

# **THE PORTAL**

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



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**FRONT COVER:** Brown's Swingbridge at High Peak Junction being lifted off its pivot to allow replacement of the ball bearings. This was carried out by a team of volunteers led by FCC Chairman John Baylis with the approval of Derbyshire County Council engineers. Photo: Editor

**BACK COVER (TOP):** Waterway Recovery Group volunteers removing silt from Lock 4 at Ironville during the July work camp using the barrow hoist gantry (which could be called Elmer?) recently acquired by the FCC and reconditioned by volunteers at Langley Mill. Photo: Pete Clark

**(BOTTOM):** Pull up a stone and sit down. Enjoying a dirty weekend at Ironville waiting for the next barrow to come back. Photo: Pete Clark

### 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. 54

We are now well into the summer and the big news in the FCC is the continuing success of *Birdswood*. The number of passengers is showing a healthy increase on last year and we now have a good group of volunteers who are vital to keep the operation going. Three new masters are at present in training and will be taking their MCA tests shortly. The other good news is that the FCC have now leased the former Weighbridge Office at Cromford Wharf. This will be Vix's office and used for *Birdswood* bookings and ticket sales and a small shop. See Vix's report on pages 10-12 for more details.

However it is not all 'plain sailing' with *Birdswood*. The crew are having trouble at the moment with low water levels. Combined with underwater obstructions in certain places, particularly at the winding hole at Leawood, this is causing worrying delays. This situation has been with us for some time and is getting worse. Hopefully it can be addressed in the near future before it becomes more serious and leads to reduced passenger numbers or even cancellations. The draught of *Birdswood* when loaded is no more than 0.8 metres, yet the specification of the dredging carried out before the operation started was for a channel depth of 1.2 metres. So the canal is too shallow, rather than the boat being too deep. Another worry is that when the water level is high enough for navigation, this aggravates the leaks in the bank, which also need attention. Maybe some of the cost of dredging the problem areas and stopping the leaks could be met from *Birdswood* takings? This would be in line with one of the FCC aims which is to restore the canal to navigable condition.

There is also good news in the work party department, with John Barker continuing to organise successful days on the Cromford to Leawood section. Meanwhile the length down the top part of the flight of locks at Ironville, which belongs to the Canal & River Trust and has been adopted by the FCC, has now attracted a separate team of volunteers led by Pete Clark and Wayne Scarle. These efforts have been given a boost by the kind gesture of Jack Brown, who runs a transport business near the canal in Ironville and is an FCC Trustee, who has provided one of his buildings as a Work Party Headquarters. See Pete Clark's report on page 18.

Another thing which has come to light recently is the fact that the proposed electrification of the Midland Main Railway Line is to be delayed. Before you think that I have lost the plot of the Cromford Canal, bear in mind that when the canal is restored at Bullbridge, a new aqueduct will be needed over the A610 road and the railway. The delay in electrification means that we have more time to talk to the railway people to make them aware of our intentions and ensure that their wires will pass under the new aqueduct.

They will be lowering the track to avoid several bridges in Belper!

**The press date for the Autumn 2015 issue will be November 2nd.**





## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM



I am sorry to have to report the death of Valerie Kelley after a debilitating terminal illness. In 2002, with her husband Mike, Val was one of the steering committee which became the Friends of the Cromford Canal. See Mike's article about the founding of the FCC on page 21. Mike became the first Chairman but as he was still teaching in the Sudan,

Val in her familiar role on the FCC raffle stall



I was Vice Chairman and Val was our essential contact during Mike's periods away. Val organised speakers for the early meetings and ran the raffle for many years. Her funeral at St. Martin of Tours Church, Alfreton was well attended by family, friends and members of the FCC; our sympathies go to Mike and his family. I am pleased to say that Mike wants to resume some of the work of the FCC and will now rejoin *Birdswood* as one of the masters, which role he had to abandon during Val's illness as he became her full time carer. Tragically, they had moved into sheltered housing only two weeks before she passed away.

Howard Smith, another member the steering committee of the Friends, has been Chairman of the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association for 23 years and he decided to resign in May. With Mike, Howard was a guiding force in the formation of the Friends and his wife Sheila and I drafted the Friends constitution for the Charity Commission. Howard was also a founder member of the Derbyshire County Council Cromford Canal Partnership. Norman Cornwell has been elected chairman of the ECP&DA and has been invited to attend the Partnership meetings. Norman also wants to progress the extension of the Cromford Canal above Langley Mill. See also page 30.

For the fourth year, Waterway Recovery Group have held a Canal Camp on the Cromford Canal and for the second year this was at Ironville Lock 4 continuing the cleaning out started last year. The vegetation clearance carried out by John Barker and Peter Clark made access easier this year and in addition to clearing the lock, the fore bay was cleared and a blinding layer of concrete poured to give a safe and stable base for future work. See pages 14 - 17. The barrow hoist purchased from ebay and repaired by WRG East Midlands performed much better than the hired equipment used last year and will be a major asset to the Friends equipment. The main problem now will be trying to persuade the Canal & River Trust and the Reservoir Engineers that restoration of the flight need not reduce the effectiveness of the reservoir outfall.



# VOLUNTEERS WORK ON BROWN'S BRIDGE

by John Baylis

The Friends of the Cromford Canal (FCC) had been in discussion with Derbyshire County Council for some months on investigating problems with Brown's Swing Bridge at High Peak Junction, but the critical point was ensuring Construction (Design & Management) Regulations (CDM) were complied with for the safety of people and the bridge structure, whilst lifting the bridge by volunteers. Then towards the end of May, the bridge became very difficult to swing and use of it had to be restricted as the bridge was being damaged and it was becoming unsafe to use. This created problems with the FCC trip boat *Birdswood* not being able to reach the winding hole. Urgent action was required and John Baylis, Chairman of the FCC, and also a Director of Waterway Recovery Group, put together a package with the bridge being lifted by a contract crane hire with Walkers of Tuxford and the work carried out by volunteers from WRG East Midlands and the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association (ECP&DA). This was approved by Derbyshire County Council engineers and the work was carried out on June 5th.

Brown's Bridge is part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and was replaced in 2011 (see *Portal 38 - Ed*). However, concern had been expressed that the original balls in the bearing that were refitted in 2011 were not of uniform size. Heritage advice at the time of the bridge replacement was that this set of balls should be retained. The first part of the lift was to remove these cast iron balls, ensure the bearing surfaces were clean, and replace with a similar uniform set of 65mm balls from an old Nottingham Canal bridge now in the possession of the ECP&DA.

The crane carefully positioned to avoid the power lines about to start the initial lift.



Hugh Potter





Editor



TOP: The ball race contained 21 balls (2 short of the ideal number) and was full of grease contaminated with dirt and grit.

BOTTOM: The balls were removed, the race cleaned out and the replacement balls are being fitted.



Hugh Potter





TOP: The 23 replacement 65 mm balls fitted in the cleaned out bottom race.

BOTTOM: The opportunity was also taken to inspect the underside of the bridge and the upper ball race before the bridge was lowered back into place.

Editor

Editor







The bridge is finally lowered into position after experimenting with the different sized balls.

Editor

The first lift went well, but there were still problems with swinging the bridge and possible damage to the stonework because the swinging end of the bridge was catching. It was therefore decided to lift the bridge again and fit a set of 70mm balls to give more clearance. This meant that the bridge rested higher and cleared the stonework. However, the larger balls did not seat correctly in the ball race, meaning that swinging the bridge was still difficult. The bridge was therefore lifted a third time and the 65 mm balls refitted. The problem of the swinging end catching on the stonework was then rectified by adding about 200 kg of cast iron to the counterweight of the bridge, kindly loaned by Derbyshire County Council from the High Peak Junction Workshops, to rectify the imbalance and raise the swinging end clear of the stonework. The work also revealed damp and possible wood rot in the counterweight boxes. It was therefore arranged that the ECP&DA would source some suitable pieces of steel plate and return in due course to fit these instead of the loaned cast iron, and also clean out and improve the ventilation of the counterweight boxes at the same time.

John Baylis said “The ECP&DA has carried out maintenance on the Nottingham Canal swingbridge at Langley Mill for over 40 years (*see Portal 53 - Ed.*) and are experienced in some of the problems of bridges of the original design. I hope that this work will allow the FCC and other volunteers to do more technical work on the DCC owned section of the Cromford Canal”. The work is being funded by the Friends of the Cromford Canal as part of its agreement with DCC on the licence for *Birdswood*.

*I am very pleased that John and his team were able to demonstrate to Derbyshire County Council that volunteers could carry out this type of work on the bridge. It is a vital part of keeping Birdswood running. Ed.*





# NEWS FROM THE NORTH

## Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate

### Update - Summer 2015

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 to maintaining and improving the canal, please contact the Countryside Service or John Barker, the FCC work party organiser. Volunteers have helped to keep the navigation channel clear, cleared silt traps and vegetation. Invasive Himalayan Balsam has also been

John Guyler



FCC volunteers working alongside DCC staff clearing weeds from the canal near Lawn Bridge.

removed from alongside the canal. This volunteer input is much appreciated. The Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) has been supported by DCC by providing the Wharf Shed residential centre near High Peak Junction as a base without a charge. 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.

**Brown's Bridge, High Peak Junction** - Anyone who has taken a trip on *Birdswood* may realise that there has been quite an art and an increasing struggle to open the swing bridge at High Peak Junction. The bridge, which is a scheduled monument, was rebuilt in 2011 but the heritage advice at the time was that the set of bearings should be retained as it was thought these were original. Unfortunately the bearings were not of a regular size and with frequent use with *Birdswood* on the canal it resulted in the bridge catching on the stone work on the High Peak Junction side. A proposal was made by the Friends to improve the bridge operation and on June 5th a crane lift was arranged by John Baylis and this made it possible to change to bearings of the same size and shape (but an authentic era) and to ease a number of sticking points on the bridge. This included shortening protruding bolts and chamfering a protruding wooden edge. Thanks go to John, the FCC and the Inland Waterway Association group for co-ordinating this work and for the work to improve the bridge ballast. A great job was done. [ See John's article on the previous pages - Ed. ]



**Towpath improvements** - The section of towpath from Lawn Bridge (opposite Cromford Meadows Rugby Club) to the High Peak Junction swing bridge will be resurfaced over the autumn period, starting straight after the Discovery Days activities of October half term. The section of canal towpath from Cromford Meadows to High Peak Junction will be closed from November 2nd for several weeks. If planning walks and activities on the canal towpath feel free to call the team at Middleton Top for updates.

**Leak Repairs** - All man made structures need attention and maintenance. Unfortunately at any time there are several leaks from Cromford Canal. We constantly monitor these leak sites and carry out ongoing repairs. We are regularly having to repuddle a number of leaks eg. sections adjacent to Cromford Meadows.

**Additional canal spillway** - The top section of Cromford Canal was built with very few overflows, to help serve the locks to the south east. Practical experience backed up by a hydrology report has shown that a flood event could lead to the canal banks overtopping and even the possibility of the banks being breached. DCC was supported by WRG and FCC work parties on a scheme to widen the Derwentside overspill weir in the summer of 2012. See Portal 43. This spillway has worked well and the completed job is shown below.



Hugh Potter

Having got an agreement in place with Network Rail, it is now hoped to construct a similar weir north of Whatstandwell close to the ground paddle at Simms bridge, utilising the existing stream course. If funding is confirmed the scheme is planned for early in the New Year 2016.

**Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days Events** - There are heritage activities a plenty during the DVMWHS Discovery Days on Saturday 31st October and Sunday 1st November. Make sure you visit High Peak Junction. Visit the historic railway workshops on one of the free tours and try your hand at Blacksmithing on the forge. Those interested in woodland crafts can learn all about bodging and much more. 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.**





# BIRDSWOOD UPDATE

by VIX WILDING



Birdswood is fast becoming a popular tourist attraction and has already seen more passengers than last year. This all amounts to more funds being raised to meet the charity's aim of full restoration of the Cromford Canal.

As many of you have seen on the website and Facebook, the lease was signed in June for a Booking Office/Heritage Centre. The building is the old Weighbridge Office on the back of the Gothic Warehouse on the wharf. It's a prime spot and I hope to generate extra income by selling local artists' products as well as our own. We have all worked hard to transform this old storage room into an asset for the FCC. Shelving has been created, a desk added and items related to the canal and the old offices itself are slowly being added and this will continue to grow. If anyone has anything of interest to display I would love to hear from you. The displays are safe from public hands and the building is alarmed. By the time this goes to print this will be fully operational and open for ticket sales, souvenir purchases and a step back in time for the Canal, *Birdswood* and Wheatcroft Fans.

The Weighbridge Office at Cromford Wharf which is now open for FCC sales as well as all *Birdswood* enquiries and ticket sales



Vix Wilding



*Birdswood* herself has seen new windows fitted which have been very capably organised by Ian Hooker. Production of new seating is now also going ahead, following the making and modifying of prototypes by Dave Ratner. These will allow more space for knees and easier cleaning for staff. Thank you gentlemen. We are working on replacing the present carpet tile flooring within the Galley. They become wet and muddy quite quickly so the decision has been made to replace with a wipeable surface. With the growing demand for charters and school trips as well as a heavy summer sailing programme the FCC have decided to invest in three new masters. Currently training are Clive Stokes, Hugh Potter and Steve Leaver. Steve and Clive have only been a part of the team for about a year but you should all recognise the name Hugh Potter. They have all taken their Fire and Water Safety along with full medicals. Final First Aid courses and the MCA exam are due to take place in late September. These three will be signed, sealed and delivered ready for the end of October so keep your eyes open for new faces at the helm.

The 'lift out' for the full MCA hull inspection is due to take place early November and *Birdswood* will be seated for about a week on the peninsular where she will be cleaned, blackened and some general maintenance will take place.

Other news.....September has a National Talk Like a Pirate Day. On Saturday 19th for the 11am sailing you can visit and ride on the Black Pearl, enter the fancy dress competition and join in with activities during the trip.

And if that's not enough excitement, we will be running the Halloween Spooky Sailings again. Afternoon sailing for all ages with drinks and snacks included for just £5 per person, (under ones free). SEE POSTERS OVERLEAF or ring the number below.

Finally, at the end of October the traditional Derwent Valley Discovery Days take place with plenty to see and do up and down this beautiful World Heritage Site. October 31st and November 1st see plenty to see and do in the Gothic Warehouse and even pick up an early gift for Christmas from our shop which is stocked with local handmade items. DVMWHS sees its 10th year of celebrations and to honour that the FCC are putting on a special family event. Come along on Thursday 29th to make your own Bug Box and contribute to a static one for the first time at Cromford. All details are on the poster but please ring and book if you're considering the boat trip as well. The BOGOF deal is for this special date only.

Before I sign off need I remind you that December will see the return of our ever popular Santa Specials running on the weekends of 5/6th, 12/13th, 19/20th. Details to be added to website and Facebook shortly.

By the time Santa visits I shall have been employed by the FCC for a year and can I say a massive THANKYOU to them for putting their faith in me and allowing me to develop *Birdswood* and the opportunities for outdoor learning. All the work has been fun and promotes the charity's goals and helps to raise the much needed funds. All this and the plans for next year cannot take place without the thousands of volunteer hours that are put in by the rest of the team. I cannot thank each of you enough. Congratulations on surviving another season and contributing to the up keep of the Cromford Canal!

*May I also add my thanks to Vix for ably taking charge of the Birdswood operation and continuing to increase the passenger numbers despite the problems caused by obstructions in the canal and low water levels.*

*I am also very pleased to see that Mike Kelley has now felt able to return to giving more of his time to skippering Birdswood after the tragic death of his wife Val following her long illness. - Ed.*

**Phone 07552 055455 for all Birdswood enquiries**






## Talk like a Pirate Day

**Ahoy there Mateys!**  
Join us aboard the  
Black Pearl for  
merriments aplenty on  
September 19th!




**£5 Each**  
(under ones free)



**Bring yer own grub!**

Fancy dress competition and prizes!  
Activities and a story onboard for the children

Ye'll be sailing at 11am me hearties • booking is advisable

Call the booking line on: 07552 055 455  
Email: [bookings@cromfordcanal.org](mailto:bookings@ cromfordcanal.org)  
Visit: <http://www.cromfordcanal.info>



## Bug Boutique

Cromford Wharf  
Thursday 29th October  
10am - 3pm



Learn how to build a bug boutique using materials you might usually throw away

Please bring any old newspapers, sticks, bamboo, pipes or any other junk you think might be useful with you

Drop in session, however, if you would like a miniature bug hotel to take home then booking is advisable




Ride the Birdwood canal boat at a special BOGOF rate as part of the event (usually adults £6 and children £3)  
Booking essential for the boat trip

For further information or to book contact DerwentWISE:

Email: [derwentwise@derbysshirewt.co.uk](mailto:derwentwise@derbysshirewt.co.uk)  
Telephone: 01773 881 188




# Halloween




Friday 30th October at 2pm

Celebrate with a trip on our narrowboat

## Birdswood

**£5 per person**



**Family dress optional**

Spooky cakes and dragon's blood drinks available

Call the booking line on: 07552 055 455

Email: [bookings@cromfordcanal.org](mailto:bookings@cromfordcanal.org)

Visit: <http://www.cromfordcanal.info>





Some special events to look forward to on *Birdswood* before the end of the year. And don't forget our new booking office and shop in the Weighbridge Office at Cromford Wharf. There will also be the traditional Santa Specials in December





# SCARECROW WEEKEND AT CROMFORD

by Vix Wilding

The annual Scarecrow Weekend on August 1st & 2nd at Cromford Wharf was a sunny occasion with plenty to see and do. The FCC sales stall and tombola stand saw a steady stream of people together with the painted ware and watercolour pictures stalls and many sat to watch the historical slide show. Chelsea was in a good mood and received some carrots at half time for her work. She asked me to say "Thank you to Chris Jacklin for bringing such juicy ones".

The Nottingham Model Boat Club were there again and their boats put on some lovely shows in between *Birdswood* pulling in and out with full loads of passengers. The new shop in the Weighbridge Office saw its first trading days, onwards and upwards! Many people came in to see the varied stock of locally handmade items and souvenirs for sale. We received positive support and encouragement from many passers-by.

The scarecrow competition was a close call and many businesses from Cromford Mills including the *Birdswood* Team got involved in this fun competition. I'm pleased to say that our scarecrow 'Boatman Bill' did receive some of the votes but 'Fred the Fisherman' won by 1 vote.



Editor

Above: Horse and crew about to set off, but the chap on the foredeck looks a bit pale.

Below: The very realistic model oarsman created a lot of interest.

Right: Boatman Bill taking a rest between trips.



Editor



Vix Wilding





# WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP RETURN TO LOCK FOUR

by George Rogers  
All pictures by Pete Clark

Summertime can only mean one thing: it's time to get down and dirty! Cue the fanfares (or at least the steady humming of a generator, pump and a simmering burco), WRG are back.

Sadly, we were frustrated by ecological limitations, there being a very large number of 'rare' crayfish that all had to be moved before work could begin. See below.



This year, we hosted two weeks of WRG camps, following on the fine work completed last year at Lock 4. The aim this year was to continue removing silt, cast a layer of concrete 'blinding' in the top forebay and to do some repair works to the towpath.

To the first aim, the FCC have now invested in a gantry hoist, see below. Last year we had many problems finding equipment to haul the silt out of the lock, to the point







that volunteers were actually pulling it up in buckets. This year, they only had to press a button – it's not that much faster (if at all), but we do still have functioning volunteers at the end of the day. A huge thank you must be extended to all who helped get the hoist ready - John Baylis and his team at Langley Mill, John Boucher for testing it and JB transport for allowing one of their drivers to collect it from Slough.



The barrows still had to be filled and moved to within reach of the hoist by hand.



Over the course of the fortnight a lot more silt was removed. Disposal still proved problematic as the tipping point is several hundred yards away. The dumper can't get under the hoist and so loading is tricky, but the lock is getting clearer – and looking fantastic! We knew when starting this process that Lock 4 was probably in the best condition of all the locks, but it is beautiful. One of the volunteers remarked to me that there are locks on the navigable system that are in much worse condition (and having boated a bit I agree!).





Task 2 was the concrete 'blinding'. To the less technical amongst you, this is essentially an initial layer of concrete to help give a sturdy base and flat working platform for further concrete – it isn't doing anything structural but it makes life a lot easier when you try to do the structural bits. At the moment we are unsure of the details of restoring lock 4 (the cill has been lowered), so putting in the blinding will minimise the ingress of silt back into the lock and also gives us a solid base to work on whilst restoring the wing walls. The FCC engineering team now has some work to do to prepare the next stage of restoration!







The pictures on the previous page show the forebay having been cleared of silt and rubbish, covered in a layer of stone and then the concrete blinding being laid. The finished slab is seen on the right. This will form the base for the final layer.



Time for a little archaeology. Many bottles and other ceramic items are to be found in the locks at Ironville. They were made in large numbers at the pottery above lock three. From there crates of finished products were sent by boat to London.

Task 3 was the footpath – with the other works going on, not a huge amount happened on this but some progress was made and I believe Pete Clark & John Barker are going to set this up as a future job for the local work party.

All in all it was a very successful fortnight. Hopefully the photos tell the story!

A few thanks to finish – to the WRG leaders & volunteers, to the *Birdswood* team for the boat trips each week, to the Barley Mow at Bonsall for hosting the volunteers for an evening meal after the boat trips, to JB transport for storing the equipment and providing welfare facilities, to C&RT for continuing to work with us on the site, to Matthew Rogers and John Boucher for organising and providing the engineering design, to Matthew and John Barker for hosting the end of camp BBQs and to everyone else who helped in some way – if I have forgotten anyone I apologise.

We are currently reviewing the options for next year, but as we have the grant money from Severn Trent (see last issue) towards the work at the Narrows at Sawmills, we will most likely be returning there. Watch this space!





## NEW FCC WORK PARTY HQ AT IRONVILLE

by **Pete Clark - Ironville Work Party Organiser - [pete.clark@hotmail.com](mailto:pete.clark@hotmail.com)**

A room at the premises of JB Transport at Ironville has been kindly provided by Jack and Cath Brown to provide facilities for FCC work Parties.

This is a fantastic resource, being dry and secure, close to the canal with convenient car parking and rubbish disposal, a good place for sitting notices and the signing in book, coping with muddy boots etc. and providing facilities for the vital things like making tea and eating sandwiches.

This is working out very well indeed and proving quite popular. In the future I have plans to talk to the owner about the possibility of internally painting it and fitting it out with storage cupboards and shelving. We would perhaps re-purpose some old kitchen units - any offers of old kitchen cupboards etc.??

Our late spring / summer work consists of :-

- Clearing soil from coping stones (Locks 2 and 3 look good on the fence side)
- Fence painting in a sympathetic dark brown chestnut colour. Appropriate materials have been supplied by the C&RT. The result is much more pleasing to the eye and looks quite smart together with the cleared coping stones.
- Ongoing litter-picking and dog-poo spraying. There is a great deal less of both litter and dog dirt now. Many towpath ramblers and residents alike comment most favourably.
- The canal at Ironville was Water Tested last week, Wayne used a special kit, and the quality was found to be very high. More tests to follow.

• I have now replaced the missing C&RT sign at Smith's lock No.4. I have used anti-theft 'nuts' in addition to the C&RT supplied nuts and bolts, whereas previously it was a very simple matter to steal the sign with a small spanner.

• Regarding wildlife along our adopted stretch, I can report a Kingfisher sighting near Lock 3 (July 22), a Grass Snake sunning itself on the towpath also between Lock 3 and the Iron



Pete Clark with the new C&RT Lock Name Signs outside the new Work Party HQ.

Footbridge (July 25). Two pairs of Grey Wagtails have reared young (Nests in Lock 3 and Lock 4). During the WRG July work in Lock 4, a two foot long (rather emaciated looking!) Pike was removed, together with about 800 White-Clawed Crayfish!

Future work in the short term will continue with the above (there are 'miles' of fencing, and it is supposed to be given 2 or 3 coats!), plus:-

- Hammerite re-painting the towpath gate in black and white by Lock 4.
- There is some Himalayan Balsam to clear from the edge of Codnor Park Reservoir. NB there are masses of this in the nearby River Erewash, so we will need to be vigilant.
- I will put up a new C&RT sign at Boat Dock Lock No.2 to replace the damaged sign.



# ENGINEERING REPORT

by Matthew Rogers

We hear a lot about what is going on that you can see evidence of, but what of behind the scenes and our aspiration to restore the canal? A small group of engineers meet to look at the plans, objectives and possible ways forward. We would love to say that it was all very straight forward, that there are no problems – only solutions, but that is very far from the truth. Since the canal was allowed to fall into dereliction vast lengths are now in private ownership, all traces of the original route have been lost and there are new solutions required to overcome the obstacles in our way.

To work on the entire length at one time is too great a task for our limited resources. We have therefore split the canal into smaller sections as follows:

- Langley mill to Codnor Park Reservoir
- Pinxton Arm
- Codnor Park Reservoir through to Ambergate
- Ambergate to Cromford

We are being greatly assisted by CRIB (Canal Restoration in Bullbridge) who are working closely with the FCC, local councillors and Mansel Architects to look at the former Stevensons site at Bullbridge ensuring that the canal gets reinstated as part of the proposed housing development.

For the engineering team our focus is on the Langley Mill to Codnor Park reservoir section for a number of reasons, with the key one being the opportunity to join it to the existing network. The engineering studies have to consider actions across a broad spectrum of aspects including topographical surveys, location of buried services, geotechnical information, land owners, known environmental constraints and heritage information for starters. We have plotted potential routes including options to cross the A610 and past Stoneyford to meet the concerns of the landowners and that make commercial sense. However, our biggest single issue currently is Codnor Park Reservoir and the requirement for an overflow channel with sufficient capacity in the event of the “1 in 10,000 year storm”. This is not a figure invented by Canal & River Trust (C&RT) but legislation and it may cause the FCC a very significant risk. If the channel cannot be altered then we don’t have a canal channel without significant realignment. We don’t yet know the extent of the impact this may have on any future restoration so we are currently working with C&RT to obtain quotes for a full hydraulic survey of the reservoir catchment area and the outlet channel. This will tell us exactly what is required and is information that is vital to future restoration. Until it is completed we are not permitted by the C&RT Reservoir engineer to do any formal restoration works through the Ironville Locks.

C&RT are being incredibly supportive and working closely to assist us in our quest. Sean McGinley (Waterway Manager East Midlands C&RT) and his team have held detailed talks with us (my thanks to Jack Brown for the use of his meeting room). They are as keen as the rest of us to find a solution, not put barriers in our way and at the recent WRG camp pulled out all the stops to assist us dealing with the crayfish cancelling other meetings to stay on site.

Elsewhere on the canal on the Pinxton Arm we are revisiting the original planning permissions and obtaining formal quotes for potential earthworks so that we can consider grant applications to progress.

If anyone feels as though they can assist us in any way please let me know - you don’t have to be an engineer! We will try to bring you regular updates on our progress and today I have agreed that we will formerly present at next year’s AGM so watch this space!





# The Inland Waterways Association Restoration Raffle 2015

By Bob Bullock, FCC Treasurer

The photo below shows FCC Chairman John Baylis (right) receiving a cheque for £1,200 from IWA Chairman Les Etheridge. This was the FCC share of the profits from the 2014 IWA Restoration Raffle. The Friends of the Cromford Canal sold the most tickets so we received the highest amount.



The money was put towards the purchase of equipment and tools for use by FCC work parties and the two WRG work camps at Ironville locks which have just been held in July. See pages 14-17.

Enclosed with this issue of the *Portal* is a book of five tickets for the 2015 restoration raffle. I realise that many people do not like to receive raffle tickets this way and if you choose not to buy any that is fine, your support as a member of the FCC is very much appreciated.



The raffle prizes have all been donated and the cost of organising it are all met

by the IWA so the FCC receives every penny from the tickets we sell. Last year we received 6,000 tickets most of which were distributed through the *Portal* so had we sold them all we would have raised £12,000. It would be unrealistic to expect that to happen but if every member bought just one ticket we would be able to double the amount raised last year.

If anyone requires more tickets they are available from myself or the Membership Secretary Yvonne Shattower or from our Boat Operations Manager Vix Wilding at the Weighbridge Office Cromford. All contact details are on the inside front cover.

## PROPOSED NEW BRIDLEWAY BRIDGES LINKING JACKSDALE AND CODNOR PARK, IRONVILLE

Share your ideas and help to make this ambition a reality on

**Saturday 19 September 10am to 12 noon at Ironville Church Hall  
or 2pm to 4pm at Jacksdale Community Centre**

A partnership of local councils and organisations was formed in 2012 to progress a bridge design to allow walkers, cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooters to cross the Cromford Canal and the River Erewash and re-establish the link between Jacksdale and Codnor Park. The main challenge is fundraising. Come and have YOUR say.



# IN THE BEGINNING

by Mike Kelley



Many have become members of the FCC in recent years, so maybe it is time to state, for the record, how it all began. For this we have to go back to the year 2000, at which time I was working in Sudan, and in the long lonely evenings I spent many hours looking on the internet at things back home. I was already (at that time) a member of the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Society and thought to myself I would also like to join any group who are looking after the Cromford Canal. After much searching I was surprised to find that no such society existed.

In my search however, I came across Howard Smith, Chairman of the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association (ECP&DA). We exchanged several emails, and Howard explained to me that his association had already restored part of the Cromford Canal at Langley Mill, and if I was interested I should become a member of the ECP&DA. This I did and during one of my leave periods back in England I set out with my wife to locate and photograph the route of the Cromford, for at that stage I had no idea where it went to between Ambergate and Langley Mill.

I attended a meeting of the ECP&DA in 2001 and shortly after Howard and his wife Sheila invited me and my wife Valerie to dinner with them at their house. We discussed many things, the result of which was Howard asked if I would take charge of a sub-committee of the ECP&DA whose aim would be the restoration of the Cromford Canal. Sheila asked if she could become FCC member number 1, which she did and so to this day holds that precious number which no one else can ever have. Howard became member number 2, myself number 3 and Valerie number 4.

It was around this time that Howard had written an article for the *Erewash Outlook* magazine in which he stated that they should now be looking at the restoration of the lower part of the Cromford Canal.

The first meeting of this sub-committee was on 22nd November, with just 13 members of the ECP&DA in attendance. One of the items for discussion was the name of this sub-committee; various suggestions being: Cromford Canal Restoration Soc., Lower Cromford Canal RS. and Cromford Canal Society 2001. At that first meeting the name 'Friends of the Cromford Canal' was decided upon, and the rest as they say is history.

To kick off the campaign I wrote over 60 hard letters in December 2001 and some emails to key personnel throughout the country. Then on Wednesday 13th March 2002 the first public meeting was held at Ironville Village Hall. We thought if 40 were to come along we would have done well, so imagine our surprise when over 200 tried to get in to that hall. It was standing room only.

After this it was frantic. We were immediately blessed by knowledgeable and willing volunteers stepping forward to help, some of whom are still with us today. Without such people we would not have got off the ground; as it was, we hit the ground running.

Initially we were met by a brick wall when speaking of the canal being restored, but not anymore. Now, thanks to so many giving their time to this project, our voice is listened to and the first mile and a quarter of the canal from Cromford is operational. This was the beginning, but there is still a way to go.





## CANAL REGENERATION IN BULLBRIDGE

from Gill Hirst, Secretary, Canal Regeneration In Bullbridge.  
Tel 01773 856178 Email [bullandsaw@outlook.com](mailto:bullandsaw@outlook.com)

We have been asked to provide an update on CRIB.

If you did not have sight of the last *Portal*, CRIB is an acronym for Canal Regeneration In Bullbridge. We are a group of people from The Friends of Cromford Canal, The Bullbridge and Sawmills Area Civic Society (BASA) and local elected representatives.

We believe that if the canal is not reinstated at the same time as the Stevensons Site is developed it is unlikely to ever be reinstated and we are determined to encourage the planners and developers to see the reinstatement as a positive that will benefit many. We are presently researching what we need to do to get a coherent plan together to present to planners and developers. Clearly the plan must show thought for how such a project might be funded, how it might impact on the environment, community, infrastructure, responsibility for maintenance and so on. We have split this huge task into smaller ones, which members have “adopted” to research and with the aid of examples of similar work done by others, available assessments and our own local knowledge and expertise we are working towards each module.

Getting others on board is crucial and we are pleased that our County Councillor David Williams is an avid supporter of our cause. Last week we met up with our MP Nigel Mills to take him round the Stevensons site before a lengthy discussion on the pros and cons of asking for the canal to be reinstated through the site. Nigel asked some pertinent questions and provided us with some useful information and has tasked himself with contacting various persons/ departments on our behalf.

We hope to arrange a meeting with Amber Valley Borough Planners soon to listen to their best advice which will inform our plan.

We would love to hear from anybody with particular interest, expertise or experience in any facet of our project. We really do need all the help we can get and guarantee you a welcome to our group.

**Further to the above, George Rogers  
(a member of CRIB as well as being FCC webmaster)  
has sent in some extra information:**

Since Gill Hirst wrote an introduction to the work of CRIB in the last issue of *Portal*, there have been several meetings of the group. The current focus is largely divided into 3 key strands:

1. Lobby the planners. Ultimately, convincing the planners is a very important step towards seeing any changes to the outline planning permission. As Gill mentions above, we had a very useful site meeting with Nigel Mills MP, and he gave us some very useful pointers on this and other matters, as well as agreeing to speak to various parties to hopefully further the dialogue between us and them.

2. Write a planning brief. One of the members is an architect with significant experience of town planning, so he has been developing an alternative to the scheme proposed when the outline planning permission was granted in 2013. He has been putting numbers to the original scheme and his own scheme to demonstrate how the alternative actually makes



a developer more profit, as well as seeing the canal restored and satisfying the wishes of the local community. Our hope is to be able to use this to work with any future developer and the Amber Valley planning department.

3. Write a coherent engineering strategy. My main task at the moment is to develop the engineering behind the canal restoration on the site. We are building on the work done by our neighbours at Chesterfield to develop a comprehensive strategy document to show how the canal could be restored – when we push for the canal to be restored as part of the development we need to be able to demonstrate that it isn't going to be a stagnant pond but that it will one day be part of a thriving canal.

Of course, all of this takes lots of work and we really could do with more help. It was slightly disappointing that nobody from the FCC membership responded to offer any support on this – in fact it is possibly more concerning that, in a group actively working to restore a section of the canal, there are only a couple of FCC members – from a group whose stated aim is the restoration of the Cromford Canal! You don't need to be able to come to lots of meetings, but there is research to be done and lots of people to contact, so if you would like to lend a hand in any way please get in touch with me (writing the *Crib Sheet* would be a good start – that's one job we've neglected at the moment???)

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## CELEBRATING CROMFORD WEEKEND

by Yvonne Shattower

On Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th June the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site held a 'Celebrating Cromford' weekend, following two weeks of various walks around the whole of the World Heritage Site, and your Sales Team were in attendance, together with *Birdswood* and 'Chelsea'. The Leawood Pump was also in steam for the weekend.

When I say 'your Sales Team', it was in fact, the 'B' Team, as Val Roberts and Mike Harrison were not available on this occasion, so it is thanks to Hugh Potter, David Martin and Joan Colebrook with her friends Phyllis and Eve that we were able to have a presence there. Vix Wilding and her family (especially Felicity) did a wonderful job with two Tombolas, one for children and another for adults, both of which proved very popular. We also had Trina with her painted canal items, and Wallace Spence who brought along some of his lovely prints and paintings. Thanks must go to them both for their donations to the Friends. Hugh set up one of his interesting slide shows which were appreciated by visitors who came in to get out of the sometimes inclement weather. *Birdswood* did two trips each day pulled by Chelsea, and having the Sales Stand in the Gothic Warehouse meant that we were able to tell visitors about the next day's trips, and reserve places for people who would, otherwise, have missed the opportunity to have a boat trip. This, I think, shows how important it is to have a presence at Cromford Wharf, something which will happen now we have the use of the Weighbridge Office there.

Hugh, David, Vix and her family and I manned the Stand on the Saturday, and on Sunday things were looked after by Joan, Phyllis and Eve, as Hugh was leading one of the Walks. Peter Keating was in attendance on both days with his trusty organ music. The weather was very windy, especially on Saturday, and Peter had a full time job keeping the various FCC boards upright!

Our next weekend at Cromford will be on Saturday 31st October and Sunday 1st November when we will be at Cromford for the annual Discovery Days. As always we would be very grateful for any help at either of these events, especially at the start and end of the day when we have to set up and take down stalls, tents etc.





# DERWENT - THE TALE OF A CANAL BOAT

by Chris Jacklin

This, like many stories today began with an email. The attachment showed an old weather beaten model narrow boat named *Derwent*, obviously in dire need of TLC with an appeal for a volunteer to help her. I really hoped that someone else would step forward but no one did and deep down I knew that we were destined to meet.

Our first meeting was at the Horse & Jockey car park where I picked her up in my arms from the boot of Hugh Potter's car. The photograph was deceptive, she was larger, heavier than I had expected, peeling and in need of a good wash! But what fine shape and curves she had and that was all that mattered. I eased her gently into my car and the two of us headed off for my place. Not one for messing about I headed for the bathroom and smothered her in wet towels to restore the dry body, she was already peeling off... I left her in the bathroom and went to bed.

A few days later....

The flaking, brittle lettering on the cabin required the most immediate attention, see photo. The humid atmosphere of the towelling had stabilised the peeling paint allowing me to use a watered down solution of P.V.A glue gently brushed over the lettering. After several coats as much of the lettering as was possible to save had been secured back in place. The first criteria of restoration should be, I believe, to conserve as much as possible and restore as little as possible.



The cabin panels were in places worn down to the bare wood but enough lettering remained on each side for me to trace and transfer across to the other side.

I had retained the tins of paint used on *Birdswood* and decided to use these on the *Derwent*, the colours were identical. But what looked good on the 70ft *Birdswood* didn't look so appealing on a model canal boat. So I sanded down the paint with fine model makers sandpaper and repainted with my own oil paints which gave a much more pleasing finish. The decoration on the bow, rudder and helm (diamonds, roses and flowers) required only the minimum of retouching with a fine brush.

However, the cabin interior was a different story. Whatever items that may have been there appeared to have been digested by slugs or snails. All I could do was to turn the boat over and tip out the contents - now compost. With the interior I wanted to create the canal past in miniature, the dark cramped accommodation with copper pans and brasses reflecting the soft light from a gas or oil lamp. No mean feat then.

More by luck than design I found all I required at "Hobbycraft", bread, milk and breakfast cereal for the table, copper saucepans for the range, a rug for the floor and pictures and plates for the walls, all in the correct scale. However, I did feel rather conscious of being the only male rummaging through the doll's house range. Others were checking out "Airfix" models and giving me odd looks. I made a quick exit with my purchases in a plain paper bag.



It took a great deal of patience and swearing to tease so many items into the correct place through the narrow cabin doors. Sometimes at the last moment they would fall from the long tweezers. If I took too long the super glue dried too quickly and they stuck in the wrong place. But, when I switched on the cabin light the atmosphere created made it all worthwhile (right).

The cargo...

The boat had been donated to the FCC for educational purposes. My work gradually evolved from just restoring the boat into illustrating narrow boat life. As well as the living accommodation I wanted to show the variety of cargos the narrow boats had carried. Milk churns collected from local farms by Cadburys, barrels of lime juice for Roses, bags of sugar collected from the Tate & Lyle refinery and of course coal. The need for coal was brought home to me when my grandson Ben asked, "What's coal"? Then I realised that children today have probably never seen coal let alone handled it, so a genuine piece of Cromford Canal coal is displayed with the boat.

I had read that the first hold compartment beyond the cabin was for personal items, equipment and tools. So after referring to archive photos and canal stories I added a sink for washing, a tin bath for bath nights in front of the cabin range and a feed box for the horse. I thought for some time how to make the bath; the best way seemed to be to slice the bottom off a plastic bottle and spray it silver - simple. I spent a dinner hour in "Wilko's", walking the aisles upturning bleach bottles, shampoo bottles and washing up bottles, trying to find the correct shape with no success. But what would I have said had the staff intervened? "I'm trying to find a plastic bottle to make into a tin bath?" Would the FCC have bailed me out? I had a vision of John Baylis saying, "Yes he's one of ours and we know all about him."

The boat shows good, honest solid work, almost folk art in appearance. I have to admire the skill of the model maker, perhaps someone with experience of working canal boats. In keeping with conservation criteria my deck and cargoes were made to be easily removed (no glue) so that the original workmanship can still be seen and admired. But I am left wondering who made it and why, was it for a child, teaching purposes or for display. Perhaps Hugh Potter can tell us more.....







Hopefully members will remember receiving a flyer with the last issue of *Portal* regarding the launch of a book by Derbyshire Record Society.

This is a good quality hardback book, the front cover of which is reproduced here.

It is now available to FCC members for the special price of £20 including postage and packing from Derbyshire Record Society, 9 Owen Falls Avenue, Chesterfield S41 0FR, enclosing a cheque payable to the society.

Alternatively, it will be available on the FCC sales stall at various events and meetings.

On the face of it, this could be expected to be a rather dry volume aimed at the true 'anorak' but it has now been read by our former chairman and FCC stalwart **Mike Kelley**, who has picked out some of his favourite extracts which have been reproduced here.

## Minutes of Meetings of the Cromford Canal Company 1789–1799



Edited by Hugh Potter  
and Philip Riden

### Tit-Bits from

### ***Minutes of Meetings of the Cromford Canal Company, 1789-1799***

Hugh Potter and Philip Riden have produced a wonderful book about our canal. It took many years of work to compile and is not a 'paper-back' easy read; far from it. It is an academic work for researchers and canal enthusiasts. Personally I loved it. You really get an insight into what went on behind the scenes to get this canal built and operational. What follows are my personal selection of 'juicy bits' which a casual reader might miss.

For example, on page 19 we are told, "Resolved that Sir Richard Arkwright be requested to recommend a proper person to superintend the execution of that part of the canal which goes through his property." Yet Benjamin Outram was the Superintendent (Site Manager today). And thereby lies a story. Mr Outram had got so fed up with all the objections which Arkwright kept putting in the way of advancing the canal that he was heard to say whilst in a pub, (after a few beers?) that, "Arkwright ought to have his head cut off." This got straight back to Arkwright who promptly banned Outram from working on the canal which crossed his land. Hence, when Arkwright chaired that meeting he asked for "a proper person" to Superintend that part of the canal. Nasty.

On page 35 we are told that William Jessop, the senior engineer, would not be available to spend much time on the canal! Instead Outram would do all the site work. On May 24th 1791 Jessop said, "It was his opinion (he) would not be wanted further (until) February 1792." An absent engineer? Outram does the work Jessop takes the credit!



The Cromford Canal Company Committee were people of their age. On page 127 we are told that, "Joseph Walter shall pay the penalty of 40 shillings (£2) for navigating the canal on a Sunday." Also at the same meeting, that even "...Outram and Co. shall pay the penalty of 40 shillings for navigating the canal on a Sunday.... and a further penalty of 40 shillings for having a boat on the canal without a person on board." (?) What that last bit means I have no idea, but my computer tells me £2 then is equivalent to £4,276 now! For working on a Sunday.

Page 131 talks of the need for a water pump, which eventually was built at Leawood; but interestingly, they call such a pump a "fire engine". Well it was before the railway age.

There was quite a conflict going on between the Cromford, Nottingham and Erewash Canal Companies. There are several references to this, but one on page 142 says, "Mr Ingram (Cromford) shall weigh the coals or other cargos in boats passing into the Erewash or Nottingham Canal whenever he shall be of the opinion that the Bills of lading (tonnage carried) shall not be accurate." In other words they did not trust each other to declare the correct amount being carried.

On Page 164 we learn of a little fiddling going on. "Mr. Cutts (Cromford) having stated in his account that £203.10s.1/2d was due from Mr. Bourne to the Company and £143.16s.4d only of that money being in Mr. Bourne's hands." It goes on to say, not surprisingly, that, "Mr Bourne is no longer Toll Collector for the Company." Hand's in the till and all that!.

On page 169 it would seem that Mr. Bourne had an 'arrangement' with Wheatcrofts of Cromford. "...Mr. Cutts shall immediately proceed to recover of (from) Mr Wheatcroft £43.3s.2d .... arrears of tonnage due when Mr. Bourne was employed as collector..."

Finally we learn on page 170, "that Mr. Bettison, Mr. Bourne's surety, shall be requested to pay on as early a day as possible..... the balance due from Mr. Bourne to the Company." Poor old Mr. Bettison.

Yes it may be a heavy book, but there are some hidden gems therein.

## FORTHCOMING MEMBERS' SOCIAL MEETINGS

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

The following are scheduled between now and the end of the year.

There is a bar, tea & coffee and raffle available at all meetings. Admission is £2.

- **September 21st** - MIDLAND MURDERS (VARIOUS) AND THE FIRST USE OF DNA - David Bell
- **October 19th** - LASER SCANNING OF BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES - PARTICULARLY IRONVILLE LOCK 4 - Andy Beardsley
- **November 16th** - THE LOST INDUSTRIES OF RIPLEY AND DISTRICT - Brian Key
- **December 20th - Christmas Social** - This will be a joint event with the crew of *Birdswood* and will be held in the **Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf.** More details in the next issue.





## MATTHEW'S GOSPEL ON CANAL WALKS - No.7

by Matthew Rogers



No 7 in our series of walks and we explore the area around Codnor Park Reservoir and Riddings and a view of the East Portal of the Butterley tunnel. The walk is mainly on paths and tracks and is fairly flat. I would like to dedicate this walk to my old faithful friend Jaffa who has accompanied me on numerous walks over the years but sadly died last November.

As with walk 3, this walk starts from the car park at Codnor Park reservoir where you will often find a refreshment caravan. GR443 515 and can be followed on OS 1:25,000 Explorer Map 269. The walk is about 4.5 miles long and is not suitable for pushchairs in places. Plenty of opportunities for a pint along the way!

1. Leave the car park crossing the metal bridge over the weir and follow the edge of the reservoir for about 80m to the stone bridge that marks the start of the Pinxton Arm. Bear left before the bridge keeping the reservoir on your left. As the reservoir ends bear slightly right to follow the old Pinxton Arm and cross under the first of 3 bridges with restricted headroom. Continue straight ahead through the car park (adjacent to Ironville village hall and the venue of our social meetings) and onwards under the next 2 bridges.
2. At the road junction turn left passing "Woodside" on your right and follow the road up a slight incline as it bears right and then left. Just after the left hand bend take the footpath on your left and bear right to stay parallel with the road through Riddings Wood to re-join the road near the large brick house. Continue on the road uphill past the "Coach House" and bear left at the road junction into Riddings.
3. At the T junction (road sign for Market Place straight ahead) turn right passing "The Moulders Arms" and "The Seven Stars" pubs and keep straight ahead onto Church Street passing St. James church, the junior and infant schools and community centre as you head along the road.
4. At the main road turn right, cross on the pedestrian crossing and then almost immediately left on a footpath signposted for "Swanwick 1¼ and Butterley 1¾" keeping straight ahead onto Peak Avenue and take the footpath just to the left of "Parkways" shortly crossing over a wooden footbridge.
5. Keep straight ahead with the field boundary on your right for 4 fields. At the end of the 4th field do not cross the stile but bear left and after soon picking up the field boundary again on your right continue ahead for another 4 fields and under the railway bridge at Swanwick Junction.
6. After 80m turn right under another railway bridge and bear left before the miniature railway and follow the path keeping the railway on your right passing under a black metal footbridge. Do not cross the stream by the first bridge but keep the railway on your right for about 400m. As the path eventually bears away from the railway you will meet up with another path and bear right and continue ahead through the trees for 400m.







# THE END OF AN ERA - AND PERHAPS THE START OF A NEW ONE?

by the Editor



On May 21st, Howard Smith stood down as Chairman of the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association (ECP&DA), a post which he has held for 23 years. My picture above, taken in Sandiacre Lock Cottage at the ECP&DA AGM, shows Howard (right) and his wife Sheila, who are also founder members of the FCC, having just been presented with two tickets for the World of Brass Concert at the Sage in Gateshead, together with a two-night hotel reservation, by ECP&DA President and founder member Jim Stevenson (left). This was provided by a collection among ECP&DA members who thought it would be a suitable retirement gift for Howard who is a passionate fan of brass bands.

At the same meeting, Norman Cornwell was elected as the new ECP&DA Chairman. What also pleased me about the meeting was when Norman spoke after being elected and set out his manifesto!

In common with many other canal societies, the ECP&DA is finding it difficult to recruit younger members, and the average age of the membership is probably over 60. Norman spoke for many members when he said that the ECP&DA needs a project to encourage the younger generation to join in. His thoughts echoed my own when he suggested that now was the time to look again at continuing the restoration north up the Cromford Canal from Langley Mill. Michael Golds, when he was ECP&DA work party organiser, made a good start on this but these efforts were frustrated by the need to wait for a proposed opencast coal site adjacent to the canal to get planning permission. We were told that this would include restoring a length of the Cromford Canal and building a marina. However, after nearly 20 years, this proposal seems as far away as ever.

Norman's proposal is that the ECP&DA should now join forces with the FCC in working towards restoration of the Cromford Canal above Langley Mill. Proposals for this are already being drawn up by FCC engineer John Boucher and could lead on to significant progress of the FCC aims and an increase in members for both organisations. Norman has expressed his intention to see the canal extended under the A610 (at Langley Mill rather than Bullbridge!) during his period as chairman. Watch this space!



## 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

Reading through some of my previous reports the other day, it occurred to me that I always seem to be having a little grumble about something that members do, or don't do, which must make you feel that I am always complaining about things, which I hope is not true. So this time I am going to say a big 'thank you' to all the members who have responded to my pleas to update their standing orders for their Friends Membership subscription. Thank you all, especially those who added a 'little extra' by way of apology.

We had a pleasant, if windy, weekend at Cromford on 6th and 7th of June, and we must thank Joan Colebrook and her friends for standing in for the usual team; your help was invaluable. Our next event at Cromford will be the Discovery Days at the end of October, so we hope to see you there.

When you are next at Cromford, do call in and see our new office in the Weighbridge at the end of the Gothic Warehouse. Vix or one of her assistants will be pleased to see you and you can purchase FCC items and other gifts there.

Things seem to be very quiet as we do not have our regular meetings at Ironville in July and August, but we look forward to 21 September when we shall have David Bell telling us about some Derbyshire murders and the early use of DNA. Come prepared to be terrified! Our talk in October is something very different as Andy Beardsley will be talking about the Laser scanning carried out on some of the structures on the Cromford and other canals, and in November we will have the ever popular and well informed Brian Key telling us about some of the Lost Industries of Ripley. Please note there is no meeting at Ironville in December this year. Unfortunately, the Ironville Christmas events of the last few years have not been well supported, and we have decided to have a break this year, but instead Vix is organising a Christmas get together at Cromford after the last of the Santa Special events. See the next Portal for more details.

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

Mr K Laing, Grantham

Mr P Matthews, Matlock

Mr & Mrs M Bradley, Alfreton

Mr & Mrs I McCuaig, Matlock

Mr & Mrs R H Wright, Hope Valley

Mr & Mrs D Wilson, Nottingham

Mr & Mrs I Thompson, Nottingham

Dr S Whitehead, Matlock

Mr & Mrs A Smith, Bakewell

Mrs P Bradley Nottingham

Mrs D Fretwell, Matlock

Mrs T Kelsey, Belper

Miss S Fricker, Hungerford

Mr & Mrs P Maddon, Nottingham

Mr & Mrs S Corbett, Derby

Miss D Johnson & Mr P Murphy, Belper





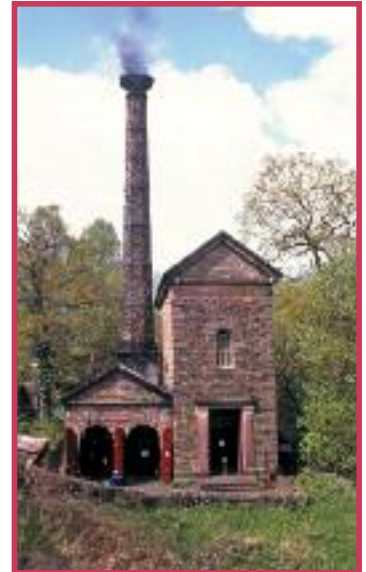
# LEAWOOD PUMP OUTLET

by Ian Yates

This year started well and the engine is now in the middle of a major overhaul with part of the pump in pieces. The first three steamings were very successful and our costs were covered on all occasions, something not always achieved on opening days not associated with a Bank Holiday or the like.

There have been several private visits on non steaming days which have helped as no running costs are involved.

A major problem arose on the May Bank Holiday when Brian noticed that one of the roof trusses had dropped, no longer being parallel with the roof. An investigation showed the timber in the wall was rotten and the stonework had a moisture content of 80%. A call was made to Middleton Top and they visited with a building surveyor. Upon further investigation the surveyor pushed a screwdriver through that beam and the one on the other side of the centre line. A request was made not to go upstairs or enter the engine house if at all possible. The structural engineers were called in and produced a design for a timber prop which was sent down to the Building Department. A scaffolding company was brought in and on the Friday before the June steaming a propping system was installed which meant we could run again for the steaming. How the scaffold team got the timbers up to top floor we are not sure, they are large! Whilst this is a temporary measure at present we can operate normally. The group is grateful to the Ranger Service, Derbyshire County Council Building Department, Structural Engineers and Lindway Scaffolding for getting the problem sorted out and to allow the engine to remain open.



At the end of the steaming the beam was propped up to allow work to start on the inlet valve. This now means the engine is not running until the August Bank holiday but is open for static viewing whilst the works are in progress. Up to now the access door has been removed, the valve top lifted and just over half of the old blocks removed. The working conditions are not pleasant as the space is so restricted. There is a monitor with us at all times to check for unwanted gases in the area as it is classed as a confined space. The new blocks have been made and over the weekend of 1st and 2nd August it is hoped to get some if not all fitted. There are four leaf springs on the valve and these have broken and disintegrated. It was discovered that a piece of metal used to stop splashing on the pump plunger was one of these springs so there is a pattern to make new ones. This pattern has gone to a spring manufacturer in Nottingham for new ones to be made. Nearly all the water has been stopped from entering down the rear outlet from the canal but there is still a steady flow which means if you are not careful you get wet, but as its summer (?) it's not too bad as some have found out. If the project goes to plan the work should be ready for August.

With the rear outlet empty the outlet valve was checked, the replacement blocks are fine but the balance chains are broken and will need replacement. This is not a big job once new chains have been sourced. The boilers were inspected for the annual report and whilst they have passed, some work is required to both of them. Israel Newton have been to visit, an estimate is awaited and when they can carry out the works.

Unfortunately whilst all this is going on the *Duchess* has not progressed but the battle with the Little Grebes seems to have gone away and as soon as it is possible work will be carried out to tidy the boat up for winter. It is in use for coal and taking across various



heavy items. The boat made an escape for freedom during June when one of the mooring rings snapped off from the wharf shed wall. A ranger recovered the boat and it is now tied up with rope rather than chain to hopefully prevent it happening again.

When the next *Portal* is due, the works should be complete and the engine will be running again. It is hoped that more water will go into the canal as it should not return past the inlet valve to river.

The photograph below shows the works in progress on the valve and the tight conditions we are working in. The gaps in the sides led straight down into the well underneath, anything dropped down there will stay there. It's deep water.



Ian Yates

## LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING DATES 2015

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

MONTH	SAT	SUN	MON	PERIOD
AUGUST		30th	31st	August Bank Holiday
OCTOBER	3rd	4th		First Weekend
OCT/NOV	31st	1st		Discovery Weekend

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