around the canal sites of Derbyshire. Then finally the third was at the Derbyshire plague village of Eyam, where I was very warmly received by a group of about 60. We can now produce talks on a computer package called PowerPoint which makes the assembly and delivery so much easier and more visual for the audience. So if anyone wants a speaker for their group(s) just let me know and I'll do my best to oblige.

Sheila Smith organised another bus trip for us in May, this time to the Black Country Living Museum and the Dudley Canal tunnel. This is a well set out site with houses as they were, where you can

just wander in and meet the 'residents'. There was a real fish and chip shop with the tasty morsels cooked in animal fat as they used to be, what a difference this makes, but not so healthy of course. Then we had a trip down the coal mine to see how men and boys actually worked. The tunnel trip itself was really special. No, it is not just a ride into a dark hole in the ground, but a floodlit experience with audio-visual sets all along it. I thoroughly recommend it for a family day out.

It was a really lovely day out and my thanks go to Sheila for all the hard work she puts in to these special occasions. I look forward to the day when people will come to the Butterley tunnel for a similar experience, only we have a local steam railway society as part of the attraction, which Dudley does not have.

The Cromford Canal recently had two major articles in the national waterways magazines; 'Waterways World' and 'Canal Boat & Inland Waterways'. Both were good, well written articles and provided information for new members to join.

Don't forget this year's Inland Waterways Association Festival at Preston Brook during the August Bank Holiday weekend. FCC will be there, so plan a day out and come and say hello.





# MORE ON THE THE ROYAL COMMISSION

by David Wilmot

Hugh Potter's fascinating insight into the activities of the 1906-09 Royal Commission (Portal No. 13) brings to light a luminary perhaps more famous in railway circles than the research reveals. Hugh mentions the evidence given to the Commission by Mr W Guy Garnet, General Manager of the Midland Railway and at one point his "total contradiction to the previous witnesses". The explanation may be found in the background of William Guy Granet (not Garnet) who was a barrister with railway expertise from the Railway Companies Association prior to his appointment as deputy general manager of the Midland Railway in 1905. He had only been appointed as general manager in 1906 and prior to that he seems to

have had very little direct experience of railway operation.

Guy Granet went on to be knighted in 1911, joining the Board of the Midland in 1918 before becoming its last Chairman in 1922, leading to chairmanship of what was at the time the world's largest company, the London, Midland & Scottish Railway, until his retirement in 1927.

Guy Granet's comment, recorded by Hugh, that Cromford Tunnel was by the time of the Royal Commission beyond restoration remains as a challenge to FCC to prove that his evidence was, despite his legal background, well and truly off the beam.

## A DAY OUT WITH BLACK & VEATCH

by The Editor

"If it's May, it must be Newts!"

Black & Veatch have (as you will know) been engaged to carry out the Environmental Survey for the FCC, on the length from Ironville Top Lock to Langley Mill - Patrick will give you more information in his article. I decided that on behalf of the membership at large, somebody ought to go along and see just what you get for £15000, so I wangled myself an invitation to join the survey team on their visit in May.

There are going to be a number of visits

through the year that the survey will take, as different species are more to the fore at different times of the year and it's necessary to observe them all. This day's work was in two portions: the first portion was spent newt hunting, the second involved a detailed study from the Ironville Top Lock area to the point where the canal disappears into the fields just above Stoneyford.

The Great Newt Hunt had in fact started the night before, when the survey team of Kristina Lewis and Christian Middle had set the bottle traps. One might think that these would be incredibly high-tech.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth! Take a two litre plastic soft drink bottle, cut around it about a third of the way down, take the cap off and insert the top, neck first, into the bottom. Cut holes through the bottle to allow a cane to hold the two sections together and punch a series of smaller holes in the bottom of the bottle to allow air in. Use a cane to fix the trap at an angle at the water's surface facing into the pond. Make sure the entrance to the trap is

submerged so that animals can enter and that there is sufficient water inside the trap. It is essential that the other end of the trap is exposed to the air with the air holes above the water level. The trap must only be partially submerged in this way so that any captured animals can breathe air from within the bottle. Set at dusk and come back the following morning!



A Bottle Trap

Having met up with the survey team, off we went to see what was to be found. We found one newt out of about 14 traps in the first pond and when we arrived at the second one, I was allowed to help. The first trap I pulled had two female smooth newts and a pair of 3 spined sticklebacks - beginner's luck! There were none of the (protected)

Great Crested Newts in the traps but newts are one species we will have to care for when the canal is restored: possibly with ponds on the off side, within the canal bed but not connected to the main waterway. We had to trek up at a fair pace to the fourth pond, in an impenetrable wood not far from the bottom of the watered section, as the





One female smooth newt

sun was now well up and there was a possibility that anything caught in the traps might be getting distressed from lack of oxygen. That wasn't the case on this occasion! It was interesting note that in this high-tech age, where palmtop and notebook computers and GPS are available to catalogue one's every find, the survey team relied on good old Pencil & Paper!

Having driven to Golden Valley and walked down to Ironville, Kristina and Christian started the second task of the day, setting off down the bed of the canal from just below the spillway at the bottom end of the reservoir, recording all the species of wildlife, flora and fauna. There is a Prescribed Method for recording all this that was devised by the (former) National Rivers Authority: there are symbols for the type of bank and for the types of vegetation observed.

Coupled with a plan, drawn on the spot, more-or-less to scale, and copious notes about species, the whole ends up as a piece of paper totally incomprehensible to anyone other than the person who wrote it! Everything appeared to be what might call "normal": there was nothing to get excited about at first, apart from guessing who'd lose a wellie first. As they walked, the sound changed from "splash" to "squelch" to nothing as they moved from water to mud to solid ground: it was the mud that was the problem area and Kristina came nearest!

There was an exceptionally large butterbur plant in the bottom of Pottery Lock: apparently this was so named as its leaves were used to wrap butter in, before the days of pre-packed groceries. There were also water vole latrines below Pottery Lock: we'd heard that there was a good population of water



.....good old Pencil & Paper.

voles in the reservoir, and this evidence of droppings on flat surfaces and stones just above the water level confirmed that. There were also vole tracks below the railway.

Also by the railway, the survey team discovered a fresh water crayfish - a native species that's been driven out of many of its former habitats by foreign

imports. A possible major find was some minute water snails of the vertigo species - only about a millimetre and a half long, and possibly (subject to a definite identification) only found in one or two other places in Britain.

Something which will have to go was some Japanese Knotweed which was found just down from the railway - it's a definite no-no, is that stuff!



A freshwater crayfish on one of the incomprehensible pieces of paper



As we worked our way towards Portland Basin, we saw an Orange Tipped butterfly - evidence that there's lady's smock (the plant on which the eggs are laid and the larval stage lives) in the vicinity.

As we were about to take a refreshment break in Jacksdale, I spotted the distinctive v-shaped "bow wave" of a water vole swimming down the canal - another one bagged! A very early dragonfly was spotted: these (and invertebrates) will be the "special subject" for the August survey. Christian was astonished by the size of the Water Dock growing in the canal - it was growing over twice as large as normal, but some old stems standing 1.8 metres high confirmed that this part of the canal bed was very rich in nutrients.

Apart from recording all the "normal" stuff, that was about it: we continued down the canal until it converted itself into a watercourse back into the

Erewash and then struck out for Stoneyford.

What have I learnt? There's an awful lot of wildlife out there - some of it very interesting and which will require Special Measures to safeguard or create alternative habitats in the future. There's at least one species which will have to be removed but which will require great care when we come to do it.

What have they learnt? Well, they know a little more about canals, they know that there's a Web Site which they can use to identify structures and locations, they know what the off side is (the side furthest away from the GBP) and how little this will have to be disturbed and they've learnt a little more history. They couldn't believe that there was once a massive foundry next to the canal and on present-day evidence that's hardly surprising: I find difficulty in recalling what it looked like only just over a year or go, when the opencast was on the go!



Kristina and Christian on the bottom section

# A GATE OUT

by Val Roberts

**A**t around 5.00pm on the 18th of May, a boater ascending Langley Bridge Lock (the only one currently navigable on the Cromford Canal) inadvertently allowed the bow of his boat to stray under the top beam of one of the top gates and the rising water lifted the gate out. The skipper was mortified and then of course had to stay the night!!

Interestingly, this gate was one of those rescued from the top lock of the Wollaton flight of the derelict Nottingham Canal by the ECP&DA volunteers in 1973, before being pressed into service at Langley Mill. We don't know how long it had been in use on the Nottingham Canal before this, but it is fairly safe to say that it is now one of the oldest lock gates still in use. This lock had been maintained for some 30 years entirely by the ECP & DA volunteers, including the design, fabrication and fitting of a new steel balance beam to this same gate in recent years. However, some two years ago, responsibility for the lock was handed back to British Waterways.

To give BW their due, they attended immediately the accident was reported

and said they would return at 8.00 am the next day complete with a crane. They were as good as their word, and by 10.00 am the gate had been lifted back into its cup and the lock was again in working order. Our worries about whether the old gate would stand up to this heaving about were apparently unfounded.

There was now a secondary problem in that, at this lock it is the top gates that hold the water, and as the water had been running off through the bottom gates overnight the basin and the Cromford Canal level were now very low and several of the boats on their permanent moorings were aground. After a delay to allow the water to make up a little, two pennings were permitted before the lock was locked up to allow the level to recover. The water supply to the Langley Mill pound comes from Moorgreen reservoir and is sometimes inadequate in the summer, but on occasions such as this BW are able to open the valve to give an increased feed for a short time. This they did and the level had recovered by mid day the following day.

These things happen!!



An uninged gate with BW in attendance.

(Val Roberts)



# NATIONAL TRAILBOAT RALLY

by Mike Harrison

One of the various waterway events held over the Spring Bank Holiday this year was the National Trailboat Rally. This event is organised annually by the Inland Waterways Association to draw attention to a length of canal which is at present detached from the main waterway system. The event this year was held at Tapton Lock, Chesterfield. This is on the restored but currently isolated five mile section at the western end of the Chesterfield Canal.

The FCC sales stall was in attendance over the three days, together with the Chesterfield Canal Trust and the Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust. We were all helping to support the Derbyshire

Canals Partnership and together formed an attractive display in the main marquee. The only snag was that this was also the entertainment marquee and sales staff were nearly deafened at times, making conversation with potential customers rather a problem.

The weather was kind, however, and the attendance and business better than expected. It was, in fact, quite a good flag-waving exercise. The various trailboaters, particularly the Wilderness Boat Club, support this event each year and are always looking for interesting sites. It was generally agreed that an excellent venue for a future National Trailboat Rally would be Cromford Wharf.



Val in charge of her continually growing empire!

(Mike Harrison)

# PHOTO FEATURE - BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM TRIP

by Dave Ratner



There was the usual queue for the Chip Shop.....



..... but one of our number had a better idea!





Mr Ratner legging in the tunnel



The Museum has a reproduction authentic working boatyard built around an old arm

The arrival of a 'new' photograph showing the rebuilding of Langley Mill road bridge during the electrification of the tramway in 1913 got me thinking about the boats that used our canal. The photograph was taken on 17th June 1913 by the Midland Railway who at that time owned the canal. Although it was taken on the south side of the road bridge, this is still technically the Cromford Canal. The Erewash Canal used to terminate in a basin to the west of the canal alongside what was later Vic Hallam's factory. The Cromford dropped through Lock 14 (the one that was restored by the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association in 1973 and now leads to the boatyard) to join it.

The boat that partly appears in the photograph is named Shamrock, and the lettering on the cabin side appears to say Midland Railway Company. I was asked whether this was the same boat Shamrock that appears in the well

known photograph of Cromford Wharf, and it seemed obvious that it must be. However, the two boats do not look the same. The one at Cromford is a nicely shaped horse boat and belongs to W Dawes & Son. The Langley Mill boat is rather more workaday and square. What's more, with Butterley Tunnel closing in 1900, it means that the Cromford Shamrock must have left before then if it was the same boat. However, Shamrock is one of the boats remembered for carrying on the coal trade from Hartshay to Lee and Cromford into the 1930s. There is even a photograph of it in this trade. So there must have been two – quite a coincidence as there were only around five boats working on the isolated top end of the canal: Shamrock, Onward, Thistle, Excellent and Victory.

An equal coincidence (or is it confusion?) is that the Cromford Shamrock also later became a maintenance boat!



The Midland Railway maintenance boat Shamrock working on the widening of Langley Mill road bridge in 1913.

*(Courtesy Heanor Historical)*





A busy scene at Cromford around 1900, with W Dawes & Son's  
Shamrock prominent. *(Courtesy Alan Swift)*



Shamrock at Starvehimvalley Bridge working in tandem with a second boat carrying  
coal to Cromford. *(Courtesy Simon Stoker)*



The former coal carrying boat Shamrock tied on the south side of Bullbridge Aqueduct near the cabin used by the canal maintenance gang, probably in the 1940s. Although it still has its name, there are no company details on the cabin side. *(Courtesy Brian Key)*

## WHAT'S ON

6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> August	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
27 <sup>th</sup> - 29 <sup>th</sup> August	IWA Waterways Festival - Runcorn
28 <sup>th</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup> August	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
26 <sup>th</sup> September	FCC Public Meeting - Cromford Wharf Warehouse - speaker Martin Ludgate of wrg on "A Year in the Life of wrg"
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Steaming at Leawood Pump House
November 7 <sup>th</sup>	FCC Social Meeting - Ironville Church Hall - speaker Eugene Baston (External Relations Manager, British Waterways) - subject to be confirmed.
December 5 <sup>th</sup>	FCC Christmas Social Evening at Ironville Church Hall with French Danse Band "Zut Alors" - bring your own festive food - admission £1

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



# HO, HO, HO!

You might not be thinking too seriously about Christmas, but in Santa's home in Lapland (aka Langley Mill Basin) his little gnomes (aka the FCC Sales Department) have been beavering away producing the first ever FCC Christmas Cards! There are two designs (both from pictures by Hugh Potter) showing the former Hays Wharf at Ambergate and Chase Bridge. They both carry the greeting "With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year". They're available in packs of 10 (all one design) for £3.00 from the Sales Stand at public meetings and events, or by post for £3.70 from the Sales Department - please make cheques payable to "Friends of the Cromford Canal". Pictures are already in the pipeline for the 2006 versions.....



# SUNDAY-SCHOOL TRIPS ON THE CROMFORD CANAL

by Hugh Potter

It was once commonplace to clean out a coal boat and take parties for outings on the canal, although it only appeared to have happened between Cromford and Ripley – probably on account of the lack of locks. However, it was a 'two-way traffic' as you will discover as you read on. The items below come from various sources, but what is missing are photographs. I have only ever seen one, and that is the one on page 39 of my book 'The Cromford Canal', which was reproduced in Portal No 8. If any members know of any similar photographs lying in a dusty attic, I would be delighted to see them.

Taken from the compilation by Ripley & Pentrich WI Group, a copy of which is held at Ripley Heritage Centre

Many of the older inhabitants in their reminiscences tell how they journeyed to Cromford in the boats along the canal. At half past 5 o'clock on Whit Monday they hastened down Lowe's Hill on their way to the boats which set off at 6 o'clock. Posters advertising the trip were displayed in the town, and there was great excitement about this yearly event which was organised by the Band of Hope Unions. The return fare for the journey was 1s 0d for adults and 6d for children. Horses towed the boats along, while men standing in them navigated them along. Often as the boat moved along in its zig-zag path, mischievous boys rocked it to and fro, much to the annoyance of some of the passengers who, as a result, suffered disturbing effects. As the boat went near to the towing path some of these boys jumped out to the path, and back into the boat. Some managed this feat, others that

were not nimble enough landed in the water instead of the boat. The speed of this journey, I am afraid, would not satisfy the present generation, for Cromford was not reached until 9 o'clock, after which they walked up to Matlock. The weather was not always kind to them for on one occasion as the boats were returning to the Tunnel End there was a thunderstorm, and it was a very wet party which arrived in Ripley that night.

Extract from The Journal of A Derbyshire Pitman 1835-1906 by Terry Judge

4.7.1870: Scholars from Primitive Methodist Sunday School [Buckland Hollow?] go to Cromford by boat and from there to Matlock Bath. This was an annual trip, popular with Heage folk. The Key family of Ridgeway, who were partners of the Wheatcrofts and operated barges on the CC, supplied the boats.

From A Time to Remember in Ripley & Heanor News, 9.3.1973

Boat loads of Sunday School children and adults travelled up to Cromford from Ripley at 3d per head at bank holiday times.

Interview with F.D.Lee 18.11.2001

There were outings from Heage Chapel. They used to go down to Lower Hartshay for Sunday School outings, but I don't know how they cleaned the boats out. I'm not sure how far they went, probably Whatstandwell or somewhere



like that; they didn't care exactly where they went.

## Interview with George Sparham 17.1.2002

They loaded up Sunday school outings to Cromford in the narrows at Buckland Hollow; they didn't have to tie up they could just step on and off. They came from Heage, Pentrich; even the Ripley people would get on at Lower Hartshay. I've heard them talk about it many a time; it would be early 1900s, Sunday school trips in summer, no special time of year. From Cromford they'd probably walk into Matlock Bath.

From *Childhood Reminiscences IV Lea Bridge & Holloway (1993)* compiled by George Wigglesworth. *This extract is quoting Mrs Minnie Redfern, born 1906.*

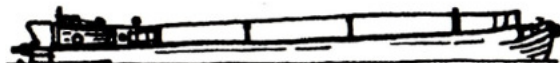
At that stage of my life I attended the 'bottom chapel' Sunday School and we looked forward to our summer time treat which invariably was to Ripley using the 'coal boat' from Lea Bridge Wharf. During the week it plied between Lea Wharf and Hartshay bringing coal from the pit for Lea Lead Smelting Works. On a special Saturday in June or July the boat would be scrubbed and clean seats put

along both sides all ready for embarkation. At 1pm prompt we all clambered into the boat. The beautiful horse pulling the boat had also been given a good grooming and its brasses well polished. We loved watching the horse pulling us from the towpath. It went through Gregory Tunnel and out into 'Wide Hole' which is a broader part of the canal. This froze over in winter and the people from the village went skating there.

Our excursion went on via Whatstandwell where the horse was unhooked and taken over the road bridge because there was no tow path there. The boatman used his feet to get us under the tunnel to be reunited with the horse on the other side. *[This is odd because there is a towpath through this bridge - HP]* Sailing merrily along, watching all the wild flowers and animals and singing songs we reached Hartshay, where we had to disembark to walk up to Ripley. A delicious tea had been laid on for us at the Methodist Chapel there. After tea and a few games we walked back to Hartshay where the horse, fresh and well fed, was waiting to take us back to Lea Wharf. Tired but very happy we went home already looking forward to next year's treat, weather permitting.

## MEMBER'S SALES

FOR SALE - 16" x 18" LH bronze propeller. Reasonable offers. (From boat which ran between Cromford & Leawood on several occasions before converting to horse-power). Tel Simon Stoker 01629 650403



**A**s I write this report for the summer issue of 'Portal', I can't help but think that the weather is most unlike summer at the moment. It is pouring with rain, and the heating has just gone back on. Hopefully we will have some summer weather soon!

Val Roberts has put in a great deal of hard work to produce our excellent new information leaflet, which has a membership form attached. We are hoping that this will bring in new members as we distribute it at the various events we are hoping to attend this year. At the Annual General Meeting in March, our Chairman asked if every member could bring in one new member - can you get a friend, relative or work colleague to join us using the leaflet enclosed with this magazine?

Do you have a yellow, blue or green membership renewal form hiding somewhere amongst your paperwork? If so, please send it back to me NOW with your cheque, otherwise this will be the last copy of the 'Portal' that you will receive. There are still a lot of members outstanding from April - we don't want to lose you. It does help me if you can return the renewal slip, even if you don't fill in the address, because I file it as a record of your payment. The members whose subscription has become due in the last couple of months will have noticed that your membership number appears to have changed. Don't worry - it hasn't! It is merely that I am using a different system of numbering which makes it quicker for me to enter your payment on the database.

Some of the newer members may not be aware that we have an E mail group where you can keep up to date with important events and points of interest

aired between members. If you want to be added to the list just send your E mail address to our Webmaster, Brian Dominic, saying that you would like to join the group and he will do the rest.

There is a very long list of new members this quarter, for some reason the names I sent to our Editor for the last issue did not reach him, so you have six months worth instead of three.

The Friends had a stand at the Trail Boat Rally at Chesterfield over the May Bank Holiday, and our next big event will be the National Festival at Preston Brook. Are you planning to take your boat there, or do you will you be visiting for a day? If so, can you spare a couple of hours to help us man the stand? Please let our Secretary or me know if you can help, even if only for a short time.

## NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to these new members who have joined us.

Mr & Mrs M Stone, Nottingham

Mr G Thorpe, Alfreton

Mr G Bunt, Nottingham

Mr I Walker, Chesterfield

Mr & Mrs B Pedler, Godalming, Surrey

Miss B Taylor, Sheffield

Miss E Taylor, Leicester

Miss J Pedler, Coventry

Mr J Slack, Ripley



Ms C Tucker, Nottingham.  
Mr B Mills and Ms J West, Nottingham  
Mrs J Woolley, Heanor  
Mr & Mrs B Davis, Alfreton  
Mr & Mrs B Parrr, Alfreton  
Mr & Mrs G White, Burton upon Trent  
Miss S Chinchin, Ripley  
Mr & Mrs J Harris, Belper  
Mr & Mrs J Barton, Chesterfield  
Mr & Mrs D J Elvins, Alkham, Dover,  
Kent.  
Mr & Mrs Vickorage, Ripley  
Mr P Coleman, Ripley  
Mr D R Bartrop, Long Eaton

Mr T J L Collier, Kettering  
Mr & Mrs T P Baker Ilminster  
Mr G E K Sims, Ambergate  
Rev G R Richens, Wigan  
Mr E H Garland Erith, Kent  
Mr & Mrs J A Buckingham, Eyam  
Mr W J Buckingham, Liverpool  
Mr S J Crookes, Codnor  
Mr & Mrs Waddingham, Heanor

## LIFE

Mr & Mrs D Tinkler, Hucknall  
Hugh Potter & Liz Tatam, Ambergate

