

THE **PORTAL**



JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL



Registered Charity Number 1100700
Free To Members £1 When Sold

NUMBER 47

AUTUMN 2013



CONTENTS

Editorial	2
Washday at Cromford	3
Chairman's Notes	4
Members' Social Meetings	5
<i>Birdswood</i> Update.....	6
Passenger Comments	10
National Register of Historic Vessels	11
Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days.....	12
Pots 'N' Pix.....	12
Was Our Canal Once Longer?.....	14
Beeston Big Band	16
Doug Walking at Langley Mill.....	17
Volunteering	18
Waterway Recovery Group Work Camps	20
Webmaster's Report	22
Butterley Tunnel West Portal - Then and Now	23
Public Transport and The Cromford Canal	24
The Alison Uttley Walk	26
Trouble In T' Tunnel - Part 2	29
Membership Matters	32
Obituary - Trevor Robson.....	33
Facebook Feedback	33



FRONT COVER: Eric, Mike, Wendy and Beryl proudly displaying their new crew uniforms before setting off on the first passenger carrying trip on *Birdswood* from Cromford Wharf. See pages 6-8. Photo: Derick Spencer

BACK COVER: The Lavender Hill Mob? Seen on August Bank Holiday when *Birdswood* was being a static exhibit at Cromford. Apart from the crew in period costume entertaining the public on the boat, Sue Johnson was also giving a 1940's washday demonstration. See page 3. Photo: Mike Kelley

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. 47

Autumn is here once again and this will be the last issue of *Portal* in 2013 and marks the end of my sixth year as editor. This time last year the FCC were in the process of buying *Birdswood* and it has been a long and difficult period of intense activity since then to get us to the day when we carried passengers from Cromford for the first time.

Although this was achieved in late September, we are still not in a position to operate the boat to its full potential. As our chairman has explained in his notes, there are still serious problems caused by lack of depth and considerable weed growth. This has reduced the speed of the boat significantly, meaning that the intended schedule cannot yet be achieved. At the time of writing, passage is not possible beyond the swingbridge at High Peak Junction.

I do not intend to go into the rights and wrongs of the politics of this situation, or the efficiency or otherwise of the dredging operation, I will leave that to others. Suffice it to say that the FCC will be making every effort to rectify the problem by whatever means is within their power. What is very certain is that the first few weeks have already shown how popular the boat trips will be and, once these issues have been overcome, which they must be, the operation will go from strength to strength.

This will of course depend on the support of volunteers, as does any activity of the FCC. As George has outlined in his article on pages 18 - 19, there are many ways in which YOU can help the FCC achieve its aims. Not everything requires physical strength or any particular skill. ANYONE who is interested can contribute to the ultimate aim of restoring the canal for future generations to enjoy.

Val and I have just returned from a three-week boat trip. This involved, among others, the Leicester Section of the Grand Union Canal and the South Oxford Canal. Both of these are busy nowadays, but in the 1960's, both came very near to closure. This is not realised by today's boaters. In the 20th century, over 500 miles of British Canals, including the Cromford, were lost. Many of these have now been reopened entirely due to volunteer effort. And many more, also including the Cromford, will be restored in the 21st century.

This of course, as well as volunteer effort, requires a lot of money. We do not pretend that the Cromford Canal can be restored by volunteer fund raising alone. What is important, however, is that by having a presence with the sales stall at various events, holding social meetings, recruiting new members and operating the trip boat, what we are doing above all is attracting attention to the Cromford Canal. That is what will lead on to more of the sources of the serious money becoming interested.

Finally, let me be the first to wish you a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Be sure and come for a boat trip from Cromford in 2014!

The press date for the New Year 2014 issue will be January 17th.



WASHDAY AT CROMFORD WHARF

by the Editor



Editor

We were all very disappointed that *Birdswood* could not be ready to operate at Cromford over at August Bank Holiday, but it was decided that to cheer ourselves up the boat would provide a static exhibit. The public were invited on board and shown around the boat, including in the boatman's



Photos: Val Roberts



cabin, and much good publicity was obtained.

This was greatly helped by the crew dressing the part to try to give some idea of what life was like in the 1940's, when *Birdswood* would be in its heyday. See the motley collection of dubious characters on the back cover. Sue Johnson provided an excellent display of a typical washday scene from the period (above), whilst her husband Steve kept us all entertained with his wonderful wind-up gramophone (left).



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by Matthew Rogers



Summer has been and gone, and what a summer it has been for the FCC. After years of waiting, *Birdswood* is on the water and operational. My whole hearted congratulations to everyone who has played a role in achieving this fabulous feat, not least to Pat Morris who was instrumental in putting the society on the road to getting the grant from DEFRA without which it just wouldn't have been possible. I am not going to name names as I will miss someone, so just well done everyone! Please make every effort to come and enjoy a trip along the canal - you won't be disappointed.

The operation of *Birdswood* is, however, severely hampered due to the very limited extent of the dredging that was completed by Derbyshire County Council. The purchase and operation of the trip boat was based upon the understanding that the canal was to be dredged to provide a channel 4m wide by 1.2m deep. This would allow the boat to operate causing minimal disturbance to the silt and extend the period until further dredging would be required. In the end the contractors Ebsford Environmental achieved an average of only a 2.5 to 3m channel by 850mm deep, with the depth in places insufficient to allow the trip boat to even operate at all. Whilst significantly more silt was removed than in the original contract between DCC and Ebsford, it still leaves the FCC in a difficult situation. Where we can operate it we can only carry a maximum of 30 passengers and crew - not the 51 plus 3 crew that it is licensed to carry. The boat cannot be operated beyond the swing bridge at High Peak junction so we can't wind (turn the boat) and therefore are forced to travel in forward and reverse. Until we can wind, the opportunity to operate it as horse drawn is completely out of the question. We are currently working with DCC to try to resolve the issue and we will keep you informed of the progress, but for now we are trying to make the best of the situation but losing a significant proportion of the expected income.

On a brighter note, for all those of you that attended the Beeston Big Band evening organised by Gordon and Marjorie Harwood and Jim Corby - what a night! The band was fantastic, the hall was packed, great dancing and they raised a staggering £512.80. Well done to you all and here's to next year. Please see the full report later in the Portal from Howard Smith, Chairman of the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association and a great band enthusiast.

On the same theme I'm looking forward to meeting you all at the Christmas social on 2nd December. Once again we welcome back the Red Lion Band for a night of dancing and a Pie and Pea Supper. Places are limited so get in early to avoid disappointment! It was great to meet up with the Waterway Recovery Group earlier in the year. For me it was a meeting of old friends as many of them come back to Cromford year after year and each week was rounded off with a barbecue in my garden. We had two fantastic groups



and they have continued the work on the “gauging narrows” and approximately 300 metres of new footpath through Sawmills which will make the going much easier over the winter. Again please see the full report later in the *Portal* from George. Next year we are hosting them once again but hopefully at Ironville to commence the mammoth task of clearing the locks so that we can see just what needs to be done. However, before then there are a lot of discussions to be had with the various stakeholders and permissions to be gained.

Through a grant from DCC, we have been given a wonderful opportunity to work with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to develop the Cromford Canal Interpretation Project. This will consist of 8 to 10 posts between Cromford Wharf and High Peak Junction, each with a QR code (the square barcodes you see everywhere nowadays that you can read with a smartphone). This will take you to an audio link where you can listen to facts about the canal, the wharf and the wildlife. It is hoped to have everything in place by early spring 2014 so watch this space. If it is successful then there are already plans to extend this along further lengths of the canal.

As always there is a lot going on in the background and lots of people doing their bit to continue the work of the FCC. Please read the article from George later in the *Portal* regarding help. We really do need some more help to keep the momentum going. *Birdswood* should start to provide the income we so desperately need but we need more volunteers to do their bit. “Every little helps” as the slogan says – it really is true!

I look forward to seeing you all at the social evenings and at the Discovery Days events. Let’s all make the most of the autumn days as they draw in to enjoy the fabulous scenery and wildlife of the Cromford Canal. If you take any good photos please forward them to George – we are always looking for new shots for the gallery.

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 for the winter period.

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

- **November 18th** - ACROSS ALASKA IN WINTER - Andrew Heading
- **December 2nd** - CHRISTMAS SOCIAL - See below
- **January 20th** - FIFTY YEARS A RAILWAYMAN - Bill Devitt
- **February 17th** - THE GREAT WALL OF BUTTERLEY - An examination of the Butterley Furnaces - Tim Castledine
- **March 17th** - STEAM LOCOMOTIVE A1 TORNADO - Alexa Stott

THE FCC CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

including Pie & Pea Supper

will be held on **MONDAY 2nd DECEMBER**

at **Ironville Church Hall 7.30pm**

THE RED LION FOLK BAND WILL BE PERFORMING

Tickets £6 from Dave Ratner 01773 713174 or at the November Social



BIRDWOOD UPDATE

a progress report

from Mike Kelley,
Boat Operations Manager



PLAIN SAILING?!

You will have read in the last *Portal* that *Birdwood* arrived in the water at Cromford on July 27th, so all should be plain sailing now! Well no, not really. The arrival of *Birdwood* at Cromford Wharf was the end of the beginning. There was still a lot to do.

First we had to carry out boat trials; from which we found the canal to be too shallow to get the boat to the planned destination of High Peak Junction Pump-house. It soon became evident that the dredging of last winter had left the canal too shallow in places and/or choked with underwater weeds, so we could not reach the southern winding hole at the pump-house. Not only that but a coot had nested right in the middle of the turning circle we would need to wind the boat around. Regarding the coot there was nothing we could do but to sit and wait. Regarding the shallowness, Derbyshire County Council wardens agreed to a temporary solution; not a complete solution, but a partial one, which would and did help a little. With the aid of extra stop planks the level of the canal was raised, just a few inches, but enough to get us going. Even so, we could not turn the boat as planned; but she did reverse well. In fact she went better in reverse than any narrow boat I have ever been on. So we could go forward to near High Peak Junction and then reverse back to Cromford Wharf. So far so good.

Then we had to obtain all the required licences. I say 'all' because *Birdwood* herself needed a licence from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) to say she was up to the job of carrying passengers, then Derbyshire Dales District Council had to issue a passenger carrying licence. On top of this each of the four boat masters had to have their personal licence from the MCA; and none of this was cheap!

The boat was tested and retested in accordance with the MCA regulations and finally passed on the same day the boat masters were tested. The personal Boat Master's Licence was hard work, not unlike obtaining a bus driver's or HGV licence. I can only stand back here and say a big thank you to Eric Singleton (who together with his wife Beryl have been a major pillar of our society) Ian Hooker and Stephen Johnson, for their devotion and dedication to this project and taking on all the extra work to become Boat Masters of *Birdwood*. Such volunteers are priceless. The four of us had first to pass a full medical, and then practice, practice and practice. Not just handling such a big boat in shallow water, but all the safety and emergency procedures as well. All this had to be perfected. On the day of the test each man was given an hour and a quarter verbal test which was quite gruelling, and then each had to go through the winding, mooring and emergency procedures; all-in-all a nine hour test. So we were delighted when all four passed.

Saturday 28th September, saw Eric take the first fare paying passengers; and at last after years of hard work, we were up and running - just! Since then we have run three



PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT ACT 1907

LICENCE FOR PLEASURE BOATS AND VESSELS

Licence No: DDPB02

The DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL

being the local authority for the boating Cromford Canal as shown on the attached plan

HEREBY LICENCE for the period of one year from: 27 September 2013 to 26 September 2014. The Pleasure Boats or Vessels, belonging to:

Mr Mike Kelley

of 50 Beech Avenue Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 7EW and described as follows

No. of Passengers	Description	Name of Vessel or Boat	Length	Breadth
51	Narrow Boat	Birdwood		

To be let for hire, or to be used for carrying Passengers for hire subject to the following conditions, namely:

1. The number of passengers carried for hire shall not be greater than 51
2. The name of the owner and the number of persons the vessel is licensed to carry in the form "Licensed to Carry 51" is to be painted in letters and figures, not less than one inch in height and three quarters of an inch in breadth, on a conspicuous part of the said boat or vessel.

PLEASE SEE SCHEDULE OVERLEAF:

Date of issue: 27 September 2013

Signed: LICENSING AND ADMINISTRATION MANAGER (the officer appointed for this purpose)

NOTE: The local authority may suspend or revoke this Licence whenever they shall deem such suspension or revocation necessary or desirable in the interests of the public

Two certificates were required for the boat. The first was issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, for whom this is a regular occurrence. The other (shown above) by Derbyshire Dales District Council, for whom this was very rare!



days a week, on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday, with one charter trip on a Tuesday. The response from the public has been tremendous, overwhelming even; for the public are so delighted to see this historic narrow boat running along the Cromford Canal. Something they have waited long to see. Even though we cannot complete the trip as planned to High Peak Junction Pump-house, the public are never-the-less enjoying their trips along this beautiful stretch of water. The crew all have a new uniform of dark green tops, sporting the FCC's logo, and carrying the words, 'Birdswood Crew'.

Due to the canal's shallowness, at the time of writing we can only take up to thirty passengers, which is a big disappointment, as Birdswood is now licensed to carry fifty-one. Even so it is a two-hour trip along one of the country's most lovely canals at a very reasonable price of just £5 per adult, £4 for seniors and £2.50 for children. So come along and enjoy the peace and quiet, a wind-down from the hustle and bustle of life. To date people have come from all over the country and even Canada just to do that.

During October and November, we plan to operate two public return trips per day - 11.00am and 2.00pm - on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday. Each trip lasts approx two hours. Private charters will also be available by arrangement on other days.

These arrangements could be subject to change due to weather and other circumstances, so it is always advisable to check on the number below before travelling.

**For all trip boat enquiries use our dedicated phone no. 07552 055455
or email: mgkelley@hotmail.com**



Editor

Take a trip back in time on the tranquil waters of the Cromford Canal



ABOVE: The first load of paying passengers on board at Cromford Wharf....
BELOW:...and setting off on the first trip with Eric Singleton in command.

Photos: Derick Spencer





BIRDSWOOD PASSENGER COMMENTS

The following feedback, collated by *Birdswood* Operations Manager Mike Kelley, has been received from passengers during the first few operational trips.

What aspects of your cruise along the canal have you enjoyed?

- The commentary by the volunteer lady and the mine of information too
- All of it - (several said this)
- The scenery - (several said this)
- The wildlife and the views - (several said this)
- Peace and tranquillity - (more people said this than anything else)
- To hear a little of the history of the canal. This was well done.
- A very interesting and relaxing trip
- Looking at the wildlife and enjoying the peace
- The history and the wildlife - (several said this)
- Novelty, closeness to the water, the talk about history
- A nice gentle trip, a different angle, very interesting info with time to chat.
- Enjoyed seeing the back cabin
- The sunlight dappling over the water - beautiful in the autumn and so quiet
- I enjoyed the slower pace of life
- Ducks, swans, and history commentary - (several said this)
- All of it and the helpful volunteers

What aspects of the cruise could be improved?

- No need for improvements, it was all so lovely (several said this)
- Hot drinks and snacks - (several said this)
- A tea machine please
- To extend the route of the canal and go a bit further
- Stop at High Peak Junction
- Speed, too slow - (several said this)
- Council need to dredge it properly - (many said this)
- More publicity
- Period costumes
- Padding on the wooden side rail as it sticks in ones shoulder
- The option to walk back

Any other comments?

- Refreshments are good value
- Very good value for money - (many said this)
- Thank you to all the people who have given all their time and effort
- Introduce horse drawn boat
- Job well done
- A really enjoyable day
- Seats are comfortable but the sides are hard and pokey!
- Very nice to see a canal boat back at Cromford
- Afternoon tea and cakes would be very welcome - (several said this)
- Well done on all the hard work, thank you - (several said this)
- Very good value for money



BIRDSWOOD'S HISTORIC STATUS CONFIRMED

Shortly after the transport of *Birdswood* at Cromford, I applied to National Historic Ships UK for the boat to be included in the National Register of Historic Vessels.

I am pleased to say that this application was successful and I have now received the certificate below which confirms the boat's registration number as 2730. *Ed.*

For full details of *Birdswood's* entry, together with information on many other interesting historic craft of a great variety of types, visit:

www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk

National Historic Ships UK

*The official voice for historic
vessels in the United Kingdom*

This is to certify that

Birdswood

Length Overall: 70.17 feet (21.39m)

Built: 1938

Builder: Yarwood, W J & Sons Ltd, Northwich

has been identified as meriting inclusion
in the National Register of Historic Vessels
of the United Kingdom

National Historic Ships UK

Date *03 September 2013* Certificate Number *2730*



DISCOVERY DAYS 2013

by Hugh Potter

Each year, at Cromford Wharf, we showcase the activities of the Friends of the Cromford Canal as part of the **Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days**. We will be 'on show' in the ground floor of the Gothic Warehouse on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd November.

Inside we will have our sales stall, slide shows of archive photographs plus recent work on the canal, a tombola, traditional boat painting and peg loom weaving demonstrations, and canal watercolour paintings for sale. Outside we will have our popular hand-turned street organ, miniature traction engines, model boat displays, Wild Over Waterways activities for younger visitors, and the opportunity to have a go at canoeing on the canal or try out a climbing wall with professional instructors.

Best of all this year we will be offering - for the first time at Discovery Days - BOAT TRIPS ON BOARD *BIRDSWOOD*

As you will read elsewhere in this issue, the start of the trip boat operation has not been without its problems, but these are being overcome. In addition to the public trips, there will be an official launch ceremony on Sunday 3rd. VIP's will gather on *Birdswood* from 12.00 noon, with the cutting of a ribbon across the canal from the boat at 1.00pm.

So, all in all we are expecting a busy weekend and we need extra volunteers to help out. Can you spare an hour or two to lend a hand to promote the FCC? Whether it's for a day or just an hour, we need more volunteers, and there are plenty of different things you could help out with.

Absolutely no special skills are required! If you can spare any time over that weekend please contact co-ordinator Hugh Potter on 01773 852009 or hugh.p@virgin.net.

POTS 'N' PIX

An invitation from our Archivist, Hugh Potter

The annual exhibition of the Cromford Canal Archives at our house by the towpath at Ambergate will take place on 23rd & 24th November this year. You will be very welcome to call in on either day between 11am and 5pm to browse through the extensive archives, watch a slide show of old photographs of the canal, and do some Christmas shopping - the FCC Sales Stand will be there as well. As usual Liz Tatam will also have a display of her pottery for sale. New for this year are yarn bowls to keep balls of wool under control - an ideal present for knitters.

Do come and join us for a cup of tea or glass of wine at Bankfield, Chase Road, Ambergate, Belper DE56 2HA. And if there is anything particular from the archives that you would like to see, or if you need directions, do drop me an email or call (details above or on inside front cover).



World Heritage Site

DISCOVERY DAYS

26th October to 3rd November



Lots to discover by the Cromford Canal on 2nd and 3rd November

Canal Boat Trips

10am to 4pm at Cromford Wharf. Bookings can be made on 07552 055455. After a gap of 20 years, boat trips are returning to the Cromford Canal and this will be one of the first opportunities to take a 2 hour return trip to Leewood Pumphouse.

Celebrating the Cromford Canal

10am to 4pm in the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf, see the Exhibition and demonstrations of Rose & Castle painting, peg weaving and a historical slide show. There's a tombola, the extensive Friends of Cromford Canal sales stand, and watercolour paintings for sale.



Activities for Young and Old at the Cromford Canal

10am to 4pm at Cromford Wharf. No need to book, just call in. Miniature traction engines in steam and demonstrations on the canal by Nottingham Model Boat Club. For the younger folk, there will be canoeing along the canal and the ever-popular climbing wall. There will also be the Wild over Waterways (WoW) activities with a host of different things to try. And look out for the World Heritage Site Team stand, with activities and the launch of our new augmented reality apps.

High Peak Junction Railway Workshop

Open from 11am to 3pm, with free hourly tours. Come and see Dave the Blacksmith working the High Peak Junction forge, and demonstrating his smithy's skills. He'll even help you to have a go yourself. Find out about **Woodland Skills** and have a go at them too. While you're down there pop over the canal to see the marvellous **Leewood Pumphouse** in action!



To book an event or find out where to pick up a programme ring 01629 536831

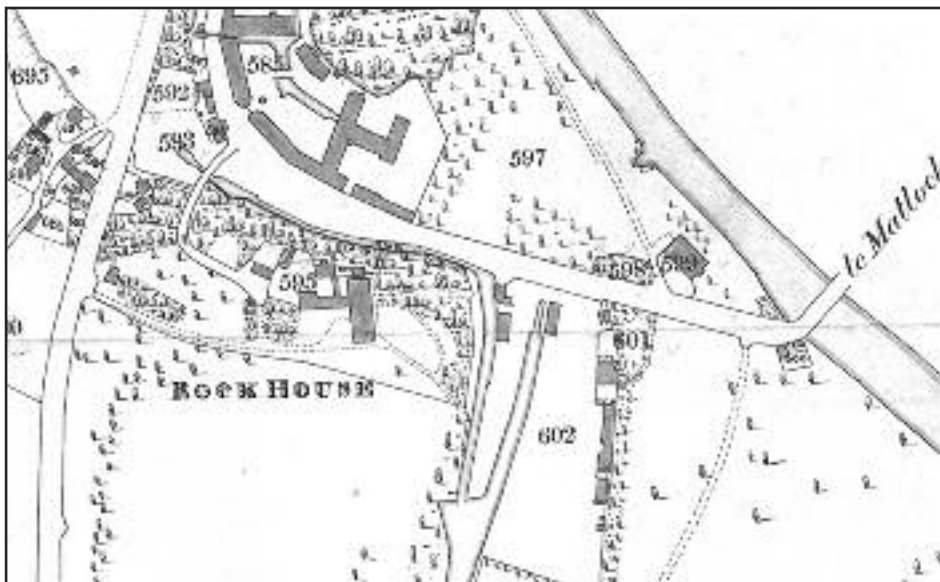


WAS OUR CANAL ONCE LONGER?

FCC Archivist Hugh Potter thinks the canal may have once extended beyond the present wharf at Cromford

When the Cromford Canal was built, it terminated in a single basin at Cromford, adjacent to what we now know as the 'Gothic' Warehouse (the one adjacent to the car park). The second basin was built some time later, and now 'peters' out into a feeder arm which supplies water from across the road at Arkwright's mill. But was this feeder once navigable? Evidence on the ground today suggests not; it is far too narrow and the bend looks too tight.

However, take a look at the tithe map of 1841 reproduced below. The channel appears to continue around the corner, follow the road, then pass under the drive to Rock House to end at a small basin (by no. 593 on the map).



We know from the Canal Company minutes that, at a special Meeting of the Committee held at the Blackmoors Head Inn, Nottingham, on 19th November 1819:

"Mr Benj. Pidcock having applied for permission to make a branch from the Canal on Cromford Wharf to his Stone Quarry at Cromford thro' Mr Arkwright's Land and having provided an estimate of the expense of making that part of it which will lead from the Canal near Mr Peter Arkwright's Boathouse to Mr Wheatcroft's Counting House amounting to £250 and undertaking at his own expense to make and complete the whole of the proposed Cut and to erect such a fence as Mr Arkwright shall require and in all respects to perform the work to the satisfaction of the Agent of the Company on receiving £130 from the Coy. towards such expense, Resolved that the Committee accede to the proposal made by Mr Pidcock agreeably to Mr Martin's plan, and as staked out by him on condition that the intended cut be used by Mr Pidcock for no other purpose than the conveyance of limestone. The said £130 to be paid at the time of the completion of the said cut, and on Mr Arkwright's conveying the land to the Coy. which shall be given by him towards forming the said Canal."



Then, on 9th December 1819

“Resolved that Mr Gell is requested to negotiate and settle with Mr Arkwright instead of Benj. Pidcock as to the terms on which the proposed Branch from the Canal on the Cromford Wharf to his Stone Quarry at Cromford shall be made.”

But frustratingly we hear no more.

According to local historian Doreen Buxton, the quarry mentioned was behind what is now called the mill manager's house on Mill Lane. An employee of the Colour Works, which used the mill site for many years, claimed that when a hole was being dug in the garden behind the house, evidence of a wharf was found. That implies that there was a bridge for the canal under the drive to Rock House, just as it appears on the Tithe map.

So was this once a navigable channel? It hardly looks big enough for full size (70ft by 7ft) narrow boats, but it could just have been. However, Simon Stoker, former manager of the canal for the erstwhile Cromford Canal Society, says that the narrows at the entrance to the feeder arm (close to Arkwright's boathouse) was not deep enough to take a loaded boat. The passenger boat John Gray could only just squeeze through, and the bottom was solid rock suggesting that this had never been deeper.

So, the 'extension' to our canal must remain a mystery for the moment – but do Friends have any other thoughts on the subject?

Following the arrival of the FCC trip boat Birdswood, we have been giving this second arm of the canal at Cromford Wharf more attention. Although very narrow because the minimum of digging in the solid rock would have been done when the arm was made, following the recent dredging it is once again navigable (just!). The awning over this arm at the back of the second warehouse, which is now the Wharf Cafe, provides a very convenient sheltered mooring for the boat. When standing on the boat roof under the awning, I saw some very interesting historic evidence of boating activity. On several of the wooden beams which support the awning, there are a large number of small holes which I had not previously noticed. See below. These will have been made over many years by the boatmen using the pointed end of their hook shafts to manoeuvre the narrow boats alongside the warehouse. This proves that boats regularly reached at least this far up the arm and the existing crane also suggests they were loaded and unloaded here. Ed.



Stab marks on the canopy support beam caused over many years by the boatmen's hook shafts.

Editor



BIG BAND NIGHT

by Howard Smith



“Ain’t that a shame”. That is what a line of a song says! The shame is, that many members missed one of the best nights at Ironville Church Hall. “Beeston Big Band” gave us a night to remember.

It was a full house from the beginning. Seventeen band members giving it some welly! Quickstep, Foxtrot, Waltz. You name it and it was played. Glen Miller, Beatles and all the tunes we remembered. Nostalgia was thick in the air. Billy Ternent, Ambrose and many others were remembered, and what joy to see people up dancing from the beginning.

I can only hope this is only the first and not the last we hear this kind of music. If there is another, then you will have to join the queue for the tickets. Happy listening. And well done to all!

Photos: Matthew Rogers





DOUG WALKING

by Matthew Rogers (with a little help from Hugh Potter)

On 3rd October it was an honour to welcome Doug Hamilton-Cox to the Cromford Canal. He has been raising funds for Help for Heroes for 7 years and in that time has raised more than £70,000. Over the years his walks have got longer and longer until, after his John O'Groats to Land's End walk in 2011, he wondered "What next?" His answer was to walk every canal in Britain, and he is well on his way to achieving that aim.

Beginning in January 2012, he has been working his way up and down the country and is close to achieving his aim - in fact he is diligently searching for the smaller canals that he may have missed and he challenged the Waterways World Consultant Editor (our very own Hugh Potter) to come up with some new ideas. Well, there is always the Compstall Navigation . . .

Once he has exhausted the canals of England, Wales and Scotland, he plans to cross to Ireland to walk its extensive waterway system.

I met up with Doug at Langley Mill where we were joined by Howard Smith, Chairman of the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association (Doug completed the Erewash Canal earlier this year) and Eric Singleton of the FCC Sales team.

After a few words Doug, Eric and I set off to walk the Cromford Canal taking in the Portland Basin. We left it at Ambergate due to heavy rain but Doug will be returning next year to complete the Cromford Canal and Pinxton and Lea Arms before he's off to visit our neighbours at Chesterfield and the Derby & Sandiacre.

Interestingly, of his many walking projects the canal walks have generated more than any others, the donations for these now standing at over £21,000.

You can check out his progress at www.dougwalking.co.uk, where details of how to donate are also given. And if you have any ideas for waterways he may have missed he'll be pleased to hear from you.



Eric, Doug, Howard and
Matthew at Langley Mill

Matthew Rogers



VOLUNTEERING - HOW YOU CAN HELP

by George Rogers

It's not all meetings and shovels...(aka 'how else can you volunteer for the FCC?')

There is a common misconception that to volunteer for a canal restoration organisation you either have to spend your evenings cooped up in committee meetings or your weekends with a shovel. But whilst you can do that (and indeed, many people do - some people even do both!), there are a myriad of other ways you can help out.

I asked each member of the current committee how they thought outside volunteers could be of help to them: which role could YOU fill?

I'll start with my own area of 'expertise': the website. You might like to take on the role of managing the FCC's output on social media through Facebook and Twitter (which we've not yet joined), or you could simply take your camera to canal events or work parties and capture them for our online audience. You could write news articles, historical interpretation pieces, or features about the canal today. Perhaps you would like to expand our Chairman's walks currently appearing in the *Portal* or even plot out the current ones on GPS. You could also get involved in the technical side of the website - looking into new technology, beta-testing new sections of the website and proofreading articles.

Recent focus in the Friends has been surrounding the boat. *Birdswood* is always looking for more crew and eventually more Masters. How about offering to clean the boat once a month, or making new cushions! You might be prepared to sit at Cromford Wharf whilst the boat is on a trip and take bookings and hand out leaflets.

What about the history of the canal - and the archives? Our archivist is always on the lookout for volunteers to transcribe typed or handwritten documents from the canal's past, or perhaps you'd like to go on a treasure hunt to the local record offices and archives. What else can you dig up about the canal online or by talking to people in your community?

How about the *Portal* itself? Apart from our Editor's standard plea for articles, the job of actually sending the magazine out is somewhat tedious - currently our Membership Secretary spends several evenings putting stamps and labels onto envelopes before filling them with the magazine. Perhaps you'd like to help with that - many canal societies have 'magazine stuffing' evenings where a group get together. If you couldn't come along yourself, perhaps you'd like to bake a cake to keep them going!!

And talking of cake - work parties. They always say that an army marches on its stomach, and the same is certainly true of Navvies. Even if you can't help out with the shovel, you can support those who do. If you fancy the fresh air, how about coming and standing with a work party for a few hours and talking to passersby about the work and the Friends. You could help us to obtain tools, equipment and storage by helping with grant writing or plain old bartering with the DIY store. Then there's the background planning of work parties and camps - you don't have to take it all on yourself but a team together could look much further ahead. How about taking 'ownership' of a section of canal and keeping it tidy and free of litter?

Doing any work on the canal ultimately requires money - how could you help raise it? Our sales stand is out and about regularly, but we are increasingly finding that they are needed in too many places at once. How about helping out on the stand or taking a small version out yourself? If you can't do that, how about spending time looking for new products and trying to drive down prices! You could even donate your books and bric-a-brac?



Away from sales, money is also raised at our social evenings – do you know an interesting speaker? Or have you got tales to tell yourself? What about following in Gordon and Marjorie Harwood's footsteps, and organising a fundraiser for the Friends? A village coffee morning, a sponsored walk or abseiling the Grand Canyon - every bit helps us towards our eventual goal. It would be excellent to set up a group of volunteers who could look to putting on some larger events as well, how would you like to be involved in that? You could help at existing events, such as the Discovery Days festival – more from Hugh Potter elsewhere in the magazine!

Looking further ahead means planning. Always a dark art, perhaps you have experience in the area? Or if not then perhaps you have professional skills you could donate to the Friends - legal, engineering, business, finance, publicity, management, volunteer coordination, heritage, ecology, sociology, art and design... the list is endless!

The list and suggestions here are by no means exhaustive - if something isn't listed that you think you could help with, please get in touch. It isn't that we don't want you, it is simply that we haven't yet thought about it!

On the WRG camp last year, and indeed again this year, the WRGies collectively gave over 2000 volunteer hours to the canal. The committee and current volunteers collectively give even more each year. But if every member gave an hour a month, we'd quadruple the time spent on the canal over the next year. And that could only be good.

Please think about how YOU could help...



Michael Golds Collection

...and also think yourself lucky that things have changed a bit in canal volunteering in the last forty years. The picture above shows myself and Michael Golds in the chamber of Langley Bridge Lock in 1972. Michael had just persuaded me that it was essential that I crawl through the ground paddle culvert to clear it out. This I duly did, much to the entertainment of all concerned. Needless to say, it was full of the most foul-smelling gunge I have ever experienced. The same afternoon, we got (relatively) clean to meet the MP Jeremy Thorpe and take him for a boat trip to promote restoration of the canal, before retiring to the Great Northern. But we were all young and foolish in those days - Ed.



WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP SUMMER WORK CAMP (PART 2)

by George Rogers

At the time the last issue of *Portal* went to press, members of the Waterway Recovery Group were 4 days into a two week camp working on the Sawmills gauging narrows. They were focussing on re-surfacing the towpath along that stretch, and continuing the rebuilding works at the same time. That was Wednesday - oh, how things can change!



Hugh Potter

Work continuing at Sawmills
ABOVE: Removing soil prior to laying a new stone surface on the towpath.
BELOW: The now familiar stone work at the Gauging Narrows.



Hugh Potter



On Thursday, I visited a new set of jobs that was proposed to us by Rick Jillings of Derbyshire County Council. He had three lots of fencing, some bank protection and a few other miscellaneous jobs he thought we might like to look at – ‘If we weren’t too busy’. A quick site visit, some new paperwork, and all of a sudden the Week Two campers were split over two sites.



At High Peak Junction, half of the group did sterling work replacing the fencing around the outlet from Leawood Pump House (above). They also started work on replacing the rotten fencing along the bridge over the stream that flows out of the canal opposite the pump house – but true craftsmanship (and who can deny that the three way, angled dove tail joints, come under that heading) takes time so only the former was completed.

In addition, I borrowed three of the HPJ group for 2 days of depth surveying the dredged canal between HPJ and Cromford Wharf (right). The drudgery of measuring the depth at over 1000 points was lifted by the hilarity of manning the boat with a broken oar and an inelastic tape measure connecting it to the bank.





At Sawmills, the towpath was duly finished and inspected by Juliette Stevens whose money had funded the work (see below). She was suitably impressed with both the towpath and walling works – how different the whole area looks now compared to when we started in 2009.

My thanks to all who made it happen, I won't name names as I always manage to leave someone out! WRG will hopefully be back in 2014 - we have big ambitions, so watch this space!



WEBMASTERS REPORT

from George Rogers

Not a lot to report on this time round – I've made some tweaks to the trip boat section on the website and filled out some of the content (and I hope you like the new header photo!), but aside from that its all been a bit mundane. I would be grateful for any feedback, particularly on the trip boat section as we move forward into boat operations!

With a different hat on, I am planning to run a books and bric a brac stall at Discovery Days. Any contributions will be gratefully received.



THE WEST PORTAL OF BUTTERLEY TUNNEL NEARLY 50 YEARS OF 'PROGRESS'?



Derek Gittings

TOP: An unofficial expedition into Butterley Tunnel in 1964 aboard a wooden dinghy which had been launched into the water retained by the stop planks. If the attractive stonework of the west portal looks familiar, it is from this point in 1908 that the photo was taken which is used as the basis of the FCC logo.

RIGHT: What passes for the same portal today. The stonework was engulfed in concrete when the A38 was built, effectively lengthening the tunnel for the second time in its history. The tunnel is gated off these days, although apparently unlocked when this photo was taken.



Hugh Potter



PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE CROMFORD CANAL

by Hugh Potter

An increasing number of people are turning 'green', leaving their cars at home, and travelling instead by public transport. With that in mind, I thought I'd take a look at how you can access the Cromford Canal by bus and train, not only to get to it, but also to plan one-way walks.

The situation is not straightforward, but I hope the map opposite will help. There are basically two networks with a 'dividing line' at the Derwent/Erewash watershed, which the canal penetrates by Butterley Tunnel. One network is around the Derwent Valley between Cromford and Ambergate; the other is around the Erewash Valley to the east of the tunnel. These are tenuously linked via the hourly 143/4 service.

West of the tunnel the popular DCC length of canal is served by both the Derwent Valley rail line from Derby and the Transpeak bus which runs between Derby and Buxton, with some journeys extending all the way to Manchester. The train serves the canal only at Cromford, Whatstandwell and Ambergate, whilst the Transpeak offers more frequent stops allowing you, for example, to alight near High Peak Junction. Both services are hourly except on Sundays when the train is only every 2 hours.

On the north side of the canal the 140 and 141 offer an hourly service with stops near to Cromford Wharf and High Peak Junction car park before continuing to Crich (for the Tramway Museum). The 141 continues to Bullbridge where it crosses the canal again. The 144 runs from Crich via Whatstandwell to Ambergate and the 143 comes up from Belper to Ambergate. Then between them they offer an hourly service alongside the canal with convenient stops at Bullbridge, Buckland Hollow and Lower Hartshay before terminating at Ripley.

There is no Sunday service on the 141, 142, 143 or 144.

At Ripley you can link with buses towards the east of the tunnel. The Rainbow 1 will take you to Langley Mill and on to Nottingham via Eastwood every half hour, even on Sunday. A 'different' Rainbow 1 links Pye Bridge to Eastwood hourly (not Sundays). Both the 90 and the 9.3 go from Ripley to the Midland Railway Centre at Butterley, close to Butterley Reservoir and on the line of the tunnel. The 90 then goes hourly to Pinxton via Ironville and Jacksdale whilst the 9.3 goes every half hour to Pinxton (not Sundays).

Langley Mill station has an hourly service to Nottingham and Sheffield and is on the main London to Leeds line, but only a few of the long-distance trains stop there.

With so many different bus companies operating in the area, the Derbyshire Wayfarer ticket offers a good way to access all buses at any time and all trains (after 9am) in the area. You can get all bus timetable information at www.derbybus.info.

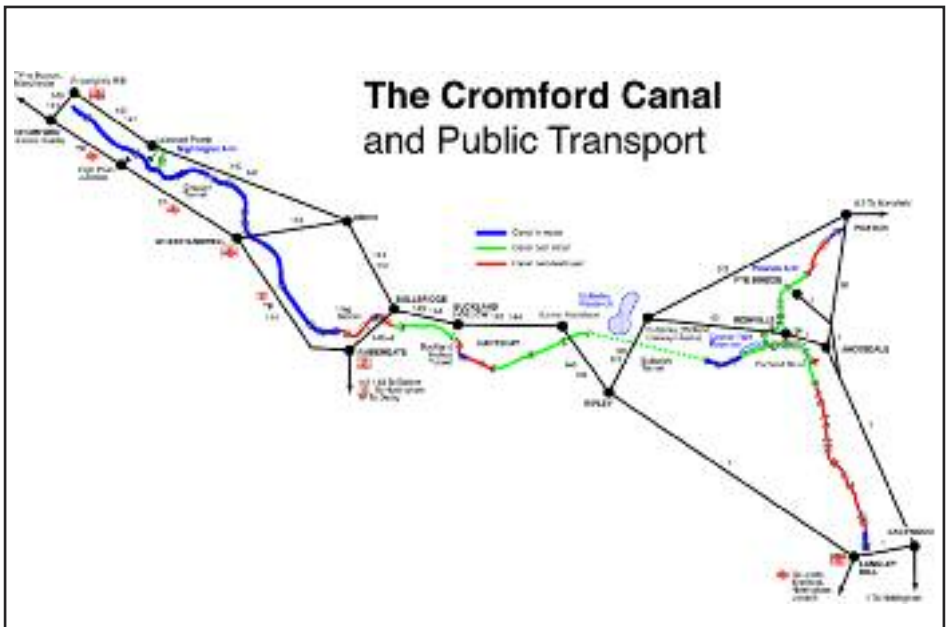
So that's it in summary, see also the table opposite. Some of the stops/stations can be a short distance from the canal (especially at Cromford and Ambergate) so prior research can save time and walking! I find that Google Maps are excellent for showing bus stops and often have timetable information at the click of the mouse.

The one thing that does stand out is that Sunday is a no-go day for many services! I hope you find this useful and that you will write to the Editor and tell him of your experiences of exploring the canal by public transport.

And don't forget to pack your copy of the Walker's Guide so you don't get lost between the bus stops! If you are not yet the owner of a copy of this very useful booklet, it is readily available from the FCC Sales Department be it at the monthly Ironville meetings or anywhere else the Sales Stand attends or indeed by post.



Number	Between	Canal Link Points	Frequency	Operator
1	Alfreton & Nottingham	Pye Bridge, Jacksdale	2 per hour	Trent Barton
1	Ripley & Nottingham	Langley Mill	2 - 4 per hour	Trent Barton
9.3	Mansfield & Derby	Pinxton	2 per hour	Trent Barton
90	Mansfield & Derby	Jacksdale, Ironville	Hourly	Trent Barton
140	Matlock & Alfreton	Cromford, Lea Bridge	Every 2 hours	Your Bus
141	Matlock & Ripley	Cromford, Lea Bridge, Bullbridge	Every 2 hours	Your Bus
142	Alfreton & Nether Heage	Ambergate, Bullbridge	Every 2 hours	Your Bus
143	Ripley & Belper	Ambergate, Bullbridge, Buckland Hollow, Hartshay	Every 2 hours	Doyles
144	Crich & Ripley	Whatstandwell, Ambergate, Bullbridge, Buckland Hollow, Hartshay	3 per day	Doyles
TP	Manchester, Buxton & Derby	Cromford, Whatstandwell, Ambergate,	Hourly	High Peak





In 2010, the FCC sales team were given a box of secondhand books to sell on the stall to raise funds. Amongst these were five first editions by local author Alison Uttley. Although I for one had not heard of Alison Uttley at the time, our archivist Hugh Potter pointed out that these were of much greater value than your average donated book. They were subsequently sold by auction and raised a very useful sum. See Portal 33 page 22.

I have recently been sent the following description of a circular walk which takes in part of the Cromford Canal and passes Castle Top Farm, Alison Uttley's birthplace. Ed.

THE ALISON UTTLEY WALK

by Valerie Shaw

This walk is very steep most of the way and not suitable for the disabled.

Approximately 4 miles - 2 hours

Alison Uttley was born on December 17th 1884 at Castle Top Farm, which even today can only be reached by a narrow steep road. Cromford and the surrounding area would have been very familiar to Alison and part of the walk is that which Alison regularly took to go to school at Lea.

Cromford Wharf & Canal

Start the walk from here and head off along the towpath to High Peak Junction and Leawood Pumping Station. Look for water voles and water fowl along the way.

Pass over Wigwell Aqueduct and follow the path to your left and look for the ruins of Aqueduct cottage on your right. This was the home of the lock keeper who controlled the traffic between the canal and the Lea Arm.

Lea Arm & Lea Wood

You are now on the Lea Arm. Follow the path through Lea Wood to the wharf at what was the Hat Factory. Look for the iron ring in the ground where the crane operated to unload the boats. Also see the photos on the post just above it.

Shortly after here turn left onto the narrow path with a high stone wall on your left.

Follow path to the end and turn right. You will now reach a road and turn right to head up the hill to Lea Bridge. Approaching the buildings look for the farm gate on your left (below)



Valerie Shaw

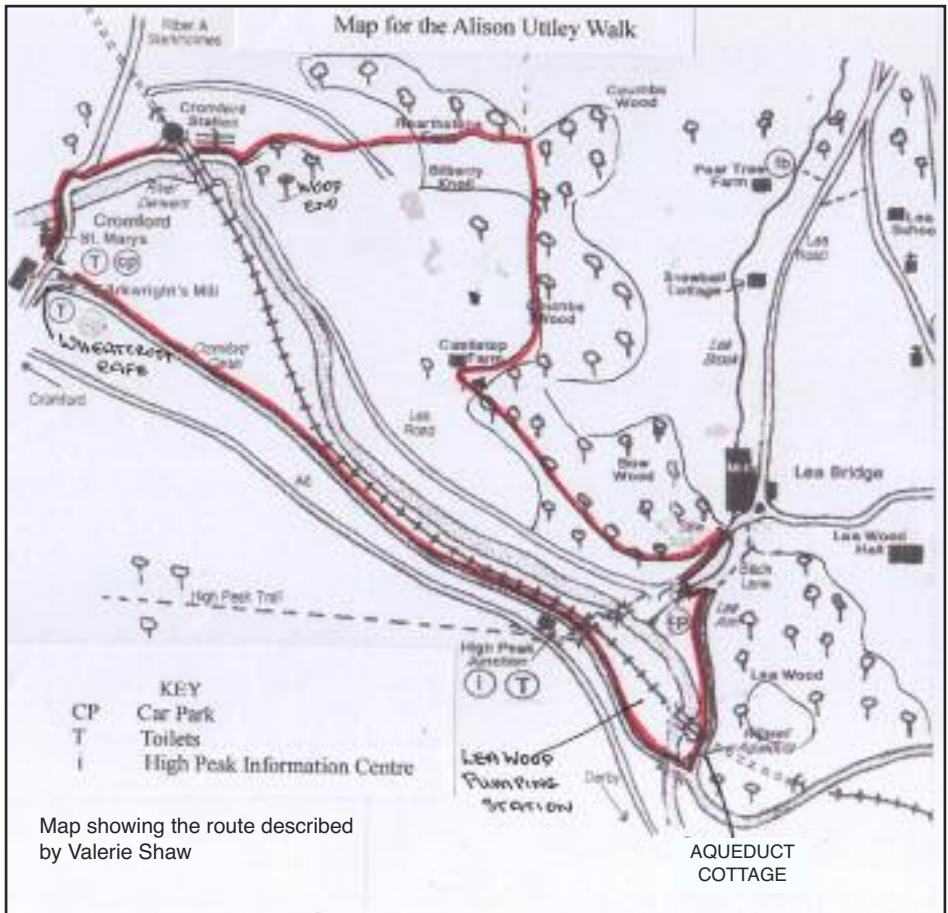


across the road. This leads into Bow Wood, but it is worth going on a few yards to see the now derelict workers' cottages on your left and the bridge over the road linking Smedley's factory. The cottages on the right used to be a hospital for the workers.

Bow Wood

Return to the gate into the wood, keeping to the main track all the way. This would have been wide enough to take coal drays from Lea Wharf. You can still see the stones laid to help the horses. A steep climb but worth it as you emerge from the wood and see the view over the Cromford valley.

Pass Sunny Bank Cottage on your right and come out onto a steep road. Turn right, this leads to Castle Top Farm which is privately owned and not open to the public. Shortly you will see a blue plaque for Alison Uttley on a wall to your right.



Castle Top Farm

Turn right here and head up the track running along the bottom of the farm. Follow the track as it rises steeply and you now have a view of the farm to your left. Carry on through the gate and into the field. Follow the track and look over to your left at the stone barn. This is where the seasonal farm labourers lived when working on the farm. Keeping



to the track, look for the stone gate posts with the arrow bench marks for measuring height above sea level. There is a welcome seat at the top of the field from which you can see Willersley Castle, Cromford Canal & Meadows, Black Rocks and Alport Heights.

Coumbs Wood

Enter Coumbs wood and follow the path straight ahead. After a short distance there is a path off to your left, follow this dropping down through the wood to open fields. Cross the first field and over the stone stile. Go straight across the gravel road and continue down the next field heading for the stile into Wood End.

A steep path but with good steps will bring you out onto the road just before the railway bridge. Turn right and go under the bridge. It is worth going up the steps to your right to look at the renovated Cromford station buildings. Turn back and follow the road to get back onto the main road. Willersley Castle is on your right just before the bridge.

The Bridge

Built in the 15th C, one of the oldest in England, alongside it are a fishing temple and the remains of a bridge chapel. Look for the plaque relating the story of The Leap, June 1697.

The Church

St Mary's contains the tomb Sir Richard Arkwright who was responsible for much of Cromford as it is today.

Cross the road and return to the car park at the Wharf.

Useful information

Cromford SK295.567

Cromford sits astride the A6 Matlock to Derby road, less than one mile south of Matlock Bath, 16 miles north of Derby and 11 miles west of junction 28 on the M1.

At the traffic lights at Cromford turn onto Mill Lane. Cromford Mill is on your left and just past there Cromford Wharf car park is on your right.

There are regular bus and train services to Cromford.

Bus Line 0871 200 22 33 Train info 08457 48 49 50

Toilets

Cromford Wharf Cromford Mill High Peak Junction

Find out more

Sir Richard Arkwright's Cromford Mill

www.arkwrightsociety.org.uk

Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

www.derwentvalleymills.org

Leawood Pumping Station

www.middleton-leawood.org.uk

Cromford Wharf - Boat trips on FCC's ***Birdswood***

Contact 07552 055455

Eat

Wheatcroft's Wharf Cafe, Cromford Wharf

Contact 01629 825995

Mill Restaurant, Cromford Mill

Contact 01629 825995

Stay

The Greyhound Hotel

Contact 01629 822551

Market Place, Cromford

www.greyhoundhotelcromford.co.uk

Shop

Masson Mills Shopping Village

www.massonmills.co.uk

Scarthin Books & Cafe

The Promenade

Contact 01629 823272

Cromford

www.scarthinbooks.com

Evening entertainment

Run of the Mill Folk Dance Club meet at the Florence Nightingale Hall, Holloway

2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7.30 to 10.00 and welcomes visitors. Details 01773 747850



The article researched by Dave Ratner and published in the *Portal* 45 concerning the efforts of the Midland Railway Company to maintain Butterley Tunnel provoked the following response from our former chairman Patrick Morriss:

Mike

As I have said the last *Portal* was once again top of its class. It is widely respected and in the past I have tried to be factual in any of my articles and if I was unsure I would qualify any assumptions. There are one or two issues with the tunnel article however.

1. A "Blow George" is not a type of scaffolding or staging, it's a form of ventilation. A Blow George is an implement used in fire lighting. It consists of an iron or steel plate with either a rectangular opening or holes drilled into the lower half. It is held against the surround of an open fire and accelerates the chimney draw, significantly increasing the efficiency of fire lighting. It is an application of the venturi effect. The implement was named after George Atkinson of Askrigg. Atkinson applied similar principles to mine shaft ventilation, and later to steam engines, and referred to the device as a "Blow George".

2. It's not a padlock hole, it's a Putlog Hole i.e. a hole in brickwork that takes one end of the horizontal scaffolding pole when only one vertical leg is in use.

3. I do not think that Oakes & Co. had anything to do with the Tunnel Widehole.

I've no doubt that after a few months of this you'll wish I was a busy chairman again rather than a pedantic member!

Pat Morriss

Not at all, Pat. It is always good to receive comments from you or indeed any other reader. Ed.

Dave Ratner's response was as follows:

Hi Mike,

Comments re comments re *Portal* article.

'Blow George', is a term I had not come across until reading the MR correspondence. A session with Google failed to find any enlightenment so I (incorrectly) took it to be part of the staging.

'Padlock', this should have had (sic) after it as that is how it was typewritten in the transcribed correspondence. During my time in the building trade 'Putlog' was also referred to as putlock, pudlock or pudlog, my foreman referred to them as 'notch 'oles'.

The reference to Oakes & Co, instead of Outram & Co., was merely the folly of proof reading at two o'clock in the morning.

The foregoing has been corrected in my records and I look forward to more corrections for future articles.

Regards, Dave R

Dave now continues his report on the state of Butterley Tunnel after closure to regular boat traffic. This has been painstakingly gleaned from various archive material dating from the time of Midland Railway ownership of the canal:

TUNNEL MUSINGS - 2

There is a dearth of correspondence available for the period between Oct 1907 to February 1909 so it is not certain (at the time of writing) as to what was agreed with regard to repairs to the tunnel before the laying of pipes began. Certainly it would seem that Butterley's regular use of the access shafts had stopped by 1875 with the laying of the



Pye Bridge to Ambergate railway line. They had deteriorated more than somewhat and brickwork from the bottom portion of the shafts had fallen into the canal in the post 1900 period. It seems that this caused sufficient blockage to stop water getting from the Butterley Reservoir to the East end of the canal, with consequent loss of navigation from the East end. A bit of a cleft stick for the Midland Railway Company as they couldn't get water from the Butterley reservoir without flooding the area where they needed to work to remove the blockage. As an interim measure they installed a pump to fill the top end of the canal from Codnor Park reservoir.

Correspondence about the underground wharf shows that originally it was 65 yards long and that four shafts lead directly down to it. These shafts were in poor condition and it was suggested by Butterley that arched chamber "A" should be filled in, the shaft at "B" securely pinned up and in the case of C & D it would be advisable to reduce the width of the canal. The arched chamber was short and parallel to the canal tunnel on its North side opposite the wharf and connected to the tunnel by three short openings and known as the 'Bacon Hole'.

MR decided to use shaft number 3 as access to affect the repairs. But it was necessary to repair the shaft first as, (26-9-1907) *"It has now been found that three lots of brick lining 5ft, 2ft and 7ft-6in in depth respectively in very defective condition and coming at various depths between 41ft and 86ft from the surface and would have to be repaired before any material is wound up"*

A month later, (22-10-1907) Fred J Grey reports on a visit to the tunnel: *"Arriving at shaft No. 3 we were let down in the box and found that debris had been removed from the bottom of the shaft to a depth of 2ft 6ins below water level; the remainder to make a depth of 4ft will be removed by about the end of the week. We then journeyed West of the shaft for a chain or two by raft but found the roof so badly damaged in places that it was not considered safe to go further in that direction, and on returning to the shaft we entered the boat and made our way to the Eastern end of the tunnel. The piece of tunnel between the shaft and the open rock piece was found to be in a very defective condition, and the open rock piece also was seen to be much worse than on previous visits, much more rock being split and fractured. For a chain or so on the Eastern side of the open rock portion the arch was found to be so badly crushed along each springing that instructions were given that the boat should not for the present go beyond 35 chains, and material required from the Eastern end to be loaded on a raft and towed by rope from the 35 chains to where it is required, 320 yards of tow rope being necessary for this purpose. Superintendent Johnson was instructed to at once commence the erection of timber centres (made of old sleepers &c) in the piece of tunnel from a point one chain East of the open rock portion up to shaft No:3 and then start working from the shaft westward, i.e. towards the block.*

A visit was afterwards made to the East end of the tunnel. (It may be here stated that Inspector Winson and a number of men were at work in the tunnel at 54 chains on Sunday last removing the puddle stank so that there should be no difficulty in getting the boat past yesterday. Winson states that they heard three loud reports. One at 9am. One at 9-30am. and one at 11am. Fearing that a collapse of shaft No:2 was the cause of this they deemed it unsafe to stay any longer.)

At this end we journeyed in the boat up to shaft No:2 and found things pretty much as on previous visits, there being nothing there except the small heap of debris at the bottom which has been there all along. With some trouble the raft was forced over this heap of stone and the journey continued some chains further towards the block, but the roof and sides being exceedingly crushed and cracked in many places it was considered



dangerous to proceed. However the journey continued as far as 67 chains 6 yards when a piece of the crown 9ft long by 1ft wide and 9ins thick was found to be fallen entirely out. Whereupon it was decided to return, and whether this collapse was what Winson heard, or whether there is some further collapse cannot yet be stated. Yesterday's inspection therefore reduces the length of tunnel as yet unexplored to about 27 chains.

As centering will be required West of shaft No:2 and as the bottom of this shaft is in a bad state, it was considered desirable that this shaft should be supplied with a winch and inspected preparatory to the bottom portion being repaired (or pulled down as found desirable) with a view to the centering being gone on with towards the block. Centering is wanted here as badly as at the East end as a further collapse might be expected.

On March 19th 1907 John Argyle writes: "In consequence of information we have received as to the rapid working out of coal between the "Wide Hole" and shaft No.2 I think it very desirable that the tunnel should be examined between 44chs and 50chs from the East end and 55chs and 60 chs from the West end."

On August 9th Inspector Winson reports "some slight movement taking place between 50 & 56 chains and 56 & 58 chains."

An examination of the tunnel dated 19-8-09 shows:

Very slight signs of squeeze in South haunch at about 18 chains.

Very slight signs in crown at about 5ft East of 21 chains.

Slight signs of crushing in North abutment and little stalagmite peeling in South abutment at 24 chains 54ft.

Slight signs of crushing in crown at about 26 chs, where bottom rock comes in.

Signs of crushing in North abutment and some deformation at 27 chs.

Stalagmite peeling at about 28 chs (South abutment).

Slight stalagmite crack at 29 chs (South abutment).

Slight stalagmite crack at 29 chs (North abutment).

Slight signs of crush in crown at 29.5 chs.

Stalagmite cracking at 29.5 chs

Stalagmite cracking south abutment at 30 chs.

Slight crush in crown at 30.5 chs.

Stronger signs. Stalagmite shelling between 30 & 31 chs.

Stalagmite peeling at 31 chs. Both sides, peeling strongly.

Considerable signs of movement in South abutment and crown between 31 & 32 chs.

Stalagmite peeling between 32 & 33 chs.

Very bad deformation and squeeze in haunch at 34 chs.

Crush in North abutment at 34.5 chs.

Crush in Crown at 36 chs.

Slight crush in crown at 36.5 chs.

Very bad crush in both haunches, considerable area of stalagmite peeling 36 to 37 chs.

At some point between then and 19-1-1910, a decision must have been taken to examine shaft No. 4, presumably to determine its possible use as an access point, but it also appeared to be in poor condition. So much so that "it would not be possible to lower men up and down. The rock is splitting in places and the shaft shews every sign of being affected by the coal workings."

Were the men working in the tunnel at this time very brave or just compelled by necessity? From what we know of more recent entries into the tunnel, the work carried out in shoring up the tunnel appears to have been effective as most of the shoring is still there and even where it has fallen away, the tunnel is STILL standing!



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

from Yvonne Shattower



The last couple of months have been a landmark time for the 'Friends' with the commencement of public trips on *Birdswood* at Cromford. They have also been very hard work for those who have volunteered to crew and maintain *Birdswood*, so if you can help in any way you would be very welcome. Training and a great deal of commitment is required for some of the jobs, but there is still a lot that can be done by volunteers who can only manage to help occasionally. *Birdswood* will be very much 'on show' during the World Heritage weekend on November 2nd and 3rd so do come along and see her at Cromford.

Our members' meetings at Ironville Church Hall continue to do well and it is good to see so many members there. We have to thank member Gordon Harwood for arranging a most successful evening with the 'Beeston Big Band' recently. Those of you who were there will, I am sure, agree that it was a resounding success, with the band playing a first-rate selection of music. Gordon donated the profits from the evening to the 'Friends' – a very welcome £500. Thank you very much, Gordon. I have a feeling we shall be repeating the event. Don't forget our Christmas Pie and Pea with the Red Lion Band on Monday December 2nd – note this is not our usual meeting night. Tickets (price £6) will be available at the November meeting or can be reserved by phoning Dave Ratner on 01773 713174. You can order a choice of steak or vegetable pie.

I send out over 700 copies of the *Portal* each quarter, and hopefully they all reach their intended destination. However, one copy of the last edition did not get delivered to its right address; the magazine and the corner of the envelope which carries the return address was returned to me by the Post Office in a plastic bag with no indication of who the original recipient might have been, so if you did not receive a copy of the 'Birdswood Special' in September please let me know and I will send a copy to you. My contact details are inside the front cover of this magazine.

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

Mr P J Parkin, Dorchester

Rev'd & Mrs J H Lister, Ashbourne

Mr I S Harpham, Matlock

Mr & Mrs K Smith, Matlock

Mrs D Bronte-Stewart, Saltcoates

Mr A Walker, Derby

Melanie-Jane Martin, Harlech

Mr K Green & Miss S Carlyle, Belper

Mr D H Burton, Ripley

Mr & Mrs K Venables, Belper

FINAL LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING for 2013

Discovery Days Weekend Nov 2nd & 3rd 11.00am to 4.00pm



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	Life: £110.00
Couples: £10.00	Life: £165.00
Corporate Business: £35.00	Corporate Charity: £17.00

OBITUARY

It is with sadness we have to report the death of Trevor Robson, an active member since the formation of the FCC. Trevor and his wife Dorothy joined us at the first Ironville meeting in 2002 and were amongst the first to take advantage of Life Membership. Trevor helped with many projects in the frantic early days when everything seemed to need doing at once. Among other things, by carefully searching he found out who each of the many owners were of the canal, or its line, and approached them to speak of our plans. He helped out on work parties and also delivered all the *Portal* magazines to members in Fritchley and Crich. It was only shortly before his death he came aboard *Birdswood* to have a look around. He will be greatly missed and we send our condolences to Dorothy and their family.

Yvonne Shattower

In the last issue, John and Hilary Liley were acknowledged as providing the PA system for *Birdswood*. John has pointed out that his employer **CIE-Group of Bulwell, Nottingham** donated most of the equipment, for which we thank them.

The following message has recently been put out on Facebook:

Just been on a trip on the Cromford Canal on the big barge, very very good. The master of the boat did an excellent job of steering. The crew outside (Wayne) did a great job of getting us up the right channels in the canal avoiding all the weeds.

The crew inside (Wendy and Beryl) kept us busy with information, but could have been busier in their words if they could have served a hot drink but that will come I am sure.

I have got to give it a 4/5 for the trip. The staff 5/5

We will be back for sure

2hours for £5 each well spent

Well done all. Reports like this are very encouraging - Ed.

Unless specifically stated, any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the formal policy of the Friends of the Cromford Canal. The FCC accepts no liability for any matter printed in this newsletter nor any advertising that may be included. Reproduction of extracts from this newsletter welcomed provided that a full acknowledgement is given.

