

THE PORTAL

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



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FRONT COVER: Volunteers from the Waterway Recovery Group are hard at work in the chamber of Lock 4 at Ironville clearing the silt and rubbish using buckets, shovels and wheelbarrows, having been badly let down by the plant hire companies who failed to supply the ordered equipment. See page 6. Photo: Steve Harnes

BACK COVER: Chelsea the boat horse waits patiently at Cromford Wharf for the passengers to embark on *Birdswood* for their trip to High Peak Junction. Note she is now equipped with the multi-coloured wooden bobbins on the harness in the traditional canal style. The last horsedrawn trips for 2014 will be at the Discovery Days Weekend on November 1st & 2nd. See page 21. Photo: Editor

The aims and objectives of the Friends of the Cromford Canal

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



EDITORIAL

from Mike Harrison



Welcome to The Portal No. 51

There is now a letter r in the month and Autumn is with us once again, although at the moment the weather is remaining mostly fine and mild. This is helping us to carry on with the very successful season on *Birdswood*. August was our best month yet and the trip boat operation is now becoming very popular. This is entirely due to the growing group of volunteer crew, and I must say that I for one have been pleasantly surprised by the number of people who have come forward to help make this project a success. Vix Wilding has very ably taken charge of these good people and is doing an excellent job in co-ordinating the operation.

One trip which was particularly satisfying for all concerned recently was when ten children from part of Belarus affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster were guests of the FCC. The lively group of 10-12-year-olds, their teacher/translator and host families and helpers had a great time on the boat despite heavy rain. The children's four-week visit is being hosted by Bonsall and Derbyshire Dales branch of Chernobyl Children's Life Line. The charity has more than 130 groups nationwide which bring 3,000 to 4,000 children to the UK for health recuperation holidays every year. More than two million people – 400,000 of them children – live in areas of Ukraine and Belarus, north of Kiev, that are still heavily contaminated by radioactive fallout from the 1986 reactor melt-down. One of the main health benefits of the visits is a boost to the children's immune systems, which have been damaged by the radiation. A boat trip in the fresh air in Derbyshire must have been like another world.

Birdswood's season will be rounded off with the Santa Specials on three Sundays in December, see page 17. This brings me to the very necessary maintenance work which will need to be carried out on the boat before next season. In particular, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency biennial out of water inspection must be done this winter. This means that we need to make arrangements to lift the boat out for the surveyor. Painting will be needed at the same time. Other jobs will be work on the seats and the windows, and checking the operation of all the boat's equipment etc. For this, as always, volunteers will be welcome. Some people are perhaps willing to help with the boat but are not particularly happy when dealing with the general public. If, like me, you feel that this perhaps applies to you, and you are more inclined towards getting your hands dirty, then you will be very welcome to help us over the winter.

Work is also carrying on at other parts of the canal, for which help is very welcome. John Barker is always pleased to hear from people who are interested.

Although it seems far too early, I wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and remember your FCC Christmas Cards. See inside the back cover.

The press date for the New Year 2015 issue will be January 19th.



ACTING CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM



As the last *Portal* went to press the Waterway Recovery Group Canal Camp had just started on Lock 4 at Ironville; this being the fourth year that WRG volunteers have spent part of the summertime in Derbyshire on Canal Camps, see page 6. First of all my thanks to all the WRG volunteers, some of whom came from Europe as well as most parts of the United Kingdom; without your help we wouldn't be able to impress on local authorities and grant operating organisations that it's not just a few locals who are interested in restoring canals. Secondly, I want to thank George Rogers for the organisation, Matthew Rogers for the co-ordination of equipment and the day to day work and John Barker for his general assistance. Finally, I must thank Derbyshire County Council for the loan of accommodation at the Wharf Shed, and the Canal & River Trust for allowing the work on its property.

The Canal Camp was planned to clear Lock 4 of undergrowth and rubbish so that the engineers could see the current state of the stone walls and how much work would be required to bring them back to a navigable condition. This involved the removal of weeds and other undergrowth and the silt accumulated since the reservoir overspill works on the flight of locks in 1980. We were fortunate in that the CRT agreed that the natural material could be dumped locally and our thanks to Sean Fields for allowing it to be disposed of on his land. This probably saved around £3000. It is difficult to do anything in Ironville without Jack Brown being involved and our thanks to Jack for the use of his facilities and looking after the tools etc. overnight. There were problems when some of the hired plant did not arrive or was inadequate but the volunteers coped and all the intended work was completed.

As a result of this the CRT volunteer organiser Wayne Ball has asked if the Friends would like to adopt the CRT section of the flight so as to do the routine maintenance as well as furthering the restoration. At the last FCC Committee meeting there was general agreement that this would be very useful and the FCC want to include and involve the people of Ironville and Jacksdale and the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on all the future progress on the Ironville flight.

The Friends trip boat *Birdswood* has had a very good summer on the section of Cromford Canal between Cromford and High Peak Junction and the volunteer crew and other helpers had a very good barbecue on September 5th. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but my thanks to all who have worked and helped on *Birdswood* during the year.

Regarding the proposed adoption of the Ironville locks mentioned above by John Baylis, our vice chairman John Barker has added the following:

This proposed adoption would I feel fit in with our future plans in getting these locks into water, but we need help.

I have been in contact with Ironville Village council and other groups to help in this proposal and I am very pleased with the response, but we need helpers from the FCC to assist in this work. Posters will be put up on notice boards and we are proposing a leaflet drop. If any members would like to help please contact me.

John Barker 01773 760358



BIRDSWOOD UPDATE **a progress report**

from Mike Kelley
Boat Operations Manager



OUR FIRST SUMMER SEASON

When we first set out on project *Birdswood* it was largely a step into the unknown. We did know that the last time a trip boat ran along this canal it was a successful operation, but they were using a smaller boat, which was solely horse-drawn, and it was a long time ago. So much had changed since the last trip boat ran on this canal before *Birdswood*, so to some extent we were flying by 'the seat of our pants', to coin an expression. There were so many unanswered questions, which could only be answered by actually doing it.

The 'known unknowns' (to quote United States Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld) were: will the depth of water be sufficient, will we be able to get enough volunteer crew to run her, can we get enough dedicated people willing and able to obtain a Boat Master's Licence, are the winding holes big enough, will electric propulsion stand up to the demands, can we manage the boat under horse power, will we get through all the hoops the Maritime and Coastguard Agency demand, and last but not least will the public come??? So many questions which we could not fully answer without actually doing it.

- Well, the water is just about deep enough, although not as deep as we would wish.
- And yes, we did get the crew; truly wonderful people, who are prepared to give of their time freely and willingly. And 'yes', we do still need more who can partake in our crew training programme which is now in place, under the auspices of Dan Harrison.
- Eric Singleton, Ian Hooker, Wayne Scarle, Dan Harrison, Anne Haile and myself are the current Boat Masters. To get this licence is not easy but once you have it is very satisfying to be responsible for such a boat and seeing the passengers enjoying their trips. We hope to train up three more this winter.
- We are able to wind the boat with ease at the northern winding hole, but the southern one still has its problems, wherein I hope some sort dredging can take place to make this easier for us.
- The electric propulsion is a great success and so much cleaner and easier to maintain than diesel power.
- The horse days are simply wonderful. The horse owners, Arraslea Shires, have worked very well with us; after all it was a new venture for them also.
- And yes, the public came - they came in their thousands. At the time of writing we have had over 4,000 passengers since March this year. Thanks to the ticketing system Nic Barfield designed, we are able to check on where most of our passengers have come from; all of which is recorded and documented. They have come from all over the country as well as from overseas. We have had passengers from China, New Zealand, Holland, France, Germany, Russia and Australia - to name but a few.

Kevin Costner famously said in his film, 'The Field of Dreams', "If you build it the people will come."



All of this, of course, does not organise itself! Our Admin Officer Victoria Wilding (Vix) has spent many hours juggling with crew, dates and passengers; but somehow she manages to do this very well indeed, which is a daunting task. (I know for I did it for a while at the start of this project).

There are still problems! There will always be some problems; but my philosophy is that a problem is something just waiting for a solution. The current main problem is that the swingbridge does not swing very well! In fact sometimes it is very difficult to even move. Our engineers and committee are talking to Derbyshire CC about this so let's hope they can find the solution to this problem.

In the winter major maintenance work will need to be carried out to the boat. The seating needs to be made more comfortable, the windows need replacing, also the Maritime and Coastguard Agency want an out-of-water inspection, which will be expensive and difficult to do.

So, over all, this has been a very satisfying first season; a big well done to all who made it so.

Remember the season is not over for *Birdswood* until after the Santa Specials in December. There are regular trips every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, plus charter trips on other days. Details from Vix Wilding on:

07552 055455

or email bookings@cromfordcanal.info

POTS 'N' PIX

An Invitation to an Exhibition of Cromford Canal Archives and Studio Pottery

The annual "Pots 'n' Pix" exhibition at our Archivist's house by the towpath at Ambergate will take place on 29th & 30th November this year. Displays of historic photographs will be accompanied as usual by the presence of the FCC Sales stand and a gallery of Liz Tatam's studio stoneware pottery for sale, made alongside the canal!

You will be very welcome to call in on either day between 11am and 5pm to browse through the extensive archives, watch slide shows of old photographs of the canal, meet other FCC members and do some Christmas shopping. Included this year will be a display of the recently acquired photographs taken around the Ironville Lock flight in 1907 and previously unseen photographs of maintenance work including repair of the major culvert at Robin Hood.

You are invited to join Hugh and Liz for a cup of tea or glass of wine at Bankfield, Chase Road, Ambergate, Belper DE56 2HA. If you need directions, Hugh's contact details are on the inside front cover or visit www.canalsidepotters.co.uk.



WRG AT IRONVILLE

by George Rogers

Over the past few years, we have welcomed the Waterway Recovery Group onto the Cromford Canal to do a variety of restoration tasks – but this year we offered them something a little different. The aim was to clear the structure of Lock 4 at Ironville, such that we could then arrange for a laser scan of the masonry to assess its condition and determine how we would go about restoring it.

We chose to work at Lock 4 because, of the three locks owned by the Canal & River Trust (CRT), Lock 3 looks to be in the worst condition (and so would have required significant temporary works to ensure stability of the walls whilst the volunteers were working within it) and Lock 2 is less accessible. The remaining locks on the flight are currently owned by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and one of the aims of this exercise was to improve the working relationship with CRT.

The lock being owned by CRT we spent a significant amount of time in the planning stage discussing the exact methods of working, permissions and supervision with them. This all has to balance with the need to satisfy the committee of the FCC that what we are doing is cost effective and worthwhile, and the need to coordinate with the WRG leaders to ensure they are happy!

So having done the planning, the site visits and ordered all the equipment, WRG arrived on site. Day 1 was spent establishing safe access into the lock and setting up the sandbag dams and pipework that would feed water through the lock whilst keeping the volunteers dry. It quickly became apparent that the amount of water coming through the lock was quite a bit greater than was initially expected so additional pipework was required.



Building the access steps. Note the pipes and sandbags ready to be installed.

Gavin Darby



Gavin Darby



Gavin Darby



ABOVE LEFT: The first lengths of pipework installed.
ABOVE RIGHT: The completed pipe run through the chamber to keep it dry enough for access.
BELOW: Starting to clear the silt and wide variety of assorted rubbish with buckets and shovels

Stephen Harmes





Day 2. The day that the rest of the equipment was due to arrive. The intention was to use a hoist to lift buckets of material from the lock (not being able to use a machine due to worries about the damage it could potentially cause to the lock invert), and then empty the buckets into a tracked wheelbarrow in order to transport it to the disposal site on land adjacent to the canal some 500 metres away. However, early on we received a phone call



ABOVE: The invert was cleared along both sides of the chamber.
BELOW: The ground paddle culverts were uncovered and unblocked. Note the good condition of the stone invert.





to say that the equipment we had ordered was not in stock and as such we couldn't have any. This was disappointing to say the least – much of the rest of the equipment had been loaned to us free of charge, transported by others free of charge and the equipment we were due to pay for didn't arrive!

This caused a lot of hassle - despite contacting every hire company we knew of within a 50 mile radius, nobody had anything we could use. Eventually one firm tracked down a conveyor in their Rotherham depot that was dispatched to us, and one tracked wheelbarrow. In the interim it was down to sheer brute force to pull the buckets out by hand and wheel them manually to the disposal area.

The next week (including the volunteer changeover) was spent in this fashion clearing silt from the invert of the lock. I am full of admiration for the effort put in by

all of the volunteers throughout this period. I have spent time clearing locks in this fashion before, and it is very hard work. Yet, on the few occasions I managed to get to see them, they were smiling and enthusiastic.

Towards the end of the second week we had arranged for the lock to be laser scanned. We are still awaiting the results of this but when we have them we will present some of the findings in a later report. We are also hoping to invite Andy Beardsley (who kindly did the scan free of charge) to give a presentation and demonstration of the techniques to one of our social meetings (and believe me, it is a very interesting talk!).

All that was left was to clear everything up (although when we say all, that does involve removing a lot of very wet sandbags...).

On behalf of the FCC, I would like to extend a huge thanks to all of the volunteers who worked so hard to show us the bottom of Lock 4. I can only apologise for the lack of equipment, but once again you all rose to the challenge. I would also like to thank North Midland Construction for the provision of the construction materials and the use of showers at the Ambergate Reservoir scheme and Collins Earthworks for assistance with transport of materials, also CRT, DCC, Shaun Fields, Dave Collins, Jack Brown, John Boucher, The Barley Mow, *Birdswood* and her crew and everyone else who helped out. If I have left you out, I apologise (blame it on the pressures of a rapidly approaching *Portal* deadline!) See you all again next year?

Gavin Darby

Some of the collection of rubbish awaiting disposal.



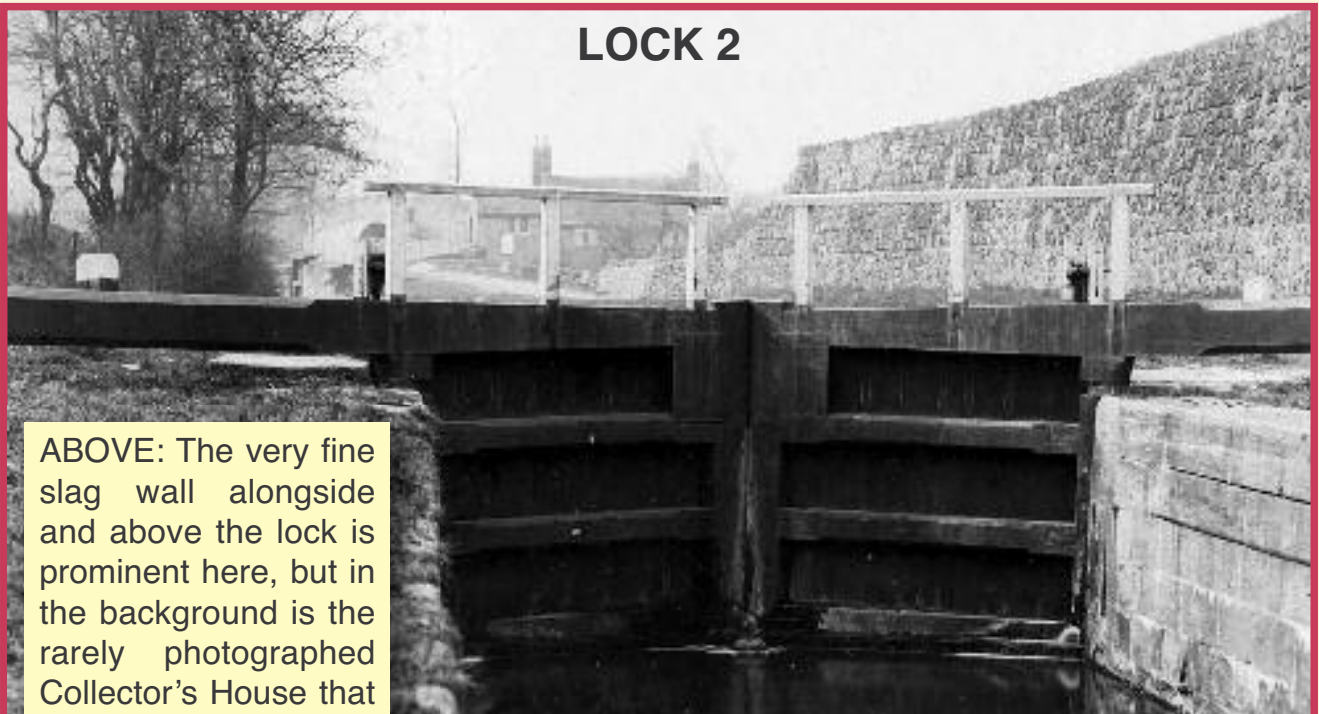


CROMFORD CANAL LOCKS IN 1907

FCC Archivist Hugh Potter looks back to when the locks at Ironville were in rather better condition than they are today.

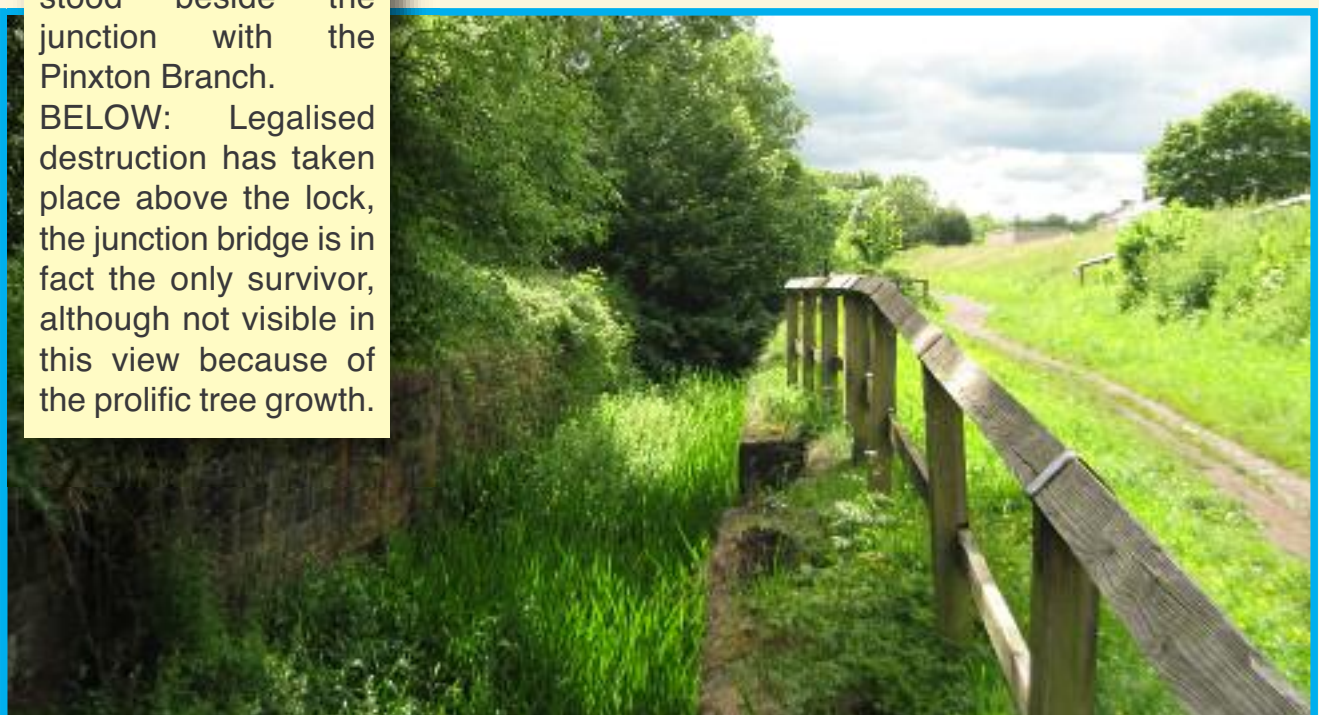
Thanks to Barry Argent, I have been able to scan some excellent photographs taken in 1907 of every lock on the canal. These are in the collection of his late father, the well-known Ike Argent, who saved them, along with many other documents, from being thrown away by British Waterways.

The photographs are somewhat repetitive, mostly showing close-ups of the lock gates, but perhaps of greater interest is the background that appears in a few of them, reproduced here. In each case, the editor's present day view of the same scene is shown below the 1907 one to illustrate the changes.



ABOVE: The very fine slag wall alongside and above the lock is prominent here, but in the background is the rarely photographed Collector's House that stood beside the junction with the Pinxton Branch.

BELOW: Legalised destruction has taken place above the lock, the junction bridge is in fact the only survivor, although not visible in this view because of the prolific tree growth.





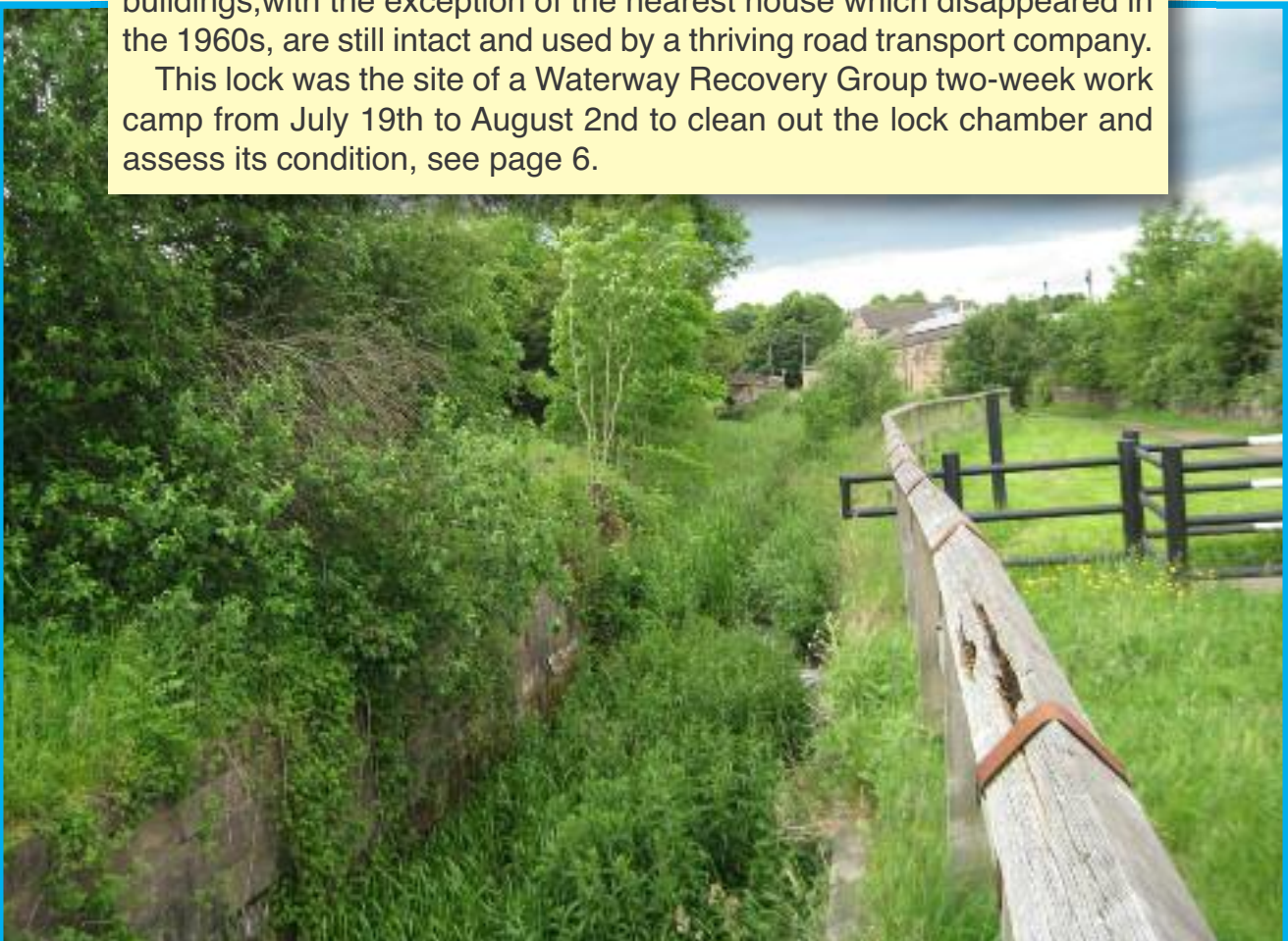
LOCK 4



ABOVE: The fine stone-built former stables adjacent to the towpath above the lock and the bridge at the tail of lock 3 are in good condition in 1907.

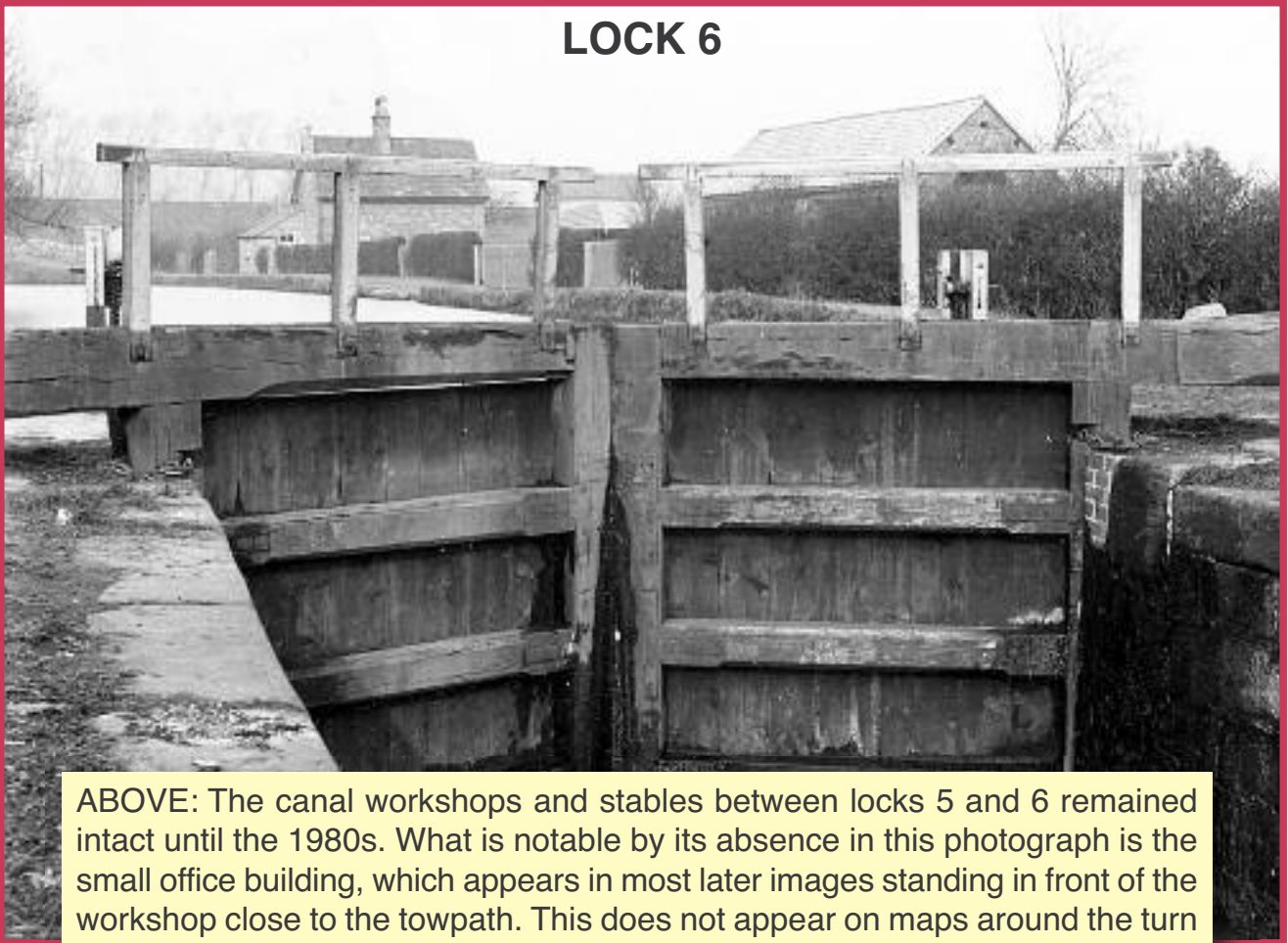
BELOW: Again obstructed by trees in this view, but the bridge and buildings, with the exception of the nearest house which disappeared in the 1960s, are still intact and used by a thriving road transport company.

This lock was the site of a Waterway Recovery Group two-week work camp from July 19th to August 2nd to clean out the lock chamber and assess its condition, see page 6.





LOCK 6



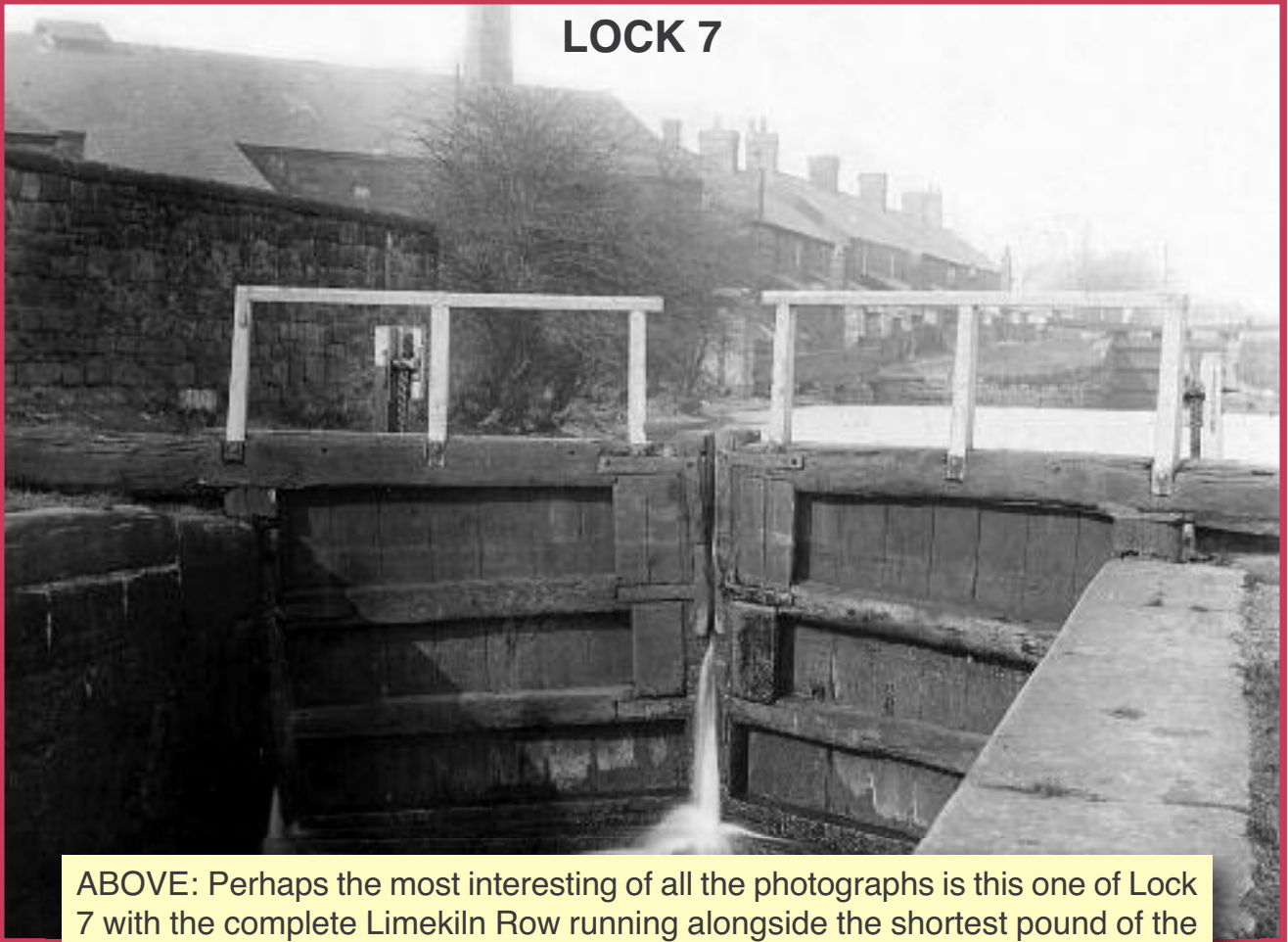
ABOVE: The canal workshops and stables between locks 5 and 6 remained intact until the 1980s. What is notable by its absence in this photograph is the small office building, which appears in most later images standing in front of the workshop close to the towpath. This does not appear on maps around the turn of the century so must have been built much later than the other buildings.

BELOW: Extensive restoration of the buildings, including the office referred to above, is now being carried out. The gates have disappeared long ago as with all of these locks, but the stone lock chamber is mostly intact, albeit with a 'temporary' low level concrete bridge seen in the foreground of this view.



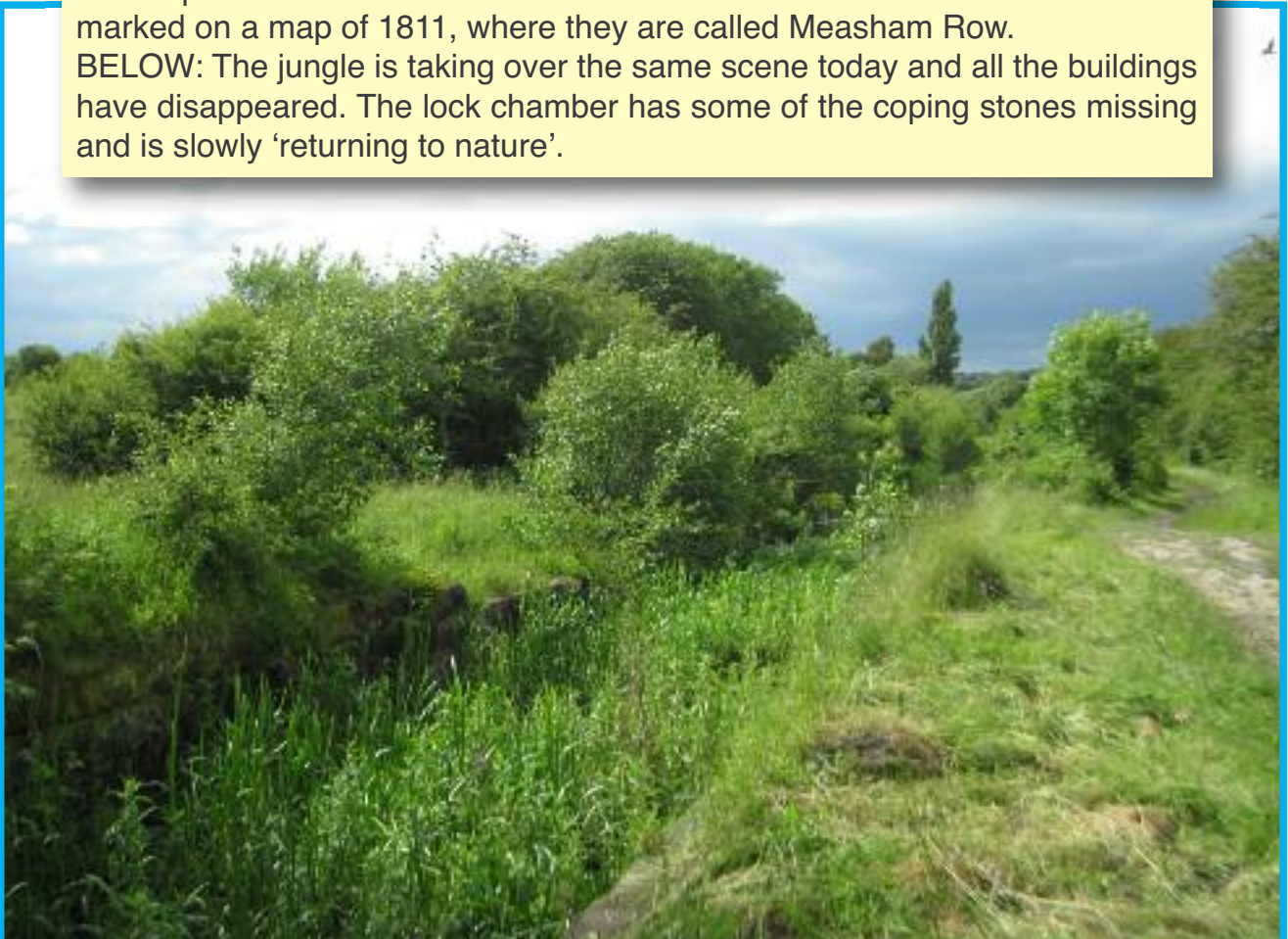


LOCK 7



ABOVE: Perhaps the most interesting of all the photographs is this one of Lock 7 with the complete Limekiln Row running alongside the shortest pound of the canal up to Lock 6. These houses are some of the few near the canal that are marked on a map of 1811, where they are called Measham Row.

BELOW: The jungle is taking over the same scene today and all the buildings have disappeared. The lock chamber has some of the coping stones missing and is slowly 'returning to nature'.





LOCK 8



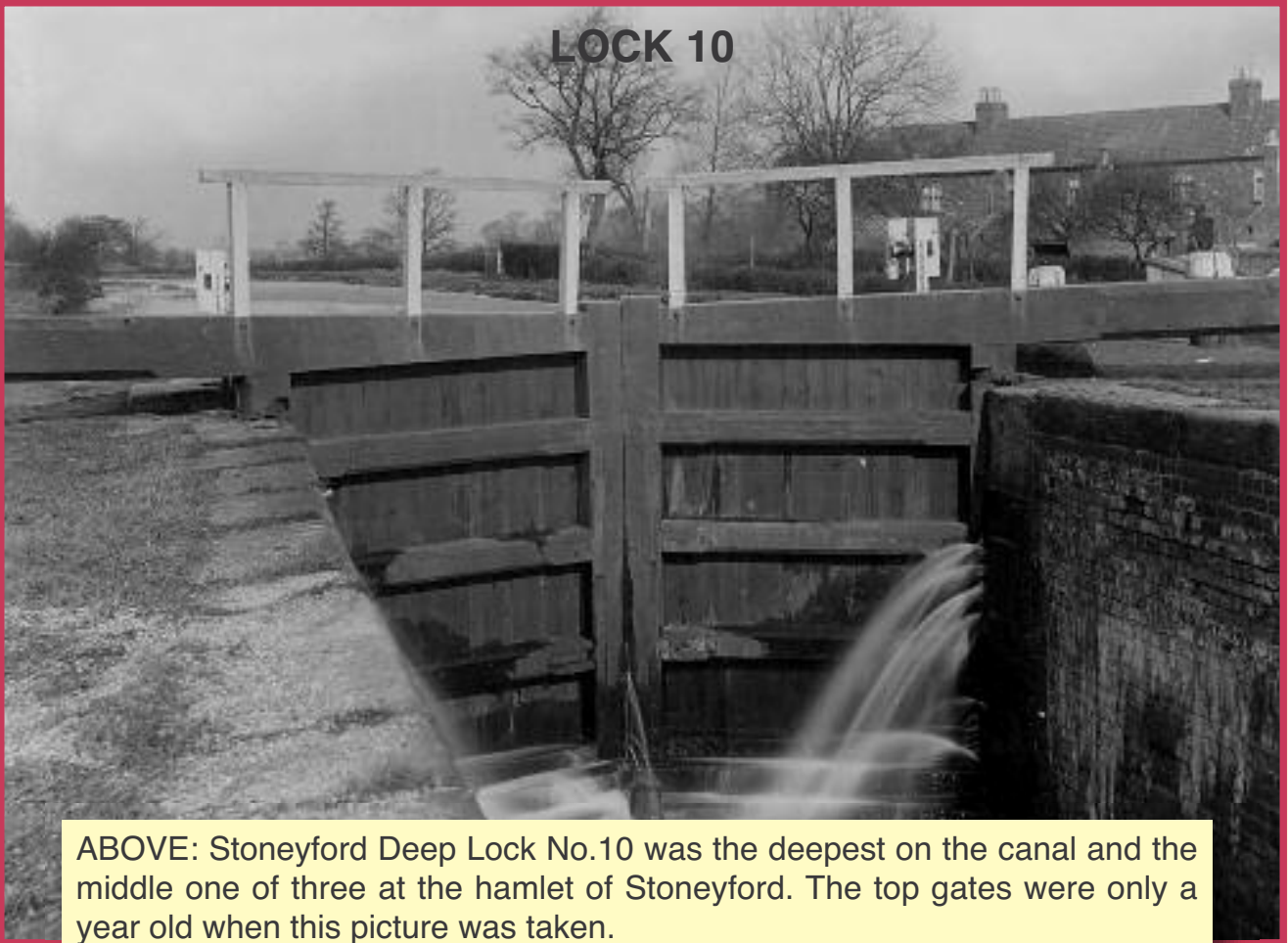
ABOVE: A smarter set of gates at Lock 8, beyond which is the now demolished 'Black Bridge' carrying the link line between the Midland and Great Northern railway lines that ran up the Erewash Valley.

RIGHT: There are now no remains of Lock 8 apart from a few stones hidden in the considerable undergrowth. The picture shows what remains of the railway bridge. This is the pier on the north side of the canal adjacent to the towpath as shown above. The water still runs down the flight from Codnor Park Reservoir until just to the right of this view where the flow is diverted nowadays into the nearby River Erewash. The small footbridge carries the public footpath.





LOCK 10



ABOVE: Stoneyford Deep Lock No.10 was the deepest on the canal and the middle one of three at the hamlet of Stoneyford. The top gates were only a year old when this picture was taken.

BELOW: Unbelievably, this depressing view was taken from almost exactly the same place a few years ago. Everything has been destroyed by opencast mining, including terraced houses on both sides of the canal as well as the lock, canal and towpath. The ground levels have been greatly changed both by the opencasting and deep mine subsidence.



FRIENDS OF CROMFORD CANAL
BIRDSWOOD TRIP BOAT



SPECIAL HALLOWEEN TRIP

Friday 31st October

3pm till 5pm.

Come and have spooky cakes and drink blood!

Fancy Dress Welcome

Booking Essential on 07552055455

£ 5 per person (infants free)



Take the kids on a **Christmas** cruise!



Santa Specials

on historic narrow boat BIRDSWOOD
Sundays 7th, 14th & 21st December

**A trip on the Cromford Canal,
a present from Santa in his Boatman's Cabin for the kids,
and seasonal refreshments for everyone!**

FARES: Under-5s £5; 5-11 years £8; Adults £8

*** EARLY BIRD SPECIAL - £1 OFF all tickets reserved by 31 Oct. ***

Trips at 11 am, 12.30 pm & 2 pm each day. **Advance bookings ONLY.**
Departing from Cromford Wharf, opposite Arkwright's Mills, DE4 3RQ.

BOOKINGS: call our Elfline on 07552 055 455



THANK YOU FOLKS!

by John Barker

The FCC Committee and Trustees put on a Thank You Party for all *Birdswood* Crew Members, families and helpers including our valuable Work Party members at the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf on Friday 5th September 2014.

This was to show our appreciation to all those who have helped the FCC during the past year. We are now building up a very satisfying number of volunteers to help the FCC forward in this exciting period. There have been, and indeed still are, problems with the operation of *Birdswood* but we are now making good progress towards overcoming them and making the trip boat operation a great success.

We had a wonderful barbecue cooked by my wife Jackie with help from Ester. Vix had also been very busy during the day picking up drinks etc from the cash and carry.

Rick Jillings, Area Assistant Manager, Derbyshire County Council Countryside Services, and some of his staff were present and also representatives from The Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. I am pleased to say that we are continuing to develop a good working relationship with both of these organisations and we look forward to continuing to build on this in the future.

A vote of thanks was given by Mike Kelley, appropriately from the roof of *Birdswood*, see below. We also took *Birdswood* out for a quick run down to Lawn Bridge and back and all 50 guests had a really good night.



Hugh Potter



WORK PARTY TROPHY

by John Barker



John Guyler

On the 19th August, we had another of our now regular work parties removing weed and cutting back vegetation around Lawn Bridge and also at High Peak Junction.

We had something of a surprise on this occasion, however, when we felt an object in the canal which was much larger and heavier than usual. This took the combined efforts of three of us to before we managed to get it out on to the bank, as shown above.

This turned out to be quite a large piece of steel diamond pattern chequer plate, something one might perhaps expect in an urban length of canal, but it was rather a surprise on the Cromford. One wonders how it came to be there.

The picture on the right shows (l-r) John Sparham, John Barker and Martin King admiring their trophy.



John Guyler



NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate Update - July to September 2014

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

Volunteer work parties - Thank you to the Friends for regular practical work parties; these are taking place fortnightly on Tuesdays. If you feel you could offer assistance with maintaining and improving the canal please contact the Countryside Service or John Barker the FCC work party organiser. Volunteers have helped to clear vegetation around Lawn's Bridge that made it hard for *Birdswood* to navigate the narrows. DCC appreciates the volunteer efforts of FCC and Waterways Recovery Group and has been able to support the residential work parties by providing the Wharf Shed residential centre near High Peak Junction as a base without a charge. *[Thanks again Rick, this is much appreciated - Ed.]* We have plenty of waterways projects that we are working on, the WRG volunteers are working to repair a leak in September near Whatstandwell and we have canal channel clearance work planned for December. FCC and the Amber Valley Conservation Volunteers from the Parkwood Day Centre are continuing with the on-going job to rebuild sections of the canal bank that have been eroded by dogs.

Tree Felling - A Forestry Commission felling licence and Conservation Area consents have now been granted that will enable tree management to the south of Leashaw Farm and near Thurlowbooth Farm, Whatstandwell over the next 2 years.

Towpath improvements - The section of towpath from Cromford Wharf to Lawn's Bridge (opposite Cromford Meadows Rugby Club) and the section from High Peak Junction swing bridge past Leawood pump towards Aqueduct Cottage should be resurfaced from November. Unfortunately this will mean that the towpath will be closed to the public for safety reasons while the work takes place. The closure will also enable the leak mentioned below to be tackled. It is likely that the section of canal towpath from Cromford Meadows to High Peak Junction and Leawood Pump will be closed from November 3rd for several weeks. As the work progresses we will try and allow public access on the completed sections wherever it is possible and safe. If planning walks and activities on the canal towpath feel free to call the team at Middleton Top for updates.

Leak Repairs - A major leak half way between Cromford Wharf and High Peak Junction requires repair. Water appears to be leaking from the canal over a long section through the stone wharfing. A deep trench will be dug in the towpath parallel with the coping; this trench will then be back filled with puddle clay.

With the water vole breeding season coming towards an end it allows us to investigate and repair canal banks without causing disturbance to the water vole populations. In areas of suspected leaks and water vole activity we sometimes need to trim short sections of bank to encourage water voles to use alternative feeding and sheltering grounds. Then if we identify any water being pulled into the bank we hand dig between the towpath and the bank and back fill with compacted clay to seal the canal edge. Several sites will be investigated and repaired over the autumn and winter period.

Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Day Events - There are heritage activities a plenty during the DVMWHS Discovery Days on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd November. Make sure you visit High Peak Junction. Visit the historic railway workshops on one of the free hourly tours and try your hand at blacksmithing on the forge. Those



interested in woodland crafts can learn about bodging, willow weaving and pyrography. These Discovery Days activities are available from 11am until 3pm both days and you can visit Leawood Pump in steam from noon until 5pm.

Details are available from: The Countryside Service Events programme
<http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/events/default.asp>

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

DISCOVERY DAYS 2014

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 1st and Sunday 2nd November from 10am to 4pm.

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 and Wild Over Waterways activities for younger visitors.

Plus there will be the opportunity to take a horse-drawn trip on FCC's narrow boat *Birdswood* between Cromford and Leawood Pump, which will be in steam on both days.

All activities are free (apart from the boat trips of course!) so please drop by on one of those two days, when there will be lots of other activities in the area as well. But if you are planning a boat trip it might be wise to book your seats in advance as they are likely to be very popular on those days: booking hotline 07552 055455. On the Saturday morning trip that departs at 11am we will have a special guest on board with us – the High Sheriff of Derbyshire!

So, all in all we are expecting a busy weekend and as always we need extra volunteers to help out. Would you like to help 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.

LAST LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING DATES 2014

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

Why not book a ride down to the Pump House on Birdswood?

Call 07552 055455

MONTH	SAT	SUN	MON	PERIOD
OCTOBER	4th	5th		First Weekend
NOVEMBER	1st	2nd		Discovery Weekend



DERBY ROAD BRIDGE - LANGLEY MILL

by John Baylis

Derby Road Bridge at Langley Mill is the first on the Cromford Canal where it leaves the Erewash Canal just before Langley Bridge Lock. The original bridge was built about 1794 when the Cromford Canal was opened, but the present bridge only dates from 1913. This fact is well known as several bridges in the area were all rebuilt for the Nottingham to Ripley Tramway; colloquially known as the “Ripley Rattlers”. The purpose of this was to remove the hump back bridges and create a steady gradient from Cromford Road to the Sun Inn, Eastwood. The bridge across the Great Northern Railway disappeared with the building of the Kimberley to Eastwood Bypass in 1973 but the abandoned ends of the old Derby Road can still be seen by Travis Perkins and opposite B & Q. Part of the abutments of what was the third bridge over the Nottingham Canal can still be seen in the Great Northern Basin, but the rest was removed in 1973 to improve the camber on the re-aligned A608. The blue brick wall and steps outside the Great Northern Inn was also built to retain the pavement alongside the new road.

Some months ago Howard Smith and I noticed a man in a yellow waterproof coat looking at Derby Road Bridge and out of politeness we asked what he was doing. He told us he was Tim Jeffery and was looking at the state of the bridge with a view to Derbyshire County Council doing some maintenance on it. He explained that DCC had taken over the bridge in the boundary change of 1993 but Nottinghamshire didn't have any plans of the bridge. We explained that the bridge had been re-built in 1913 for the “Ripley Rattlers” and suggested that it might be worth him looking in the Nottinghamshire County Records Office near to Castle Lock in Nottingham. Some weeks later we saw him again and he said he had drawn a blank and I said I would try to help.

Following advice from FCC Archivist Hugh Potter I contacted the Heanor Historical Society and they produced a copy of a photograph (below) taken in June 1913, with bricklayers building the offside abutment adjacent to the large water pipe which already





crossed the canal at that point. The water main is part of the supply to Nottingham from the Derwent Valley Aqueduct which was built from about 1900; it still looks identical to the photograph. The work is being done behind wooden piles, with the narrow boat *Shamrock* moored alongside. This boat is painted in the livery of the Midland Railway Company who owned the Cromford Canal at that time. Another interesting item is that the existing bridge looks as though it has iron or timber beams, wooden parapets and brick walls on the land each side of the bridge.

As this looked to be part of a series of photos I asked the Historical Society if they had any more and they produced a further three photos. The most interesting from Tim's point of view was the laying of the girders on the Ilkeston side of the bridge, see below. There are about 20 men working, all in cloth caps, several with moustaches and all wear waistcoats or jackets. In the background is a solitary policeman. The tram poles and wires have already been erected and by the Great Northern is a telephone pole with about 20 pairs of wires on pot insulators. These photos have been of interest to all the council employees and contractors working on the bridge.



The other two photos showed building the bridge across the Nottingham Canal, one taken from each side; these both show that this bridge was a brick arch rather than flat top. As nearly all the other over bridges on the Cromford Canal are arched brick/stone and original, had the Derby Road bridge also been re-built a few years before 1913? However, the Midland Railway Company, in 1929, report that three bridges in the Langley area, Stoney Lane, Marshall's and Moorgreen Railway were all re-built 1900-2, and the Nethergreen Brook aqueduct suffered from subsidence. Derby Road was listed as the Nottingham to Matlock Toll Road and may well have been used for traction engines prior to the trams, so had this also been rebuilt prior to 1913, and this was missed in the 1929 report, which only noted re-built 1913? Perhaps this is a question for Mr. Potter's archives.

In the following pages, John brings this article up to date, describing the recent maintenance work carried out on this bridge, the first for many years. - Ed.



I have had a mooring and been a regular at the Langley Mill working parties for over forty years and I am sure I have never seen any maintenance being done on the bridge so I suspect this is the first time in just over 100 years. Tim Jeffery was concerned about some cracking on the blue brick parapet on the lock side and thought this might have been caused by some corrosion on the girder supporting the bricks.

The second photo above showed the composite riveted steel girders being fitted and formed the basis of the County Council's inspection of the underside of the bridge. The outer three girders on each side formed a space for the various service pipes and cables but the inside (ten?) girders were concreted to give a flat concrete soffit to the bridge. Basically the work proposed was to expose and paint the girders under the bridge and to expose and stabilise the area under each pavement over the pipe runs. At about the area of the offside abutment shown being rebuilt there is a continuous flow of water from the drain holes, which Severn Trent Water plc finally agreed was drinking water.



John Baylis

In order to work under the bridge a pontoon of plastic floats about 40 x 14 feet was built up in the lock and then floated under the bridge, see above. The pontoon was pulled out overnight for passing boats. Only the outside three girders on both sides of the bridge were showing some corrosion; the centre girders being covered in concrete underneath and by the roadway above. In order to inspect the inside girders the engineers located the position of the beams by breaking out small areas of concrete by the abutments on both sides of the bridge and then removing the concrete from underneath the centre girders.

This was an interesting operation carried out by specialised contractors. They first drilled and fitted four Rawlbolts into the concrete between two girders and then bolted a steel rail between the abutments. On the rail was located a hydraulically driven brick saw



John Baylis

about two feet in diameter; cooled by water, which moved along the beam by means of a cog locating on a toothed rack, see above. The saw was operated by a hand held control and cut a slot about 2 inches deep about 2 inches away from each side of the girder. The concrete between the two cuts and up to the beam was then removed with a jack hammer. This revealed that the concrete was held up by chicken wire and thicker steel rods fastened to the girder, Underneath, the girders looked in very good condition and were still covered in red lead paint, see below.



John Baylis



The state of the girders after 100 years seems to be a reflection on the quality of reinforcing in other much newer bridges. We have recently been on the canals under the M5 and M6 Motorways and for a number of years work has been going on to chip off decaying concrete from rusty re-bar and patching up the surface with new concrete or epoxy resin mixture. Locally similar work was done on Gunthorpe Bridge a few years ago where the re-bar was showing through decayed concrete.

When all the concrete had been removed up to underneath the girders, they were cleaned with a needle-gun and then given several coats of epoxy paint. The angle between the edge of the girder and the cut concrete was filled diagonally with mortar, and the whole of the concrete painted. The edges of the outside girders under the parapet walls were also cleaned down, painted and re-pointed, but it was decided that little work was needed on the parapets.

The Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association work party removed all the signs from the bridge and, after painting, these were refitted after the bridge had been painted.

The work under the pavements was perhaps more revealing as the removal of the concrete kerbs and excavation of the fill over the services revealed how the girders had been joined together and their state of preservation. On the lock side there were numerous largely unused telephone ducts. Perhaps this is an indication of the rise of telephone usage from the 20 twin wires on the pole in 1913, to many hundreds in the 1950s when the majority of telephone connections were underground to now when the main line connections are by satellite or glass fibre cables.

After clearing most of the fill from over the services, the visible parts of the girders were painted, two new 5 inch conduits were laid amongst the services, then after levelling with hard-core and re-laying the kerbs, a 3 inch thick concrete slab was cast, shown on the right, followed by finishing with tarmac. The other side was similar with gas and electricity services and was treated in the same way as the lock-side. It was disappointing that



the water leak was not discovered, however DCC and ourselves decided that the leak was probably on the Eastwood side of the bridge and running down hill. Severn Trent should be coming in the near future.

This was a very interesting job and similar to the work done recently on Hollingwood Bridge on the Chesterfield Canal, however thanks to the DCC Engineers we were privileged to watch and photograph the progress of the works.



Glenn Miller
Frank Sinatra
Count Basie
Dean Martin

Beeston Big Band

www.beestonbigband.co.uk

www.cromfordcanal.org.uk

SAT. 6TH DECEMBER
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 £6.50

Available on the door or from:

Dave Ratner - 01773 713174

or Gordon Harwood - 01773 520404

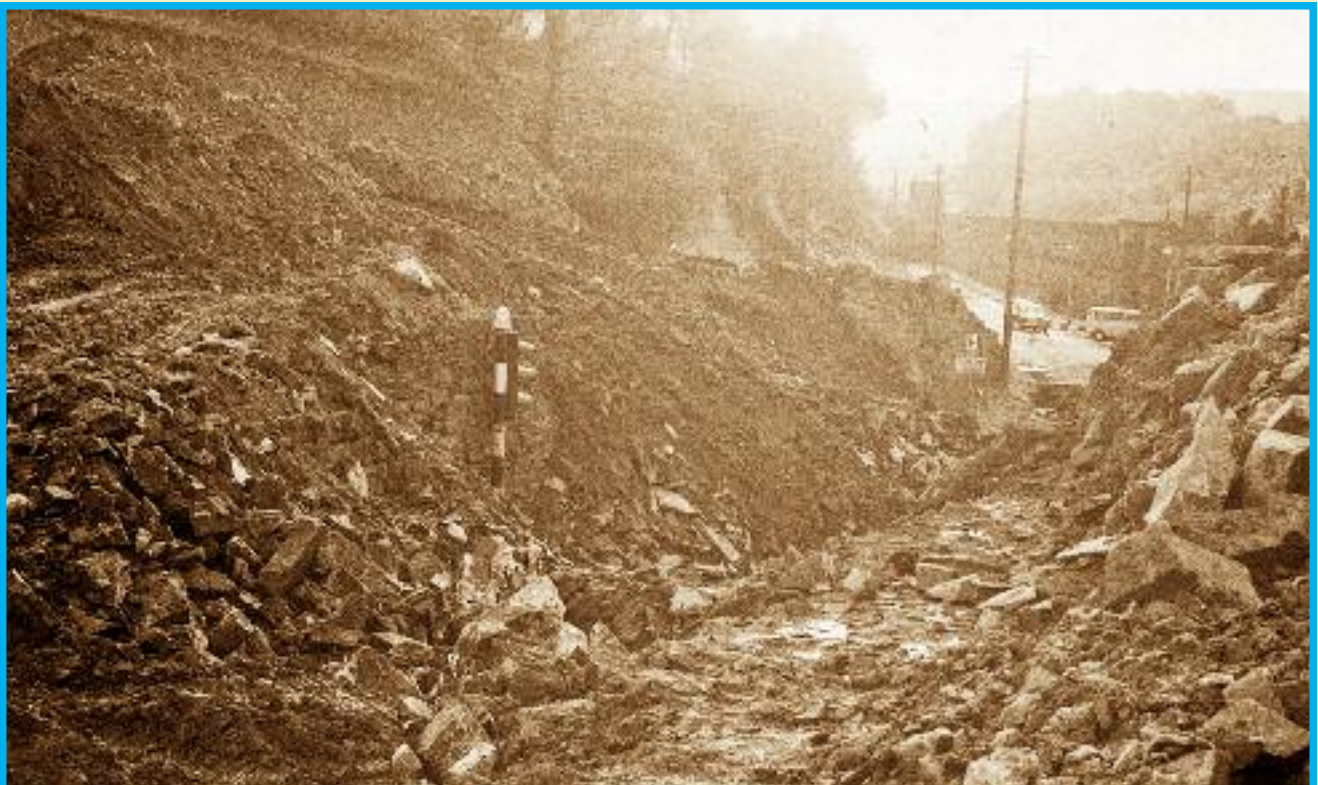
Doors open 7.30pm – Music from 8pm



BULLBRIDGE AQUEDUCT DEMOLITION

by Hugh Potter

Mark Sewell recently sent these pictures, taken by his father-in-law, to the 'Derbyshire and Proud' Facebook page. He kindly allowed us to copy the originals and to use them in *Portal*. They show that fateful time in October 1968 when the gothic-arched aqueduct that had carried the Cromford Canal for almost 200 years over the road at Bullbridge was demolished. Not such a proud day for Derbyshire!

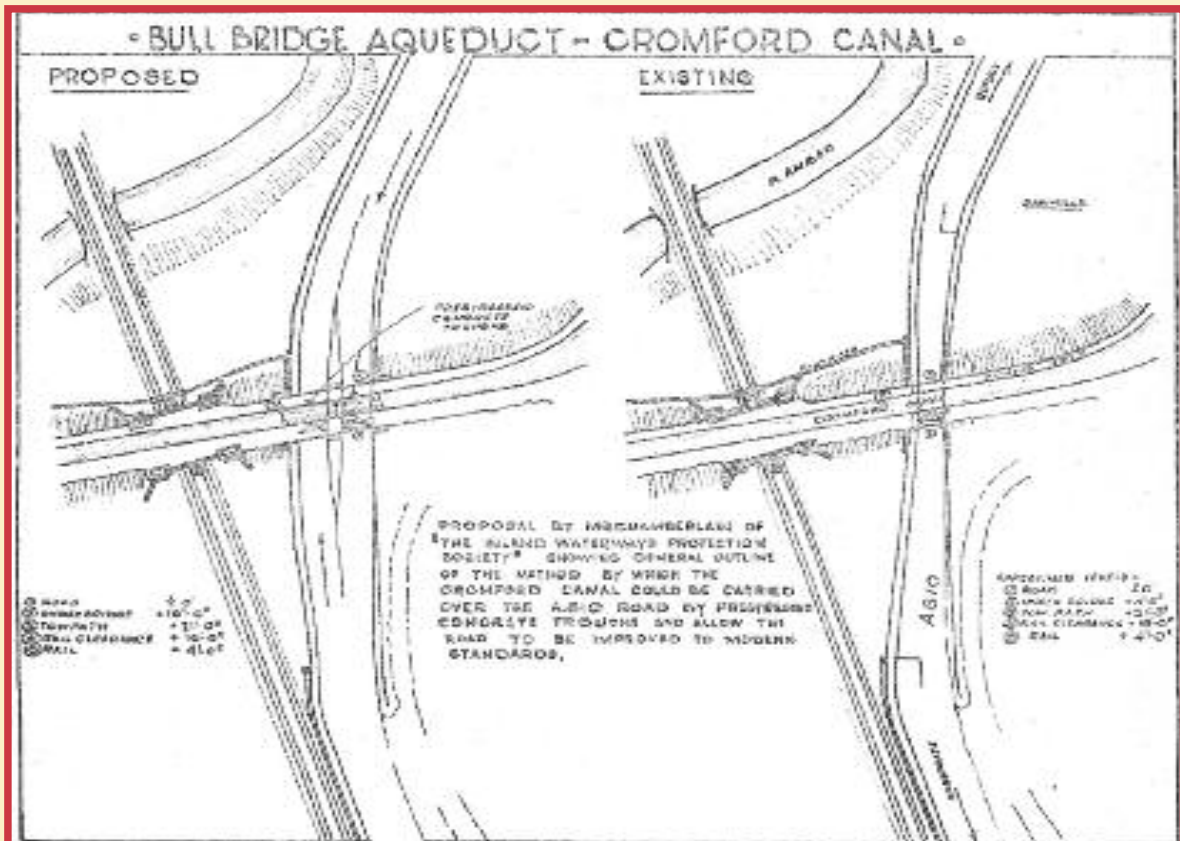




The view across the remains of the aqueduct during the demolition



At the time, there was considerable opposition to the demolition, and the Inland Waterways Protection Society put forward plans for a concrete trough over a widened road to relieve the traffic flow whilst maintaining the canal line, see below. Sadly this suggestion went unheeded and today we have a large 'gap' in our canal. Once the road aqueduct was demolished, the railway aqueduct followed very quickly, and its replacement now offers interesting challenges in view of the extra height required for electrification.





GIVING TO THE FCC

by John Guyler

Further to my article in the last issue, may I remind all members of the way in which everyone can contribute by way of donations without digging into their own pockets.

The FCC is registered with two schemes, www.easyfundraising.org.uk and www.everyclick.com incorporating www.giveasyoulive.com and when purchases are made through the connection of these web sites, the retailer then pays a fee for accessing the web site, this is then fed back directly into the account of the FCC as a percentage of the purchase. All the major retailers, some holiday companies, Ebay, Travelodge etc. are contracted to these sites.

All transactions made with the retailer are with the retailer directly and not with the funding website. Any defect or fault with the goods purchased, are the sole responsibility of the merchant from whom you purchased the product. This is a normal online transaction except to collect the reward it must be done through the give as you live web site or the easyfundraising to activate the donation. To gain donations on all purchases, click on the retailers website before each purchase.

For an individual to register, just click on the web site of your choice and away you go, register **The Friends of the Cromford Canal** as the recipient charity, also remember to access Gift Aid, which increases the donation. Registered participants can see a record of their individual donations, when they log on the web site they are registered with.

With the large membership that is the Friends of the Cromford Canal we can hopefully bring in a significant amount of funding on a regular timescale.

As one person commented its "money for doing nothing"

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 remainder of 2014

There is a bar, tea & coffee and raffle available at all meetings.

Admission is £2

- **October 20th** - William Jessop - The Man - Martyn Taylor-Cockane
- **November 17th** - My Farcical Career as Liason Officer on a Cruise Ship - Colin Bower
- **SATURDAY December 6th - NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE**
Beeston Big Band, a special evening of music and dancing. See page 27.

STOP PRESS Special General Meeting

The Special General Meeting on Monday, September 15th was inquorate and consequently adjourned until 7.30 pm on Monday, October 20th in Ironville Church Hall. The agenda will be as advised in Portal 50 page 33.

John Baylis BEM, Executive Secretary



LETTER

The following email was received by Hugh Potter, concerning his article on page 24 of Portal 50 about a small pleasure boat called *Nellie* which visited the Cromford Canal in 1895.

The Register of British and Foreign Shipping: Yacht Register 1902-1903 lists Frederick Brown of Yacht *Daisy*, Hamble, Southampton, owner of three yachts: *Daisy* (25 tons), *Lila* (8 tons) and *Nellie* (3 tons). *Nellie* was built by Watkins & Co. of London in 1888, its spritsail rig was made by Laphorn in 1895 and its dimensions were: length 22.8 ft, breadth 5.6 ft, depth 2.3 ft. This edition of the Register has been digitised by Google and can be found on the web.

A Google search for Arthur William Hutchinson Borrás revealed that he was born in 1878 and was therefore aged about 17 at the time of the cruise. This seems to have set him up for a maritime career, as he is recorded in Hudson's Bay Company records as one of its steamship masters in 1918-21 and was awarded a Lloyd's Silver Medal for Meritorious Service for his encounter with an enemy submarine on 26 August 1918.

Has anyone come up with anything on the canal voyage itself, or should I still keep my eyes open?

Grahame Boyes

BIG CHANGES IN PROGRESS AT BULLBRIDGE

by Hugh Potter

Work is progressing rapidly on the demolition of the former Stevenson's Dye Works at Bullbridge. Removal of buildings and trees has revealed the former route of the canal beneath the Derwent Valley Aqueduct pipeline looking towards Bullbridge itself where the old buildings are not being removed. See photo below. It has also revealed the top of the northern portal of Hag Tunnel, which was closed by a concrete slab when the now-removed reservoir was created.

The Derwent Valley Aqueduct survives among the demolition at the Stevenson's site. How long before boats pass under it once more?



Hugh Potter



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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



from
Yvonne Shattower

With your last magazine, you would have received a book of raffle tickets for the IWA raffle to be drawn in January 2015, and we hope you will be able to fill these in to be in with a chance of winning one of the excellent prizes on offer. The proceeds from the raffle will be divided between nominated canal restoration projects in proportion to the number of tickets sold for that project, so the more tickets you buy, the more money we can raise. Currently we are top of the list for tickets sold, so we have to say a big 'thank you' to those of you who have already sent off your ticket stubs. We also have to thank our treasurer's wife and son, who spent several hours stamping all the stubs for us. If you would like to have more tickets to sell to friends or family, please contact Beryl and Eric Singleton (contact details inside cover).

Did you enjoy reading your Portal in colour last time? Members who receive their copy by E mail have had the benefit of this for some time, but it has been too expensive to have the hard copies in colour. Now our editor has found a printer who can do it in colour for less than we were paying for black and white. Don't forget he is always happy to receive articles and photographs for publication.

Many of you will remember that, last year, we were treated to an evening at Ironville with the Beeston Big Band, which was generously sponsored by one of our members, Gordon Harwood. It was a great time, and we have been lucky enough to be able to book the Band for our Christmas Social, which will be on **Saturday 6 December, not Monday 8 December as published**. So, put the date in your diaries. Doors will be open at 7.30 and music will start at 8.00. The band plays all types of music, so I am sure there will be something to suit everyone. Tickets are £6.50, and will be on sale at our members' meetings at Ironville or from Dave Ratner (tel. 01773 713174) or you can pay on the door on the night. See also page 27.

As I write this report, we are having lovely late summer days, and it is hard to believe that we are working to a deadline to get this magazine to you in time for the World Heritage Site Discovery Days at Cromford Wharf on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd November. See also page 21. There will be many of the usual attractions, including *Birdswood*, and our Sales Stand, where you will be able to buy Christmas cards and presents for the Festive Season. If you are wondering what to get the person who has everything, how about giving them Membership of the Friends of the Cromford Canal for a year or longer? It is one present that will last them for the whole year through!

We welcome just two new members since the last edition of *The Portal* :

Mr & Mrs. T Townsend, Lincoln

Mr & Mrs R Ayres, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

Also, our apologies to Mr & Mrs D Roose of Matlock, whose name was entered incorrectly in the last magazine.

Friends of the Cromford Canal Christmas Cards

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

1st and 2nd November 2014

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

Greeting inside all cards is:

With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year

No. 1 Winter on the Shropshire Union Canal

Birdswood in her commercial carrying days

From an oil painting by Dusty Miller
Member of the Guild of Waterway Artists



Mixed packs including cards from previous years also available

No. 2 Santa comes to Cromford Wharf

Photo: Nic Barfield

No. 3 The Gauging Stop and Former Toll House at Sawmills

From a painting by Chris Jacklin



Packs of 10 cards and envelopes £3.00 per pack.

from the sales stand or by post from the Sales Address, add £1.10 p&p per pack.

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.

