

# **THE PORTAL**

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



**NUMBER 55**

**AUTUMN 2015**

**Registered Charity Number 1100700**

**Free To Members    £1 When Sold**



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**FRONT COVER:** Gently does it! *Birdswood* being lifted out of the water on the wharf peninsula at Cromford and positioned on the stands ready for the biennial out of water survey by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency surveyor. See page 14 - 15

Photo: Editor

**BACK COVER:** Our regular stalwart Peter Keating keeps us all entertained with his street organ at the Discovery Days event at Cromford. Notice also the rather smart new FCC roll out banner, a new addition to this event. See pages 4 - 6

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. 55

Autumn is now with us and this issue of *Portal* is rather later than usual for various reasons. One of the results of this is that I am able to include a report on the Derwent



Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days in this issue. This annual event, which enjoyed good weather this time, is one of our most important of the year and was another success both for the FCC sales stall and for *Birdswood*. See pages 4 - 6. Having said that, as many of you know, my wife Val Roberts has been in charge of FCC sales from the start in 2002 and following the departure this year of Eric and Beryl Singleton, who did a very good job during their period in the sales department, is thinking it is time to hand over to a younger person or group. Fresh ideas are needed to carry FCC sales forward into the future. See Val's article on page 18.

Another concern for me is that, in common with many canal societies, the FCC is being held back at the moment by lack of the right people to carry it forward and make some real progress towards restoring the canal. The stalwarts who run the FCC and do the real work are a very small proportion of the membership and many members are getting frustrated by the lack of progress. Committee meetings come and go and little seems to come out of them and too many things have to remain 'on going' for months. Having said that, I am not saying that I can suggest what can be done about this.

On a brighter note, the success of *Birdswood* has continued over the summer and not only have three new masters trained and become qualified this year to replace those who have left, but Vix now has a good list of volunteers trained as crew. See the *Birdswood* review of the year on pages 8 - 12. Also, the Weighbridge Office and Shop in the end of the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf is proving a success. Not only is this now Vix's office for running the *Birdswood* operation, but it is also very well stocked with sales items and well worth a visit. See the report by Felicity Wilding on page 13.

Finally, you are probably wondering about the picture above. This was taken by Chris Jacklin during the lift out of *Birdswood*. I seem to have been left with rather a weighty problem. Please send in a printable caption and I will publish the best in the next issue. Sorry, but I can't remain serious for too long.

Incredibly, another year has nearly gone and I would like to wish all members a

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

**The press date for the New Year 2016 issue will be February 1st.**



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM



By the time you read this, *Birdswood* will hopefully be on the bank at Cromford Wharf for the biennial external survey of the hull by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA). This will be followed by a coat of blacking from the boat volunteers. The MCA involvement in passenger boats followed the *Marchioness* Disaster on the River Thames in August 1989 when 51 people were drowned. The legislation requires the MCA to inspect all trip boats carrying in excess of 12 passengers and to examine and certify the Boat Master who must be in charge of the boat on every trip. Fortunately the FCC has managed to have sufficient volunteers to qualify as Boat Master, but Vix Wilding is always looking for new volunteers to replace those who for various reasons cannot continue.

Although the MCA involvement covers a much needed aspect of passenger boat safety, the legislation which became the Act of Parliament means that even though there are obvious differences between the Cromford Canal and the North Sea, all passenger vessels are now subject to stringent MCA regulations. The unfortunate part of running a passenger boat at Cromford is the lack of facilities and we must pay for a crane each time the boat is lifted at a cost of about £1200 per lift, whereas at the Langley Mill end of the Cromford Canal is a dry dock where the inspection could be done for about £300 in total. Discussions with the MCA have allowed some respite this year, but the trustees have to allow for such costs in the business plan and regular maintenance costs of *Birdswood*.

*Birdswood* made a profit of £11,500 in 2014 and to fulfill the requirements of the Derbyshire County Council licence to operate the boat, this is being spent on canal maintenance, divided between the Cromford to High Peak section and the rest of the canal. The trustees are trying to organise this work themselves as this can be more financially efficient than if done through DCC. So far the works include the WRG Canal Camp at Ironville and support for the DCC Waterway Officer, and the works on Brown's Bridge. In addition to the regular weed raking on the Cromford section, the engineers are getting estimates for cleaning out the winding hole at High Peak Junction, and investigation of water supplies and leakage to the Cromford section.

This year looks to have been equally successful with the establishment of the office and shop in Wheatcrofts Office at Cromford and my thanks go to all the workers and volunteers who have been involved with running *Birdswood*, canal maintenance, sales and all the other projects needed to keep the canal and the Friends of the Cromford Canal running efficiently. I hope that we are getting established and we can look forward to continued progress in future years.

Finally, I want to thank all the members for their continued support and wish you all the Seasons Greetings.



**DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

# **DISCOVERY DAYS**

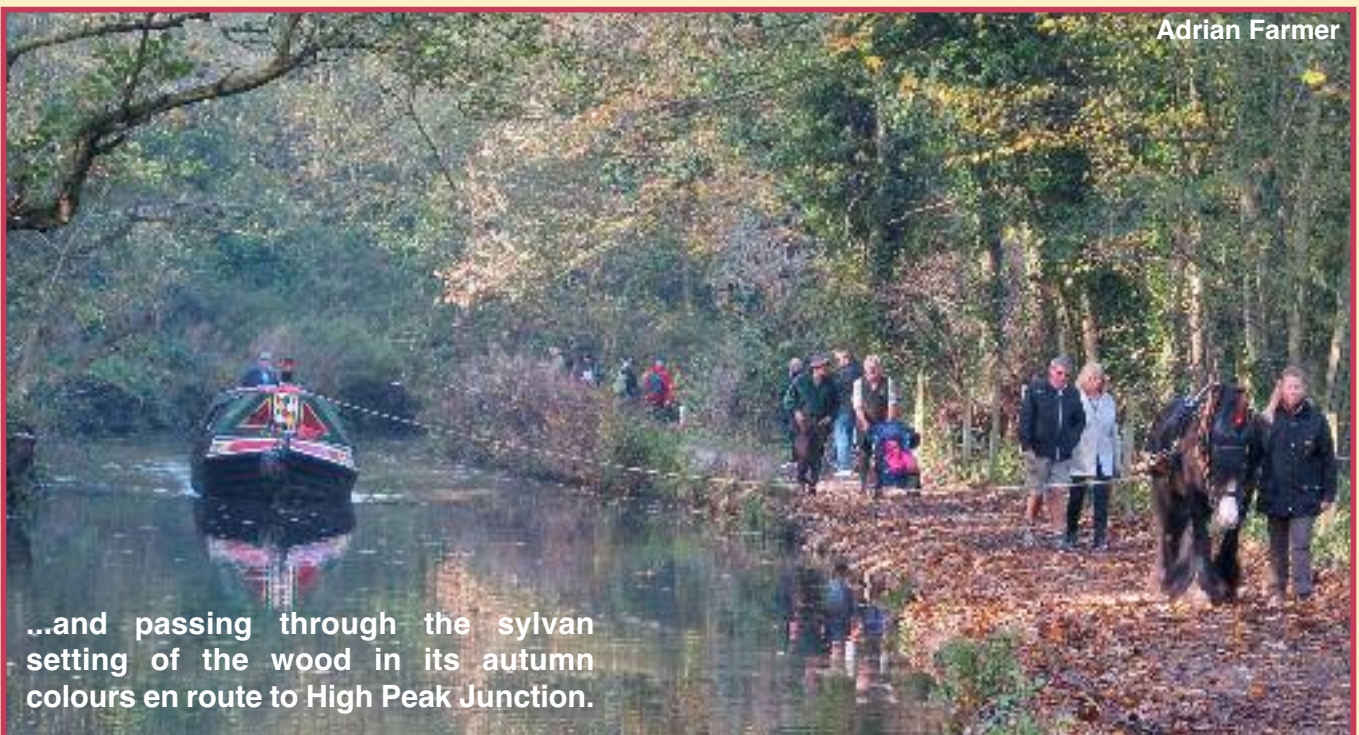
## **2015**

by the Editor



Chelsea about to leave Cromford towing *Birdswood* with another full load ...

Each October, the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site stages Discovery Week. This is a wide range of activities which take place all along the Valley from Derby to Matlock Bath which culminated this year on October 31st and November 1st at the popular event held as usual at Cromford Wharf. This is one of the biggest events of the year for the FCC and this year was another success with a good turnout of visitors in the fine autumn sunshine. Since its official launch at this event two years ago, the FCC trip boat *Birdswood* has been a major attraction and was again very popular, carrying full loads of passengers on both days. Chelsea the horse, immaculately turned out and skilfully operated by Corinne and Lance of Arraslea Shires, always creates a lot of interest.



Adrian Farmer

...and passing through the sylvan setting of the wood in its autumn colours en route to High Peak Junction.



Adrian Farmer

Apart from Birdswood, other outside attractions included the Nottingham Model Boat Club, whose fleet displayed on the canal this year included a narrow boat, see above. The miniature steam engines also made a good display, seen below giving the event atmosphere, and were joined this time by various stationary engines.

Peter Keating also kept us entertained with his street organ, seen on the back cover with the new FCC banner alongside.

Also on the car park were the Inland Waterways Association 'Wild Over Waterways' marquee with activities for children and a bric-a-brac stall run by Judy Berry in aid of the FCC.



Adrian Farmer



Editor

Meanwhile in the Gothic Warehouse, we had Val Roberts with the FCC sales stall, see above, accompanied by our tombola stall, Jess Inglis doing traditional canal painting together with his wife Lin with her peg weaving, see below, Wallace Spence with his oil paintings and the continuously running FCC slide show, all of which attracted much interest. These were joined on the Sunday by our friends from Heage windmill who are at present raising funds to carry out major repairs to the mill following the discovery of serious rot.

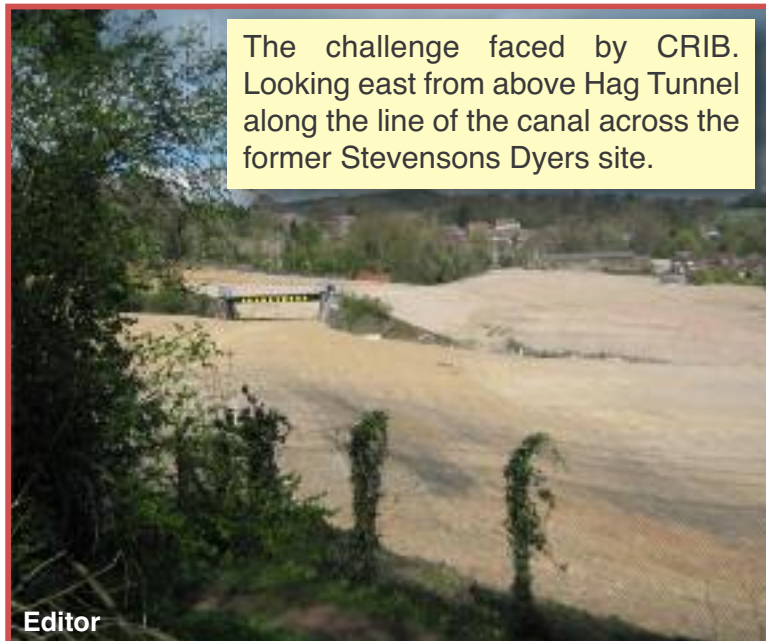


Editor



# CANAL REGENERATION IN BULLBRIDGE (CRIB) UPDATE

In April 2016 the final contamination assessment of the Stevensons Site will be taken, which will hopefully be clear again. The site will then be ready for development. As we go into November, CRIB members are only too aware that we only have six months to assemble some sort of design plan to put to planners and developers.



So what have we done toward this? We have been gathering information - examples of similar projects, green papers that inform development, recent assessments such as the Atkins study, assessments made by the previous owners and planners, promoting and publicising the group - by Newsletter, email, facebook, twitter and our recent Discovery Days Exhibition.

We have begun to contact people in the public eye or with particular skills and/or knowledge to ask for their support. The exhibition provided the opportunity to sound out local people and test the water as to their opinion. (We are currently looking into how best to survey the views of local residents). The exhibition also meant that we could talk to people who are interested in the canal (for diverse reasons) but know little about the challenges or indeed the facts. Several local people thought that the Stevensons site was owned by the council and others that the council owned the whole canal and were going to put it back into water for its entire length (we wish!). Our new exhibit helped people to get an idea of the size of the site and where the canal sits within it. We were gratified that several people approached us and said "You have our support".

We also signed up some new members to our Civic Society (BASA) over the weekend, which was gratifying. We don't have a system for "signing up" members to CRIB as it is not a formal society, but are pleased that two more people have joined us to share the work we must do. If you are interested in joining us, just contact me and I will let you know when our next meeting is to be held.

## **Assembling a Design Plan.**

When we look at the Chesterfield Canal Partnership documents, which we are using as a form of template to ensure we have covered all bases, we can be overwhelmed by its size. However this size reflects the length of canal addressed, a stretch that is some miles in length and with several structures. The Bullbridge stretch that we are concentrating on is only hundreds of metres in length and has no such structures. This in no way minimises the huge task we have but does put it into some perspective.

Much of the above is preparatory work, but we have recently started some of the units. Noses to the grindstone, there is much to do!

**So there we are. The journey so far. Why not join us ?!**

**Gill Hirst Tel 01773 856178**

**Email [bullandsaw@outlook.com](mailto:bullandsaw@outlook.com)**





## BIRDWOOD'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR



FCC Boat Operations Manager Vix Wilding (pictured on the right in one of the many costumes she has worn throughout the year) has kindly allowed our narrow boat *Birdswood* to speak on this occasion and give us this account of the 2015 season of giving many people the joy of a boat trip on the wonderful section of the Cromford Canal from Cromford Wharf to Leawood Pump.

### **MARCH 2015**

It was good to see someone again after a long cold winter. I was beginning to wonder if I'd been forgotten about. Some of the nice ladies spent a day giving me a full scrub down and all my brass was polished. The old life rings were replaced with some orange ones too, funny colour I think... With Easter coming that meant just one thing... My old friend Chelsea the Horse would be back. To my delight the people organised a practice run so I got to say hello sooner than I had thought. This went well and I felt new people steering me. I could feel them shaking in their boots! The season kicked off with a special trip for Mother's Day and the warm fuzzy feeling began to grow inside me again as I started to please everyone. I'm glad things started off well and hope the season continues in this way. Towards the end of the first month that Vix lady was busying around putting up displays, I wondered what on earth all the fuss was about. One particularly windy, wet day I was dragged out and had a lot of new faces sitting around me listening to some of the volunteers talking about what they do. It was a Recruitment event for new friends to join in and help through the season. It was exciting to have new people wanting to come and work with me.

### **APRIL**

It's still cold out here but at least we are seeing lots of passengers and people are happy. Easter saw the first public Horse Drawn trips and Chelsea was in a really good mood. She seemed to have a real spring in her step. Approaching the Leawood Pump





I could see the black smoke billowing from the tall chimney and felt the slight rock of the swelling water beneath me. Up the steps came the men from the pumphouse who waved over towards me. They were filthy but it was good to see the familiar faces. Several people stopped to watch me arrive and drop the passengers off and I hesitated just long enough for them to get pictures of my good side! All the new people came and had the special training needed to be able to work inside the cabin. I must say, the verbal training is thorough and then they stay to shadow someone else before being left with the responsibility of the customers. This seemed to go on for some time, I counted about 12 new volunteers. They all seemed lovely. The only event this month involved families and an Easter Trail. Sticky Hot Cross Buns were eaten on the way as the excited children watched the birds building their nests and then they got off and walked alongside me...

## **MAY**

The Vintage Austin Register came for a trip and arrived in their special cars. They were a beautiful sight all lined up in the car park and were even joined by a vintage Rolls Royce - see below. If I had known I would have had my brasses polished! The gentlemen were appreciative of my heritage and wanted to learn all about what I'd been doing through my life. Its great to hear people telling your story. We talked about the Maritime and Coastguard Agency visit that was due and all the hoops the volunteers have to jump through to keep me working. For this I am very grateful because without my friends I would be left doing nothing again. The MCA visit went really well and they even complimented the bosses about the order of records and logs. There were a few minor alterations and additions to make but we all passed and got another stamp of approval for 6 months. Oh my, the birds are super busy building nests and chatting away about the new children who will be joining them soon. One couple of coots were saying how worried they were because last year they lost their young to the large pike. I overheard them talking about making a

Vix Wilding





high bank in the water this year so the babies could climb out the water quickly if they needed to. It's a great plan I think, such a cruel thing is nature...When I go past the nest of eggs and babies I slow down so I don't disturb them, I do like to see the new babies around the water. Lots and lots of people came with cameras to take pictures because we get so close. Its turning into a beautiful canal again now as the flowers are reappearing and the colour is back in the trees and meadows.

## **JUNE**

The trees are green and the chicks are chirping....Such a wonderful time of year to be on the water. Where else would I be? The charters have increased and so have my days. I am now running 4 public trip days per week till the end of the summer. As part of the community in Cromford I let them have a bit of fun themselves this month as I like to see how fast the humans can pull me! They gather teams of 8 people and pull in a relay, 2 at a time... This year the local Cricket team beat the local pubs! It's an amusing sight to see these human horses showing off. The special trip came a little later on, Father's day. It's so nice to see the love people have for each other and how they like to celebrate being parents. I took 12 lucky daddies on this special Sunday. There has been a lot of measuring of my window frames and they even took one out for a while, I felt very exposed! I wonder what they are up to now? I was most annoyed with the drilling and banging one morning. It had been a long week and I was disturbed from a cheeky lie-in by David Ratner. He was putting holes in me!! Listening to him talking to Vix I soon discovered that they were trying new seats for the customers. I forgave them for waking me....this time.

## **JULY**

This is the busiest month for me as so many groups and organisations want to take a trip and have parties. The charters are different from the public trips because everyone knows each other and they all chat and laugh as we are going along. It creates a lovely atmosphere and a great advertisement for those missing out on the towpath. I was dressed up really nice by Vix who laid the tables with table cloths and added vases of carnations as a group had requested a Cream Tea trip. The ladies who joined us were so pleased I thought we would have tears. This trip was for a group of people who have been diagnosed and living with a lung condition. The group talked about their struggles and support for each other. Many had been unable to walk the canal for many years and it was a pleasure to receive the thanks for making that possible again. A couple of trips were complimentary to say thank you to the WRG's....strange name but lovely people. The Waterways Recovery Group come along to help the Bosses restore the canal, one day I hope to get a bit further. It looks so pretty beyond the planks.... With the weather being warmer Mr Jacklin came along to help me with my rust spots, they were getting worse. He scrubbed and tickled my roof till all the flakes were gone and I was smooth again. He then treated me to a new coat of paint. Thanks from me for this, although the light colour really shows the dirt! Spoilt I was this month as Ian Hooker fitted the complete set of new windows, I was looking very smart...

## **AUGUST**

I like August the best, the sun shines and lots of people come out to see me. The special treat is that I get to catch up with Chelsea twice! She allows me to have a rest and its such fun being pulled through the water at such speed. She's got much more horse power than me! The whole month flies by with visitors from all around the world. Places that I'd not heard of before like New Zealand, USA, Spain and somewhere called Sussex....the people talked a while about secret tunnels and bottomless pits, sounds like a great place to explore. The month was a simple month apart from a water leak at the beginning. Sitting one lunch time between shifts the crew were saying that vandals had removed the end stop



planks which retain the height of water I need to travel. I had wondered why I hadn't seen anyone for a week. The time off was much appreciated though. I understand the impact of this has meant that the water levels will remain very low now as there isn't enough rain to refill the canal. I just sat screaming at them because we have an active steaming pumphouse on the canal and that could bring us water. But as usual they can't hear me. I do wonder about these humans sometimes!

## SEPTEMBER

And breathe!! That's the busy times over and back to running just 3 public trips. I got stuck in the channel so many times recently, the water has been so low. The crew have been saying that the rain has been 50% less this month compared to other years. We had a visit from the MCA again and they asked lots of questions and looked around all my nooks and crannies, I didn't mind too much till they asked to see my bottom! This will happen in November so i'll fill you in soon about that. Steve, Clive and Hugh all showed their skills off and passed their Masters exams. I'm so proud of them. They have been looking after me the best they can and I've had a good clean and my roof has been scrubbed too. I've had a few charters to do and these are always interesting as the groups do some funny things. The people were very chatty and enjoyed the slow pace as I plodded along. The best event this month was the Pirate day, see below. Lots of children came with their adults dressed in costumes and we played games, I even hid the treasure for them. They searched for a long time and were happy to be rewarded with the chocolate coins. Our youngest passenger of the year joined us and I loved having little Tommy who was just 7 weeks old. He didn't disturb us too much. I think the highlight of my trip was taking Long Row School, Belper. They brought all 91 children from the younger classes to me over 3 days. Nic and Marie put on a special treat for them and the children arrived by train, I took them along the canal and then Patrick, from Countryside Services showed them the railway workshops. I brought them back as they ate lunch before catching their train home again. Some of the little ones spilt sticky juice on my floor and one even fell asleep. I hope they have special memories of this trip and come back with their mummies and daddies.



Vix Wilding



## OCTOBER

Chelsea popped in the first weekend to work her magic and we had a chance to make plans for the end of the month. The World Heritage Site people have a special week called Discovery Week. Lots of events happen apparently and since coming to Cromford I was included in this. It's a nice way to finish the season off as well. Chelsea said she would make it extra special by having her shoes and hair done especially. She looked

Editor



Birdswood with the smart new windows rolled up in the fine autumn sunshine, carrying another full load of passengers. Chelsea is all dressed up with ribbons and her fancy bonnet.

really lovely on the day. Lots of people came and made it a successful weekend, I certainly felt the weight of maximum numbers on board! I must tell you about the Halloween trip that happened just before all this. They really scared me this time with the wails and spooky tales. Both adults and children dressed up and joined in with the games, and enjoyed the cakes too. I've been hearing about all the plans for a crane to come and lift me out, I remember the last time two and a half years ago. It tickles when they drag the straps under my belly but being hung in the air is really scary. The company, Walkers are very gentle with me for which I am grateful. I'm sure everything will go to plan and all be over sooner than I know it. I'll finish now as I need to get my beauty sleep ready for all the disturbances I'll have to put up with over the next few days. At least I still have Santa to look forward to. He always brings more fun and laughter.



Adrian Farmer



# THE WEIGHBRIDGE OFFICE AND FCC SHOP - UPDATE

by Felicity Wilding

Sales in the shop have been steady and many members of the public have come in to make enquiries about Birdswood and the FCC. It's an excellent addition to the Wharf and the charity.

Some of the members of the FCC make handmade items that we now sell in the shop. One of the members, Trina, paints pots, bowls, cups, spoons, flower pots, key racks and mirrors. All of these are painted in the original canal art style. The products have become very popular, as they are beautiful and Trina is very talented; she can't paint them quick enough! She will take



on special orders; check out her website for more. Other items in the shop include handmade necklaces and ear rings, horseshoe hearts and a variety of pots and ornaments made by our very own Liz Tatam, the other half of our archivist Hugh Potter. There are also the wood turned items that are always in stock. There are souvenirs from FCC and *Birdswood*, also knitted and quilted Christmas decorations are now in stock!

The opening hours are 10am-5pm, when the boat is running so we started off with Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. However now the boat has stopped running we are only opening 11am-4pm Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday until Christmas.

Through the summer we have had a young lady working in the shop, Charley Franklin, who was extremely helpful and enthusiastic. Being a contact from the job centre work experience programme, it was a pleasure to be able to offer someone employment, even for just a short while. She was a professional asset to the team and successfully completed all the tasks that were handed to her as well as using her own initiative. Charley was quiet in the beginning and this opportunity has given her the chance to grow and build her confidence. Her contract ended on the 1st of November but she has offered to continue to help as a volunteer.

Sales figures have been increasing as people learn where we are. The main difficulty is advertising as no signs or banners can be erected due to the historical listing of the building. We hope to be able to financially sustain ourselves through next year. The development of an online booking system is underway and soon we hope to be able to take electronic payments also.

As you can imagine this requires more volunteers to help promote the history of the canal and our charity, while selling the odd item too. If you have a passion for the area and are happy to talk to people about it, please get in touch to discuss how you could help. Even a half day's cover is invaluable, please get in touch with:

**VIX WILDING 07552 055455**



# WE HAVE LIFT OFF!

by the Editor - all photos by Hugh Potter

It is now over two years since *Birdswood* came to Cromford Wharf and the boat is now due for its biennial out of water survey by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The last such survey was carried out in the dry dock at the other end of the Cromford Canal at Langley Mill before the boat came to Cromford in July 2013. Since there is not (yet!) a dry dock at Cromford, this time the boat had to be lifted out of the water by crane and positioned for inspection on stands on the peninsula at the wharf. This was very ably carried out by Walkers of Tuxford, the same company that had been used to bring the boat from Langley Mill. The following pictures illustrate how the job progressed. At the time of writing, we are awaiting the MCA surveyor. Full report in the next issue.



*Above:* The 'small' 55 tonne crane arriving at the wharf.  
*Below left:* The crane set up on the wharf and carefully lifting the boat from the narrows.  
*Below right:* Gently swinging round towards the previously positioned stands.





Above: Completing the swing.  
Top right: Levelling the stands and positioning the boat before final lowering.  
Right: The boat settled in position and the crane being packed up only an hour after arriving. A job well done.  
Below: We had a good turn out of volunteers who immediately set to work scraping and brushing the hull whilst it was still wet. This made an interesting change from their normal Tuesday work party activities.







# SANTA SPECIALS

## CHRISTMAS CRUISES on the Cromford Canal



**Sat & Sun 5/6, 12/13 & 19/20 Dec**  
plus **Weds 23 December**

**A present from Santa in Birdswood's grotto cabin for the kids,  
festive food and drinks for all, plus Christmas tunes!**

**GREAT VALUE FARES: Under-5s £6; 5-11 years £9; Adults £9**

**Save with a FESTIVE FOURSOME FARE - £30 for four (adults or kids)**

Trips depart from Cromford Wharf at 12 noon & 2 pm. Advance bookings ONLY.

To book, call Santa's Little Helper on **07552 055 455**



# Friends of the Cromford Canal

invite you to join them at their

## Christmas Party

20th December

The Gothic Warehouse, Cromford DE4 3RQ

4.30pm until 9pm Tickets £5 each

Comedy Quiz, Food and Refreshments

Hot Soup with a roll, mince pie or cake  
and a festive drink, but you could  
also bring a bottle

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

Phone: 07552 055 455





## THE SALES STAND TEAM



Editor

The Inland Waterways National Rally of Boats at Red Hill on the River Soar in 2009  
Eric and Beryl Singleton and Mike and I did this event

I have greatly enjoyed organising the sales for the FCC for the past 12 years - we've had some great fun. It's quite exciting to go to a boat rally, for example, meeting people and chatting to them about what we are working to achieve - and you get the added advantage of free entry! Variety is the thing, small village do's, supermarkets, steam rallies etc., indoors or outdoors.

Unfortunately during these last 12 years Mike and I have got old, so are looking for an enthusiastic couple - or preferably two couples - who are fit and active and willing to take on this responsible post. We have done many of these events on our two own, but its better with say four of you, then you get the chance to see the event or even have lunch! It now needs someone new with fresh enthusiasm to organise and re-vamp the job.

You need to have your own transport and the ability to tow a trailer is an advantage, although other members would bring the boat trailer to the event for you. You will need to store a quantity of the FCC stock and keep records of sales at events and bank the takings. You need to be fit and able to erect the FCC marquee which is stored in the boat trailer together with the tables. There is an amount of heavy lifting (of boxes of stock) involved, but its fun to lay out the tables and make the stand look attractive.

If this appeals to you, please contact any committee member who will be pleased to discuss it.

Val Roberts

*Right: An indoor event at the Gothic Warehouse on Cromford Wharf*



Editor



# **NEWS FROM THE NORTH**

## **Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate**

### **Update - Autumn 2015**

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

#### **Volunteer work parties**

Regular practical work parties by the Friends are taking place fortnightly on Tuesdays. If you feel you could assist and help improve the canal please contact the Countryside Service or John Barker, the FCC work party organiser. Volunteers have helped to keep the navigation channel clear and cleared silt traps and vegetation. This volunteer input is much needed and appreciated.

#### **Towpath improvements**

The section of towpath from Lawn's Bridge (opposite Cromford Meadows Rugby Club) to the High Peak Junction swing bridge will be resurfaced 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 9th for several weeks, given good weather it should be completed and the towpath back open to the public for Christmas. If planning walks and activities on the canal towpath feel free to call the team at Middleton Top for updates.

#### **Whatstandwell 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. An agreement is in place with Network Rail and it is now hoped to construct a weir north of Whatstandwell close to the ground paddle at Simms bridge, utilising the existing stream course. The funding is now confirmed and the scheme is planned for early in the New Year 2016.

#### **Vegetation management**

If you wander down Cromford Canal you may wonder why some blocks of vegetation are cut and some are left. The canal banks are very important for wildlife and are part of the Site Of Special Scientific Interest. They support a wide range of nectar-rich wildflowers and insects. If left unmanaged, the canal banks would become overgrown with thick, rank plants like rosebay willow herb and nettle along with bramble and tree saplings. To stop this, succession management is carried out each autumn cutting, raking and removing half of the vegetation. The other half is cut the following year to ensure there is somewhere for overwintering insect life. The cut vegetation is made into habitat piles that in turn support a wide variety of wildlife, sometimes even the harmless grass snake.

#### **Tree work**

Over the winter we plan to fell and thin quite a few of the trees that are growing in and around the retaining walls that support the canal. The main areas are between High Peak Junction and Whatstandwell. Some of this work will be carried out by a DCC tree team, but work will be done by the Countryside Service, often assisted with volunteers. If you would like to help please let us know.

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

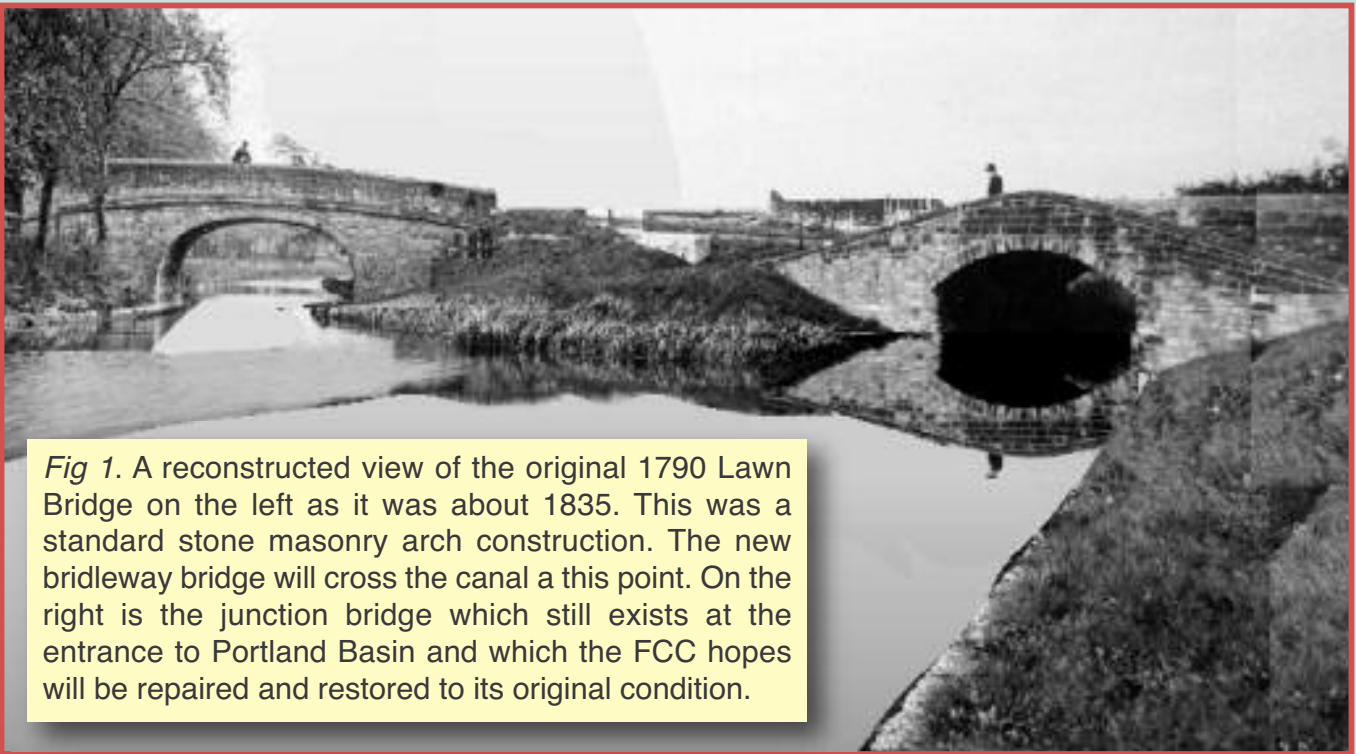


# PROPOSED NEW LAWN BRIDGE, CODNOR PARK

by John Boucher, FCC Civil Engineer

As briefly advertised in the last *Portal*, Derbyshire County Council held a public consultation in Ironville and Jacksdale on 19th September on the proposed new bridge over the Cromford Canal. The FCC also took advantage of this to mount a display of their work on the canal in the Ironville Area.

This Lawn Bridge, not to be confused with the other Lawn Bridge (the first bridge out of Cromford) was we believe originally a stone arch bridge of the standard Cromford Canal design, but only the towpath side abutments and towpath remain from the original bridge (fig1).



*Fig 1.* A reconstructed view of the original 1790 Lawn Bridge on the left as it was about 1835. This was a standard stone masonry arch construction. The new bridleway bridge will cross the canal at this point. On the right is the junction bridge which still exists at the entrance to Portland Basin and which the FCC hopes will be repaired and restored to its original condition.

It was built to carry the ancient bridleway which then ran from the Nottinghamshire side, nowadays Jacksdale, into the Parkland of Codnor Castle. It seems that it may have given structural problems requiring repairs from an early date, and it is likely that a Butterley Company tramway was built across it from their adjacent Codnor Park Forge to link with the Portland Colliery tramway, and the new Portland Basin at Jacksdale constructed about 1822. The Portland Tramway was upgraded in the railway age, and the Midland Railway Company built a connecting branch to it from their main line in 1844. At this time the original Lawn Bridge appears to have been demolished, and a new, wider and longer, railway bridge built in its place, together with a railway bridge across the river Erewash and the surviving massive ironworks slag embankment alongside the Portland Basin.

With the development of the Codnor Park Forge, the Butterley Company sought to block off the public bridleway running across their land, and obtained an order which diverted it along the new "red road" and across the bridge below Lock 3 in the middle of Ironville. When the collieries it served were closed in the 1890s, the railway bridge was demolished leaving a gap across the canal. Local residents were no longer able to creep across the railway bridge and surreptitiously through the works to get their train at the Midland's Codnor Park station, although they did quickly develop an unofficial new route across the top gates of locks 6 and 7.



Fast forwarding to WW2, when the canal was still navigable, the Butterley Company developed a new rapid erection form of heavy road bridge which they tried to sell to the military, but were unsuccessful, with a rival company getting the order. They did however launch one of their prototype bridges across the canal as a demonstration piece, and local residents were able to resume their short cut to Codnor Park (fig2).

Being a military type bridge, with a short design life, corrosion protection was not a major consideration and by the 1990s some of the main structural members had completely rusted through, and it was quite amazing that the bridge continued standing.



Fig 2. 'Butterley Standard' wartime bridge.

When the bridge was eventually demolished in 1997 it left no easy way of crossing the canal, but enterprising local youths managed to prize out some large chunks of masonry to provide stepping stones across the by now badly silted canal bed, followed by a steep climb up the bank on the west side (fig 3). This was fine for the agile, and the local children loved it although they frequently returned home soaking wet after having fallen in. But for the more mature it was impassable, and with the rapid housing developments in Codnor Park there developed a strong demand for a new bridge at the point. Some funds were allocated about 2006, but an argument developed about whether it should be purely a footbridge, or whether it should be an all-purpose bridge suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders. Failure to resolve this at the time led to an impasse, and the offer of funding lapsed.

In about 2013 after renewed agitation the plans were revived, agreement was reached that it should

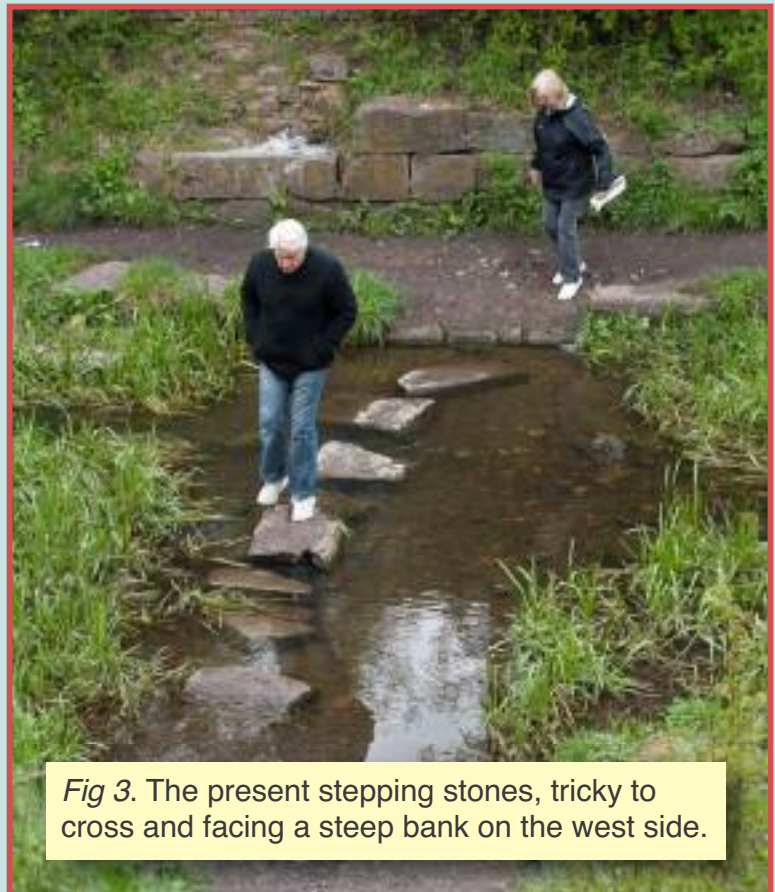


Fig 3. The present stepping stones, tricky to cross and facing a steep bank on the west side.



be a multi user trail, and in fact Derbyshire County Council designated the track from Codnor Park to the edge of the bridge site as a bridleway. Funding was allocated to proceed with the necessary investigations and design, and a working group comprising the local councils, local residents, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (who now own the canal at that point), and the FCC was set up. Although the canal bridge itself is in the Amber Valley Borough of Derbyshire, the bridleway route passes into Nottinghamshire with the crossing of the river Erewash being the border. Nottinghamshire and Ashfield District supported the scheme, but agreed that Derbyshire should take the lead and design and manage the proposals. A scheme design has been produced, planning approval will be sought shortly, and applications are now being prepared for funding for the main construction. Details were available at the public consultations, which were generally well received by the visitors, which all helps in producing a good case for project funding. Following through all the correct planning procedures is rather frustrating and seems to take an interminable amount of time, but things are progressing and if all goes well construction could start early in 2017.

### Details of the scheme.

A general layout of the proposals as exhibited is shown in fig. 4. From the railway bridge at the Codnor Park end, the route crosses the former forge site, since opencast for coal and now being

planted to form a new woodland, and up to the canal bank is already designated as a bridleway. A new bridge will cross the canal, and then the path will continue on the line of the former railway over a new bridge across the river Erewash, where the routes will diverge. Pedestrians will be able to follow the track of the old railway across the slag embankment, or turn right and drop down on to other footpaths on Jacksdale's Wharf Green, the site of the original Portland Canal Basin. Equestrians will however have to turn left and follow a new bridleway

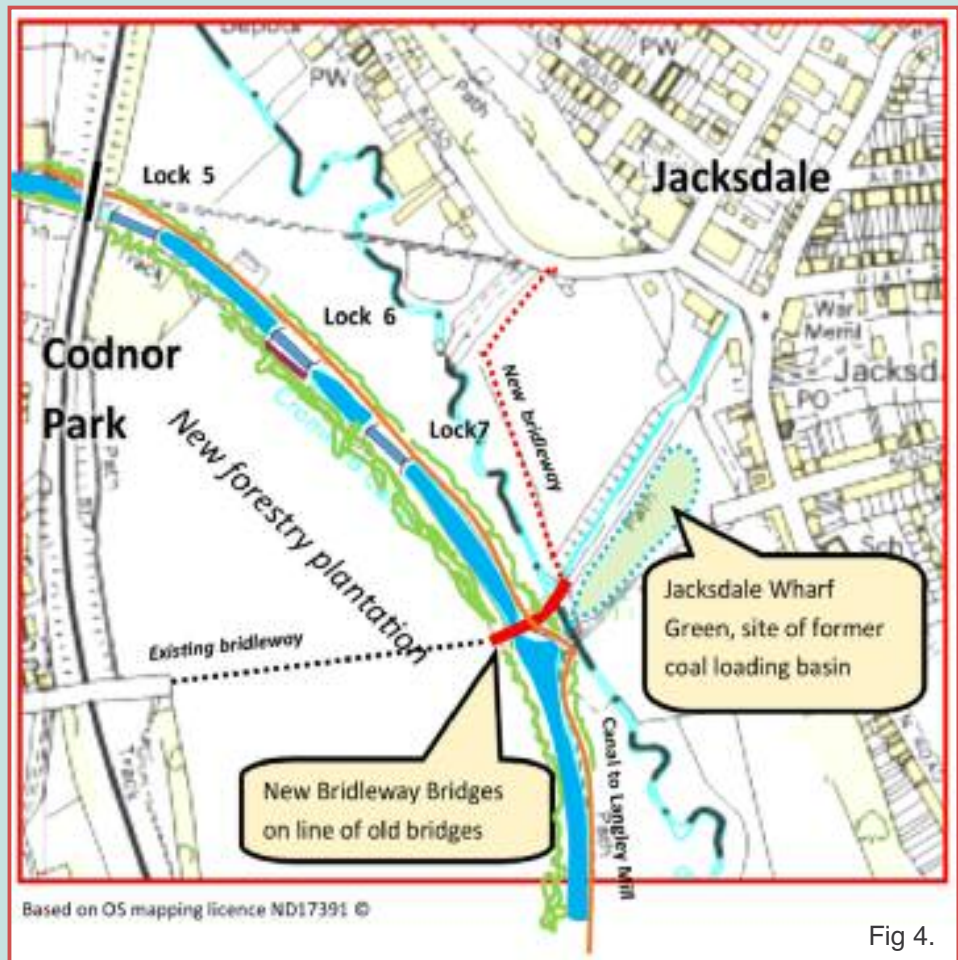


Fig 4.

out at a point on Pye Hill Road, as the exits from existing footpaths in Jacksdale Village Centre were considered to be unsuitable for riders.

Early proposals to avoid the new river bridge would have taken the new track across the towpath bridge crossing the mouth of the Portland Basin, but this route would have faced very steep 'hump back' slopes which could not be made to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements for new footpaths without major works affecting the bridge and the adjacent towpath. Cost estimates showed little difference between the two



alternatives, but the two bridge scheme with a separate Erewash crossing will not only provide a much better alignment for all users, it will avoid undesirable alterations to the historic canal bridge.

Early thoughts of reconstructing the original stone arch bridge were dismissed on probable cost grounds, and a reproduction of the last bridge at the site, the 'Butterley Standard' wartime bridge, had little merit on cost or aesthetic grounds. The County bridge engineers looked at the options and proposed a relatively straight forward cambered beam design, sitting on concrete bank seats at either side as shown in fig 5, which will provide a



Fig 5. Scheme design for the new bridge

good clear height above canal water level to permit future navigation. The span has been strongly influenced by the presence of old foundations, with the east side ending on a bank seat over the old Butterley bridge foundations – further investigations are required to determine whether piling is required. On the west side, the bank slopes up from water level for a considerable distance, and archaeological investigations are awaited to determine the extent and importance of any old buried foundations. As a result, the scheme design has been made to span across this area, which has given the bridge a rather unbalanced look, something which was commented on by a number of people at the consultation. However, there is still time for this detail to be reviewed, and I personally hope that a shorter span looking more like a traditional canal bridge will result. Indeed it would not be too difficult to give a slight arch to the edge beams to more resemble a traditional Butterley cast iron bridge – which could be very appropriate at this particular location.

The proposals were well received at the consultations, the main reservation being the perceived problems with youths on motorbikes, and how to restrict them. In order to progress the funding of the scheme, specialist Ian Parkin has been brought in to assist. Ian did sterling work obtaining grants for Cromford Mills, and provided backing to us in our bid for a grant for *Birdswood*. Although the overall cost could reach £600k, covering the bridges and the sections of greenway that also have to be provided, Ian was not perturbed by this and even felt that the scheme could be enlarged to bring in more local community benefits, to make it more attractive to potential funders. Immediate thoughts include full restoration of the historic towpath bridge and stone boundary walling at the entrance to the Portland Basin, and to clean out the length of canal from the bottom of lock 7 to the existing dam across the canal to the south of the new bridge. This would remove the current thick clog of weeds and attract more varied wildlife. Plus, of course, full interpretation of the rich industrial history of the area. It would provide an attractive nature park and recreation corridor from Jacksdale, through Wharf Green, across the long pond and through the newly forested area to Codnor Park.





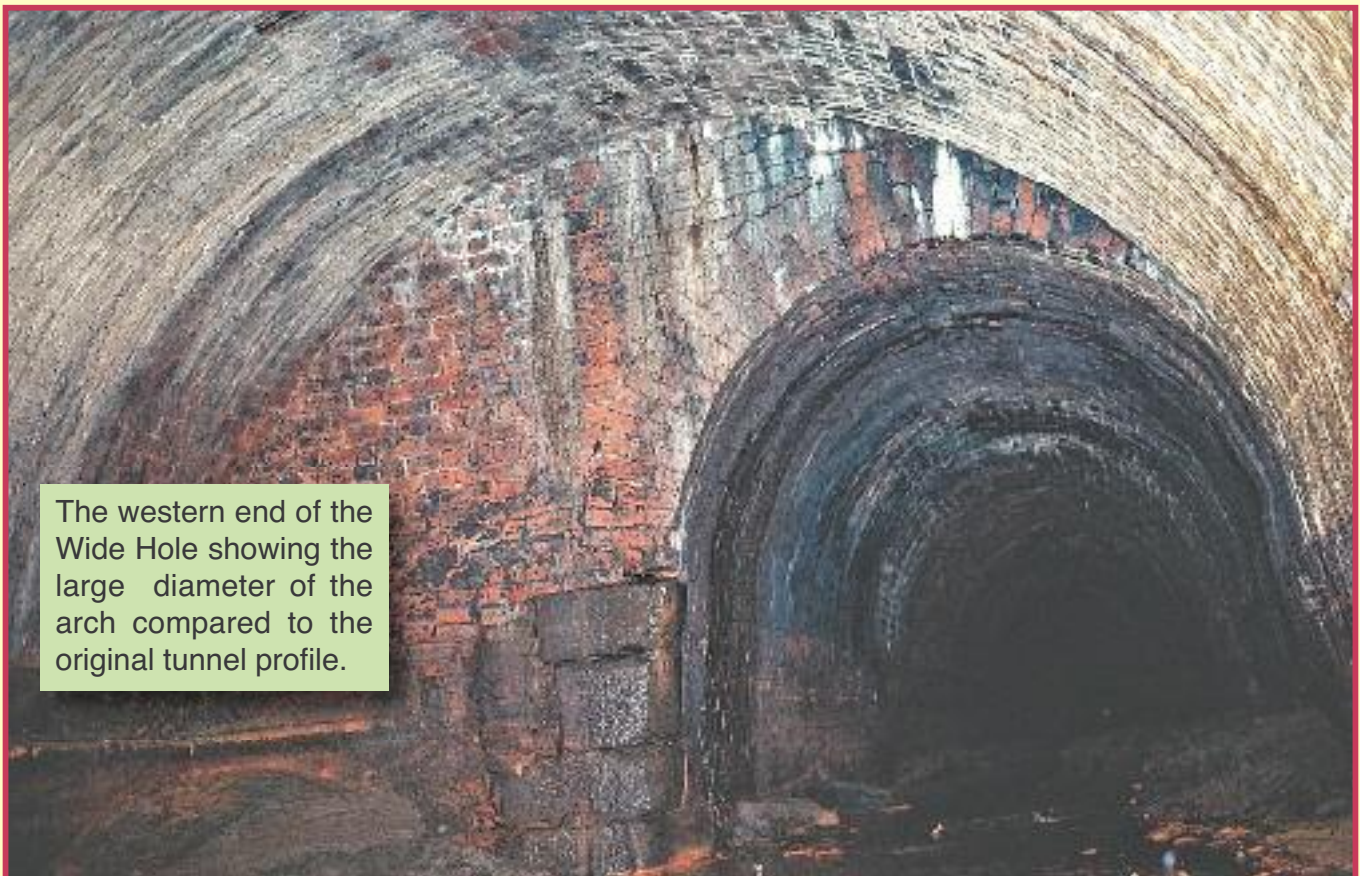
## TUNNEL MUSINGS - 3

***DAVE RATNER sends a further report, painstakingly compiled from historic documents, on the problems of keeping up with the maintenance of Butterley Tunnel at a time when lack of boat traffic meant a serious shortfall in income and considerable work was required to cope with the effects of mining subsidence. This follows on from Dave's previous reports in Portals 45 and 47.***

Photos and plans from FCC Archives

Work to repair the tunnel begun in 1907, dragged on through 1908 to 1913 by which time the Midland Railway Company (MR), then owners of the Cromford Canal, seems to have decided that it was expedient to build a 'tunnel within the tunnel' through part of the Wide Hole, just as they were doing through the "old coal working collapse" (completed 26 Nov 1909). This would involve the filling in of the "arched chamber" and reducing the width of the wide hole to that of the rest of the tunnel. Essentially, the narrowed part was to support the part of the tunnel weakened by the parlous condition of the two shafts and the coal mining going on below.

At this point things go a bit sour between MR & the Butterley Company (BC).



The western end of the Wide Hole showing the large diameter of the arch compared to the original tunnel profile.

In December of 1912, BC and MR were in the process of coming to an agreement on what should be done with the Wide Hole. Plans drawn up by MR are shown to BC who agree with the proposals. MR are unable to give BC an estimate of costs, but BC say they would prefer to do the work themselves provided MR give them free use of the canal from Hammersmith to the East end of the wide hole. So far so good.

In February of 1913 MR prepares plans and assumes that the responsibility for costs of reducing the Wide Hole to be BC's, and that they should indemnify MR from any claims from any accident. In March BC suggest a misunderstanding has taken place regarding carrying out the work. In April, John Argyle of MR Meets Godfrey Wright of BC.



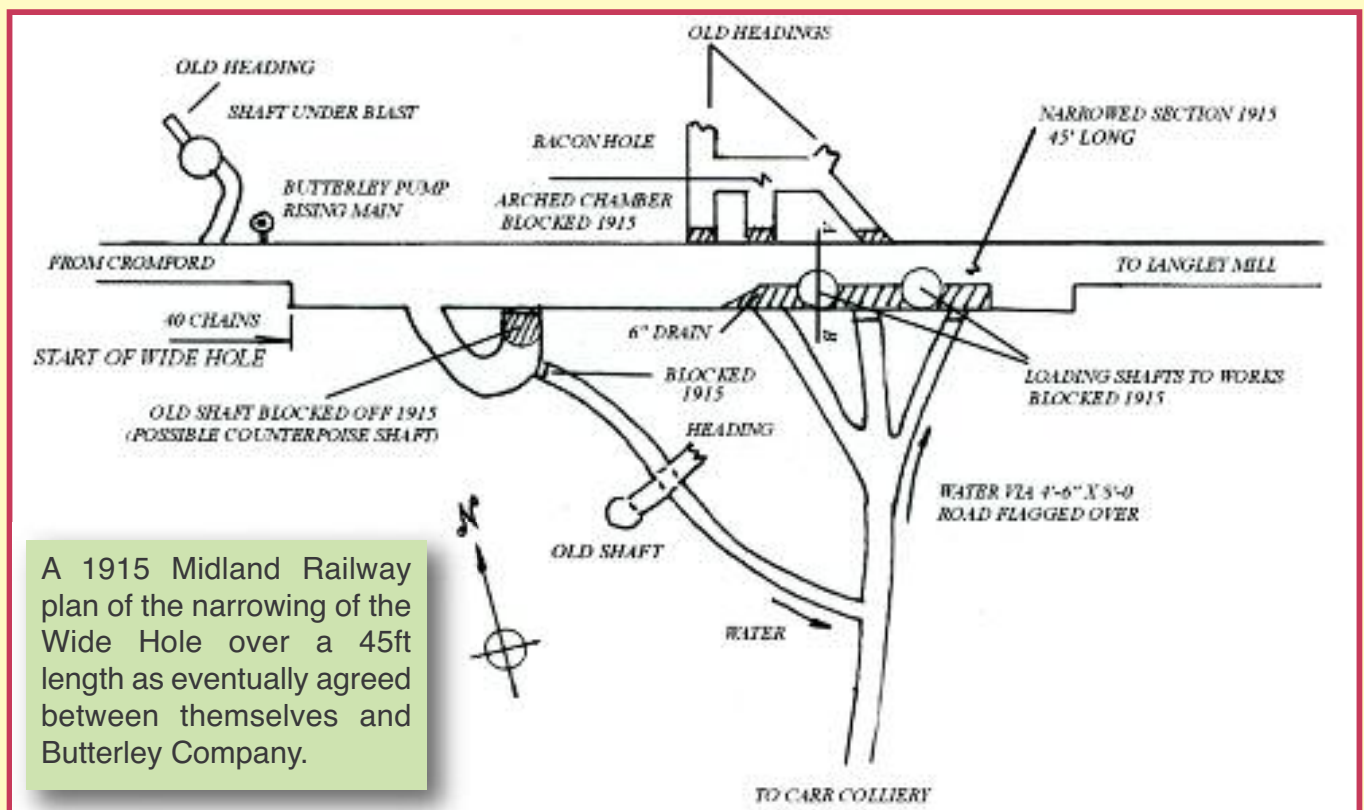
Wright is of the opinion that all the work should be done by MR and is unaware that BC paid for the work to create the Wide Hole, but will put the matter to Leslie Wright.

A further meeting takes place in July between Godfrey Wright (BC) & John Argyle (MR) at which Godfrey is suggesting that “about 20 feet of the Wide Hole at the Langley Mill end is sound and could be left. And further suggests that the new section be built 14 inches out from the present south wall.” John objects to this on the grounds that this would “involve an offset in the tunnel wall.” Godfrey agrees but suggests splaying the offset into the existing wall, as he does not anticipate long barges using the canal ever again.

John tells Godfrey that whatever was done should not stop barges of ordinary length and width working through the tunnel if it became necessary. Godfrey points out that there were already bends and corners in the tunnel that were worse than the one proposed. He goes on to say that they would not need to line the shaft as he proposed to fill it up with rough material to form a backing to the new section to permit drainage.

Godfrey goes on to say that BC would prefer to do the work at their cost and that to carry out MR’s proposal would be difficult to estimate for and might involve considerable expenditure if the side of the old tunnel was interfered with opposite the shafts. He would not object to BC paying any reasonable cost of the scheme if MR would carry out the work. He follows the visit up with a letter of confirmation on 7th July reiterating that they would prefer to narrow the tunnel rather than cutting out the arch which they felt was “exceedingly dangerous” and also suggesting the length of the work be 45ft instead of 65 feet.

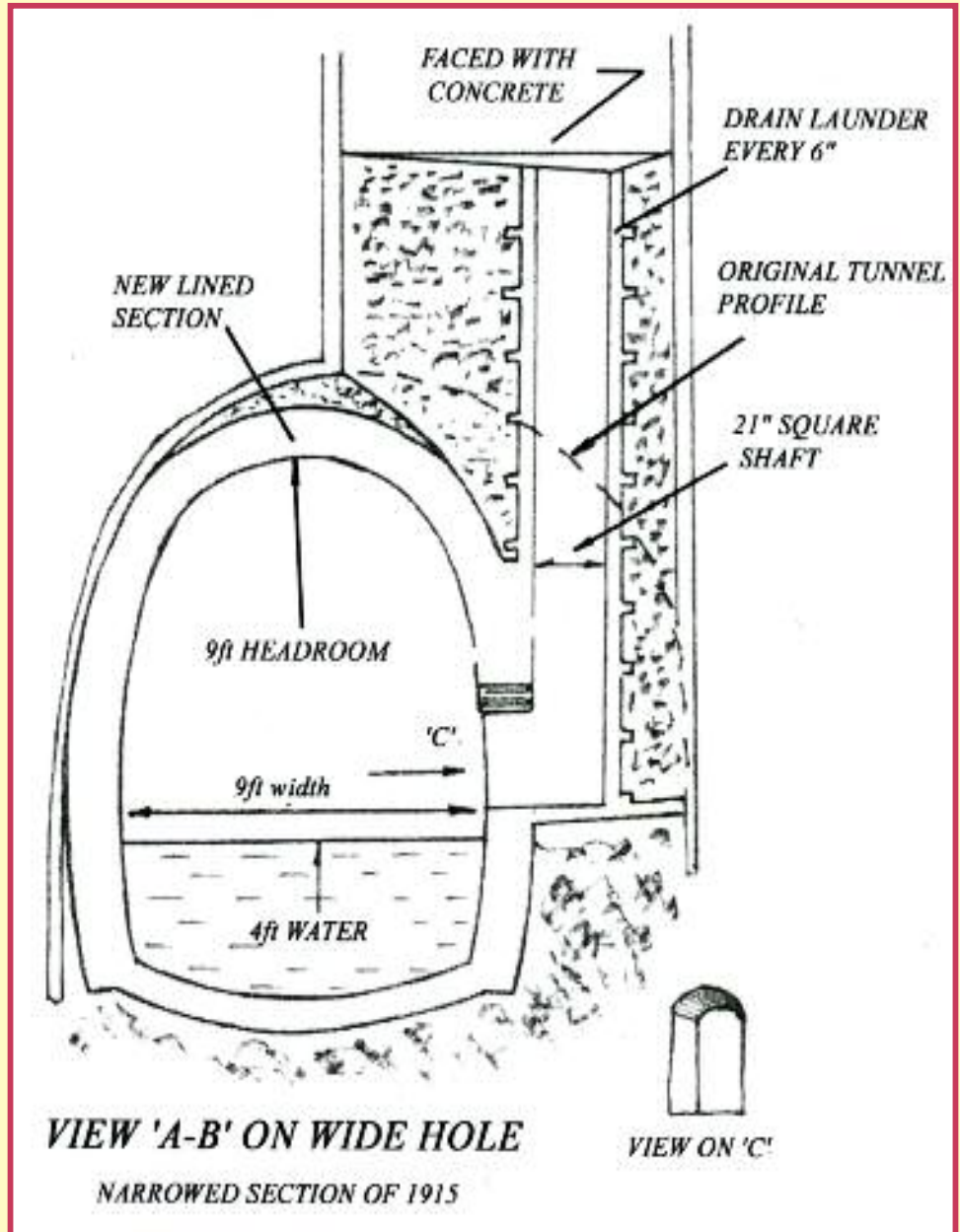
On July 21 Agyle replies (grudgingly) that MR could do the work but that their men have a great deal of work to do in the tunnel at that time, and because “the place is very much distorted, cracked and thoroughly charged with water” it was likely to cost around £1000. He is still trying to reinforce the argument as to who paid for the wide hole maintenance by stating “very little has been done, but some of the old driftways (entrances to mines) have been built up where they join the tunnel at some period in the ancient back history of the canal of which there are no records nor is information obtainable as to who paid the cost of this”. (He must have been unaware of the CCCo’s minute saying that BC could alter the tunnel to suit the building of a loading bay if it was done at BC’s expense).





On the 22nd July 1913 Argyle replies to James Briggs Esq (of Beale & Co Solicitors) accepting that the rebuilding of the new section out of line is not objected to other than “a natural engineering sentiment against it.” He goes on to say that if the proposal goes ahead “a chamber sufficiently large for access for cleaning purposes must be left through the rough filling at the base of the two shafts, otherwise they would be choked up with lime encrustation; both shafts make a great deal of water. Some mortar should also be used in the rough filling as to make a really good job of it”. Briggs suggests installing perforated cast iron pipes, which Argyle says would quickly block up with lime.

Ultimately they agree to the construction of two 21” diameter shafts 5 feet up the dry filling in the old shafts from the soffit of the Wide Hole (as shown on the second MR Plan on the right). MR Solicitors are then asked to draw up the agreement sometime in October 1913. It goes back and forth between the two seemingly in accord. Until that is, BC’s Solicitors decide to challenge the origin of the Wide Hole, claiming it to be “for the mutual benefit of both parties and that it served only as a passing place.” When faced with evidence to the contrary, they (sort of) back down by agreeing to pay towards the work but decline any obligation to maintain it. Legal council rumbles on into February 1914.



By March 1914, Argyle is advancing the work of ‘centering’ (propping up the canal roof with baulks of timber) at both West (47-48 chains) and East (35-36 chains) ordering, “that 6 old 85lb rails (not less than 27 ft.) be sent to Mr. Ackfield at the Signal Works, Derby.” To be bent into a suitable curve to suit the tunnel profile. And the Solicitors still rumbled on through April, and up to the new year when things take a more serious turn. Inspector Winson notices there is movement alongside the wide hole, and despite Argyle’s insistence on the 20th of an immediate start on the work, the solicitors are nit picking the fine detail!

On the 27th Winson finds “the first culvert inside the Bacon Hole (the arches chamber) has cracked in two places and several pieces of brickwork have dropped from the crown.” More legal stuff despite the immanent collapse of the Bacon Hole and then



the decision is made to fill it up with slag lumps. Finally, on 23rd March 1915, Godfrey Wright asks MR for three small flat bottom boats for a start on the repairs to be made on the 25th. As these repairs progressed, Abbott the foreman in charge is concerned about the bulging wall on the opposite side to the wharf and that repairing it is going to be difficult even with timber shoring. He suggests that it would be better to leave the old brickwork, and lower the section (and presumably pack the space between). A flurry of further legal nit picking ensues resulting in an agreement on the 20th July to change the specification of the work to be carried out.

From this new schedule of work to be carried out, we discover that this is when the three eastern most passage ways from the Butterley Carr culvert are bricked up and the “western one opened and made good.” The shafts are to be rough filled with slag lumps and rough cement mortar. The whole of the arched chamber on the North side and adjoining headings to be packed with slag lumps and the opening bricked up. The bottom of the nine foot shaft to be walled off from the Wide hole with a brick or slag wall battering (sloping) 1 in 6 on the Wide Hole side.

The work appears to have been completed at the end of August and signed off in September. There are communications referring to the removal of an electric pump and its cable, confirming that the age of steam is in retreat! Yet naphtha and carbide lamps are still in use by the workmen. It takes until February 1916 for the final bill to be submitted to MR. In April Butterley ask MR for permission to inspect the base of the pumping shaft as a white vapour has been seen coming from the shaft top. A boat is arranged by MR on the 5th May but found nothing to account for the vapour. MR must have heaved a sigh of relief at this point. But that relief was to be short lived.

(Note: The slag lumps referred to above were not random lumps but were made by shaping the molten slag before it hardened, into roughly regular sized blocks. Some of these were used to support the side of the Portland Wharf at Jacksdale, and later were also used experimentally as a building material)

## 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 next summer.

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

- **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.** See page 17.
- **January 18th** - A HISTORY OF THE BUTTERLEY COMPANY - Tim Castledine
- **February 15th** - ASHOVER LIGHT RAILWAY - Richard Booth
- **March 21st** - THE IDLE WOMEN - WOMEN ON THE CANAL BOATS IN THE LAST WAR - Mike Constable
- **April 18th - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** including an engineering update by Matthew Rogers (free admission)
- **May 16th** - AMBERGATE UNDERGROUND RESERVOIR - Anthony Healey
- **June 20th** - TOP GEAR AT THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY - Bill Devit



# WORK PARTY REPORT FOR CROMFORD & PINXTON

report and photos by John Guyler

There have been two main work party areas this year, Cromford and Ironville. Ironville will have a separate report by the team leader Pete Clark, see page 30.

The Cromford group have been clearing silt traps along the stretch to High Peak Junction ready for the winter rains and weeding in the winding hole at Leawood pump. *Birdswood* has been having difficulty turning in the winding hole because of growth of weed and varying water levels. A group of us worked from the work boat pulling weed out in the winding hole, the first week we removed twenty one wheel barrow loads and the second week we removed a further twelve. But this is only a partial solution, further intensive weed clearance needs to be planned

The big success was the removal of some obstructions in the channel at the garden centre. For a long time the masters have been complaining of hitting something in the water at the garden centre so with the exact position established and with the work boat in position, work began. With John Sparham in his wet suit, in the water, we established the obstruction was a large tyre. Eventually we got it to the towpath (see below) and loaded into the work boat. We located a second tyre and a large log in the same area and removed those also. There is still something in the channel but it is so deep in the silt that some tree pulling equipment will have to be used. At Cromford Wharf some of the team have cleared the feeder channel against Wheatcrofts cafe of weed that was choking it up. They also started clearing some of the high growth on the peninsula for when *Birdswood* is lifted out.



There has been one work party at Pinxton Wharf and it is intended for more through the winter. Pinxton Wharf is at the other end of the Pinxton arm from number one lock at Ironville. The FCC were invited to work on the section by the DCC ranger, Iain



Stafford. The half mile of the arm in water had been restored by Derbyshire County Council many years ago and is now becoming very overgrown in places. On an initial survey by John Barker it was established that the most urgent work was the removal of a very large amount of Himalayan Balsam at the furthest point from the Wharf.



The site had a very steep access so waders, buoyancy aids and safety ropes were required. In early September, the Himalayan Balsam was removed after several hours of difficult work. The banks were then paced out in 30m sections for alternating clearance. That is, as each section is cleared the next section is left and will be cleared next year to still provide cover for the wild life. It had been noted that there were water vole in the area and care had to be taken not cause any problems. But what we didn't know about was a wasp nest in the bank. John Sparham found it, and was stung several times. The above photo shows a section after clearance and the other is of the group who did a good job.





# IRONVILLE WORK PARTY REVIEW

A variety of jobs described in pictures by local work party organiser Pete Clark





### Key to Pete Clark's photos opposite

1. Clearing the coping stones of grass along the edge of the chamber at lock 2.
2. Treating the fence near the Erewash Valley Main Line railway bridge.
3. Removing the oversized stones from the freshly-laid towpath repairs before they get used as convenient ammunition.
4. Grey Wagtail on a car wheel (since removed from the canal bed). These birds successfully bred in both Lock 3 and Lock 4 walls. Some of the fledglings were eaten by a heron, as witnessed by Wayne Scarle, but some survived. Also seen at Lock 4 were a bank vole and a weasel.
5. Students on a Community Certificate Scheme plus local volunteers take a tea break in Jack Brown's yard. Note the bags of rubbish collected from the canal bank.
6. A supply of new tools and equipment from Keep Britain Tidy - Waterside Care arrive via John Barker



Top: Cleared scrub left as habitat stacks on the offside of Lock 4. Note also the new lock sign fitted by the volunteers.  
Below: The motor cycle barrier at Lock 4 (unfortunately very necessary in this area) being repainted.  
Both photos by John Guyler.



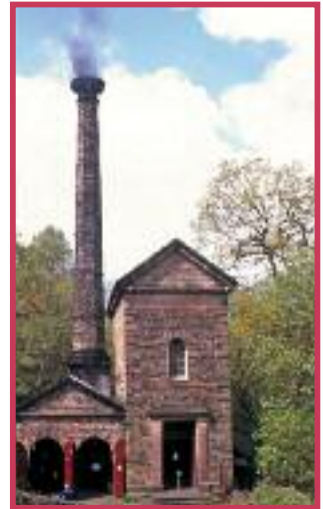




# LEAWOOD PUMP OUTLET

by Ian Yates

It's the end of another season and our final steaming took place over the Discovery Days weekend of 31st October and 1st November. The weekend was a success with a lot of interested visitors from quite a number of various places including Tring and London. Luckily the weather was better which helped, the previous steaming at the beginning of October was poor with few visitors on the Saturday due to the rain. There was an issue with the water level in the canal on the first weekend and a request was made if the engine could pump for an extra hour to help raise the water level in the winding hole as *Birdswood* was having a problem with the low water. This was duly carried out and had the required effect raising the water level certainly on the Sunday about 60mm according to reports from Hugh Potter on the boat. It was good to have the engine doing its original job of work 166 years after it was installed. The replacement blocks on the inlet valve do seem to be a success and it really does pump water into the canal at quite a volume. With this in mind and the water generally being low in the later months another steaming has been put in as a trial in mid-September. It will be a bit of a dash to get clean and ready but hopefully it will work out alright.



Over the next couple of weeks the boilers will be drained down and thoroughly cleaned out before being set aside for winter. One boiler, number 44, requires some minor repair works and it is also ready for a non-destructive test. Hopefully these works can be carried out over the winter ready for a steam test next Easter which will mean that there will always be a boiler "in ticket" so there will not be a rush to get two ready together giving the possibility that a boiler will not be available. With having carried out the works over the summer, there is little to be done on the engine except to keep it clean and rust free so concentrating on the boiler house should not be an issue. Also with there being heaters in the boilers over winter the general atmosphere is much more pleasant to work in so long as the door stays shut!

The next steaming days will be at Easter 2016. A full list of dates for the year will be in the next issue of *Portal*.

## GIFT UPDATE TO THE FCC

I am very pleased to report that the FCC has received two very generous gifts from supporting groups, after both Mike Kelley and I had given presentations of the working and history of the FCC.

Mike gave a presentation to the Rotary Club of Belper and Duffield early in October and I am pleased to report that they have very kindly given the FCC £250 towards a STIHL 70Sc strimmer, for work party use.

I have given two presentations, the first in late September was to the Rotary Club of Matlock and in October I gave a talk to the Rotary Club of Bulwell and Basford, which is in Nottingham.

The Friends have received a gift from the Rotary Club of Bulwell and Basford of £50, possibly this gift could be put towards buying paint for Birdswoods hull, but that remains the decision of the committee.

It is anticipated that there will be a presentation of the strimmer, yet to be arranged, and a report will be in the next issue of *Portal*. Thank you to all associated with the gifts, they are very much appreciated.

John Guyler Nov. 2015



## 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

Welcome to the last magazine of 2015. I hope you have all had a good year and are looking forward to 2016, I wonder what the new year will bring for the Friends of the Cromford Canal?

We have just had our biggest 'outing' of the year, which is the culmination of the Derwent Valley Heritage week. I think we did quite well with the sales stand, and the Tombola made £126 over the two days. We were very fortunate with the weather, despite the foggy conditions in some areas. Speaking of the sales stand, we are urgently in need of someone to take on this important job, as Val Roberts is no longer able to carry out this role. Please contact us if you are able to help with this or any other role.

We have recommenced our talks at Ironville Church Hall on the third Monday of the month and the programme will be listed elsewhere in the magazine. We have some very interesting speakers lined up, and we are delighted to welcome Members and non Members. Admission is only £2 and there is a bar and raffle available. Please note that there will not be a meeting in December, instead we are having a Christmas Party at the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford on 20 December from 4.30 – 9.00pm. Hot soup with a roll, cake or mince pie and a festive drink will be served, but you are more than welcome to bring a bottle. Tickets are £5 each, available from Vix Wilding. Phone 07552 055 455 to reserve your place.

With less than two months to go until Christmas, the shops are getting full of Christmas goods, so I will close with wishing you all a Happy Christmas and very best wishes for 2016.

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

Mr & Mrs A Hough, South Normanton	Mrs J Cassady, Nottingham
Mr & Mrs D Wayte, Norwich	Miss K Worthington, Long Eaton
Mr K Mann, Matlock	Mr & Mrs A Diprose, Nottingham

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# Friends of the Cromford Canal



Our aim is to restore the historic Cromford Canal for the benefit of the public and we need your help

[www.cromfordcanal.info](http://www.cromfordcanal.info)

Birdswood is the FCC's trip boat which offers public cruises and is also available to charter



Volunteers always needed for various roles at events and as sales assistants and ambassadors

Help us by becoming a member of the FCC and donating regularly or assisting in our work parties



[www.facebook.com/Birdswood](http://www.facebook.com/Birdswood)



On selected days of the month our trip boat is horse drawn which makes it an extra special treat

For further information: 07552 055 455  
Email: [boat@cromfordcanal.org.uk](mailto:boat@cromfordcanal.org.uk)

Charity No. 1100700

