

THE **PORTAL**

**BIRDSWOOD
SPECIAL!**

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



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FRONT COVER: The moment we have all been looking forward to for a long time - *Birdswood* about to be lowered into the water at Cromford Wharf after an uneventful road journey from Langley Mill. See pages 17 - 21.

Photo: Val Roberts

BACK COVER: Councillor Andy Botham, Derbyshire County Council Deputy Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Transport, sits on the stern of *Birdswood* with Mike Kelley, Friends of the Cromford Canal Boat Operations Manager, soon after the boat had arrived at Cromford.

Photo: DCC

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. 46

I find that I must once again apologise for the late arrival of this edition of your *Portal*. Firstly I had put the press date back about a month so that all the news about *Birdswood* could be included, but there has been further delay due to pressure on my time from matters not connected with the FCC. However, I hope you think that it has been worth the wait.

What I do not apologise for is that I have given over a large part of this edition to news and pictures about *Birdswood*, which in the unlikely event that you have not already heard, is the trip boat which after the expenditure of considerable time and effort by many FCC volunteers, not to mention money, is now at Cromford and will shortly be operating regular return trips to High Peak Junction.

Many people have helped with the *Birdswood* project in many different ways, some of whom I have mentioned in the various reports, but at this stage I would like to particularly mention our Boat Operations Manager Mike Kelley. Apart from his physical contribution, I know Mike has had to cope with a considerable amount of paperwork, both in applying for the grant and satisfying the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, both of which have been and are continuing to be very time consuming. None of us had any experience of these matters before and it has been a very steep learning curve. Thank you Mike. At this point I should like to appeal for any other volunteers who would be able to help with the boat. Help will always be needed for various jobs on board, as well as for those able to train as skipper or crew. Mike Kelley would very much welcome your input to this exciting project. Mike has a new telephone number for all boat enquiries - **07552 055455**

Also in this edition, you will notice another change in the personnel list on the inside front cover. Since the AGM, we have a new chairman - Matthew Rogers, who has introduced himself in his first Chairman's Notes on pages 4 - 5. Matthew is already getting to grips with his job and I would like to welcome him on behalf of all members. Unlike most of us on the FCC committee, Matthew is relatively young and will no doubt wish to bring in some new ideas. We look forward to making further progress with restoration of the Cromford Canal under his leadership.

I would like to finish with another appeal for volunteers. At the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days weekend at Cromford Wharf on November 2nd and 3rd, we will be having the official opening of the trip boat operation. This means that some of our members who would normally be helping with the various activities in and around the Gothic Warehouse will be manning the boat.

Extra helpers will therefore be much appreciated - please contact Hugh Potter

The press date for the Autumn 2013 issue will be October 11th.



Gordon Harwood – a member of Beeston Big Band and the FCC wanted to do something to help raise much needed funds for *Birdswood* and say a big thank you for the massive effort that has been made by everyone to bring the trip boat back to Cromford. He has teamed up with Jim Corby (from the band and celebrating a milestone birthday) and organised what should be a fantastic night of music and dancing to the sounds of a 16 piece big band. The band will be augmented by 3 superb singers. So why don't you come and join us and bring your friends. Tickets are likely to sell fast and can be bought from Gordon on 01773 520404 or on the night.

Let's see a big turnout and have some fun. Matthew Rogers, Chairman



www.cromfordcanal.org.uk

Glenn Miller
Frank Sinatra
Count Basie
Dean Martin

Beeston Big Band

www.beestonbigband.co.uk

28th September 2013
A NIGHT OF MUSIC, DANCING & FUN WITH THE BEESTON BIG BAND

In Aid of the Friends of the Cromford Canal



*Licensed bar
Raffle*

Ironville Church Hall
Casson Street
Ironville
NG16 5NN



Tickets £6
Available on the door or from:
Gordon Harwood - 01773 520404

Doors open 7.30pm – Music from 8pm



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by Matthew Rogers



Do you trust this man? Taken in front of the FCC sales stall at the IWA National Festival in Watford in July – the things I'll do to get the FCC noticed!

Well where do I start for my first report since taking over as Chairman at the AGM last April. Firstly I must start by giving my wholehearted thanks to Pat for all the sterling work he did in his six year tenure. I have committed to taking the reins for five years and I sincerely hope that my time in office continues to take the massive steps forward achieved so far by the committee under both Mike Kelley and Pat Morriss. I do not intend to talk about *Birdswood* – I'll leave that for others. Suffice to say that as I started writing this she was on the move to Cromford where an eager crowd awaited!!

A little background then regarding your new chairman. I'm 47, married to Valerie and have two children. George (the webmaster) has just graduated with a MEng(Hons) in Civil Engineering from Trinity College Cambridge, and Heather who is in her final year at Aberystwyth University studying International Politics. We live in Whatstandwell by the canal bridge so give us a wave or stop for a chat if you are passing. I'm a Chartered Civil Engineer and have worked in the construction industry since leaving university in 1988. There I have worked my way up the ranks working on a wide variety of construction projects ranging in value from £50k to £25M with my primary focus on water and wastewater treatment and distribution. About five years ago I finally became totally office bound (not my favoured location!) and now head the design division for NMCNomenca, part of the North Midland Construction Group, Huthwaite which has a combined annual turnover of around £170M.

To relax Valerie and I own a small narrowboat – 'Spider' moored near Loughborough which is our little bolthole. There is nothing we enjoy more than time spent sitting on the canal banks fishing, reading or more commonly fast asleep! To counter this relaxing pastime my other key hobby is walking and I regularly enjoy challenge walks organised through the Long Distance Walkers Association which can be anything from 21 to my longest to date 62 miles in a single day. However, the majority of my walks are along the Cromford Canal with our dog - Jaffa - where every day there is something new to see and enjoy. For those of you that enjoy a little walking I hope you have tried the first two rambles and another this month from Codnor Park Reservoir. See page 28.

So to the future and the next five years. My focus is the development of a detailed business plan for the redevelopment of the canal. Further to studies that have been collated to date and some early optioneering we now need to prepare a series of documents. This will cover areas including: Finance, Engineering & Options, Tourism, Economic & Social Regeneration, Archaeology & Heritage, Environment & Ecology, The case for restoration & Planning. This is a huge task and it is proposed to split the canal into probably three sections: Langley Mill to Codnor Park reservoir including the Pinxton Arm; Codnor Park to



Ambergate; and Ambergate to Cromford including the Lea Arm. Each of these sections have very distinct challenges and there is not a single solution for the entire length. With these documents we can then start to apply for the grants to actually make things happen and work with the Local Enterprise Partnerships, the local authorities, residents and private developers.

The initial focus will be on the first section between Langley Mill and Codnor Park Reservoir and the Pinxton Arm. At a recent Cromford Canal Partnership meeting it was noted that the footpath along the Pinxton arm is almost impossible to follow in places. We need to work with the interested stakeholders to look at how we can start getting sections of the canal back in water and demonstrate the benefits that a restored canal will bring. So hopefully, further to some initial consultation work we can start to clear lock chambers and remove the rubbish.

All this, of course, will take a lot of time and money. For much of the research we will need to employ external consultants. The scoping study that was carried out by WS Atkins in 2012 cost DCC around £70,000 alone. The FCC have commissioned the preparation of a single method statement to allow access into a short section of the Butterley Tunnel. That has cost £2500 and that is before we actually attempt to undertake the survey which will probably be in the region of £20k. Yes we can get grants to carry out this research but I'm sure you can appreciate even this takes considerable time to prepare.

The commencement of *Birdswood* is vital to the future of the FCC as this will help in our bid to bring in much needed additional funds on top of what the sales team already achieve. We must remember that it is largely down to them that we have been able to purchase the trip boat in the first place! However, we need more help. If every member of the FCC gave 2 hours per annum that equates to 1700 hours or a full time employee for an entire year! Everyone has something to offer – please don't be shy! It's not all about being handy with a shovel or a bow-saw. We have a sales team that would love to see a new face for an event, a publicity team that is looking for bright ideas, an engineering team that has got to prepare drawings / take measurements. We need people to carry out surveys along stretches of the canal to count the number of walkers / joggers / pushchairs and just chat to passers-by, ask them their views and pass out leaflets. We need people who can write a letter, type up reports. We need, I won't go on but I'm sure you get the picture!

Elsewhere in the *Portal* you will see the Beeston Big Band event on 28th September. Gordon Harwood (the keyboard player and a FCC member) is organising the event to help raise funds for the FCC. Gordon wants this to be a thank you for all the hard work that so many people have contributed to get *Birdswood* on the water. It should be a wonderful evening with the music of Glenn Miller and Count Basie. Put on your dancing shoes and come and join us and bring your friends. Tickets are likely to sell fast so buy early to avoid disappointment.

I hope many of you got to see the Waterway Recovery Group hard at work again at Sawmills continuing the restoration of the narrows and footpath improvements. Next year we are hoping they will be making a start on the Ironville Locks! Thanks guys – the weather certainly didn't make life easy!

So enough of my ramblings. I'll keep you updated on progress and here's to the next five years, and I hope that whoever has the 'pleasure' of taking over for me can say that they are continuing to build on the successes to date!

May I take this opportunity to welcome Matthew as our new chairman during what I am sure will be a very exciting period for the FCC - Ed.



BIRDWOOD UPDATE **a progress report**

from Mike Kelley,
Boat Operations Manager



LAUNCH DAY!

There is a wise old saying, 'Be careful what you pray for; God may give it to you!' This was how I felt at 6am on Saturday 27th July after arriving at Cromford Wharf, hoping all the plans we had made would work out alright and come to fruition. It was a fine morning, the traffic cones were all out and the central area cordoned off. So many had worked so very hard to see this day dawn, and/or contributed financially towards it, and now it was actually happening.

Not long ago, the thought of seeing a trip boat operating along the northern section of the Cromford Canal seemed a long way off, but now we were almost there. It has been a hectic year for the Friends of the Cromford Canal, getting all of the key ingredients into place. First the canal needed to be dredged, as it was only a few inches deep in places, also the old swing bridge at High Peak Junction needed replacing. Derbyshire County Council, who own this part of the canal, with foresight and vision found the money for both these items; so together with the determination of the 'Friends' committee, the day had finally come for dreams to come true.

As this part of the canal is a SSSI wildlife reserve, agreements had to be reached with Natural England, (NE) who are in charge of this and the wildlife sensitivities of this delicate area respected. This required several meetings between our two groups and officers of the Council, until a way forward was found. One of the agreements we made was to change any appropriate boat from diesel power to electric, thereby being more environmentally friendly within this reserve.

Whilst all this was going on the FCC had to find a suitable boat. This in itself was hazardous, because we could not buy a boat until we knew the canal would be dredged deep enough, so although *Birdwood* was 'found' in March 2012 all we could do was to declare our intentions to buy her subject to successful dredging, along with NE and Council agreements being in place, and of course enough money in our bank; none of which were in place until this spring.

Birdwood was perfect in every way; a traditional narrow boat which would fit in well with the historic area she was to operate in, having been built in 1938 for the Midland Railway, one time owners of the Cromford Canal. Since the end of her working days in the late 1970's she had been converted to a trip boat, being operated both horsedrawn and motorised. A more suitable boat would be difficult to find, but she was not cheap. We managed to get a grant from DEFRA for almost 40% of the purchase price and refurbishment, but the FCC had to somehow find the other 60%. Not only that, but before we could claim this grant we had to spend 100% of the total costs in order to claim back the 40%. There must be some logic here but it escapes me! So a campaign of fund raising



was carried out by the FCC through most of last summer. FCC members donated generously, as did many of the public along with several businesses who donated in kind toward the aim of a trip boat returning to Cromford.

Time was so tight that the purchase was made before the dredging had been completed; which was delayed due to the cold late spring. So we had our boat. Now all we had to do was strip her down, refurbish her, change her from diesel to electric, repaint the inside right down to the hull, repaint all of the outside, then get it inspected.

Inspection of *Birdswood* comes under the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) who are based in Beverley near Hull. These officers are more used to dealing with cross-channel ferries than canal boats, but because she will hold over 50 passengers we came under their jurisdiction. It was here we almost slipped up. We had no idea their costs would total up so much and had not allowed for such high amounts. True they told us on a visit to their office, their charges would be just short of £100 per hour, but we greatly underestimated how long their visits would be and how many times they wanted to visit. So far we have spent £3,000 just on the MCA. (So we still need funds folks) Dry dock inspection, floating inspection, safety checks, safety documentation, heel tests (to make sure she will not capsize). It all added up. So you see it has been quite a year of hectic activity. Then people say to me, 'Are you relaxing in your retirement?'

Now, on the morning of Saturday 27th July, much of this was behind us. People began to gather quite early. BBC Radio Derby were there as were reporters from several Derbyshire newspapers. Then I had a call from Mike Harrison at Langley Mill, 'She's on her way. Lifted and loaded on time, at around 7:30am.' Interviews took place and still the people were coming into the Wharf. Tensions grew. Next thing, 'She's in Cromford,' came the voice over the phone. Sure enough she was. First the large crane come into the Wharf, followed shortly after by *Birdswood* herself proudly sitting on a low-loader. What a sight. I would think over a hundred people were there to watch by that time.

There was one moment of tension when the tight turn into the historic wharf stalled, holding up a large traffic jam, but this was soon resolved and in she came, to the delight of all there. Walkers of Tuxford near Newark, were the men in charge of the lift, who slung just two straps under her and lifted her up and across toward the water. Keen as I was to see all this, I had the distraction of being interviewed by Radio Derby while all this was happening.

As she entered the water a large cheer went up. It was good to hear this; an appreciation of so much work and time. Crowds gathered around her in her moored position to admire her beautiful form, and paintwork, amazed at all the neat seating in place for passengers. All-in-all it was a very successful day.

Over the following days, the training of the Boat Masters and Crew began. There is a lot for them to do, not unlike getting a licence to drive an HGV vehicle or a bus; you don't simply get in and go. The testing of the boat masters by MCA was arranged for 21st August; which meant we would be operational for the August bank holiday weekend.

That was the plan! Then along came a Coot and built its nest right in the middle of the winding hole at the pump house, near High Peak Junction. As this is a sensitive nature reserve, this nest put the commencement of trips for the public on hold. It now looks like we will start around mid September. I am told that in future years this will not happen, as the movement of the boat will encourage such birds to nest by the edges.

At the moment, for the training of our staff we are going along the canal so far and then reversing back, until the bird has flown.

Any help with this project will be very welcome. Please ring 07552 055455



ASDA SUPPORT THE TRIP BOAT PROJECT

by the Editor

When Asda built a their supermarket at Langley Mill in 2010, our publicity officer John Barker immediately made himself known to the manager and was successful in obtaining financial support for the FCC sponsored walk from Langley Mill to Pinxton in September of that year, see *Portal* 35.

The Asda store is now well established in Langley Mill and John has continued the good relationship. Following the purchase by the FCC of the trip boat *Birdswood* (which by now you may be aware of!), he was again in touch with the firm.

I am pleased to say that this has resulted in a very generous donation of a large collection of various domestic consumables, from mop bucket to brasso and toilet rolls to white spirit. These will all be very useful on *Birdswood* and we are very grateful to Asda. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank John Barker for his work as publicity officer. He has established some very useful contacts and this is just one example of the benefits the FCC has obtained from his efforts. Thank you again John.

The picture below was taken when *Birdswood* was on display at the recent boat rally at Langley Mill. This shows John Barker (left) thanking Sharon Allsop, Asda Community Life Champion, for the firm's generous donation. Looking on is Mike Kelley, who is in charge of the *Birdswood* project.



Editor



FCC SALES REPORT

by Eric and Beryl Singleton

This is a report of the many and various events attended by the sales stall since the last edition of *Portal*. We have tried to increase the number of events attended this year to make up for the shortfall in takings in these difficult financial times

Saturday 6th April	Heanor Community Fair in Heanor Church
Monday 15th April	F.C.C. AGM at Ironville Church hall
Saturday-Monday 4th-6th May	Heanor Church
Saturday-Sunday 18th-19th May	Morrisons Belper
Monday 20th May	Ironville Monthly Social Meeting with Val & Mike
Friday-Monday 24th-27th May	Erewash Canal Boat Rally on a fine weekend at Langley Mill with Val & Mike
Thursday 30th May	Completely opposite weatherwise on a freezing Sutton Market
Saturday 1st June	Codnor Heritage Day at Mill Lane School
Saturday-Sunday 8th-9th June	Belper Steam Rally
Monday 17th June	Ironville Monthly Social Meeting with Val & Mike
Sunday 23rd June	Jacksdale Soldier Day
Saturday 6th July	Heanor Church Community Fair
Sunday 7th July	Codnor Fete
Saturday 13th July	Ambergate Carnival
Sunday 14th July	Butterley Railway with Wendy & Nikki
Thursday-Monday 18th-21st July	I.W.A. National Waterways Festival at Cassiobury Park, Watford with Matt & Yvonne
Saturday 27th July	<i>Birdswood</i> arrives by road at Cromford Wharf and is launched into the Cromford Canal
Friday-Sunday 2nd-4th August	Cromford Steam Rally

Thanks to all who have assisted at various events

I would also like to add my thanks to Eric and Beryl for their time and effort so generously given on a regular basis. - Ed.

FORTHCOMING MEMBERS' SOCIAL MEETINGS

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 the end of the year.

There is a bar and raffle available at all meetings. Admission is £2

- **September 16th** - FAME WITHIN 5 MILES OF ALFRETON - Ray Sunderland
 - **SPECIAL EVENT - Sat. Sept 28th** - BEESTON BIG BAND - See page 3.
 - **October 21st** - BLACK DIAMONDS - Wendy Freer
 - **November 18th** - ACROSS ALASKA IN WINTER - Andrew Heading
 - **December 2nd** - CHRISTMAS SOCIAL with the RED LION FOLK BAND
- Admission by ticket £6 including PIE AND PEA SUPPER



LANGLEY MILL BOAT RALLY - 2013

by the Editor

The late May bank holiday this year marked the 45th Anniversary of the formation of The Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association, and the 40th year since the re-opening of Langley Bridge Lock, No 14 on the Cromford Canal, and the Great Northern Basin on the Nottingham Canal. Langley Mill is the junction of the Erewash and Cromford Canals and the Nottingham Canal joins above the lock.

Fifteen historic narrow boats (including the FCC's *Birdswood*) attended the rally together with some 60 other boats, although a stoppage at Cromwell Lock on the River Trent prevented boats from Lincoln and from the Chesterfield Canal getting there.



Historic narrow boats *Bath* and *Chertsey* transported the Holymoorside Band along the Erewash Canal and drew the crowds as they ascended the lock and provided suitable music for the opening ceremony, see above. This idea of having the band arrive by boat was a re-enactment of the opening festivities in 1973, and the same format has been used at Erewash rallies ever since. In 1973 my then boat *Mercury* was used and the band was carried on the roof, with the big drum in the kitchen! Unfortunately most of the band were seated towards the fore end, meaning that the propeller was partly out of the water. We processed slowly into the lock with very little effective reverse and were stopped with a gentle 'tonk' into the top cill, which caused the band to miss a beat! Happy memories.

In keeping with the well established ECP&DA tradition, the rally this year was well organised, with many volunteers helping before, during and after the event, with a good attendance of stalls, boats and general public. Even the weather was on our side, giving a window of calm sunshine after the gales on the Friday which had prevented stall holders from erecting their marquees until the Saturday morning. The FCC sales stall, together



with our now familiar boat trailer designed by Dave Ratner, created much interest. Once again Eric and Beryl Singleton and Val Roberts, our stalwart sales team, did a fine job and the takings were very pleasing. Talking of the boat trailer, we are finding it difficult sometimes to find a volunteer who can tow the trailer to an event, assist in erecting the marquee, then return after the event to help take down the marquee and tow the trailer home.



The chance of a sit down and a cup of tea on the boat was very popular.

Hugh Potter

Birdswood also played an important part in the event, being on display on the Langley Mill Boatyard moorings and manned by a good turnout of FCC volunteers. Members took this opportunity to introduce the boat to the public, who were invited on board for tea and biscuits. This was well supported, helping with FCC funds as well as contributing to the success of the rally.



Nick Potter welcoming guests on board...

Editor



Hugh Potter

...including the Mayor of Amber Valley Councillor Angela Ward

There was excellent evening entertainment and a good quality real ale bar for the boaters. Altogether another fine example of ECP&DA organisation and hospitality, carrying on a tradition begun in 1973. Sadly this could be the last of these events since most of the ECP&DA committee members are now well beyond the first flush of youth and the younger generation are not forthcoming - an all too familiar story in the canal world.



BIRDWOOD AT LANGLEY MILL BOATYARD

by the Editor

The following will give an idea of the work carried out on *Birdwood*, both by professionals and volunteers, during its time at Langley Mill.

The existing diesel engine had first to be removed, which was a pity, but it would not have been allowed to be used at Cromford due to environmental considerations. The engine had been very ingeniously and neatly installed in the stern of the boat under the steering position to retain the horseboat stern appearance. This meant that the removal entailed cutting away the stern deck frames and carefully lifting and tilting the engine and hydraulic drive assembly with the boatyard crane and threading it out through the cabin doors. Much careful manoeuvring and potential trapped fingers were involved, but the engine, Steve Johnson and I all emerged unscathed. After cleaning out the engine space, we then left the motive power department to our engineer John Boucher to carry out the calculations of the power required and then to source and price the electric motor and all the control gear as well as the traction batteries.

In the meantime, attention was turned to the passenger accommodation. The seats and tables were removed and taken away to be stored by John Barker and Dave Ratner. This gave more room to work and enabled all the steel floor plates in the hold to be unscrewed and lifted to one side. This gave access to the bottom of the boat, which was completely replaced in 12mm steel in 1995. The bottom was still in good condition, but had evidently not seen the light of day for some years and required cleaning of superficial rust and accumulated scale and debris. It was then painted with red oxide and the floor plates refitted. The insides of the hull were then painted cream and new vinyl flooring, which had been donated, was laid. See the following pictures.





The cleaning continuing and a start is made on the red oxide on the boat's bottom.

Mike Kelley



John Guyler



Mike Kelley

Mike Kelley



ABOVE: Bottom painting proceeding and floor plates, having been turned over and cleaned, being relaid.
ABOVE RIGHT: Floor plates all relaid and screwed down. Hull sides being painted cream.
BELOW RIGHT: Inside painting completed and vinyl floor covering laid and stuck down.



ABOVE: The dismantled seats being repaired and repainted at John Barker's house.

Mike Kelley



BELOW: The rebuilt, repainted and varnished seats fitted back in position.

Mike Kelley

After being on display at the Langley Mill Rally in May, see pages 10 - 11, the boat went on the dry dock and the hull was pressure washed. This was for the first visit of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Surveyor to carry out the out of water inspection. This went off satisfactorily. Volunteers were then able to give the hull three coats of bitumastic paint and new sacrificial anodes were fitted. Also, while the boat was on the dock, Steve Kemp the signwriter came and repainted the cabin sides and name panels. There had been much debate about the colour scheme and the exact wording, but the result was quite a transformation and the work was completed remarkably quickly. See opposite.



ABOVE: The first coat of bitumastic going on the hull.
BELOW: Painting of a rather more skilled nature transforms the boat's appearance in two days

Editor





During the MCA survey, it had been noticed that the bottom of the gas locker under the front deck was quite badly corroded. Therefore, when the boat was refloated, it was moored near the workshop and Derek, the boatyard welder, removed the deck, welded in a complete new steel bottom in the gas locker and refitted the deck. Our Boat Operations Manager was then dispatched into the locker to paint it out in red oxide.

Mike Kelley



Looks like both Mike and Chris have found their vocation.

During all this, Chris Jacklin was making regular visits completing the outside painting. I think he really enjoyed this part, particularly the fancy work of diamonds along the top bends.

The boatyard also fabricated the steel boxes for the banks of traction batteries. We fitted these in the back end of the hold and also installed the electric motor after some delay while the mounting bracket was machined. I then re-connected the controls and hydraulic hoses. Dave Tinkler, whose previous marine electrical work had been on the Queen Mary, was then able to complete the wiring. After a short trial run, we only just finished in time for the transport to Cromford arranged for July 27th.



Mike Kelley

One of the battery banks in its steel box and the electric banks in the motor with all the wiring and controls connected.



Editor



Editor



SATURDAY JULY 27TH 2013 - A DAY TO REMEMBER FOR THE FCC

by the Editor

About a month before all the foregoing work on *Birdswood* was completed, it was decided to set a date for the move to Cromford to give us something to work to. It had to be at a weekend because of the need to use a works car park at Langley Mill. This was unfortunate in one way because the Maritime and Coastguard Agency surveyor needed to witness the operation and this meant paying him double time.

However, all the arrangements were made and the job went ahead. Walkers of Tuxford had done similar jobs for Langley Mill Boatyard in the past and they were very efficient. What was a momentous occasion for most of us was simply routine to them.

Val and I arrived at Langley Mill at 6.30am just as the crane was arriving and it was soon set up. The lorry arrived with another boat which was duly lifted into the water as had been arranged. *Birdswood* was then lifted over the boatyard fence without any problems and settled onto the lorry. This attracted a small crowd, including the boat's previous owners. So far so good.

We have lift off!
Birdswood being lifted out of the water and over the boatyard fence onto the lorry at Langley Mill

Hugh Potter





The boat was soon fastened down on the lorry which then followed the crane to Cromford, accompanied by a growing entourage. There were some cameramen staked out along the route with the idea of getting shots at various potentially difficult places, see below, but the journey was thankfully uneventful and all went well.

Brian Dominic



TOP: Carefully avoiding the street furniture at Codnor.
CENTRE: Turning out onto the A6 at Ambergate.
BOTTOM: Almost there - approaching Cromford Wharf

Brian Dominic



Hugh Potter





Hugh Potter



Hugh Potter

The trickiest bit was the turn from the road by Cromford Mill into Cromford Wharf. At first glance this looked impossible, since the boat is over twice as long as the width of the road and the wharf has quite a narrow entrance between stone walls.

John Holloway from Walker's was confident it could be done, however, and so it proved, although it was a very tight fit. This provided a good demonstration of the benefits of having rear wheel steering on the trailer. See above and left.



Editor



ABOVE: Some FCC types had been at Cromford since early morning to ensure the Wharf Car Park remained clear. This shot shows how essential this was.

BELOW: The boat is gently swung round from the lorry to the water. Note the paparazzi!

Hugh Potter





By this time, quite a crowd had gathered at Cromford and they were provided with a fine spectacle. The slings were soon refitted and the boat lifted effortlessly by the crane and lowered gently into the water, bringing on a cheer and a round of applause, much to the amazement of the Walkers team. Definitely the shortest time that any boat has taken to travel from one end of the Cromford Canal to the other.



Hugh Potter

ABOVE: A picture we have been looking forward to being able to take for a long time - *Birdswood* outside the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf.
 BELOW: Settling the boat into her new home mooring - under the canopy behind the Wharf Cafe.



Val Roberts



BIRDWOOD TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

by the Editor

After the successful launch of *Birdwood* into the canal at Cromford, the next thing was to carry out a heel test to the satisfaction of the Marine and Coastguard Agency. The idea of this is to simulate a full load of passengers with test weights, which in our case were 160 x 25 kg bags of sand. Measurements of the angle of heel are then taken as the weights



are moved across the boat in stages, first to one side and then the other.

As can be imagined, this entailed quite a bit of effort, but the end result was that the boat did not heel beyond what was acceptable and therefore passed the test. The volunteers then had to lift all the bags out of the boat again in the pouring rain. We were tired but happy! We were also grateful to Clowers Builders Merchants of Ripley who supplied the sand and collected it back again and charged only for the transport.

It was shortly after this that we discovered that trips could not yet be made down to High Peak Junction because a coot had decided to build its nest in the winding hole. It was therefore decided to reverse part way down the canal beyond Lawn Bridge and then come up forwards to get some steering experience. The shallowness and weediness of the canal in places was rather disappointing, but what brought this first trial to a halt was a considerable length of geotextile, presumably left over from the dredging operations, getting round the propeller. This called for the procedure well known to all boaters - stopping in the bridge 'ole and clearing the blades with the hook shaft. See below.



Photos: Hilary Liley



LEAWOOD PUMP OUTLET

by Ian Yates

Its August already, does not seem long since we started and we only have three more steaming weekends to go. A steady stream of visitors have arrived most weekends; at least the weather is better this year. The last steaming was the first rain we have had on the day. Donations are still falling short of the coal cost most times but a generous donation from one person helped to improve matters. Coal supplies are still available but some is a bit small and care has to be taken so it does not all fall through the grate. A private steaming for the Nottingham Society of Model Engineers was arranged which was well attended and it gave the option to see the engine operating in the evening. The canal was a bit low at the time and the Rangers asked us to put as much water in as we could. It's good to see the pump doing its real job 164 years after it was built. Coaling has been interesting as the boat has been out of use due to a Little Grebe making a nest in the cut out around the rudder. The County were very good and helped by getting the coal down the towpath using their small tractor and trailer. The nest is now finished so it will hopefully be back to normal again. Work is planned as soon as possible to replace the timber panels on the boat. It's been a problem as what to use but hopefully a decision has been made and the material can be ordered.



As a final point, visitors were arriving on the first August steaming and saying people working on the boat at Cromford were telling them we only steam on Bank Holidays. Our steaming days are Bank Holidays and generally the First Weekend of the month from Easter until the Derwent Valley Days of Discovery. See below

REMAINING STEAMING DATES 2013

The engine will be in motion from noon to 5pm on each of the following days (except Discovery Weekend - 11am to 4pm).

MONTH	SAT	SUN	MON	PERIOD
AUGUST		25th	26th	August Bank Holiday
OCTOBER	5th	6th		First Weekend
NOVEMBER	2nd	3rd		Discovery Weekend



Talking of steam, Hugh Potter took this shot of the fine Battle of Britain class 'Pacific' locomotive no. 34067 "Tangmere", which seems to have plenty to spare whilst heading the Peak Forester steam special up the Derwent Valley line at Ambergate.

Railway buffs would say that this loco should never be seen on Midland Railway metals!



NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate Update - August 2013

from Rick Jillings - Assistant Area Manager
Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service

Dredging scheme Cromford Wharf to Leawood Pumphouse

A milestone or in modern terms a 1.6km post has been reached. The maintenance dredging on the canal between Cromford Wharf and Leawood Pump was completed in May. Cutter suction dredging was used to extract the silt that had built up in the canal over the last 30 years. The dredging was restricted to a 4m wide channel. This is because the Cromford Canal is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) along this stretch and water vole burrows are present in the canal banks, so the dredging had to avoid disturbing the canal edges.

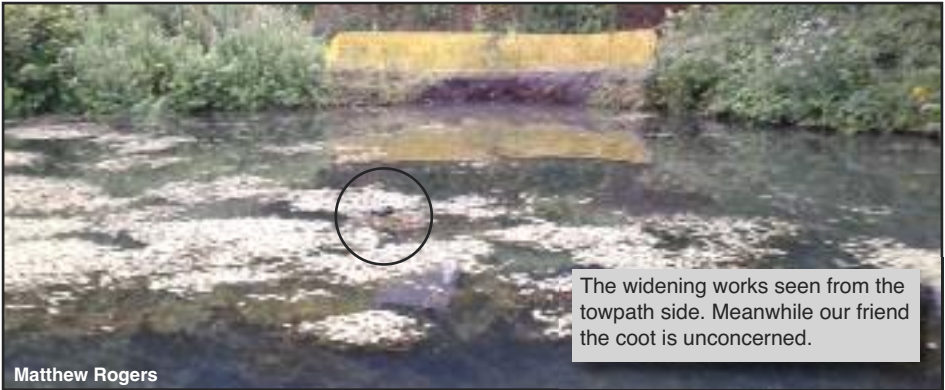
There are a number of small streams and springs flowing down from Cromford Moor. These had washed significant quantities of sand and silt into the canal, stopping the FCC operating the horse drawn boat on recent Discovery Days. Sections of geotextile barrier have been located to stop further stream deposition, however we would very much appreciate assistance from FCC volunteers to dig out these new silt traps so that navigation can be maintained.

Some careful follow up excavations have had to be done from the land around the mooring areas on Cromford Wharf and High Peak Junction. The Leawood winding hole has also been enlarged slightly to accommodate *Birdswood*, thanks again go to FCC for input with this. See photo below.

Matt Petitt - DCC

The offside of the winding hole at High Peak Junction being widened and cleared of underwater obstructions to enable the trip boat to turn





The widening works seen from the towpath side. Meanwhile our friend the coot is unconcerned.

Boat Service Update

A licence has been drawn up which sets out the terms to allow the Friends of Cromford Canal to operate a boat service using *Birdswood*. The boat trip operation has been consented by Natural England, who oversee the canal ecology with the canal being a SSSI, a regime of ecological monitoring and review has also been developed.

Volunteer work parties

Thanks go to volunteers from The Friends who assisted with work parties, including clearing invasive Himalayan Balsam from the canal banks.

Towpath improvements

Work is being planned to resurface the towpath from Gregory tunnel northwards towards High Peak Junction in the autumn. This would make 5 miles of towpath suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs, all the way from Ambergate to Cromford.

It is hoped that the Cromford to High Peak Junction section can be further improved in the future to dry out the puddles.

Simms Bridge Leak

There is still an on-going problem near Whatstandwell requiring a short section of canal to be lowered until a repair scheme can be implemented. A temporary dam has been constructed to hold water at this lower level.

Building improvements

The electrical rewiring at High Peak Junction Visitor Centre is now complete, improving lighting and safety and allowing toilets to be open longer through a time lock system. A minute's walk south the historic Weighbridge building has had its roofing facias refurbished and painted.

The public toilets at Cromford Wharf have had a complete overhaul. There is now a room for nappy changing, an improved disabled person's toilet and a Changing Places facility for those people who cannot use standard accessible toilets. This includes people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their carers, as well as many other disabled people. They need Changing Places toilets with enough space and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

<http://www.changing-places.org/>

The Countryside Service Events programme includes the operating dates for Leawood Pump and Middleton Top Engine houses (page 25) along with a number of heritage walks. <http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/events/default.asp>

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



WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP AT SAWMILLS

by George Rogers

Since I last wrote a full WRG report for *Portal*, work at Sawmills has progressed rather more rapidly than in recent times. This is thanks to London WRG, who visited us in March, and the ongoing WRG canal camps running from 3rd - 17th August.

The LWRG visit to the ongoing project at the Gauging Narrows was a rather last minute affair, as the original site they had planned to attend that weekend could no longer take them. Thus at their 'half-AGM' at the previous dig three weeks earlier, they were looking for a new site. The suggestion was Chesterfield, and I offered to find work here if Chesterfield couldn't take us for any reason. Fast forward over a week and we became the venue of choice. Cue a scramble to book accommodation and materials and ensure the local pub was well stocked with ale.

London did a fabulous job over the weekend of completing stonework started on the previous WRG NW visit, starting and completing a section of new stonework and concreting behind a large chunk of the wall. This was despite the weather not being particularly kind once again. Obviously the extra nourishment won at the Cliff Inn's weekly raffle on the Friday night were just the fortification these unusually hardened southerners needed to keep them going in the dreary conditions 'oop norf'.

As always, a huge thank you to all those involved. I won't name names this time as I nearly always leave somebody out. Most of them would be familiar anyway! Some photos of this London WRG weekend are on the website.

Fast forward now to August, and the main WRG canal camps are back with us. As *Portal* goes to press, WRG are busy continuing work on the Narrows. However, the primary focus for this fortnight is the resurfacing of the towpath between the site of the Bullbridge Aqueduct and the cul-de-sac that backs up to the Narrows. The original intention was to take this path all the way through to Lockwoods yard at Brickyard Bridge, but the Greenway is expected to be built along the line here in the near future and so there seems little point in surfacing a path that will just get dug up again soon.



The complete rebuild of the Gauging Narrows is progressing well in the first week of the Work Camp



To w path work to a high standard, as shown here, is being undertaken thanks to a grant from former councillor Juliette Blake. Juliette has been a very good supporter of the restoration of the canal over the years, and has made several donations that have helped with the work on the Sawmills stretch. Thank you!

Photos are of the work to date (7th August). A complete report will follow next time.



Hugh Potter



George Rogers



MATTHEW'S GOSPEL ON CANAL WALKS - No.3

by Matthew Rogers



Our 3rd in a new series of walks – this time we have moved further along the canal to Codnor Park reservoir to explore the Ironville locks and Codnor Castle. Codnor Castle is one of only two medieval castles retaining its original medieval architecture in the whole of the county of Derbyshire, the other being Peveril Castle at Castleton. Codnor Castle has a very rich history and the castle site dates back to the 11th century. For further information see <http://www.codnorcastle.com/>

This walk starts from the car park at Codnor Park reservoir where you will often find a refreshment caravan. GR443 515 and can be followed on OS 1:25,000 Explorer Map 269. The walk is about 4 miles long and is not suitable for pushchairs in places.

• Leave the car park by the metal footbridge over the reservoir spillway and follow the path past the stone bridge which formed the entrance to the Pinxton Arm and the position of the original Lock 1. You are going to follow the towpath with the canal on the right for about 1.5 miles passing what remains of locks 2-7. These are in the ownership of the Canal & River Trust (CRT), Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT). Note the names of the locks – some still displaying signs:

- Lock 2 – Boat Dock Lock
- Lock 3 – Pottery Lock
- Lock 4 – Smiths Lock
- Lock 5 – Gas House Lock
- Lock 6 – Marshalls Lock
- Lock 7 – Bottom of Flight

As you pass under the railway bridge beyond lock 4 you enter Erewash Meadows Nature Reserve. Note the dry dock next to lock 6 which was cleared a few years ago during a FCC workparty. Beyond lock 7 continue along the canal, crossing a small bridge (the former entrance to Portland Basin) and keep right. The area opens up with the meadows on your left and a wide stretch of canal on your right.

• The visible canal ends at the site of the former LNER Bridge. Cross the wooden bridge and ignoring the stile on your left continue ahead up through the woods bearing left at the T junction after about 40yds and then right after a further 30yds. You will pass a small pond on your left and a fallen tree on the path.

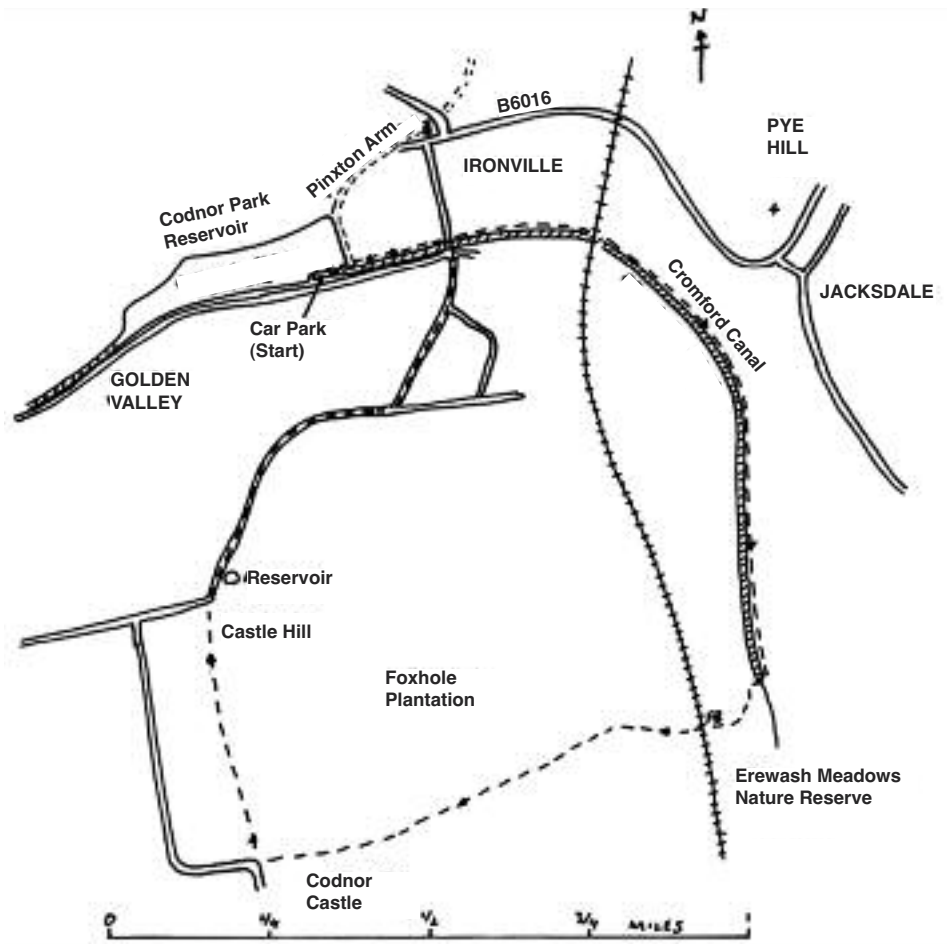
• Cross the railway footbridge and follow the track as it bears right through the woods. After 40yds take the left fork through the woods and bear left as you emerge from the woods after 200yds. Pass through the metal kissing gate and keep ahead with the fence / hedge on your right. After 150yds pass through a second kissing gate and into the woods keeping left as it forks. (The path follows the boundary of the woods and do not stray into the woods - as I did whilst reviewing the route!). After 150yds you will emerge onto the stone track and keep straight ahead.



- As the track climbs after about 250yds you need to take a path off to the left through a wooden kissing gate hidden slightly by the trees. Through the fields you can see the remains of Codnor Castle up ahead and they are well worth taking time to enjoy. Once you have taken a walk round you will need to retrace your steps back by 50 yds to the line of trees and follow the footpath through a metal kissing gate and then left onto the track that you were following previously.

- At the junction with a minor road go through the small metal gate and turn right, through another gate and along a track with fine views of Somercotes, Ironville and Westwood. At the end of the track you will cross a metal barrier, pass Castlehill service reservoir and continue ahead along the track. After crossing the wooden stile bear left at the junction of Monument Lane and Station Road at 'Sharons Corner' and follow the road back to the canal. Bear left and retrace your steps back to the car park.

The map below will help you follow the route.





MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

from Yvonne Shattower



It seems a very long time ago that I was last writing on Membership Matters for the *Portal*. I know that our Editor wanted to delay the publication of this issue as we were hoping to be able to bring you some really good news – and what news we have! Now we need you, the Members, to volunteer to keep the boat running. We already have a nucleus of Members who have trained as crew, but we need more to help us by selling tickets, giving out information, keeping the boat clean and tidy and a hundred and one other jobs that our hard pressed crew are doing at the moment. The more volunteers we have, the easier it will be to run *Birdswood*, and the more trips we can do the more money we will make, which, along with raising the profile of the Friends, is the motivation behind this venture. So, can you help us one day or even one afternoon a month? If you can help, please contact Mike Kelley on the new boat operation phone no: 07552 055455.

Matthew Rogers, our Chairman, and some of the Sales Team attended the Inland Waterways Festival at Watford in July; regrettably it was not a very successful trip from a sales aspect, but I think Matthew made some potentially valuable contacts. It was a very hot weekend, and people did not seem to be in a mood to buy. However, we waved the FCC flag, and talked to the people who did come to the stand. Unfortunately we had to cancel some of the Sales Team activities through lack of help this summer. Is this an area you could lend a hand with? We need people who are able to set up and dismantle the stand and transport the stock as well as helping with the sales. In particular, a vehicle with a tow bar would be an added advantage as we can then use our display trailer 'boat'

It seems a shame to be writing about the autumn on a lovely summer's day, but we have to look ahead to our talks at Ironville Church Hall which will start again on September 16th with Ray Sunderland telling us about 'Fame Within 15 Miles of Alfreton'. On October 21st we have a return visit by Dr Wendy Freer, who will be telling us about 'Black Diamonds' – the story of coal fields in Leicestershire and Derbyshire. Wendy is a very popular and distinguished speaker and I have never been disappointed by one of her talks, even if I was not particularly attracted to the subject, so make sure you come early to get a good seat. I hope the title of our talk on November 18th is not reflected by the weather that day as we shall be hearing about a trip 'Across Alaska in Winter'! Our last meeting this year will be our Christmas Social on December 2nd; details have still to be finalised but there will be food and the Red Lion Band as last year. (Note this event is on the first Monday of December)

November 2nd and 3rd is the date for the DVVHS Discovery Days at Cromford. There will be lots to do, free events for the children, and boat trips, hopefully horse drawn this time. This week end will also see the official launch of *Birdswood*. There will be another edition of *Portal* just before the event, which will have full details.



On 24th and 25th November we are again invited to Hugh Potter's house for the annual Pots 'n' Pix event to see some of the FCC Archive collection, and also admire the pottery made by Liz. This is a good chance to purchase some unique items for Christmas presents, or even treat yourself. Liz always makes a generous donation to FCC funds, so you will be helping us as well. This will also be the last chance to visit the FCC sales stand this year.

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

Mrs J Gardiner, Nottingham

Mr R Snell, Bordon, Hants

Mr A Webb, Heanor

Mr M Palmer, Polperro

Mr J R Curran, Heanor

Mr & Mrs T Blyth, Nottingham

Mr & Mrs W Scarle, Nottingham

Mrs B Bartles, Sheffield

Mr D A Williams, Ripley

Mr D M Pratt, Derby

Mr P J Parkin, Dorchester

Dr M & Miss L Longbottom, Ripley

Mr & Mrs P C Kirk, Alfreton

Mr A Lings, Nottingham

Mr & Mrs P Meakin, Nottingham

Mr & Mrs Boulton, Ilkeston

Mr B W Hollingworth, Ripley

Mrs N Thompson, Nottingham

Mr & Mrs F Luckcock, Nottingham

Mrs D Bartlam, Nottingham

Mrs B Bennett Banbury

MEMBERSHIP RATES

A good way to help the FCC is to recruit new members. Just to remind you, the membership rates are shown below. Also, anyone who is a UK taxpayer can use Gift Aid to increase the value of their subscription by 28 pence in the pound. Application forms are on the FCC website or contact Yvonne.

Individual: £7.00

Couples: £10.00

Corporate Business: £35.00

Life: £110.00

Life: £165.00

Corporate Charity: £17.00

WEBMASTER'S REPORT

by George Rogers

There's not all that much to write about this time around – it's been rather a busy year for me outside of the FCC (the small matter of my finals and a dissertation to write), but there has been one addition. We now have the skeleton of a new trip boat section on the website. I will be adding more to it as time progresses (and indeed may have done so by the time you read this), but in the meantime if anyone has information, photos or stories to tell about the boat, I would be very interested to hear about them. Incidentally, I should explain that I have referred to 'Trip Boat' in the website set up rather than 'Birdswood' to ensure that visitors to the site can find the relevant information easier without knowing about the boat in advance.

As always, I would welcome new ideas (or even old ones repeated to me).



LETTERS

Dear Sir/Madam,

It seems to me that the FCC is nothing more than a front for Narrowboat enthusiasts. Your Archivist Huge Potter, being the editor of Narrow Boat magazine is a case in point.

Your dreams of the canal being completely open to navigation will only serve to destroy the unique and pleasant environment that the canal has become to walkers and enthusiasts. The sound and smell of diesel engines belonging to the retired, the loss of habitat caused by dredging, the increased activity to support holiday homes and jobs etc, all so that those very same people can in their twilight years pass their time away.

And who has asked the people who walk the towpaths? Those who are not rich enough to own a narrowboat? Certainly not you and the people you represent. I myself have walked the canals that people of your ilk have "regenerated". They are bland, sterile and removed from nature. Just let them be (save for the odd trim). They are a relic of the past that needs preserving but not reinventing for the sake of the old, retired and those looking to thrive in the property market.

J Lockwood.

Hugh Potter replies:

Dear Mr Lockwood

I do wonder if you have ever seen NarrowBoat magazine. It is a purely historical magazine and has nothing to do with modern canal boating.

Also of the 850-plus members of the FCC I would take a guess that less than 10% are boat owners. The rest are those very people who, like yourself, are enthusiasts who walk the towpath.

And I wonder if you have walked the route of the canal between Langley Mill and Jacksdale or between Hartshay and Buckland Hollow for example. If you had, I doubt that you would call them a unique and pleasant environment. At present they are no more than reclaimed opencast land.

And the Stevenson's Dye Works site, on the line of the canal, is a total eyesore of half demolished factory that is a danger and a health hazard - surely you would not condone that. If you have not seen it, I do encourage you to see what can happen to an abandoned canal site.

The only section of the canal that fits your description is the top third from Ambergate to Cromford whose special nature as an SSSI must in any case be maintained by law, so we would not be allowed to 'destroy' it, as you suggest. Our work on it is all with the approval and encouragement of English Nature.

You rightly say that canals need preserving, but just how much do walkers and nature lovers contribute to the considerable expense of doing just that? In these days of restricted expenditure, someone has to foot the bill and only boaters and anglers contribute in any way to their upkeep.

I hope this has answered at least some of your points, which are my personal views, since you (incorrectly) named me in your email, and I thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention

Hugh Potter
Archivist, Friends of the Cromford Canal



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the *Birdswood* Project, the FCC have received materials and assistance from many sources, both companies and individuals. Some of these have been donated, others supplied at cost or less, and others supplied on a commercial basis. Without this support, this project would not have been possible. We are grateful to all concerned and would like to acknowledge the following with our thanks:

Iain Jones - Hull survey at Stone www.jonesmarinesurveys.co.uk

John Cook - Free mooring at Shardlow en route from Stone to Langley Mill.

Harry Arnold - Historic drawings and photographs www.waterwayimages.com

CFR srl - Electric motor www.cfritaly.com

ECS Engineering Services Ltd - Motor mounting bracket
www.ecsengineeringsservices.com/

Beard Engineering Ltd - Bracket machining www.beardengineering.co.uk

Curtis Instruments Ltd - Control gear www.curtisinst.co.uk

Powercell Ltd - Traction Batteries www.powercell.co.uk

Langley Mill Boatyard Ltd, Peter Newman - boatyard services.

Derby Road Langley Mill, Nottingham NG16 4AA

Steve Kemp Signwriter 219 Main Road, Westwood, Notts NG16 5JB

B & Q Langley Mill - Free supply of paint

Inland Waterways Association - Insurances

Jackie Young, Previous owner of *Birdswood* - information and advice

Maritime and Coastguard Agency - Hull

Derbyshire County Council - help and support, particularly financing the dredging

DEFRA - Providing financial assistance

Collins Earthworks Ltd., David Collins - additional dredging at High Peak Junction.

Walkers of Tuxford - Craneage and Transport www.walker-tuxford.co.uk

Ovation Boat Services, Chris Williams - Free gas system test

www.ovationboatservices.co.uk

Clowers Ltd, Ripley - sand for heeling test on a sale or return basis.

Kacee Carpets of Oakwood, Derby for supplying vinyl floor covering free.

www.kaceecarpets.com

The Arkwright Society, for continued help and cooperation. www.arkwrightsociety.org.uk

John and Hilary Liley - Public Address System

O. Heap and Sons - Fire extinguishers at a special discount

Asda Langley Mill - Mops, buckets etc free of charge. See page 8.

This list has been compiled from information available at the time of going to press, any additions or omissions will be corrected in the next issue - Ed.

Vounteers are always going to be vital for the success of the *Birdswood* project.

YOUR HELP IS NOW NEEDED,

**whether as trainee master, crew, catering, cleaning, maintenance, bookings,
publicity, customer liason or whatever is your interest**

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