

# THE PORTAL



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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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Front Cover: "You can't leave me down here - I've still (just) got a waterways magazine to edit!" Hugh helping clear the swing bridge on 28<sup>th</sup> July.  
*(Editor)*

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# THINGS ARE MOVING.....



**N**ot quickly, but they are moving! All the money we've spent on reports of various types is starting to bear fruit. We've got the Executive Summary of the Reservoir Report in this issue - there's a lot more to this, but the detail's rather boring and would bore the average Portal reader to tears. Believe me - I've read it! Patrick Morriss has contributed an article on the Ecology Study - we've seen an interim summary but the full Report won't be out until early next year.

In the physical sense, things are moving too. You'll find a report in this issue on us dragging the Leawood Pump House's boat from High Peak Junction to Cromford, as a test for the World Heritage Site Open Day, of which more anon. This went reasonably well, considering the waterway hasn't been used by a boat this size in years, but once we got to Cromford Wharf, the water level on the Canal dropped so much that a return passage was impossible. Bear in mind that as the Canal was only just passable, any drop in water level stopped navigation entirely. Water levels have recovered somewhat since then, and on 25<sup>th</sup> September the boat made its way back, but it remains to be seen if levels can be restored sufficiently for a reliable service at the end of the month.

If you want to come down on 29<sup>th</sup>, there'll be a lot happening. As well as (fingers crossed) the horse-drawn boat, Alwyn and Pauline Ambrey will be rope making on the wharf and we will be entertained by no less than 3 hand-wound organs. So, plenty of reasons to come down. Did I mention that there'll be an FCC Exhibition in the Warehouse, and the Sales Stand will be there to part you from your hard-earned cash? Well,

I have now!

We had a Social Meeting in the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf, too. On 26<sup>th</sup> September, Martin Ludgate gave us some insight into the work of the Waterway Recovery Group (until the bulb packed up on the slide projector, and the spare did, too!). Nevertheless, a most interesting talk.

Our next speaker (on 7<sup>th</sup> November, in Ironville Church Hall) is something of a coup: Eugene Baston is British Waterways' External Relations Manager. What he'll be talking on even he doesn't know at the point of going to press, as he wants his talk to be as topical as possible. There will be a chance to ask lots of questions, as Eugene has asked that the second half of the meeting (after the Beer Break) be a question and answer session, so put your thinking caps on!

Our final meeting of the year, to be held on 5<sup>th</sup> December, will be a little different. We're having a French Country Dance, and we're to be entertained by "Zut Alors", a local band that plays french Country Dance music. You WILL be expected to dance, so wear your best steel toecap boots! (JOKE!) As holding dances is not one of the things the FCC was set up to do, it cannot support this event financially so we're charging a measly £1 a head. Don't forget to bring your festive food, too!

Finally on the "Things to Do" List is the post-Christmas WRG camp which is once again to be held on the Cromford, with more forestry work on the dam wall at Ironville, and between Ironville and Golden Valley. Get your boots out and come and join us!

# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

by Mike Kelley

I would like to start by thanking the widow of Keith Manifold, Alice, and the members of the 'Yellow Ribbon Country and Western Club' at Gedling in Nottinghamshire, both of whom donated an appreciable sum of money to the Friends in Keith's memory. This gesture is deeply appreciated and comes at a time when we will be needing money to achieve our goals of a beautifully restored Cromford Canal. Also, on July 5th, Hardys and Hansons brewery made the official presentation of the physically 'big' cheque for the camera (*as seen on the cover of the last "Portal" - Editor*). As reported earlier they kindly donated £1,500 to us. This presentation took place at the Great Northern public house and the adjacent canal basin. We thank them for this supportive gesture.

In my last Chairman's Chat, there were two particular ongoing issues that I brought to your attention, both of which will have considerable influence for the restoration of the Cromford Canal. The first was the continuing situation regarding the Smotherfly site.

(For new readers this was an opencast coal site run by UK Coal. In order to accommodate their excavation for the coal, the river Erewash had to be diverted almost exactly along the line of

the original Pinxton branch of the Cromford Canal. Before the Friends arrived on the scene, agreement had been made between UK Coal and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to fill this diversion in and landscape the area. Then along came the Friends and said, "Wait a minute - this diversion is ideal for the newly restored canal, please leave it where it is and don't fill it in")

Obviously UK Coal said, "We already have an agreement with DCC and we can't break that." And they didn't really want to talk to us. Fortunately we had a lot of help and backing from two of our local MP's, Dennis Skinner and Judy Mallaber, both of whom asked UK Coal to talk to us. I also had a meeting with Ms Mallaber and was well received. According to the former agreement the diversion was required to be filled last spring, around March/April 2005, however our lobbying did manage to hold this off and the diversion is still there. In August a meeting was held between UK Coal and ourselves at which progress was made. They expressed understandable concerns that they were not going to have to spend extra money, and that the Friends would be able to arrange for the aftercare of the canal. This latter point has not yet been resolved but we are addressing it



by submitting a planning application to Amber valley Borough Council and DCC for the revised work. So far, so good!

Earlier I had written letters to all the Pinxton councillors and received their support, and they kindly offered us the free use of their council meeting rooms, should we require this. Thank you Pinxton for your continued, and strong support.

The technical drawing plans for the Smotherfly site, drawn up by our consultant engineer and active member, John Boucher, show a possible new feature for the restored canal at Smotherfly, in the name and shape of a 'Pinxton Wide'. (A wider than normal stretch of the canal) This looks exciting stuff.

The second issue was concerning planning permission that had been sought for a new housing development at Langley Mill. This plan required the use of the only bridge the canal can use to move north out of the Langley Mill Basin, as a road access. A suggestion had been made that both the road and the canal could both share this redundant railway bridge, but engineers refuted this as not a possible option. So, we set out on the lobbying trail again and made our point, if we can't use that bridge then the canal cannot get out of Langley Mill. Along with David Ratner and my wife we attended a council meeting of Aldercar and Langley Mill Parish Council on July 29<sup>th</sup>. I made our point and the DCC

manager listened to us. There was then a full Amber Valley Borough Council meeting at Ripley, which was attended by David and my wife, and the vote concerning the future use of the bridge went strongly in our favour. There can be an appeal but the signs are that we have good and strong support.

The Midland Railway Centre at Butterley, near Ripley is looking into the possibility of opening a new station along their track just north of the Codnor Park Reservoir. (One of the original water supplies for the Cromford Canal) This station will be just a few yards from the north bank of this reservoir. A local developer is looking into the possibility of redirecting the canal to the north of the reservoir instead of along its traditional southern route. If this is possible, then they will dig out the canal along this section for us, and water it. This will mean that tourists from the railway can alight onto a boat trip along the canal. All very early days yet, but this is yet another exciting possibility .which may help restoration of the Pinxton Branch and by-pass the problems with the missing top lock and reservoir storm weir.

On July 28<sup>th</sup> the first boat for many a year arrived at Cromford Wharf. Now before you get too excited, it was hand hauled from the High Peak Junction by a team of our members. It was to be a practice run for the World Heritage event on October 29<sup>th</sup> at Cromford Wharf. They got it there all right but

then the water level dropped and we couldn't get it back! Well not straight away. So if you have seen a boat at Cromford Wharf you now know where it came from.

August saw our hard working team of Pat Morriss, Valerie Roberts, Mike Harrison and Yvonne Shattower travel to the IWA Festival at Preston Brook. This is our second festival now and it certainly helps a great deal for us to be seen as an active part of the restoration movement. If you would like to help out at such events please let us know. Also in August I was privileged to give a talk to the Tractor Driver's Association in South Wingfield. There were over sixty in attendance. If you know of any groups or associations who would like me to give a PowerPoint illustrated talk, please let me know. (Contacts are on the cover of this magazine)

September 11<sup>th</sup> saw our annual Sponsored Walk, ably organised by Sheila Smith again. Sheila (FCC number 1) puts a great deal of effort into organising this, for which we thank her, so it was a little disappointing that not so many turned out this year. Regrettably, we inadvertently forgot to advertise this event in the last edition of the Portal, and then on the day itself we had to

compete with England's cricket Ashes final, which didn't help either.

Other activities in September were the display we put on briefly at Cromford Wharf warehouse for the visit of delegates from the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA) and then four of us took part on an evening's walk on September 5<sup>th</sup> around the canal from Langley Mill, organised by Aldercar & Langley Mill Parish Council. Around forty turned out for this pleasant evening.

Elsewhere in this magazine you will see a summary of the Pre-Feasibility Report from the Halcrow Group. We paid for them to conduct this study for us, which looks at the modifications required around the Ironville flight of locks and the Codnor Park Reservoir. In a nutshell, yes it is feasible, but more in depth studies are needed. Oh for the days when you could just get the money together and start digging!

I have a meeting arranged with another member of parliament, Geoff Hoon, Leader of the House of Commons, in October. The canal enters Mr Hoon's constituency as it goes under the A610 bridge at Langley Mill (yes "that" same bridge!).





# TRIP REPORT - HIGH PEAK JUNCTION TO CROMFORD WHARF

by The Editor

*(Written on the evening of July 28<sup>th</sup>)*

On the evening of July 28<sup>th</sup>, the first boat for many a long year arrived at Cromford Wharf. I think a little "why" might be in order before we talk about "how". In October, there's going to be a Open Day for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, and as part of this it had been suggested that a demonstration horse boat operation between Cromford Wharf and High Peak Junction would be A Good Thing. We in the Friends of the Cromford Canal thought this would be a great idea: apart from the publicity, it would be an opportunity to do any work that might be required to actually bring the canal back into a useable state. In order to assess what work might be needed, it was decided to have a trial trip man hauling the boat from High Peak Junction, where it's been employed ferrying coal from the wharf to Lea Wood pumping house.

Thus it was that a band of FCC stalwarts and Chris Combes, the Area Manager (West), Countryside Services for Derbyshire County gathered at around 7-30 this evening to try a trial run. The first job was to partially unsheet the boat, tie a long cotton rope onto one of the steel supports of the roof, around

one-third of the way back from the front, and wind the boat, which was accomplished with the aid of a couple of long shafts. This done, off we set towards Cromford. It was soon found that under "normal" circumstances, only 2 or 3 people were needed to keep the boat moving steadily through the water.

However, we soon had to stop when we reached Problem Number One, the swing bridge. This had not been swung for a good few years, so there were a number of problems, the first of which was the padlock which held it shut. It had seized to the extent that the key wouldn't even go into the barrel. Fortunately, a hunt on the boat revealed a can with a splash of red Diesel in the bottom of it. This was sufficient (when dribbled liberally around and into the mechanism) to firstly get the key to go in all the way and then unseize the barrel from the alloy body of the lock, whereupon the lock came undone and fell apart!

However the bridge still wouldn't move, even when those of us of a more portly nature jumped up and down on it. It was then discovered that the bridge had been wedged in order to stop it from moving when being walked over. Further, concentrated jumping loosened these



The FCC Technical Committee working on the swing bridge

*(Editor)*



The Full Crew: *(left to right)* The Editor, Hugh, Mike, Patrick (behind Val), a new member who joined on the night and Chris Coombes  
*(Dave Ratner)*



and the bridge started to move. Once we'd got it open, the boat went though and then we continued to improve things before closing the bridge again. A lot of the problem was the soil that had accumulated at the points where the underside of the bridge was supposed to nearly rub on the abutments at either side. There was so much of this that the bridge was riding up onto it and stopping. Some prodding and scraping with improvised tools (mainly bits of wood) removed most of this, but I'll bring a shovel for next time!

Whilst we were doing this, the boat had continued on its merry way, until coming to a grinding halt just out of sight of the bridge repair party. This was a Known Trouble Spot - there's a marble firm just above the canal by the side of the A6, and there's always been a spit of debris across the canal at this point, on which the boat had gone firmly aground. We pulled it back a little way, then ALL got on the rope and took a run at it. The front half of boat slid over it OK, so we asked the steerer to run forward to get the back end to rise a little, and over she went!

After this, the main problem was tree branches which had not been kept at bay by the passage of boats - the cry of "Duck, Val!" rang out many a time as we continued. I think a set of tree loppers and a bow saw will be part of the kit for

the return journey! There was one other grounding at another shallow point: on this occasion, we merely went back a bit and then came a little closer to the towing path. Speaking of which, there was no great problem with the vegetation, which was merely brushed aside by the towing line. There were a couple of places where branches of trees at the back of the towing path were drooping over the front edge - another job for the loppers!

We eventually arrived at Bridge 1, and realised that we were actually going to make it to Cromford Wharf: something we really didn't think was going to be possible at the start of the evening. As the light would not have allowed a return trip, we decided to moor the boat at the Wharf itself, and managed to pose for the obligatory photo, wind the boat, tie it up and sheet it down before the light went completely.

We all wandered back up the towing path in the gathering gloom, before reaching High Peak Junction and wending our separate ways home, happy with a job more than well done.

On 25<sup>th</sup> September, water levels (which had mysteriously dropped as soon as the boat had arrived at Cromford) had recovered sufficiently enough for the boat to make a return journey, with some tree trimming taking place.





Under the trees on the way back

*(Ron Amner)*



A Little Light Lopping.....

*(Dave Ratner)*



# ***CODNOR PARK RESERVOIR STUDY – 'THE HALCROW REPORT'***

*by John Boucher*

## **Introduction**

In April 2005, partly at the suggestion of British Waterways, we commissioned an 'All Reservoirs Panel Engineer' to make a preliminary investigation into the possibilities of reversing some of the damage done by the 1984 spillway works at Codnor Park Reservoir. The large new spillway was constructed in order to meet what was then considered to be the requirement of the 1975 Reservoirs Act, but the work completely removed the top (no.1) lock and dropped the level of the reservoir, and constructed a substantial new weir which completely blocked the line of the canal past the reservoir. It is clear that at that time BW sought the cheapest solution to satisfy the Act, without giving any thought to possible future canal restoration.

The 1975 Act also set up panels of appropriately qualified Engineers, of which the top rank are in the 'All Reservoirs Panel' – a bevy of 44 men (no women at present) to cover the whole country, who must be consulted and approve proposals to build or alter any reservoir with a capacity of over 25,000 cu metres – about 2000 in number, including Codnor Park. Naturally, in

such a restricted market, their fees can be very high. Furthermore, the different sections of the Act set out different requirements for different activities. For example, British Waterways are legally obliged to have a formal inspection of the reservoir every ten years by an Inspecting Engineer under Section 10 of the act, whereas any changes we may wish to make would require a Construction Engineer to design them under Section 6 of the Act.

The Inspecting Engineer has to state the amount of flood water that the spillway must be able to accommodate. His view on this appears to be unchallengeable. It is now generally accepted that the design flood capacity of the 1984 works was excessive, and there is room for reviewing it down to a more manageable level. Subsequent Inspections appear to support this view, but we await the report of the 2005 inspection to provide a definitive figure which we will have to work to.

After obtaining competitive proposals we appointed Panel Engineer Jonathan Hinks of Halcrow Ltd, a leading firm of Consulting Engineers, to undertake the necessary studies. Halcrow has been involved with examinations at Codnor

Park since 1935, when an earlier Reservoir Act introduced a need for regular inspections, and has an excellent archive of background material. Its records help to explain some of the developments since then, and also show that there is a major geological fault along the south side of the reservoir, running almost due west to east right along the line of the old canal. This is known as the 'Cromford Fault', but would have probably been unknown to the original builders in 1792. It is now considered to be highly significant and the close monitoring of the new spillway weir is maintained to detect any signs of possible movement.

Hinks in his preliminary feasibility study indicates that he considers that our aims are quite possible, and subject to detailed design and approval by a Construction Engineer, can be achieved in a way that will enable the canal to be reopened. These are featured in his executive summary (below), and our next action will be to discuss them with British Waterways (who still own the reservoir and the canal down to lock 4) and reach agreement on how we can proceed from here.

The report supports our proposal to partially re-water the top four pounds in advance of full restoration, and we would like to progress this with BW in the very near future. Whilst Halcrow was responsible for checking British Waterways designs for the 1984 works, Hinks assures us that he considers that

they were excessive, and fully supports our current aims to reduce and modify them.

The report also looks briefly at the effect of reconnecting the Pinxton Arm, and points the way forward to future action and more detailed studies required. The studies all have one thing in common – they will cost money, and serious fund raising to cover them will now have to start in earnest. Our initial experience of negotiations with the planning authorities show that many of these studies will have to be undertaken before we are able to obtain planning permission, and some will have to be arranged as a matter of urgency.

## Halcrow's Executive Summary

The Cromford Canal was opened in 1794 and was officially abandoned in 1944. It had a total length of 23km. This report concentrates on the eastern part of the canal, Codnor Park reservoir and the Pinxton Arm.

There does not appear to be any very compelling reason why Top Water Level in Codnor Park reservoir should not be raised to its former level of 83.186m AOD (*Editor's Note: AOD = Above Ordinance (Survey) Datum ie above "Zero" for Ordinance Survey maps, which used to be Low Water at Newlyn in Cornwall*). This would allow about 160 locks full of water to be held



above the former water level of 82.6mAOD in the canal.



“.....its former level of 83.186mAOD” (slightly higher than the canal)  
*(Ian Moss)*



..... and at its present level.

*(Editor)*

In order to raise the water level in the reservoir a Construction Engineer will need to be appointed under Section 6 of

the Reservoirs Act, 1975. One of the aspects which will concern him will be the safe discharge of floods from the

reservoir. It is possible that he will ask only for the safe discharge of about  $12\text{m}^3/\text{s}$  (equivalent to the flood with a return period of 1,000 years) but it is thought more probable that he will ask for the safe discharge of about  $22\text{m}^3/\text{s}$  (equivalent to the flood with a return period of 10,000 years). However bearing in mind that there would be natural floods even if the reservoir had never been built, some flooding can be accepted during the passage of flood waters from the reservoir to the river as long as the integrity of the reservoir embankment is not threatened.

It should be possible to open up the old spillway culvert from the north-east corner of the reservoir and to route the remainder of the flood flows around the Ironville locks and possibly over a new spillway on the Pinxton Arm. For larger flows water could be allowed to flow over the Ironville lock gates. All of this will need careful design but does not appear to be unfeasible.

There would be a great deal of work in restoring the Ironville flight of locks and it would probably be necessary to install spillway sills upstream of each lock and bypass pipes around the locks. The restoration of the locks appears feasible.

One aspect of the work that may be rather difficult is the restoration of the canal along the south side of the

reservoir; this is because space is rather limited between the road and the reservoir. Despite this the restoration of the canal along the south side of the reservoir is thought to be the best option. However the canal could, as an alternative, be routed through the reservoir or along its northern bank. With the latter alternative there may be some difficulty in capturing flood flows from the 5.13km catchment to the north.

The restoration of the Pinxton Arm also seems to be feasible although great care would be needed in re-excavating the canal immediately downstream of Codnor Park Dam. Another problem could be posed by the large catchment area to the north and west. It seems certain that generous spillway provision will be needed to cater both for natural flows into the canal and also for a proportion of the spillway flow from the reservoir.

All of these works will require significant design, time and funds to implement. In the short term it would be possible to re-water the Cromford Canal over the Ironville flight of locks section by means of cleaning the canal and installing stop logs. This action will galvanise local support and enthusiasm for the major restoration works and provide more data on the existing condition of the canal, aiding design of these.





# THE ECOLOGY STUDY

by Patrick Morriss

**W**hat is it? Many of you will have heard of or read something about "The Ecology Study" the aim of this brief article is to fill in a little bit of the background.

The 1994 Binnie Report into the potential restoration of the Cromford Canal between Langley Mill and Ironville concluded that such a restoration was feasible and recommended a number of alternative routes in addition to the original course of the canal between these two locations. Much of the existing route, mainly in the southern length of the section, has been lost to opencast mining and the canal line obliterated. In addition, deep mining activities have had an effect on the relative levels of land and water, both in the canal sections that still exist and in the restored section at Langley Mill where the wash wall is in many places built on top of the old wall due to mining subsidence.

Before any restoration can take place full scale Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) will have to take place. In many parts of the canal the line of the restored canal will be the original course, or very close to it. However, parts of the Langley Mill to Ironville section present alternatives so the FCC decided

to commission a study 'to assess the ecological impact of restoring the Cromford Canal for navigation between Ironville and Langley Mill – to include its historical route and each of the potential alternative routes for this section'

To give an idea of the sort of task set, the area amounts to about 1033 hectares or 2553 acres!

The FCC and others had arrived at a budget cost for such a study in the region of £15000 and the funding of such a study was obviously a major issue. Very hard work my members of the committee and others resulted in a grant of £7500 from the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership, £5000 from the Inland Waterways Association leaving the FCC to find the remaining £2500 from our accumulated funds. The FCC then had to produce a tender document and put the study contract out to competitive tender, again resulting in much work for a very small group of individuals. The result of this process was that Black and Veatch (B&V) won the contract. Ironically, Binnie's (the authors of the 1994 report) were absorbed by B&V some time ago.

As part of the process, B&V had to meet a steering committee after they had been

appointed. After this initial meeting, a further four committee meetings were envisaged during the term of the study. The steering committee consisted of:

A representative of Black and Veatch

John Baylis - Representing the Inland Waterways Association

Gary Wain - Representing Groundwork Erewash Valley

Richard Biggin - Representing FCC (Environmentalist)

Leila Griffith - Representing British Waterways

Valerie Holt - Former Environment Agency Ecologist

Patrick Morriss - Representing FCC

Others were invited to represent various bodies, but sadly declined involvement.

### Progress

The study is due to report in February/March 2006 and most field studies are now complete. The study has to provide a final report detailing all baseline data, assessment undertaken and any mitigation, compensation or enhancement proposed including:

An objective evaluation of habitats and species recorded, clearly stating the

criteria by which the evaluation was made.

A clear comparison between the route options for this section of the canal, in terms of their positive and negative ecological impacts.

A comparison between the predicted ecological impacts of the canal restoration and use, and the 'do nothing' option.

As we approach the end of this process, the FCC must bear in mind that the preferred route from an ecological standpoint may not be the cheapest, it may not be the easiest to restore/replace and it may not be the original route. At this stage, no one knows. It is possible that all the alternative routes present ecological problems of one sort or another and we have no clear 'winner'.

One thing is certain however. By commissioning this report, the FCC has demonstrated its commitment to finding the least ecologically obtrusive route for a canal channel between Langley Mill and Ironville. It is hoped that all other interested parties will endeavour to reach an agreement for restoration of this historic section of the Cromford Canal and not adopt entrenched positions.

The FCC and others will have to wait and see what the final report suggests.



# IWA DIAMOND JUBILEE GRANT AND THE FCC

by Patrick Morris

On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2005, the IWA announced that it was looking for one or more high-profile inland waterway restoration projects, ideally with capacity for a sizeable level of Waterway Recovery Group, or similar, volunteer involvement, into which it could invest up to £100,000 if the project could be completed within the next 15 to 18 months. This would be part of the Association's 2006 Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

On behalf of the FCC, a submission was made to the IWA for a grant towards the cost of rewatering any channel across the Smotherfly ex opencast site on the Pinxton section of the Cromford canal. This submission had to be no longer than a single sheet of A4 paper for any one project and be submitted no later than Wednesday 24th August 2005.

The IWA's intention was for a selection of potentially appropriate projects to be short-listed by the Association's Restoration Committee and the

Waterway Recovery Group, jointly. Promoters of these projects were to be invited to put forward more substantial proposals for a final decision by the Association's Council, based on recommendations from WRG, Restoration and Finance & General Purposes Committee, in the autumn of 2005. The work to achieve the chosen projects would have to take place largely during 2006, and could feature substantially in WRG's activities during that year.

The FCC's chosen project was not an exact match for the IWA's criteria but it would have been a possible project for 2006 if we were successful at convincing Derbyshire County Council and UK Coal that the reuse of the now redundant River Erewash diversion channel across the Smotherfly site as a canal channel is appropriate.

Unfortunately the FCC were not short listed for the IWA Diamond Jubilee Grant, better luck next time perhaps!



# THE CANAL INN, BULLBRIDGE

(article and photos by Freda Raphael)

The Canal Inn has been my local for the past five years, and I always feel that I'm walking into someone's front room when I visit. The reason is that before the Cromford Canal came through Bullbridge, this building was one of a handful of farmhouses cosily tucked away on a south-facing slope above the River Amber. It's still a suntrap in summer weather, sitting outside with a pint whilst cyclists struggle up Bullbridge Hill, one of Derbyshire's more gruelling hill climbs.

Precisely when the Canal Inn evolved from farm house to public house is unrecorded. Certainly it was a pub by



1857. When the Stevensons were constructing the Bullbridge stretch of the North Midland Railway during 1839/40, they used the strength of 200 horses and 1,400 navvies, all needing huge amounts of watering, feeding and shelter. Presumably there had been a similar influx of men and animals during the building of the Cromford Canal, and Bullbridge aqueduct, fifty

years before. It doesn't take much imagination to see the local farmers' wives rapidly turning their home brewed ale into commercial enterprises. And what better sustenance than grass-fed Bullbridge ox, merrily roasting, at the end of a long day of hard labour?

Over little more than sixty years, Bullbridge changed from a sleepy backwater to a busy



industrial centre. Road, rail and canal were squeezed into a tight valley. Tramways brought limestone down the hill from the Crich quarries. The Bullbridge and Ambergate lime kilns belched smoke and dirt, which ceased only in 1965 following the Clean Air Acts.

Another forty years have slipped away. Bullbridge has become a leafy backwater once more. But the Canal Inn is open seven days a week, serving lunches and dinners every day, a useful fact to remember. Landlords Dave and Lorraine have been keeping their customers happy for the past two years. Dave is a Bullbridge boy, born and bred. He and Lorraine offer pensioner discounts and plan to offer space for up to ten touring caravans by next summer.

So whether, like one of the navvies of old, your fancy is a roast dinner and good ale, or your appetite turns more towards fresh Grimsby fish, you'll find a warm welcome at the Canal Inn, Bullbridge.

## ***HOLRO, TOLLS AND VIDEOTAPES***

*by the Archivist*

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**H**olro? What, you might well ask, is Holro? Well, it's the House of Lords Record Office. Friend Professor Reg Schofield has donated to our Archives photo-copies of documents relating to the evidence in support of the Cromford Canal bill, when it was debated back in 1789. They are all 'manuscript', so if anyone fancies their hand at transcription, please get in touch (contact details on back cover)!

### **Just a Minute**

I have at last received photocopies of the Cromford Canal Minutes, Volumes 2 and 3. Like Vol 1, these have been copied at

the expense of the Derbyshire Record Society, who have offered to publish Vol 1. Professor Reg Schofield (author of 'Benjamin Outram') has volunteered to transcribe all of volume 2 and I can think of no better person to do this section. That 'just' leaves us volume 3!

I have begun pulling together the various transcriptions of volume 1, but have by no means finished it yet. Indeed there are one or two transcriptions still outstanding and I am now chasing these up! We still have the offer of this volume being published, but it will not be for some time yet as there are other books already in the pipeline.

Publication of volumes 2 and 3 will very much depend on how volume 1 goes down. However, the transcription alone will be a very useful resource for research.

I wonder if there is anyone out there who would be willing to undertake some (more) transcription? If so, please let me know.

## Newspaper Cuttings

If any Friends see newspaper or magazine stories about the Cromford Canal, can I ask that you send me a copy, please.

There are so many newspapers and free sheets about in our area that there is no way I can see all of them, and I'd rather have ten copies than none!

As well as the 'historic' archives, I am

trying to maintain a current archive, which will become historic when our canal is reopened!!

Mr Newton of Chesterfield has kindly donated a 15-minute film, copied to video, which depicts family visits to the canal in the 1960s. It covers the canal from Cromford to Hartshay, and shows the Ambergate lime kilns site being 'reconstructed' by EMGAS and the Bullbridge aqueducts intact, thus dating it to 1967 or 1968. We are hoping to get this transferred to digital format to enable easier distribution and viewing.

A fascinating photograph purportedly showing Florence Nightingale crossing Chase Bridge was copied to us by Adrian Farmer. What is particularly curious about this is the fact that the photographer (and his camera) are in the picture!





Finally, Stuart Griffin of Belper has donated a Cromford Canal Company Permit Book, which he rescued from the proverbial skip when a friend was clearing his attic. It shows details of boats passing Langley Mill toll office, the cargoes that they carried and the tolls they paid. Unusually it does not cover just a few weeks, as do other volumes now in the Derbyshire Records Office, but appears to have entries from 1832 to 1847.

## POTS & PIX

All these will be on display, along with other items from the Archives, at POTS & PIX 2005, the fourth annual exhibition at Ambergate featuring also the Stoneware Pottery of Liz Tatam – ideal for those unusual Christmas presents. POTS & PIX will be held at the Archivist's address from 11am to 6pm on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th November.

## WHAT'S ON

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- October 29<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Site Discovery Day - FCC display at Cromford Wharf - horse drawn boat (subject to water level), hand-wound fairground organs, rope making, FCC display and Sales Stand.
- 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
- January 16<sup>th</sup> 2006 FCC Social Meeting - Ironville Church Hall - speaker Neil Arlidge of the Tuesday Night Club - exact title to be confirmed, but will relate to some of his more "interesting" boating exploits.

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

Your Committee members have had a busy summer with lots of work going on behind the scenes. On the publicity front, we attended the IWA Festival at Preston Brook which brought us in several new members, some lapsed members who renewed, and some reasonable sales. It was, however, disappointing in that we had expected to be in a group with the Derby & Sandiacre Canal and Chesterfield Canal Societies, but found ourselves isolated at the top of the hill, despite the best efforts of Geraint Coles and Martin Bloomfield of the Derbyshire Waterways Partnership, who had gone to considerable trouble to have us all together. The weather didn't help with high winds and rain. Anyway, we survived! Once again it was good to meet Members and put faces to names and E-mail addresses. Our new brochures are doing their job and bringing in new Members; of the new names added since last time, all but two have been on the form from the brochure.

We have got some interesting evenings lined up for you this autumn. On 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005 our speaker will be Eugene Baston, the External Customer Relations Manager for British Waterways. This should be a very entertaining and informative evening and one which will no doubt prove lively. At

the time of writing we do not know the subject of his talk, but I am sure it will be well worth attending. As our Christmas meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December, our Editor has arranged for us to have a 'Danse' to a French style band. Come along and have a go - although if you don't fancy 'dancing' you can still come along and share the Christmas goodies which we hope you will bring along. As this is not strictly a canal restoration topic, we will have to make a small charge of £1.00 per person - not bad value for a good laugh - which I am sure it will be. Both meetings start at 7.30 at Ironville Church Hall.

At long last our Treasurer has managed to arrange collections of subscriptions by Standing Order. From next month, a form for this option will be enclosed with renewal forms. This will make it much easier to collect the subscriptions and will save quite a bit in postage and printing. It will also be better for you, the members, as you will only have to fill in the form once. As I have said before, I am sure that we have lost members purely because they have mislaid the form, or something else has cropped up and it has been put in a safe place - never to see the light of day again. I know - because I have done it myself!

As part of our Sponsorship from Hardys & Hansons, our magazine is now going out to their pubs along the line of the



canal, and the Committee meetings have been held at the 'George' at Hartshay, the Derwent Hotel at Ambergate and the Holmesford Cottage at High Peak. I can assure our members that we got a warm welcome and a very good pint at all of them, and I would like to thank the landlords for all their help. Please do support them if you are out that way.

## NEW MEMBERS

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

Mr P Bowler & Mrs Y McCammon,  
Matlock  
Ms E Luxton, Hitchin  
Mr R K Walton, Derby  
Mr G Sanders, Belper

Mr J A Gartside, London  
Mr & Mrs P Cook, Ripley  
Mr R Rowbotham, Rotherham  
Mr & Mrs J Pearce, Ripley  
Mr & Mrs A Ankers, Matlock  
Mr A R Brookes, Derby  
Mr D J Hardie, Matlock  
Mr M Cheetham, Alfreton  
Mr J Sanderson, Matlock  
Mr & Mrs D H Mould, Ripley  
Mrs P R Bayley, Huddersfield  
Mr I D McCarthy, Rossendale  
Mr S Houghton, Bolton  
Mr & Mrs B Oven, Alfreton  
Mr A Greenwell, Northwich  
Mr N. Turns, Dover  
Mr & Mrs C D Thornton, Worthing  
Mr R Newland, Redditch  
Evan J Beswick, Nottingham  
Mr R Wightman, Switzerland.



Val steers the coal boat away from Bridge 1 on 28<sup>th</sup> July

*(Editor)*