

THE PORTAL



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Front Cover: "I STILL can't see the 5p you claimed you dropped down here....." Investigations on the site of Colliery Office Bridge on the Pinxton Arm
(Hugh Potter)

Back Cover: "Ready for off" - Mike and Jonathan Webster ready to start the Sponsored Walk *(Editor)*

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EDITORIAL



One of the nice things about being the Editor (apart from seeing The Portal before you do) is that I get to have the last word: everybody else sends me articles (or doesn't, 'cause they're not finished yet - don't worry, it'll go in next quarter), I put them in and then I get the chance to comment on it all and bring the news bang up to date.

The Sponsored Walk was a resounding success: over 220 people joined the walk (the exact number will probably never be determined) and as well as everybody enjoying themselves we had the Managing Director of Hardys & Hansons - thanks for the pint, Jonathan! and a couple of our local Members of Parliament, Judy Mallaber and Jeff Hoon (complete with "minder") who were most impressed by the support shown by members and locals. Our thanks are due to you all.

The day before, The FCC's version of "Time Team" went on a subtle and gentle archaeological "dig" (with a JCB) and discovered the remains of Colliery Office Bridge on the Pinxton Arm. As you will see from the article in this issue this bridge was a film star, featuring in the 1960 film of D H Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers". It wasn't anywhere near where our informant thought it

was.....

The AGM happened..... but the talk we were to have had after the formal business was cancelled (Sorry, Peter) in favour of a presentation of our National Lottery Living Landmarks bid for £50,000,000. Unfortunately we didn't get beyond the first hurdle, but we aim to learn from this and have asked for feedback as to how we could improve our chances next time. This meeting marked the retirement of John Baylis as Vice-Chairman. He's been boating, restoring and campaigning for canal restoration since many of us were knee-high to a grasshopper, and his wise counsel was very welcome in the early days of the Friends. He now feels we're safe enough to be allowed out on our own (!) so he's decided to take a bit more of a back seat. He remains a Trustee and I'm sure we've not heard the last from him. Thanks for the leg up, John.

Finally, you'll notice that this edition of The Portal is the first in its new format. I've been contemplating a re-design for some time and this issue is the result of not a little head-scratching and midnight oil burning. I hope you like it.



THE SPONSORED WALK

(photos from the Editor)



A good crowd booking in.....



Under Butterley Company Bridge at Ironville



The FCC Crossing Patrol (aka Hugh Potter) on duty at Pye Bridge



There was one heck of a queue outside the pub!

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Mike Kelly

(The following are notes from the Chairman's Report delivered at the 4th AGM on Monday 27th March 2006; with an update as a conclusion. My report was largely a visual presentation with many photographs, maps, plans and diagrams; so it is a little difficult to put such a visual discourse into just words, but I will do my best.)

This last year has been an amazing and extremely busy one. We managed to get the first boat to Cromford for many a year, but to do this it entailed a great deal of hard work in preparation. The cutting of overhanging trees, and the initial bow-hauling of the boat were just two of the tasks that beset us prior to the World Heritage Day. The horse-drawn boat was part of the very successful World Heritage Day, which was held last October. Our sales team of Mike Harrison and Val Roberts had a very successful day there and our sales are now bringing in a regular source of income. This along with our photographic exhibition has been a major tool for our contact with the general public. We have also held displays at the IWA Festival, Cromford Village Festival, and on several other occasions at Cromford Wharf.

We had our first business sponsorship from Hardys and Hansons brewery with the presentation of a cheque for £1,500, most of which went towards our new leaflets. These have been very ably designed by Val Roberts and have proved so popular we have very quickly distributed most of the first print already. Dave Ratner helps a great deal in this

regard with his regular visits to the public houses (well, someone has to do it!) along the line of the canal to fill up their stocks of these leaflets. We have held nearly all of our committee meetings since last summer in various Hardys and Hansons public houses, and have been well received in all.

We became partners in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, along with the Amber Valley Partnership, which includes the 'Renaissance Ironville' and the Heanor 'Me & U' projects, as announced last year.

Several new FCC notice boards have been installed along the canal. These boards were made at cost by Burt Crump and are stocked regularly by David Ratner. So we can now let the public see what is happening.

We have held regular social events throughout the year, with guest speakers, a French style band at Christmas and a very nice trip organised by Shelia Smith to Dudley Tunnel and Black Country Living Museum.

During the last year a total of 15 talks were given to other bodies in our local area and further afield by three members of the Committee. Such talks are a great way to spread the word and to get new members. Talking of members, our membership secretary, Yvonne Shattower has as always done an excellent job in handling all the administration work that dealing with a total enrolment of 900 plus people requires. It is very demanding

work and we rely heavily on Yvonne for this.

During the year we have made good political contacts, with meetings with Jeff Hoon MP, Leader of the House of Commons and Judy Mallaber MP. We have also had telephone calls and letters of support from Dennis Skinner MP and Patrick McLoughlin. So now, ALL the MP's along the line of the canal have given their support to our project. This is no mean achievement. We were very saddened to hear of the death of Philip Whitehead MEP, for it was only a few days before he died that he sent me a hand written note expressing his support for the canal and wishing us well. Since his death, his successor Glenis Willmott MEP has written of letter of support to us.

Along with national government we have had meetings and communications with County, District and Parish Councillors. We also now have links and partnerships with the Amber Valley Partnership, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and several Parish Councils.

At Christmas, John Baylis organised the Waterway Recovery Group to spend their Christmas on the Cromford for the second year in succession. The trees on the Codnor Park Reservoir dam were dangerously digging into this structure and the canal along this stretch could not be seen. What a difference there is now, we can see the canal and this structure decline has been arrested. The WRG's web site has a lot to say on how much they enjoyed this. We thank them for their wonderful efforts.

This was not the only physical work on the canal we have carried out. Several

work parties have been held around Cromford and Whatstandwell, where work was carried out in conjunction the Derbyshire County Council's Ranger Service. We now have a Work Party Organiser, David Tinkler, who has organised these work parties for us very well. This has been a good opportunity for DCC to see we could work together and they wrote a very nice letter to say thank you to us. As well as this work, the Erewash group (ECP&DA) are continuing their work at Langley Mill extending the canal northwards.

Throughout the year we have been building links with businesses and groups with common interests. For example: myself and John Boucher attended the inaugural meeting of the East Derbyshire Regeneration Initiative. This comprises the Midland Railway Trust, DCC, Amber Valley Housing and a local developer. Ideas were pooled concerning creating a link for rail passengers to alight from the railway near Codnor Park Reservoir to enable them to take a canal boat trip. This could become a good source of revenue for the FCC.

We are now entering negotiations with British Waterways to re-water part of the Ironville lock flight. This will return the section so that it will look more like a canal and stop it looking like a empty ditch. John Baylis will be heading this project.

This last year also saw several planning issues that we had to deal with, for which a great deal of thanks must go to Steve Parish. Steve is our Local Authority Liaison Officer, even though Steve lives at Warrington, near Liverpool. Steve along with Pat Morriss and John Boucher have

kept a tight grip on planning issues, such as the housing development over the Butterley Tunnel, which is now resolved and only sees gardens over the line of the tunnel, whereas there originally were going to be buildings. Similarly another developer wanted to use the access road under the A610 for a road access to his Hall Road housing development. After attending council meetings and putting forth objections, along with strong support from Amber Valley BC, this seems to be all but resolved. Latterly Derbyshire Wildlife Trust applied for planning permission around the Brinsley Flashes nature reserve, which could have seen a bund wall of earth built over the line of the canal. It was only by chance that we saw this application and after discussions with Amber Valley Planning we are hopeful this issue is also resolved.

The FCC have had several studies undertaken:

1. An approved reservoir engineer from the Halcrow Group has completed a 'Pre-Feasibility Study on Codnor Park Reservoir and Ironville Locks' costing £5,875 which was funded by money raised the FCC raised by sponsored walks, sales and donations

2. Flood Risk Assessment of the Pinxton Arm from the Halcrow Group at a cost of £2,880 (plus VAT) Interestingly this study concludes by saying, 'The connection of the new canal to the existing Pinxton Wharf section will prevent the regular overtopping of this section of canal which currently occurs about twice a year.'

3. A year ago we commissioned Black & Veatch to conduct an Environmental

Study from Langley Mill to Ironville. We had funding from Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership for £7,500. A donation of £5,000 is to come from IWA, with the remaining £2,500 from FCC. I have seen the draft, which shows alternative routes the canal could take to accommodate most of the concerns of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, we are expecting the study to be published in May this year.

Smotherfly:

A year ago UK-Coal were about to fill in the River Erewash diversion. The agreement made earlier between UK Coal and DCC did not allow for the canal; so we lobbied and lobbied and up to today it has not been filled in. This required a huge amount of work from John Boucher, Steve Parish and Pat Morriss. Talks and meetings with UK-Coal and Derbyshire County Council were long and drawn out, but we now have the partial approval of both.

John Boucher made the engineering drawings for us, site land levels were looked at, environmental and flood issues were raised, all resulting in many, many letters and Emails. Well we are now ready to submit planning permission for Smotherfly this year. The new plan will see a new stretch of water that will be wider than the average canal, so we are calling it The Smotherfly Wide. We are hoping it will become a facility for fishing, canoeing, maybe rowing and also bird watching; with safe level access to the countryside for all, but especially for those in wheelchairs and for mothers with pushchairs.

To raise money for this venture we organised 'The Pinxton Push' sponsored

walk from Langley Mill to Pinxton Wharf. The Managing Director of Hardys and Hansons brewery, Mr. Jonathan Webster started the walk. We were delighted to have two local MP's Jeff Hoon, leader of the House of Commons and Judy Mallaber accompanying us on our sponsored walk. We had a total of 221 people sign in for the walk. This was a wonderful response to our call, with many non-members turning out. What I thought lovely to see were the large numbers of children and young people taking part on the walk. Our thanks go to Mr. Jonathan Webster MD of Hardys and Hansons for donating one pint of beer to all who took part in the walk; stewards as well as walkers. Ian and Sue at the Boat Inn at Pinxton could not pull the beer quick enough, and had a queue right outside the pub. If you have not already done so, check our website to see photos of the day. *(and see the pictures in this issue - Ed)*

Funds:

As mentioned £1,500 was donated by Hardys and Hansons, and there have been two individual members who donated money to the FCC with a combined total of around £3,000. A bid has been prepared for £66,000 from Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership (DDEP) for the cost of managing, planting and maintaining the Smotherfly Wide. This also includes an allowance for a part-time Project

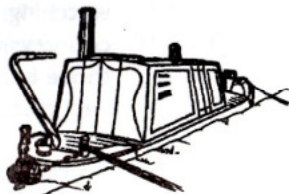
Manager. (DDEP are the ones who gave us funds for the Ecological Study) Again our thanks go the John Boucher, Pat Morriss and Steve Parish for this work.

The Big Lottery Fund is offering to fund a project that has LIVING LANDMARKS as its main feature. Well our project does. We have called it the 'Cromford 3 Valleys Community Link' (3VCL), linking the Erewash and Amber Valleys to the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site. Ours answered most of the requirements for placing a bid. So we submitted a bid, for £50,000,000

The amount of work again required to put this bid together was again considerable; and John Boucher and Pat Morriss rose to the challenge. We did not find out about it until very near the closing date, so the work was even more intense than ever.

'Audacious' the Waterways World magazine called it. Be that as it may, we are through the first hurdle. They later wrote to say, 'The Cromford qualifies probably as both the most ambitious and also the most exciting!'

When the FCC was formed four years ago, we hit the ground running. People said we would not be able to keep up that pace – well we have, thanks to our very good team.



SKATING TO CROMFORD – URBAN MYTH?

Patrick Morriss

Before and during this last winter there was much talk of how cold it was going to be, it has certainly been drier of late, but how do the winters compare to the time when the Cromford Canal was in its heyday?

Reading local accounts of the Cromford Canal, one occasionally comes across comments concerning ice on the canal and people being able to skate to Cromford. One such recollection is contained in the publication "Hartshay Historical". I had always been a bit sceptical regarding these claims in the past, as I have only known fairly thin ice on the canal and not over long lengths. If the canal did ice over there was the ice boat to call out (the sad remains of which are at Cromford Wharf) so did the ice ever get the chance to be thick enough?

The Ripley and Heanor News of Friday January 16th 1891 put the issue beyond

doubt. Under the heading, "The Frost" the paper continued "For the first time during many years the Cromford and Langley Mills (sic) canal is frozen over. The distance from Ambergate to within half a mile of Cromford can be covered. It is at least thirty years since nearly six miles of skating could be obtained as at present. Weeks ago the ice boat could not break through".

Therefore, the winter of 1890/91 must have been cold and cold over a prolonged spell. The canal at the Cromford end was always considered difficult to freeze as the water from Cromford sough coming from deep underground was at a constant temperature and did not freeze with the rest of the canal

(Editor's Note - Simon Stoker makes much the same point - look at the Simon Stoker Archive on our Web Site)

LEGGING THE STANDEGE TUNNEL

British Waterways

An attempt to leg Standedge Tunnel - the highest, longest and deepest canal tunnel in the country is being made by members of the national Horseboating Society on 7th and 14th May. These special events are being held by British Waterways as part of a double celebration at Standedge in 2006: the fifth

anniversary of the reopening of the Tunnel and the 200th anniversary of Thomas Telford's appointment to finish the tunnel.

On Sunday, 7th May, a team from the Horseboating Society will leg the tunnel from Diggle to Marsden in relays of two

people at a time. The boat used will be the historic horseboat Maria, built in 1854 and believed to have carried limestone into the Colne Valley until 1900. On Sunday 14th May, one member, Nigel Dix, will attempt to leg the whole tunnel length from Marsden to Diggle. Bonny the Boathorse will be coming "over the top" on both legging days while the boat is legged through the tunnel and visitors are invited to join her along Boat Lane.

On both Sundays there will also be free entertainment at Standedge Visitor Centre. Visitors will be able to take part in traditional games and see waterway crafts including harness making, ropework, such as making towlines and splicing, and demonstrations on a pole-lathe. Characters dressed in costume will add to the atmosphere and members of the Huddersfield Canal Society will be on hand to talk about the history of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and its restoration.

Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, is 3¼ miles long, 645 feet (196 metres) above sea level and 639 feet (194 metres) deep, traversing the Pennines between Diggle and Marsden, near Huddersfield. It took 16 years to build and was eventually opened in 1811 following its completion under the supervision of Benjamin Outram, then John Rooth, with one of the heroes of the Industrial Revolution, Thomas Telford as consultant.

To keep the costs down, the tunnel was built without a towpath and while the horses crossed over the hill, the boat crew had to "leg" the boat through the tunnel. This was done either by lying on

boards across the boat and walking along the walls, or by lying on the cabin to walk against the roof of the tunnel, either of which could take up to four hours. One of the most famous attempts to leg the Tunnel was made by David Whitehead in 1914 reputedly in 1 hour 25 minutes! Today, the only way a boat can travel through the Tunnel is as part of a carefully controlled, escorted convoy run by British Waterways using specially-designed electric tugs.

Sue Day from the Horseboating Society said: "We have been working towards legging such a long tunnel for some time and we are really looking forward to the event. It is a good opportunity for people to come and relive some of our industrial past and have some fun at the same time.

"We think the last time the tunnel was legged was round about 1947. In fact this was by one of our members, Ronnie Barnes, who is now 87. He hopes to be on board on May 7th to watch us 'follow in his footsteps'.

"We invite people to cheer us along as we set off then emerge from the tunnel on both days."

Laurence Morgan, General Manager of British Waterways, Yorkshire, said: "Standedge is a unique place and one of the major landmarks of the waterways. It was, and is, a tremendous engineering feat, which nearly wasn't completed.

"Legging the tunnel will be a real challenge for the Society's members and we wish them lots of luck. These unique events are an amazing opportunity for visitors to enjoy the canal's heritage and witness history being made, as a boat is

legged through the Tunnel for the first time in over half a century. It may be many years before this feat is attempted again, so we hope as many people as possible are able to join in the celebrations in May."

Entertainment on both days will begin at

12 noon until 4pm.

The horsedrawn boat will leave Ashton on May 4th to make the full canal journey to Huddersfield and return by May 15. Bonny and Queenie will provide the horsepower.

CROMFORD CANAL - FILM STAR?

The Editor



A still from Sons & Lovers, showing the bridge in question

(from Gavin Gillespie)

In a conversation in an inland waterways newsgroup on the Internet, Gavin Gillespie from Giltbrook was talking about the filming of D H Lawrence's book "Sons and Lovers" which has just been released on DVD. He said, "I have just received and watched it, and noticed the Trent Navigation Co. clip, and also the canals around Eastwood. The film was first released in 1960. It can be ordered for £9.99 on the following link:-

<http://www.moviemail-online.co.uk/films/16810>

I think part of the filming was done on the Cromford Canal, which should

interest Brian Dominic. At the start of the film, there is an explosion at the mine, (Brinsley Colliery was used for this), and people are shown rushing to the mine, with some of them crossing a canal bridge. Pupils at Hall Park school were used as extras, and an ex pupil said on Radio Nottingham that she was an extra, and they filmed near the school, but she did not say at Brinsley Colliery, so it was possibly the bridge scene, which probably means the bridge was over the Cromford Canal, and that would probably be the now demolished bridge on Stoneyford Lane, between Brinsley and Langley Mill. I passed the information on to Hugh, who said:

"Nice idea. The flattened arch looks familiar. But . . . It's winter. Low sun, probably from south. So Cromford is to the right. Towpath in pic is on nearest side, ie east. At Stoney Lane it was on west (could film be 'flipped'?)

It looks like there is a railway in background which would agree with pic flipping scenario.

There was a solitary distinctive crossing keepers house between canal and railway (see pictures, one taken 1953). Not two detached and a row of terraces. But the two detached houses don't look real. And there is quite a bend in road at each side of the bridge which is not apparent from map.

So, although I would like to believe it, I remain to be convinced. Could it have been the Erewash or Nottingham Canal? They are about same distance from Hall Park (assuming it is Eastwood Hall)"

John Boucher commented: "If we agree it is Pinxton, the filming would probably have been done at Pinxton Pit alongside, which would have been a much more representative mine for filming than Brinsley - I think both were closed in the 1960s, but if you can provide any shots of the mine surfaces and/or headgears we should be able to identify them."

Hugh replied: "John - that has to be it! What I sent was what I got, so I guess it's the best that could be had from the film, but Brian will know.

The houses etc tie in much better as does the bend in the road - and the gate could have deteriorated over 3-4 years."

John Boucher then found out some more:

"I have just had an interesting conversation with Mick Bacon of the wood yard alongside Bridge 11. I showed him the picture you gave me of bridge 11, and the Sons and Lovers filming, and he confirmed that they were indeed bridge 11.

He also confirmed that the two houses in front of the terraces actually existed (they had been offices, and were converted to housing when the pit closed. The gas lamp is correct - originally the whole road along Pinxton Wharf was gas lit, as were the terraced houses in the picture. The gas main and a water pipe went over the bridge. However the two detached houses in the foreground were electrically lit, supplied from the pit's own system.

Mick said that the bridge was generally in good condition, although occasionally bricks dropped out from under the arch and were replaced by BW (This can be explained by the flatness of the arch, which appears to be an original construction defect, rather than mining subsidence)

Mick lived in the third row of terraces at the back of the picture, but you can just see their chicken house to the left against the railway. A lot of his relatives lived in the front row, and the lady who lived in the middle detached house is now in her 90s and still lives in Pinxton. He has lots more details, such as bridge repairs, sewer runs, etc.

The main reason the houses were pulled down (he said) were the problems with communication when Pinxton Wharf

flooded - apparently it was a bigger problem then than now. When they were pulled down it became a scrapyard, and the owner used to take Barton buses across the bridge for breaking. This was so tight (You can see repairs to the corner of the east parapet from earlier collisions) they made a track across the bed of the canal for easier access.

The bridge was pulled down about 40 years ago. Apparently 3 men with a pickaxe arrived to start demolishing it, but the coal board stepped in and demolished it with machines so that they could use the hardcore for the road to their tip. The GN railway bridge alongside, a steel trestle structure, was demolished by Jim Bush, the scrap

merchant from Birchwood.

Cutts Bridge near the acid works was an identical bridge, also in brick, and of the same width. (Can't explain why it is shown as FP on the OS map).

Mick had a lot more detailed information. I suggest, Hugh, that you find an excuse to get your reporter's notebook out and go and see him sometime."

Brian - A lot of the filming for Sons and Lovers took part in the area around Pinxton Wharf. The people in your picture are actors - apparently no locals were involved as extras. Mick was at work when that particular scene was shot, so he didn't see it.

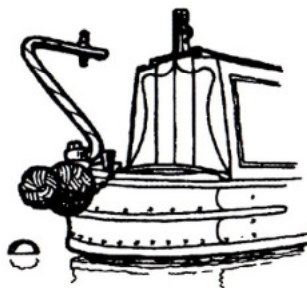
LOOKING FOR A LOST MOVIE STAR

Hugh Potter

A small working party from the Friends unearthed a long-lost movie star on Saturday April 1st. Colliery Office Bridge near Pinxton Wharf featured in the 1960 film *Sons & Lovers*, based on D.H. Lawrence's book. At the start of the film, there is an underground explosion and people are shown rushing to the mine, with some of them crossing a canal bridge. The bridge was Colliery Office Bridge, which stood at the end of the section of the Pinxton

Canal that is still in water, beyond the Boat Inn.

Thanks to help from J.C. Balls of Ambergate, who 'lent' them a JCB digger and driver for the day, we were able to locate the remains of the bridge, which was demolished many years ago. It is hoped that the foundations of the old bridge can be used for a new swing bridge which will be needed once the canal is restored from Pinxton to Pye Bridge.





So where do we start? "I reckon just about here" says Honorary Engineer John Boucher.



"I think we've hit it first time" says John Baylis. "Just hand me that shovel, Dave."



"Wow, you're right! It's the wing wall - just where John Boucher said it would be!"



"Can we just get a level on this? We think we've got down to the towpath."



So that's what it's all about. The north-east wing wall curving towards the camera and the remains of the bridge arch running from left to right.

A KINGFISHER ON A COAL-MINE

The Friends of the Cromford Canal (FCC) number some 700 members of whom only a small number are boaters. The majority simply wish to see the canal restored to its former glory for the benefit of all in the local communities. Their interests vary from desiring a pleasant place to walk or push a buggy or a wheelchair or to study wildlife or go angling or canoeing or just watching boats or ducks going by. At present, however, the canal is in a very sorry state. Those parts of the canal still in water are heavily silted and clogged with reeds; sometimes to the extent that flooding occurs. Elsewhere, except for the scourge of fly tipping, there is often little or no evidence of there ever having been a canal.

The aim of the FCC is to restore the canal to navigable status and a 17 mile linear country park. Over the last thirty years or so, a growing number of canals in England have been successfully restored to navigation and this has resulted in remarkable benefits to wildlife. Indeed, on most restored canals, protecting the natural environment and maintaining navigation go hand-in-hand. The FCC believe the same can be achieved with the restoration of the Cromford Canal and it is generally accepted that a moderate amount of boat traffic is, in fact generally helpful in sustaining biodiversity on canals

These notes have been prepared by two long term members of the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to illustrate the benefits to wildlife that can be achieved through carefully planned restoration processes.

Chesterfield Canal

The example of careful restoration most close to home is that of the Chesterfield Canal. Reedy shallows have been created at intervals along the canal to encourage wildlife, especially Water Voles, and there is a particular ten kilometre square, through which the canal passes for some 8 kilometres, starting from Kiveton, about 2 km. east of the M1 and finishing at Rhodesia on the western outskirts of Worksop. The square is known as the SK58 Birders (its Ordnance Survey grid reference). Here some 70 to 80 species of birds have been recorded by the sixty odd members of the birders' group.

Mallard, Coot and Moorhens breed here while Gadwall and Teal over-winter. There are also visiting Greylag Geese, Canada Geese and Mute Swans. Other sightings include:-

Heron (breeding)	Yellow-hammer
Goldcrest	Lapwing
Blue Tit	Wren
Redshank	Great Tit
Song Thrush	Little Ringed Plover
Long-tailed Tit	Mistle Thrush
Ringed Plover	Coal Tit
Fieldfare	Green Woodpecker
Marsh Tit	Redwing
Swift	Willow Tit
Nuthatch	Swallow
Grey Wagtail	Siskin
House Martin	Sand Martin
Redpoll	Bullfinch
Goldfinch	Kingfisher

Sedge Warbler
Dipper

Treecreeper
Great Spotted
Woodpecker

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Chaffinch

Linnet

Elsewhere in the vicinity are Skylark, Chaffinch, Meadow Pipit, Greenfinch, Dipper (at locks), Kestrel, Sparrow Hawk, Buzzard and there have been odd sightings of Red Kite and Osprey.

The range of bird-life here also suggests a very healthy diversity of insects, small mammals and amphibians with adequate vegetation both for cover and food sources for the seed eaters.

Basingstoke Canal

The plan to restore the Basingstoke Canal was not without its critics. On the one hand were preservationists whose attitude was to close the canal to all but the wildlife, whereas others felt the canal should be open to all and let the wildlife look after itself. The preservationists decided to have no part in the canal's restoration which began in 1973 and was completed as far as the Greywell Tunnel in 1991. Yet nowadays the Basingstoke Canal is recognised internationally as a vitally important site for wildlife! It is also noted for having more species of aquatic plants than any other waterway in Britain, (102 in all, of which 44 are regional or rare species) although this is in part due to the canal passing different soil types - alkaline and acidic. The canal also attracts no less than 25 different dragonfly species (two thirds of the British total), while Pike weighing 27 lbs. and Carp of over 30 lbs. have been landed from the canal.

Bird-life that depends on the waterway includes:-

Kingfisher
Moorhen
Swan
Grey Heron
Great Crested Grebe

Mallard
Coot
Dabchick
Grey Wagtail

Today, the Basingstoke Canal is again a viable waterway but unlike its earlier life when it was simply a ribbon of water for the transport of goods, it is now both a haven and a valuable corridor for wildlife

Kennet & Avon Canal

The Kennet Navigation from Reading to Newbury was one of the early canals. It opened in 1723 and was later combined with the Avon Navigation from Bath to Bristol and later still with the Kennet & Avon Canal proper from Newbury to Bath.

Unlike the Cromford, the Kennet & Avon is a broad canal throughout; a massive water corridor from the Thames at Reading to the Severn Estuary and it has one unbroken stretch with no locks for 15 miles. The range of bird-life is spectacular with 103 different species having been recorded. Waterways specific species amount to 38 and Reed Buntings, which are generally quite rare these days, are found throughout many sections of the canal.

The canal is also home to Ratty. In fact the canal forms one of the Water Vole's most important habitats in the U.K. As with some other canals, new techniques of bank protection have been applied so as not to interfere with the Voles.

These brief notes on what others have achieved illustrate a common thread which is that canals act as corridors for our wildlife and waterside flora. It is hoped therefore, that all parties with interests in the Cromford Canal and the environment will support the activities of The Friends so that this Sleeping Beauty of a canal can be restored to its former

glory for the benefit of all.

And finally, why the strange title? Well, one of the early aims of The Friends is to use a channel, made within an opencast coal extraction site, to form part of the Pinxton Arm of the Cromford Canal. And who knows? In a few years time there could well be a kingfisher perched there.

THE GREYHOUND HOTEL, CROMFORD

Freda Raphael

When Richard Arkwright opened his spanking new Greyhound Hotel in 1778 it must have looked even more grand and out of place beside Scarthin's vernacular cottages than it does now. Today, although Cromford and Scarthin straddle a bustling junction of the A6 it is still only a short walk to leave the traffic behind in a peaceful ascent through woods towards Bonsall and its historic landscape of ancient lead mining.

It can be argued that lead mining brought Arkwright to this once remote corner of Derbyshire in the first place. He needed not only workers (and lead mining was then in decline) but also the constant and steady flow of water draining the deep mines to power his cotton spinning machines which were, just then, at the cutting edge of technology. Secret and tucked away from spying eyes as his new mill at Cromford was, he needed housing for his workers and somewhere impressive and modern where his

commercial visitors could stay. He had finished North Street, named in honour of Lord North and in the hope of favours from that direction, in 1776. These houses were built to the highest standards to attract the best working families. Was Arkwright still trying to curry favours with the naming of his hotel, since a greyhound was one of the heraldic symbols of the Duke of Newcastle?

In 1778, when the Greyhound Hotel first opened, Cromford was still remote. There was no convenient, smooth road up the valley bottom from Derby as there is today. Just beyond today's traffic lights, at the A6 junction, the further way up the valley was still blocked by a sheer limestone reef. Bales of raw cotton were brought in, and finished, spun cotton was taken away, by teams of pack horses little changed since medieval times. Arkwright was keen for the new-fangled canal to come to Cromford. He must have been even more delighted when the turnpike

road was finally constructed up the valley in 1817. You can see the low cliff where the reef was blasted away, to let the road through towards Matlock, on either side of the A6.

Arkwright changed Cromford into a busy commercial centre by opening a market in the space outside the Greyhound Hotel in 1790, and then building shops around the new Market Place. These are still there, although the feeling of the market has been lost with the road from Wirksworth cutting through and cars parked on the remaining open space.

Pigot's commercial directory of 1835 lists five stage-coaches plying daily between major towns and all calling at, or starting from, the Greyhound Hotel. Their names conjure up a lost era. The *Peveril of the Peak* did the daily run to London with the *Royal Bruce* continuing on to Manchester. The *Defiance* paused at Cromford en route between Birmingham and Sheffield. Travellers had to be ready by 8.30 am sharp to board the *Peak Guide* to Buxton. Imagine doing that on a freezing February morning. The *Lord Nelson* ran between Manchester and Nottingham. With the number of horses necessary to keep the coaches to their timetables, Cromford workers must never have been

short of stable manure to make their garden leeks and potatoes grow to perfection.

You can still rely on the Greyhound for a warm welcome. Although the original eighteenth century interior was regretfully ripped out many years ago, recent refurbishment has transformed the subsequent nondescript space into a light, clean-looking area which sits well with the Greyhound's historic past. Grant, Sean and their willing staff work their socks off from noon to midnight daily. The cooks take orders between noon and 8.40 pm. On Sundays the carvery is open between twelve noon and 3 pm. For £5.95 (£2.95 for a child's portion) you have a choice of roasts with spuds, fresh veg, Yorkshire pud and ale gravy. Away from Sunday lunch, or if you are not a meat eater, you will still find good value, wide choice, and freshly prepared dishes. They don't serve fast food at the Greyhound, but they serve it as fast as a greyhound can. And as you wash the last morsel down with a pint of good ale (Hardy & Hanson's), thank your stars that your next move does not have to be a clamber onto the top of the *Lord Nelson* en route for Manchester via the chills and jolts of the windswept moor and Snake Pass.



LANGLEY MILL EXTENSION

Howard Smith

Our friends in the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association are working hard at extending the navigable length of the Cromford Canal at Langley Mill. Just beyond the boatyard, they have built up 65 yards of the original eastern (offside) wall of the canal, which had sunk several feet because of mining subsidence. This walling was built by pouring concrete up to what will be the water level, then two courses of blue bricks topped with some beautiful stone 'copings' which actually came from a railway station platform (all above board and paid for, I would add – from the defunct Portsmouth Station near Todmorden, closed by Dr Beeching).

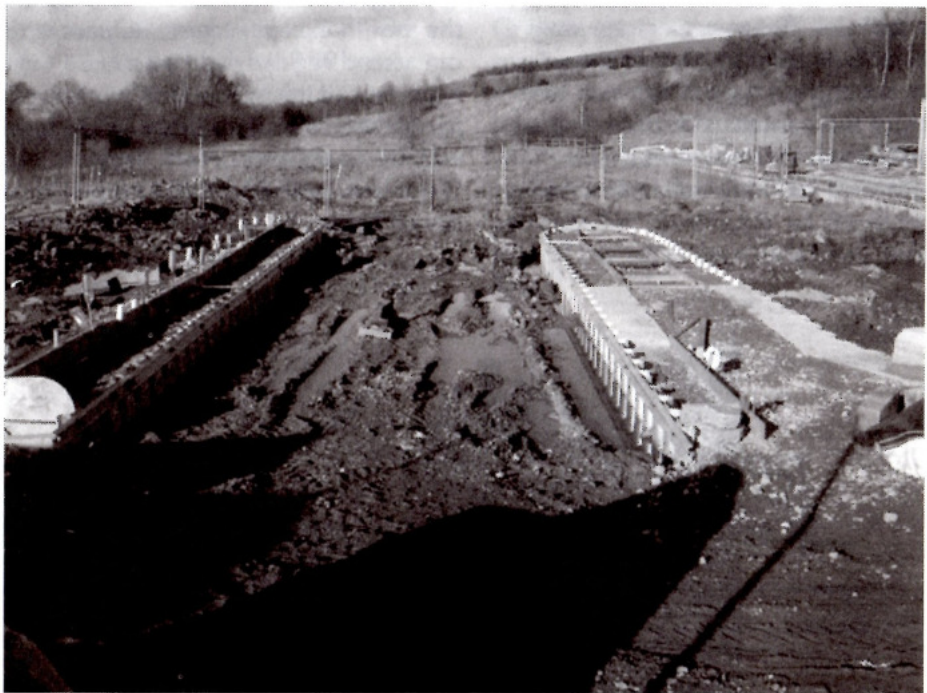
Since then ECPDA have steel-piled the towpath bank for 70ft to create one wall of a stop lock, and piled a 'pier' in the centre to act as both the eastern side of the lock and the western side of a small 'lay-by' which will accommodate three boats – that will be 'displaced' from their

present moorings in the boatyard once the extension is opened. The steel pilings have recently been capped with concrete copings manufactured on site.

What happens beyond this current work very much depends on whether or not opencasting of the area immediately above take place. If it does, then the contractor will reinstate a basic channel as far as the A610 embankment and create a small marina alongside. If not, then the ECPDA will continue their work at least as far as the now redundant slip road embankment.

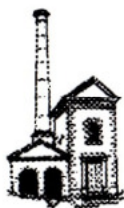
Work parties take place every Friday and on the Sunday following the monthly meeting which is the third Thursday in the month except August. Helpers who can attend regularly and who are experienced in construction work are particularly welcome. Please get in touch with Michael Golds, Work Party Organiser on 0115 9328042 if you would like to help.





DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

30th April & 1st May	Steaming days at Lea Wood Pumping House - engine running 1200 - 1700
3 rd & 4 th June	Steaming days at Lea Wood Pumping House - engine running 1200 - 1700
17 th & 18 th June	Steaming days at Lea Wood Pumping House - engine running 1200 - 1700
17 th & 18 th June	Cromford Festival - display at the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf.
1 st & 2 nd July	Steaming days at Lea Wood Pumping House - engine running 1200 - 1700
5 th & 6 th August	Steaming days at Lea Wood Pumping House - engine running 1200 - 1700
27 th & 28 th August	Steaming days at Lea Wood Pumping House - engine running 1200 - 1700
28 th & 29 th October	World Heritage Site Discovery Weekend - display at the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf, horse-drawn boat between Cromford Wharf and High Peak Junction - hand-wound street organs at Cromford.
29 th October	Sponsored Walk from Ambergate to Cromford - 1000 from Ambergate.
7 th & 8 th October	Steaming days at Lea Wood Pumping House - engine running 1200 - 1700



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Yvonne Shattower

This year has been, on the whole, a satisfactory and busy one for Membership. We achieved our 900th Member recently, and have an overall increase on our Membership numbers on last year, having 124 new members join us, thanks I am sure to our new brochure, so ably designed by Val Roberts. We have also had several members re-join after letting their membership lapse. I find it particularly satisfying to discover that we are not totally forgotten by our ex-members.

On the down side, I have to report that 69 members failed to renew, despite reminders by post and E mail where possible, so we have a total of 681 active members. With one or two exceptions, I had no reason given for the failure to renew, which is disappointing. I often find that subscriptions given as gifts are not renewed. I give the donor the chance to renew the gift themselves, but I am usually asked to refer it to the recipient after the first year. Some do remain as members, but the majority do not. Having said that, please do not stop sending membership to your friends – we value support from every one of you.

As in previous years, we have to extend our condolences to the families of those members who have died.

Life membership has increased this year and we now have sixteen single life members and fifteen couples, a total of forty six. We have eight charity rate corporate members, mostly Parish Councils, and two corporate business

members.

As mentioned last year, our treasurer has arranged for subscription payments to be made by standing order, and although I have not received as many as I had hoped for, it will make things easier for me and better for the FCC with savings in postage and printing costs. Forms are currently being sent out with all renewal and reminder notices. New members who are enrolled at outside events will be encouraged to sign up for a standing order at the time of joining.

Unfortunately the Inland Waterways Association Festival at Preston Brook was not the success we had hoped for from the membership point of view. We were not sited in the area we had been promised, and consequently did not get the number of visitors. The weather did not help, being wet and windy much of the time. However, we got rid of quite a few leaflets and I did receive several membership applications from the area in the days following the festival.

I would like to end by thanking all of you, the members, especially those who send donations with their membership - every little helps, as Mr Tesco says, also those members and Trustees who distribute the Portal for us, as well as taking leaflets to various venues. They do sterling work and get us known throughout the whole canal network.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Mr R D F Ritchie, Grantham
Mr R M Pickering, Ripley
Mr S Brown, Langley Mill
Mr A Smith, Selston
Miss A Rissen, London
Mr W Kinder, London
Mr S Boyd, London
Mr R V Blaney, Southwell (Life Membership)
Mr J P A Keys, Nottingham (Life Membership)
Mr & Mrs P R Moore, Nottingham
Mr & Mrs G R Nicholson, Derby
Mr B W George, Nottingham
Mr M Chase, Manchester
Ms J Honey, Belper
Mr B G Holmes, Butterley (Life Membership)
Mr A Tym-Crowther, Sheffield

Mr M W Smith, Matlock
Mr & Mrs P C Robinson, Cromford
Mr & Mrs R Brooks, Pinxton
Mr P M Allen, Derby
Mr P A Downing, Caernarfon
Mr & Mrs C Evans, Belper
Cromford Meadows Action Gp Aldercar
Mr C Cooper, Nottingham
Mr & Mrs T D Mills, Nottingham
Mr & Mrs J Shrewsbury, Langley Mill (Life Membership)

And also to the following existing members who have taken out Life Membership

Mr D Spray
Mr & Mrs T Robson
Mr J Dowgun
Mr D Cashmore
Mr B Holmes
Mr D Bartrop
Mr & Mrs S Beacroft
Mr & Mrs B Parr
Mr B Mills & Ms J West



