

# THE **PORTAL**

**THE JOURNAL OF THE  
FRIENDS OF THE  
CROMFORD CANAL**

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**FRONT COVER:** The first stones being laid on the new concrete footing at the Sawmills Gauging Narrows during the Waterway Recovery Group Work Camp in July. A good start was made on this project which will hopefully be continued with in the near future. See Pages 12-17. Photo: George Rogers

**BACK COVER:** The certificate given by Canal Boat Magazine and presented to the FCC for the best Non-Commercial Stall at the Inland Waterways Association National Festival at Burton on Trent. This is the second time in the last three years that we have won this award. See pages 22-23. Photo: Editor

**The aims and objectives of the Friends of the Cromford Canal**

**THE RESTORATION, RECONSTRUCTION, PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE CROMFORD CANAL, ITS ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS, TOWING PATH, STRUCTURES AND CRAFT AND THE CONSERVATION OF ITS NATURAL CHARACTER AS A NAVIGABLE INLAND WATERWAY SYSTEM FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC**



## EDITORIAL

from Mike Harrison



Welcome to *The Portal* No.39

Here we are with the Autumn issue again, and with this I will have completed my fourth year as editor. Probably of more significance, it is now ten years since the FCC was formed and eight of us who were at the first meeting are still on the committee today. Looking back over that time, in some ways it seems that little has changed, apart from us all getting older! It has to be said that not a lot has changed on the Cromford Canal to the casual observer, but a great deal has happened 'behind the scenes' and hopefully in the next few years we will see some much more obvious and even dramatic changes. We must not be downhearted. When the Huddersfield Narrow Canal restoration was first mooted, it was called "The Impossible Restoration", but it is now fully navigable. This process, however, took thirty years. Also, I well remember attending the first work party on the Grantham Canal, which was in 1971....So the Cromford's time will come!

Talking of work parties, and also the fact that we are all getting older, in Dave Tinkler's report on page 25 you will see that Dave has had to retire from the post of work party organiser. We are all very sorry about this, but pleased that Dave will continue as a trustee and help in practical ways when he can. This also means that we are now looking for a replacement, so if any of you feel able to take on this important job, please contact any of the committee.

You will see from the front cover and George Rogers' report on pages 12-17 that the Waterway Recovery Group have had a week's work camp at the Gauging Narrows at Sawmills. This again brought home to me the fact that all the WRG types nowadays look very young. It is very reassuring to see that the next generation of enthusiasts are still coming along to this type of project. George has just announced that he has managed to arrange for WRG to hold a two-week work camp on the Cromford next year. This will be on 4-18 August. Priority now must be given to arranging accommodation etc. for this. There will also be a weekend visit by WRG North West on 5-6 March.

The Sales Team continue to move ahead. Many events have been attended this summer and this all helps to spread the word and provides a steady income. As you will see from pages 22-23, our sales stand again won the prize at the Inland Waterways Association National Festival for the best Non-Commercial stand.

Another important event from a sales point of view is coming up at the end of October. This is the Discovery Days Weekend at Cromford Wharf. The FCC stall and other displays will be as usual in the Gothic Warehouse. See more details on page 5.

Finally, if it is not too early, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, with more progress towards restoration of the Cromford Canal.

**Please note the press date for the New Year issue will be January 10th.**



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by Patrick Morriss



Often frustration plays a large part in being involved in a group like ours. Part of my summer comments concerned the Scoping report relating to the canal being carried out by W S Atkins. I indicated that it should then have been drawing to a conclusion. A final draft was presented in the summer, but for various reasons Atkins was asked to revise it. A further report has been presented and stakeholders are being asked to comment, after which meetings are planned for early November. This report should have been finished for the spring/early summer and acted upon; this is how six or eight months drift by with a frustrating lack of progress.

On a brighter note, a week long Waterway Recovery Group work camp was hosted by the Friends of Cromford Canal at the Sawmills Gauging Narrows. This camp did vital work in conserving and repairing this historic structure from the ravages of time, tree roots and man in no particular order. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the WRG volunteers, the FCC people who were involved, Lockwoods of Sawmills who are the landowner and let us use various facilities and also the local people of Sawmills and Bullbridge who helped no end and have consistently assisted the FCC's efforts both here and elsewhere.

If it is autumn then it must be time for the World Heritage Site Discovery Days. Once again we are unable to operate a demonstration boat due to lack of navigable depth and width. Many of you will know that I am a member of the relatively new World Heritage Site Board and Vice Chair of the World Heritage Site Partnership. It gives me much comfort to see that the provision of a boat on the section of canal within the WHS is now an aspiration of the WHS. Of course funding it in the current financial climate is another issue entirely. It is only right and proper that I should take this opportunity to acknowledge the assistance of the new WHS team and Derbyshire County Council in recognising the importance of the Cromford Canal to the section of the WHS between Ambergate and Cromford, the longest length of canal in a WHS in England.

During the summer three of our volunteers were given awards by the WHS for their efforts. Eric and Beryl Singleton had their unstinting efforts at manning exhibition and sales stands in all manner of places and in all manner of weather recognised as was Dave Tinkler as Working Party Organiser for the FCC, much of this effort in the Derwent Valley. Dave has announced that due to age and aches and pains he is reluctantly stepping down as FCC Working Party Organiser. I would again like to take this opportunity to thank Dave for all his efforts in the past in conditions, both hot and cold, that would have deterred others. Elsewhere you will read an appeal for a new Working Party Organiser; please let us know if you can assist.

Elsewhere in the Derwent Valley repairs are drawing to a close on the Leawood



rail aqueduct. This is a unique cast iron structure that has been troublesome for some time. As it is a Scheduled Ancient Monument it was essential that repairs were carried out in a sympathetic manner that did not preclude navigation in future years. These repairs have cost a considerable amount of money but without them the integrity of the canal, chances of canal restoration, footpath and Site of Special Scientific Interest would have been in jeopardy. Once again we must be grateful to Derbyshire County Council for funding these repairs during these difficult times. An official opening is planned for later this year.

Elsewhere the FCC have pulled together a team of in house Civil and Mining engineers and acting together with Donaldson and Associates of Derby we are trying to find answers to the unknown issues that the Butterley Tunnel presents. Donaldson Associates is a specialist firm with in depth experience in civil, structural and geotechnical engineering including the development of underground space and infrastructure. We meet with British Waterways before you will receive this edition of the Portal, let us hope we can find some way forward to at least ascertain the condition of the tunnel overall and get some idea of the amount of work and cost that would be required to repair or renew it in part or whole and once again connect the Amber and Derwent valleys to the UK canal network.

As I said at the start of this article the frustration can be intense at times, but the FCC is moving in the right direction, how long it will all take is another issue of course.

## **1811 AND ALL THAT**

### **On Tuesday 25th October**

as part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days Festival, FCC Archivist Hugh Potter will be presenting a new talk entitled:

### **200 YEARS ON THE CROMFORD CANAL**

Hugh will take you on a journey along the canal exactly 200 years ago, using a unique hand-drawn map of that date, and compare it with the scene today.

**The talk begins at 7pm**  
**in the Gothic Warehouse on Cromford Wharf**

Admission is free, although pre-booking is recommended.  
(01629 536831 ; [info@derwentvalleymills.org](mailto:info@derwentvalleymills.org))

### **FINAL LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING WEEKEND 2011**

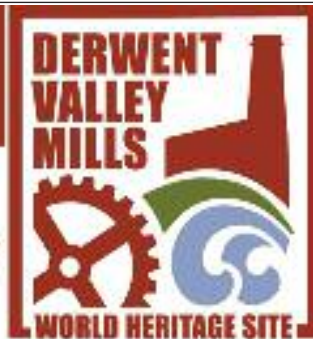
Remember that another important part of the World Heritage Site Discovery Days activities will be the last steaming for this year of the Leawood Pump on **October 29th & 30th**. This fine machine, maintained and operated by volunteers, will be in motion from noon to 5.00pm each day and is well worth a visit.



## World Heritage Site **DISCOVERY DAYS**

Friday 21st to Sunday 30th October

Special events for the closing weekend of  
Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th October



# Cromford Canal events

Both days 10am to 4pm

- Rope-making, traditional narrowboat-painting demonstrations, street organ, exhibition and Friends of Cromford Canal sales stand at Cromford Wharf.
- Forge lit at High Peak Junction Workshops, free entry.
- Leawood Pumphouse in steam. Victorian steam-powered beam engine in action.

Activities on both days also include:

- Free guided tour of the canal at 12 noon both days, starting from Cromford Wharf.
- 7pm (Saturday) and 2pm (Sunday) Cotton Grass Theatre's production of *Street Child*, based on the true story of Jim Jarvis the orphan boy who inspired Dr Barnardo. Performances in the Gothic Warehouse, Cromford Wharf. Adults £6, Concessions and children £5.

Sunday only

- 10am to 4.30pm Hike in to Your Heritage from High Peak Junction. A walk to Wirksworth for a train ride to Idridgehay, then walk back. £7 for train.

There are over 120 events taking place between October 21 and 30 in the World Heritage Site Discovery Days Festival Week. To find out more visit [www.derwentvalleymills.org](http://www.derwentvalleymills.org) or ring 01629 536831



## World Heritage Site **DISCOVERY DAYS**



## FCC NEWS UPDATE - so what *is* happening

from Mike Kelley



- **Saturday 16th - Saturday 23rd July** - Our Webmaster, George Rogers, organised the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) Work Camp on the historic Gauging Narrows at Sawmills. This feature was in danger of being almost lost, but thanks to the FCC, the Sawmills Civic Society and the WRG it will now be protected. Councillor Juliette Blake kindly found the funds for this. See George's report on pages 12-17.

- **Tuesday 19th July** - I gave a talk about the canal to the South Normanton Ladies Group. They made a kind donation to the FCC and purchased six of our canal walk books.

- **Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th July** - Dave Tinkler organised a summer Work Party at Cromford Wharf.

- **Friday 29th, Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st July** - The annual Inland Waterways Association Festival was held at Burton-on-Trent. Our sales team, plus several other stalwart supporters flew the flag for the FCC. Their efforts were again recognised by being awarded the prize for the best non-commercial stand. Our chairman Pat Morriss also gave a talk in the festival theatre. Many thanks to all concerned. See pages 22-23.

- **Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th August** - The very next weekend our sales team were out on the road again, this time to the Cromford Steam Rally. Another successful event.

- **Monday 8th August** - Our monthly Committee Meeting was held at the Poet & Castle Inn at Codnor.

- **Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st August** - Our Work Party Organiser, David Tinkler, had his second summer working weekend; this time at High Peak Junction.

- **Wednesday 24th August** - John Barker organised an afternoon visit to the West Shed of the Midland Railway Trust near Ripley. A good number turned out and quite a few children. A very enjoyable day, which also added to FCC funds. John has arranged another visit to this very interesting site on 12th November. See page 11.

- **Sunday 4th September** - At the Brinsley Headstocks Festival our sales team had another successful day.

- **Sunday 11th September** - Our hard working sales team were again out and about; this time at the Waingroves Show.

- **Monday 12th September** - Our monthly Committee Meeting was held at the Poet & Castle Inn at Codnor.

- **Monday 19th September** - Our first social evening after the summer break saw our Web Master, George Rogers, give a very interesting talk 'Engineering on the British Canal System'. We had our usual full house turn-out. Over the last year these evenings have become even more popular.

- **Wednesday 5th October** - I gave a PowerPoint presentation to 85 children and 4 teachers, at Jacksdale Junior School, near Ironville. I went dressed as a Victorian boatman



and taught them about why the canals were built and what it was like to live on a boat, which led me into talking about the restoration of the Cromford Canal. I was bombarded with questions all the way through. (As an ex-teacher I really miss teaching).

• **Tuesday 11th October** - I gave a talk about the canal to the Tuesday Club at Ripley. They made a kind donation to the FCC.

## MEMBERS' SOCIAL MEETINGS 2011/12

The Friends of the Cromford Canal welcome everyone to their Social Meetings, held on the **Third Monday of the Month at Ironville Church Hall at 7.30pm.**

The following are scheduled between now and next summer.

There are no meetings in July or August, but the programme will then be restarting.

There is a bar and raffle available at all meetings. Admission is £1.50.

- **October 17th** - CANAL BOAT PEOPLE - by Wendy Freer.
- **November 21st** - CONSERVING OUR COLOURFUL COUNTRYSIDE - by Rick Jillings of the Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service.
- **December 5th** - OUR CHRISTMAS SOCIAL - See below.
- **January 16th** - THE TRADE ON THE CROMFORD CANAL BEFORE THE RAILWAY AGE - by Philip Ryden
- **February 20th** - PETS AS PATIENTS - Ken Thompson
- **March 19th** - DERBYSHIRE ODDITIES - Barrie Lings
- **April 16th** - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (free admission)
- **May 21st** - NOTABLE & NOTORIOUS WOMEN OF DERBYSHIRE -Joan Ward
- **June 18th** - DERBYSHIRE GHOSTS AND LEGENDS - David Bell

## THE FCC'S CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

and pie and pea supper

will be held on

**MONDAY 5TH DECEMBER**

(Please note the date published in the last Portal was incorrect)

**at Ironville Church Hall 7:30pm**

**Tickets for this event are limited and cost £5 each**

This price includes one hot meat pie and a carton of  
mushy peas

**THE RED LION FOLK BAND WILL BE  
PERFORMING**

Tickets obtainable from **Mike Kelley**

**50 Beech Avenue, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 7EW - 01773 833425**

Cheques made payable to FCC please





## BUTTERLEY TUNNEL

### The 'Jewel in the Crown' of the Cromford Canal

Steve Mulholland adds to his introductory article in the last issue.

The early civil engineers of the industrial revolution were not only pioneers, but entrepreneurs and businessmen as well. The Outram family of Alfreton were no exception. Benjamin Outram served his apprenticeship\* in the promotion, planning, design, obtaining funding for and securing Parliamentary approval for the Cromford Canal. Imagine trips to London on horseback and on the shaking box of a stagecoach (no inside seats were to be had). No Midland Main Line or M1 in those days!

Joseph Outram, Benjamin's father, was a respected Land Surveyor with a busy practice and was well respected by the aristocracy. This is an essential profession associated with major civil engineering works and may well have laid the foundations for Benjamin's ultimate career of developing the canal network in northern England and establishing the Butterley Iron Company at Ripley, including the construction of the Cromford Canal. All the family men were experienced land surveyors.

These skills will undoubtedly have enabled Benjamin to achieve his outstanding feat. This was the construction of the canal at the same level from Cromford to Pinxton, which ran through hilly terrain with no locks in this section. At my recent visit to the canal with Paul Sampson, a Gleeds surveyor, he was astounded to find the canal so high up the hillside at Whatstandwell!

Schofield\*\*goes on to comment regarding the proposals for the water supply to the subsequent Nottingham Canal through the Cromford Canal that 'This was a fair-minded proposal, comparable with present day practices, and which would gain approval even with current concerns for the environment'.

The achievement of the level section between Cromford and Pinxton was facilitated by the construction of the 3.5km Butterley Tunnel through the ridge at Ripley. This was real pioneering work as at the time of its construction, no suitably experienced contractors were in existence to price the job on a 'lump sum' basis, which is common practice today and the method of estimating costs was in its infancy. The contractors were therefore paid for on a 'piecemeal' basis, i.e. for how much time the workforce spent on the job and the cost of the materials used to build it. This is regarded in the engineering industry today as a high-risk method of payment and only suitable for similar unknown and unfamiliar construction proposals. This proved to be the case, as the estimated costs rose significantly during construction. However, this did not worry the Company, as they could see a lucrative canal as the golden pot at the end of the rainbow and they duly arranged the finance.

The tunnel is more than a single bore through the ridge. Deposits of ironstone and coal were discovered during its construction and side shafts and adits were constructed to extract these minerals and lift them up to the surface, where the Butterley Ironworks was constructed above the tunnel.

The shafts were also used to drop finished products down to wharves in the Cromford Canal below, for them to be distributed to the Company's customers via the national canal network that then existed. This is hardly surprising, considering that Benjamin Outram had significant interests in both enterprises.

The family became wealthy business people, and resided at Butterley Hall, Ripley. Sadly, this is now 'off limits' to the public, as it is currently part of Derbyshire County Council's Police Headquarters.



This area has been called 'The Cradle of the Industrial Revolution'. This is well justified, considering the mileage of canals in northern England that Benjamin Outram built and the extensive coal and ironstone extraction that took place in the area over the years.

It is perhaps unfortunate that this has been overlooked with the successful developments at Ironbridge in Shropshire and the adjacent Derwent Valley World Heritage (WHS) site. However, the merits of the Derwent Valley stem as much from 'an area of outstanding natural beauty'. This reinforces the case for restoration of the canal still in water in the Derwent Valley to link to the national navigable network at Langley Mill through the tunnel. This would open up the area to (near) 'zero carbon' forms of transport for leisure access to the area and who knows, in years to come the quarries may take an interest, and want to export bulky quarried materials via the canals, what they were originally designed for, rather than road-haul them through the WHS.

Imagine canal boat trips through the tunnel, with a 'Son et Luminaire' presentation on the wharves outlining the history of the Outrams and their influence locally! It is worth noting that the shafts and wharves are being considered for listing by English Heritage.

The Butterley Ironworks were responsible for the manufacture of the wrought iron girders supporting the original iconic St Pancras Station Roof, now enjoying a new lease



of life as the terminus of the Channel Tunnel Rail link. The Midland Railway deliberately set out to build the best terminus and hotel in London, to out-class every other terminus, especially the adjacent Great Northern Railway terminus at Kings Cross. They had a commercial issue with the GNR. Nigel Lowey is speaking to us next September about the fascinating history of the station and hotel and this is a presentation not to be missed! It is at least as good as Tina's recent talk on the Butterley Tunnel.

More recently, the Butterley Company were responsible for the iconic structures of the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth and the Falkirk Wheel in Scotland. This joins the high-level and low-level canals at this location, replacing the demolished flight of locks.



We do know quite a lot about the inside of the Butterley Tunnel and its condition. It is by no means a 'bogyman black hole'. British Waterways (BW) is its owner and is responsible for its maintenance. There have been a number of entries, official and unofficial, over the years since its abandonment in the 1920's and these have resulted in invaluable information being available, which we are in possession of.

Lined tunnels of its shape are remarkably strong structures, and can withstand a high degree of neglect and settlement. I do not know what the maintenance regime on the Gregory Tunnel in the Derwent Valley is, but the public have free access to it on the towpath footpath and it is in remarkably good condition. The provision of a handrail through the tunnel indicates that the perceived risk is of people falling in the water rather than the tunnel collapsing in on them!

The broad picture of the Butterley Tunnel is that it has subsided over some two thirds of its length through mining subsidence, except below the former Butterley Ironworks site. This is because the Butterley Ironworks Company ensured that coal was not extracted below the works, to protect the integrity of their furnaces.

There are also two collapses and a further, smaller, blockage. It is suspected, although not proven, that the collapses are at shaft locations. The strategy is to remove the smaller blockage near the east portal, which will open up access to a large section of the tunnel and then take it from there.

A qualified and experienced engineering team from the Committee is meeting British Waterways next month, together with Peter Harris, to demonstrate our competence in dealing with these matters and negotiate permission for survey access. Ironically, this may also help BW's position, as with the forthcoming transfer of ownership from BW to a Trust, BW will need to demonstrate to the new owners that they understand its condition. It is essential to access the tunnel to make a proper engineering assessment of its condition, before any sensible decisions can be made.

Peter Harris, Chief Engineer of Donaldson Associates, has kindly offered to submit some thoughts for 'The Portal' on how we get inside the tunnel after the meeting with BW. Donaldson Associates are leading experts in tunnel restoration. They have as three of their clients, British Waterways, National Grid and Network Rail, and have designed remedial works to many of their tunnels. They also worked for BW on the re-opening of the Standedge Canal Tunnel on the Huddersfield Canal, which is adjacent to Network Rail's running tunnel on the busy Manchester to Leeds route. They also are commissioned to monitor on-going geological fault problems, which affect both Standedge tunnels, which are not dis-similar to the potential issues to be encountered inside the Butterley Tunnel.

### **References**

\**Benjamin Outram 1764-1805 An Engineering Biography* by Professor R.B.Schofield, Merton Priory Press.

\*\*Professor R.B. Schofield MA PhD CEng FICE FIMStructE worked on the original section of the M1 motorway and other projects before becoming a lecturer at Salford University. He subsequently held a chair of civil engineering at the University of Ulster. Well known as a historian of his profession as well as a senior practitioner, this book represents many years of detailed research and is well worth reading!

### **Disclaimer**

The views expressed here are those of the writer and no responsibility can be accepted for their accuracy or completeness.

S Mulholland C Eng MICE



## A VISIT TO THE WEST SHED

by John Barker

The Princess Royal Class Locomotive Trust is a registered charity which was formed in 1993. This group of volunteers originally shared the premises of the Midland Railway at Butterley, but it was soon decided that a separate building was required.

In 1994, utilising profits from railtours, the trust embarked on an ambitious plan to build its own headquarters at Swanwick Junction large enough to house its collection of locomotives and rolling stock. This impressive building was completed in 1996.

A number of original windows and a door rescued from Westhouses Locomotive Shed were incorporated into the building and since it was at the west end of the Swanwick Junction site, the name West Shed was deemed appropriate.

The West Shed is now the home of two BR Standard Class 4 tank locomotives, 80080 and 80098, LMS Princess Coronation Class 6233 Duchess of Sutherland and LMS Princess Royal Class 46203 Princess Margaret Rose.

On Wednesday the 24th August, 27 members of the FCC and their guests, ranging from 3-85 years of age, went on a visit and all had a fantastic afternoon. Not only that, but after paying a donation to the Trust, some profit was made for FCC funds.

Duchess of Sutherland is undergoing a Heavy General Overhaul at present, ie. it has been completely dismantled for major works, but we were able to have a good look round the rest of this fascinating collection. The West Shed people really did look after us and the day was finished off by a train journey to Newlands. Sadly no beer on this trip since the pub there is currently closed.

In view of the success of this visit and since some members were on holiday at the time, I have booked again for 2.00 pm on the 12th November. We can only take a party of 30 so first come first served. Prices will again be £5 adults £2.50 children.



For more information visit: [www.prclt.co.uk](http://www.prclt.co.uk)



# WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP AT SAWMILLS

Work Camp report and pictures by George Rogers

Many of you will have read my report in Portal 36, when I was pleased to announce that the Friends had been successful in bidding for a Waterway Recovery Group Canal Camp to work on the weir at Derwentside. Later the work was changed, owing to Derbyshire County Council scheduling the repair work for the Leawood aqueduct to begin at the same time – and so we couldn't get along the towpath to our site! Derwentside will hopefully be our project for next year, if WRG visit again. Therefore we transferred our efforts to the renovation of the Sawmills Gauging Narrows. The aim was to clear the site, remove all the tree roots that have grown through the wall over the years and make a start on the dismantling and rebuilding of the stonework itself.

The WRG camp ran between the 16th and 23rd July, with a core of 16 volunteers joined for some of the week by another 2. The group had come from as far afield as Dundee in the North and Watford in the South, so no-one can accuse us of not attracting national interest! I was leading my first camp, backed up by regular WRGies David Salisbury as assistant, Sue Johnson as cook and Steve Johnson as MUP (Most Useful Person for those who were wondering...).

Saturday evening on a camp is always one of the most interesting – all the volunteers arrive and you get your first impression of the group, along with the chance to catch up with all the old hands who you've known for eons. This group had the right feel from the beginning – it was never quiet (except for when Sue had dished up the evening meal) and the cards were quickly out!

Work actually starts on the Sunday morning, and for us that meant scrub bashing – the site had become so overgrown since my previous site visit that it was actually quite difficult to point out to the group where the wall was at first, but that soon changed.





By late morning the teams working from each end had joined up and I was rapidly thinking out what we should do next. It was rather a good omen that we had already achieved more in the morning than I had expected in the day, but the joy was rapidly wiped out by finding that the Burco (our tea urn) had broken. There is not a worse piece of equipment to go wrong during the day – without tea there is soon a mutiny on site. Thankfully the ingenious use of string and a twig (not by me, I never do anything ingenious) did see the problem solved, and so we were able to continue work in the afternoon, making a start on removing the stone from the section of wall that had collapsed.



From site we went back to the accommodation at Waingroves and collected our shower stuff. We were using the showers at Ripley Leisure Centre, and having swum there for years I thought I didn't need directions. That was a mistake, Ripley seems to have changed quite a lot in the few years since I went, and so we got lost repeatedly before luckily finding the right road eventually.

Unfortunately, the Waingroves hall was also being used by the local pre-school in the mornings, and to be out by 8.30 we decided to forego the traditional cooked breakfast and just have bacon butties instead – which meant we were out and on site by 8.15. I thought this was excellent, an early start would surely mean more work done (I was proved wrong; my camp felt that an early start meant an early finish, but it was a nice thought).





Monday's work was to finish removing the loose stone from the first section, and then start to dig down – a good 18 inches (or 450mm for the young ones amongst you) of earth has accumulated on top of the original lining since the structure closed, and all of the stonework has to be taken down to the base or we will simply be returning to repeat the job later on. Unfortunately this meant several courses of buried stone had to be dug out and saved for later on.

This excavation soon turned into a mock archaeological dig (though thankfully spades and trowels were still acceptable and they never got down to toothbrushes) as large amounts of pottery, glass and bizarrely some 1970s kids toys were dug out from behind the wall and underneath the tree roots. Evidently, some basic repairs had been done to hold the wall together at some point.

By the end of the day we were down to a layer of bedrock, and so started to prepare some shuttering for a concrete pad to be poured the following day. Meanwhile, a crew had been hard at work pulling tree roots out using a tirfor winch, and they were rapidly demolishing the next section of wall in the process.

The pulling out of tree stumps with a tirfor winch is something with which most wrgies become all-too familiar. Hard work but very effective.



One problem that arose on Monday was the arrival of the materials for the rebuilding. Only a problem because when the builder's merchants had told me 'we'll deliver on Monday or Tuesday', I had assumed that it would definitely be Tuesday, and so hadn't spoken to the residents – cue a mass panic when the driver phoned to say he was about to leave Ripley! A big thanks goes to Dave for rapidly knocking on doors and persuading people to move their cars.

FCC chairman Pat Morriss came to visit us in the evening and gave us an illustrated talk on the history of the canal, which all found very interesting. I find it amazing how even those of us who are heavily involved with the canal still seem to learn something new every time.



Shuttering being fitted and concrete poured to form the new footing...

Tuesday was the day of concrete, so whilst the team was concluding their work putting in the shuttering, I took time to train some of the volunteers in using the basic surveying equipment that WRG use and then doing a survey of the site for future reference. Five of the campers were there as a part of their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award (where they have to do a residential trip), and as part of this we try to ensure they try as varied a range of tasks as possible – so having learnt surveying and shuttering it was time to go and mix concrete.

Whilst most finished early, a few people stayed later to finish the concreting (as we needed it to cure overnight so that we could build on it in the morning), but we were all still back in time to go bowling in the evening. An observer would have been forgiven for thinking we were really tired and unco-ordinated, because none of the balls would go in a straight line – but in actual fact I have it on good authority that the lanes are actually set across a slope...



...then smoothed off and left to set ready to start the stonework the following day.





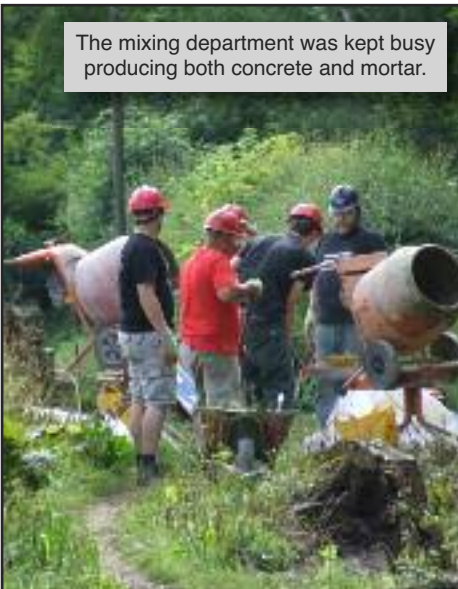
Meanwhile the demolition gang continues to extract large quantities of stone from the tree roots



Editor

Wednesday was the start of stone laying. I spent the early part of the day teaching that, but soon found that the group were perfectly capable and left them to get on with it. Another group was digging the next section of foundation whilst a third group continued with tree stump removal. In the evening we were rewarded with fish & chips and a visit to Crich Tramway Museum.

The mixing department was kept busy producing both concrete and mortar.



The first length of new wall, backfilled with rough stone and concrete.



The wall at the end of the camp.  
A good start has been made on  
this interesting project.



Thursday and Friday were simply more of the same. More stone, more concrete and ultimately a section of wall approximately 10 metres in length was finished, though without coping stones as I need to arrange something to lift them on to the wall with... A further 10 metres has been started and will be continued shortly (more on that below).

We then packed all the tools, sorted them, counted them, tidied the site and the hall and celebrated in the best possible fashion with a barbecue and drink around the fire in my garden. Never have my recycling boxes been so full!!!

I've deliberately avoided mentioning names above, because most of you wouldn't know who it related to. However, I do want to thank all of the volunteers we had: Steve B (who was actually only there for two days), our DoE'ers Adam, Bryony, Chris, Will & Simran; mixer Kimm, John H (who also brought the tirfor), Susan, Martyn (who had to drive off repeatedly for more materials), Colin, Tina, Tom and our very own Eric Singleton, who joined us for a day. A huge thank you to Steve, Sue & Dave and to all the other people or places that supported the camp.

### **So what next for Sawmills?**

Well firstly, two other groups are going to help us. The ECPDA work party is going to be on site on two Fridays per month, and the BASA work group continue to keep the site clear and free stone from tree roots. WRG NW will be joining us for a weekend in March.

However, I still want to arrange some work parties for the Friends. You will be reading elsewhere in this issue that Dave Tinkler has stepped down as the work party organiser. He leaves a hole that will be hard to fill, and we are all incredibly grateful for all the work he has done.

Therefore, in the interim I am going to continue running the Sawmills project - but until I have a better idea of my university schedule this term I can't set any firm dates. Keep an eye on the website and if anyone is interested in joining those work parties please get in touch and I will add you to my list for when I do have more information available. In the meantime, I simply suggest you go and marvel at the work that has been done!!!



# REPAIRS TO THE RAILWAY AQUEDUCT - AN UPDATE

Progress report and pictures from Chris Coombs - Area Manager  
Derbyshire Countryside Service



ABOVE: The scaffolding around the aqueduct as seen from the railway below. The need for closures of the railway greatly added to the cost of the project.  
BELOW: One of the main causes for concern with the structure was the badly corroded condition of the diagonal tie bars. Lengths of steel are seen here being welded to the bars to reinforce them.





ABOVE: When the welding was completed, the whole structure was cleaned and painted inside and out.  
BELOW: One of the two beams which will support the new towpath being prepared prior to installing.





Nocturnal activity as one of the towpath beams is slid into place during an overnight closure of the railway.



The repairs to the trough and the repainting are now all complete. The contractors, Dew Construction, have just completed the puddle clay seal between the trough and the abutments and the only remaining thing to be done on this part of the job is the fabrication of a timber bung for the drain in the bottom of the trough. (This is essentially like a giant cork with a chain on so you can fish it out to drain down).

The two beams for carrying the new towpath are also in place. These were fabricated off site by Twigg's of Matlock and then rolled out into place over two nights when we had a closure on the railway. It now remains for the actual towpath deck to be installed to complete that element of the work. In providing the concrete bases for the beams some stonework had to be removed from the abutments. This has been put to one side as we hope it will come in useful for the work on the Derwentside spillway.

Work on the whole scheme is on programme for the end of October and hopefully we will see water back in this section soon. Members of the Friends Volunteers will know, only too well, that we were hoping to get some reed out of the channel between the two aqueducts before it was re-watered. The sun-dried bed defeated their heroic efforts but they will be relieved to know we have been able to arrange for it to be removed mechanically, by the contractor, before the end of the contract.

It is hoped that we will be able to arrange some publicity once the work has been complete and Cllr Lewer will be inviting representatives from the Friends, together with other partners in the canal along to some form of opening ceremony.

**For further information please feel free to contact me at  
Middleton Top Visitor Centre on 01629 823204**



# REFURBISHED NOTICE BOARDS

by Mike Kelley

As members may have noticed, the FCC Notice Boards at various locations were beginning to look a little shabby and suffering from the ingress of condensation. There has been some discussion at committee meetings about replacing them, but the cost seemed rather prohibitive. Dave Ratner and myself have therefore decided to redesign the boards and started a programme of rebuilding them. We have put a wooden cover over the top of the frame, put in larger holes all round to let the air circulate, removed the soft fibre-board from the inside, which was at the back, and replaced with a wooden backing board holding a painted metal plate. So now the notices are held in place by magnets. The one at High Peak Junction has been replaced (see below) and the old one will be refurbished in the same way and installed at Cromford. The Cromford one will then be moved to the Boat Inn at Pinxton and the one there could go to Codnor Park Reservoir.



Mike Kelley

Dave Tinkler has sent in a timely reminder that members visiting either High Peak Junction or Cromford Wharf should be aware that the public car parks at both of these locations are now pay and display and operated by a private company rather than Derbyshire County Council. This arrangement is apparently rather more strict than previously and non-payers could get a parking ticket and possibly a wheel clamp!

For any work parties that require the use of the car parks, a temporary ticket for those attending will be issued by DCC. For any events that we hold at Cromford wharf, we will have to make arrangements with DCC or the event committee to issue us with tickets for all who are attending.



## INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION NATIONAL FESTIVAL

The IWA decided on a change of name for their annual major waterway event this year. What for many years was always known as 'The National Rally of Boats' and later became 'The National Waterways Festival' will apparently now be known as simply 'The Waterways Festival'. The date was also changed from August Bank Holiday to the last weekend in July, although it was still a three day event, being open on the Friday afternoon.

This year, the festival returned to Shobnall Fields at Burton on Trent, meaning that it was quite local for the FCC sales team to attend. The weather was very pleasant throughout, conditions underfoot were clean and dry (we all remember St Ives!) and the public attendance was good, making this one of the more successful festivals.



Editor

The sales stall ready to receive the customers

It was also very successful for the FCC. The sales team were pleased with the takings over the three days and it was a good opportunity to spread the word and give out information. Not only that, but the FCC was awarded the Canal Boat Trophy for the best Non-Commercial Waterway Related Stand for the second time in three years. Even better, the award was accompanied by a cheque for £100! Well done Eric, Beryl, Val and Yvonne, not forgetting Dave Tinkler who towed the FCC boat trailer, which forms an attractive part of our display, to and from the event. Our chairman Pat Morriss also gave a talk in the theatre, which all helped to promote the FCC.



ABOVE: Receiving the award from Martin Ludgate, of Canal Boat Magazine. Note your editor is keeping a firm grip on the £100 cheque.  
BELOW: The successful sales team in front of the FCC display with the award and certificate.



Julie Arnold

Next year there will be no IWA National Festival for the first time since 1958, largely because many of the Waterway Recovery Group volunteers will be helping to organise the boat moorings on the River Lee and Regents Canal in East London during the olympic games. Then in 2013, the site will probably be on the Kennet and Avon Canal in Newbury.





## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES...

Hugh Potter revisits the dredging tip site at Whatstandwell

As reported in Portals 34 and 36, quite extensive dredging operations were carried out on the canal at Whatstandwell in 2010 and early 2011. At the time, concern was expressed by some that the tipping of the dredgings in a field adjacent to the offside of the canal at Spinney Farm was making a terrible mess.

This was indeed the case, but after the summer we can now see that the field is looking better than it did before these operations started.

The picture on the right shows the field when the silt is being unloaded from the mud hoppers. A series of trenches had been dug up the sloping field forming lagoons to contain the semi liquid material until it had settled out.

Below is the same scene recently. The field was levelled when the silt had dried and reseeded with a wild flower mixture, which has grown well in the fertile material.



Let us hope that this result will reassure those who had doubts about this operation and the whole length from Cromford to Ambergate can receive similar treatment.





## WORK PARTY REPORT

from Dave Tinkler

work@cromfordcanal.org.uk



### **This will be the last time that I will write in this section of the Portal.**

What a lot of you don't realise is that I was 70 years old in July of this year and what with recurring industrial injuries, I have had over my working life, I find it getting more difficult to carry out my role as Work Party Organiser. I have always led by example and now find that I can no longer do that.

I have therefore stepped down to make way for someone else to have a go. I am sure that there are many of you, within FCC, that can do a far better job than I have done. So we are looking for you to step forward and take over the reins. I will offer any assistance, if you need it, to get you going.

### **If you are keen to take over the post please contact me or any of the Committee.**

I would like to give a truly big thank you to all of you who have been on one or more of the work parties that I have organised over the past years. Without you my task would have been impossible.

You will still see me on future work parties as a helper so you haven't seen the last of me yet. I am staying on as a trustee so that I can still help the committee in its endeavours to re-open the Cromford Canal.

Dave

*I was very sorry to hear this news, but I fully sympathise with his decision. None of us are getting any younger. I am sure I speak for all the committee in thanking Dave for all that he has done for the FCC over his time as Work Party Organiser. I am also very pleased to hear that, whilst stepping down from the leading role, he will continue to assist on work parties etc. Thanks again Dave. - Ed.*

**Situation Vacant**  
**The FCC are now looking for a new**  
**WORK PARTY ORGANISER**



# THE NEWLANDS INN and MAD MARY MULHOLLAND

by Henry Pinney

The Newlands Inn has been in existence for a century or two providing refreshment for the boat people traversing the Cromford Canal during which time it will have had its share of excitement plus infamous landlords and landladies.

Not least of these was one Mad Mary Mulholland, widely known on the cut as a person not to be upset due to her very short fuse, flailing arms and a distrust of men!

Born in a boatman's cabin on a



The ghost of a former landlady still stalks the towpath by the Newlands Inn

Editor

narrow boat, the second child of Patrick and Isla Mulholland, Mary grew up on the waterways and as was common at that time did not receive any schooling. The waterways families were very self-reliant and a close knit group living a very hard working life, their home plus all their worldly goods and children being contained in that very small boatman's cabin. Due to the restricted space, the children were soon set to work with tasks such as leading the horses along the towpath, splicing the ropes etc. As they travelled, a learning curve of natural knowledge developed and woe betide anyone who tried to short change them.

Mary married early and with her new husband continued on the canals, but was widowed after a fight following a major poaching incident. No husband, no boat, no home, so she went into domestic service in the kitchens of Barrowmead, not a thousand miles from Golden Valley. This provided good training and she later moved to The Newlands Inn as cook. She never re-married and as the years passed her good cooking resulted in added inches to her girth, until in 1817 the inn keeper, also no doubt well fed, died and she took over the pub.

Due to the narrow single bore of Butterley Tunnel, necessitating one way traffic, there were frequent rows and fights fuelled by excessive beer as boats queued for hours waiting for the tunnel leggers. Mary was not one to tolerate any trouble in her pub and would wade in waving a rolling pin kept under the bar for such occasions. Due to her size and weight she literally crushed the troublemakers but during one altercation she collapsed and died. Thereafter boatmen mooring overnight in the cutting swore that Mad Mary's ghost descended from the pub to the towpath whenever there was a disturbance.

The Newlands Inn is at present sadly closed and boarded up, *[and has recently been seriously damaged by a 'mysterious' fire - Ed.]* but one of the local residents and a regular at the Newlands prior to its closure swore that a female ghost clutching something in her hand still occasionally roams the area on dark nights.

*There are plenty of canal ghosts, particularly in and around tunnels, but this is the first time I have heard of one on the Cromford - Ed.*

*This article was first published in the magazine of the Golden Valley Light Railway and is reproduced by kind permission of the author.*



## WEBSITE MATTERS

from George Rogers

There is not a huge amount for me to say this time. Having had several requests I have added a map back to the website, after I had removed the previous one which I felt didn't really fit the style of site we have. The hope is that this map will eventually be made more interactive so that it can link to the relevant areas of interest around the site.

Mailing lists. I've harped on about them before but I have finally set them up. Visit the website to find out more, but basically you can sign up to various lists which correspond to the information you actually want to receive (such as work parties, news, events etc.). I have done this to try and encourage more people to use the mailing lists, because I am aware that many people do not sign up for the current email group due to the volume of irrelevant traffic it can create. Only certain people will be able to post to the new lists and so you will only receive the information you sign up for.

Email group. When the mailing lists are doing their job, I will be turning to setting up a forum style discussion space on the website, so that the conversation style discussions that occasionally take place on the current email group can move to that, and ultimately the email group will be disbanded. More info on that nearer the time though.

### MYSTERY PICTURE

The picture on the right shows a deep vertical groove in one of the coping stones at the edge of the Cromford Canal. The camera man is standing in the (dry!) canal bed. The question is, what has made the groove in this unlikely position and whereabouts on the canal is it?

Suggestions to the editor please.





## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

from Yvonne Shattower



It really is amazing how this year has flown! It seems only a few weeks ago that we were looking forward to summer, and here we are facing the clocks 'going back', and the World Heritage Site Discovery Days weekend at Cromford on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th October. I hope you have the dates in your diary, do come along and see our sales stand as well as the other displays we will have for you. This is undoubtedly our most popular event of the year, and we all look forward to it. Many of the other events that are being produced along the line of the Derwent Valley during the two weeks are well worth looking at as well. Unfortunately postage costs prohibit us putting a leaflet in with this magazine, but local Derbyshire libraries should have details, or visit the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site web site, [www.derwentvalleymills.org](http://www.derwentvalleymills.org) See also page 5.

We were delighted to win the award for the best Non Commercial stand at the Inland Waterways Festival at Burton-on-Trent. The Sales Team worked exceptionally hard over a hot and dusty weekend, and justly deserved recognition. This is the second time the Friends have been given this award, so we must be getting something right!

Our programme of talks for 2012 is now complete, and we hope you will enjoy them. The venue is as usual – the Church Hall at Ironville. Several people have recently asked me for the post code, which is NG16 5NN. Last month we enjoyed an excellent and entertaining talk by our Web Master, George Rogers, on some of the important Engineers who have shaped our waterway system, and in November we will have Rick Jillings of the Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service to speak to us. Our new venture for December is a Pie and Pea Supper, with the Red Lion Folk Band to entertain us. For this event we are selling tickets in advance at £5 each. They are available from Mike Kelley; his details are on the inside cover of this magazine. Come along and enjoy yourselves! Please note that this will be held on Monday 5 December, not the third Monday as usual so that we all have time to get ready for Christmas - talking of which - have you got your Christmas cards yet? The sales team will be having our latest design available at Cromford and the Members meetings, or Beryl will be delighted to send you some by post if you are unable to get to see us in person. Have a look at the web site for details.

**We give a warm welcome to the following new members  
who have joined us since the last edition of *The Portal***

Mr M D Osborne, Cleethorpes	Ms K M Warner, Belper
Mr & Mrs J A Hawkins, Leicester	Mr K A Wainwright, Leicester
Mr H Diamond, Farnham	Mr & Mrs M Heath, Sheffield
Mr M Clapham, Nelson, Lancs	Mr & Mrs P Tuppen, London
Mr & Mrs J Farthing, Milton Keynes	Mr D Pountain, Ripley
Mr A Fisher, Alfreton	Mr & Mrs G Lupton, Chesterfield
Mr & Mrs J Washbrook, Kirkby in Ashfield	

## Friends of the Cromford Canal Christmas Cards

These designs and alternative packs from previous years will be on the sales stand in the Gothic Warehouse, Cromford Wharf at the Derwent Valley Mills Discovery Days

**29th and 30th October 2011**

Save on the postage by buying them here, when the whole range of FCC goods will also be displayed for sale. You may get some ideas for Christmas presents too!

**Greeting inside all cards is:**

*With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year*

**No. 1 Kingfisher in Winter**



**No. 2 Poyser's Bridge No. 16**



Mixed packs also available

**No. 3 Bullbridge Aqueduct**  
from an oil painting by Harley Crossley

All cards may be seen in  
colour on our website  
[www.cromfordcanal.org.uk](http://www.cromfordcanal.org.uk)



**Packs of 10 cards and envelopes £3.00 per pack.**  
**from the sales stand or by post from the Sales Address, add 75P p&p per pack.**

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The Inland  
Waterways  
Association

Canal  
boat

**CANAL BOAT  
TROPHY 2011**

**Presented to**

The Waterways Festival

*Friends of the Cromford Canal*

IWA 2011

**for the best  
Non-commercial  
Waterway Related Stand  
at**

**The Waterways Festival  
Burton on Trent  
2011**



Peter Christmas

IWAF Chairman