

THE PORTAL

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



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FRONT COVER: Phil Roberts demonstrating the advantage of water transport by towing the 20 tons of *Birdswood* with his Burrell 4 inch scale model traction engine at the Discovery Days event at Cromford (see pages 14 -17).

Photo: Editor

BACK COVER: A drone's eye view of Leawood Pumping Station from 165ft. Notice that the chimney has a surprisingly small internal diameter.

Photo: Steve Goodman, Clay Mills Victorian Pumping Station

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.59

There has been quite a bit of activity of late with the FCC, but now we are approaching the winter there will be time for a bit of a breather. Having said that, in the case of *Birdswood*, Vix and her ever growing band of volunteers still have the Santa Specials to look forward to. It has been another record year for passenger numbers and I would like to repeat my thanks to all concerned in their various ways, both on the boat and in the shop at Cromford, for their ongoing support and commitment to the FCC.

However, there is continuing concern about the available depth of water for the *Birdswood* operation, for two reasons. One is the need for dredging, which will have to be addressed before much longer. The other is the variation in the water supply, which has led on occasions to the canal being unnavigable, but there is good news on this. The FCC honorary civil engineer John Boucher has been working on the design of a new control sluice to be fitted in the canal feeder in the Mill yard. Planning permission has now been obtained for this and work will proceed, possibly with the help of a grant.

Speaking of water levels, another worrying situation has developed, just to the south of Wigwell Aqueduct. The water has been disappearing through leaks in the canal bed. Fortunately, this is beyond the length used by *Birdswood*, but is none the less rather worrying. The leaks are being identified and sealed by Derbyshire County Council Countryside Services contractors. See page 9 -10.

As has been said before, the FCC is not all about *Birdswood*, but it is the publicity and the creation of interest in the Cromford Canal, not to mention the increasing income which the boat operation generates, which will help to lead on to the eventual restoration of the whole of the Cromford Canal.

This vision of future restoration was brought to the attention of the public at the recent consultation and drop in meeting at Ironville Church Hall as part of the Cromford Canal Economic Development Study. This was intended to gather the views of the local people and listen to their ideas, and a pleasing number of people attended. The meeting was arranged by the FCC Strategic Restoration Committee and Colin Baxter Associates. These ideas will be taken into account when formulating the plans for restoring the canal, initially from Langley Mill to Ironville. See also Gill Hirst's letter on page 11.

Another important development for the FCC is the setting up of two new websites. This project, which I am the first to admit is rather beyond me, is being led by Chris Wilding with the help of Dave Martin, George Rogers and Hugh Potter. See page 29.

Finally, something which I understand better, the FCC have published an interesting book, compiled by Hugh Potter, of the memoirs of Les Mason, one of the last Cromford Canal boatmen. See page 31.

Merry Christmas!

The press date for the New Year 2017 issue will be February 3rd



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM



The land purchase at Langley Mill from Shires Developments is moving on as we have now agreed a larger area than originally offered at a slightly lower price of £9,000. That being said, the cost of the land seems greater than it might be worth; however, with the included Right of Way from Cromford Road via Hall Road to the site the value is enhanced. This means that we can get heavy vehicles to the site for restoration and in later years for lock and canal maintenance; and the building of an alternative access route might well be in excess of the purchase price. The land purchase is now in the hands of our solicitors.

After nearly forty years, Pete Newman has decided to retire from Langley Mill Boatyard, Pete with Mike Harrison, Mick Golds and others restored that part of the Cromford Canal now used by the Boatyard. Dan Cauldwell, the new lessee, has a long involvement with boats at Langley Mill and looks forward to the FCC progressing the restoration towards Ironville.

The Strategic Restoration Committee has had an initial meeting with the Environment Agency regarding the next part of restoration still owned by the Canal & River Trust. The EA's main concern is encroachment onto the flood plain now that the opencast operation has been dropped. The engineers also talked to the EA about a new aqueduct across the River Erewash which will probably be higher and further upstream than the old stone arched structure removed in the 1970s.

At the Cromford end of the canal the planning application to replace the sluice in Cromford Mills to control the feed to the canal from Bonsall Brook has been approved by Derbyshire Dales District Council. An initial quotation for the work to be done commercially is around £15,000 and we have made an application to the Inland Waterways Association for a grant from the Tony Harrison Legacy for that amount. If that application fails we shall be looking at undertaking some of the work ourselves.

The passenger boat *Birdswood* runs as far as Wigwell Aqueduct and the section below this has been kept at a reduced level for 20 years as a result of bank failure and leaks. Just recently several "sink holes" have appeared about 150 yards down stream of the aqueduct. These are being repaired by Derbyshire County Council contractors. See pages 9 - 10.

The Economic Development Study is now progressing and on November 12th we had an Open Day at Ironville Church Hall. Around 100 local residents and other visitors arrived in a steady stream from 10.00am until 4.00pm and about 8 FCC committee members discussed the proposals with the visitors. There were some interesting comments and suggestions which will be taken into account in the final report. It was a very useful exercise in meeting a different group of local residents and progressing the aims of the Friends. *See also Gill Hirst's letter on page 11 - Ed.*

Finally, we have had two surprise donations recently, the first of £250 was from Waterway Recovery Group North West who regularly come to the Cromford, and the second was a substantial donation as a result of an Environment Agency Enforcement Undertaking.

As this is the last *Portal* before Christmas, may I wish all our members and readers the Season's Greetings for 2016 and a Happy New Year in 2017.



BIRDWOOD UPDATE

by Vix Wilding

With the main season complete, I've taken to researching funding for the following year's extra curricular activities. Things like Forest Schools and the Education Package don't have funds allocated for development and this is achieved by the hard work and dedication of a few individuals who apply for grant funding.

I've been successful in gaining £360, the cost of free family activities during the August and October Half Term holidays. This came from the local councillor Project Fund. I'm extremely grateful to Councillors Chris Pawley and Gary Purdy for their continued financial support. Families who attend these events value the time they have together and to be able to explore the natural area around them in a safe and secure environment. With them engaging at Cromford Wharf it will help secure interest in FCC development plans in the future.

The forest schools and bug hotel building are proving more and more popular. These are fully funded and I work alongside Derwentwise to utilise their skills and insurance for the good of the locals. While these activities are free for the public, they promote the work we are doing on the canal and have helped create strong links within the local community. I've also gained a following from a group of parents who Home School their children. They fully support my work and promote *Birdwood* within their exclusive circle.

Having new links with the University of Derby, our details have been added to their email database. Recently there was a call out for applications for funding that covered education for the benefit of Derbyshire. "What better fit than our education package!" With the help of Chris Wilding, we developed an idea to paper and costed the project over a couple of evenings. The application was submitted and we await the news. If successful, the money will go heavily towards new promotional materials to teach the youth in our society of the importance of our heritage. We are looking to create a teachers pack that presents our offering in a professional yet friendly manner. It will include subject details and extra curricular activities for staff to prepare the children before the visit. To be able to continue the joy and learning experience we hope to develop School Packs that the staff can take away. These would have a programme of lesson plans and creative tasks for children to learn about canal life, the construction of canals and the benefit of taking care of the local wildlife. Subjects such as English, history, maths, art and science would all be covered.





AN AWARD FOR OUR WORK

by Mike Kelley

I recently received an invitation from Museum Development East Midlands to attend Derbyshire Museums and Heritage Forum to be held Friday evening on the 7th October at the Crich Tramway Museum. I was naturally surprised and pleased to receive this, and also rather curious.

After a light buffet we listened to senior personnel from the host explaining their work in encouraging groups whose work helps to preserve our historical heritage and also help the public to understand such.

This was followed by numerous awards being handed out by Radio Derby presenter Andy Potter. 'If the FCC are to get an award it surely must be for the category, 'Greater Use of Volunteers', I thought. But no, that award came and went. Then they began to speak about the Cromford Canal and my ears pricked up. The host explained how *Birdswood* has not only brought pleasure to the public, but this beautiful historic boat has enlivened a truly historical area and concluded by congratulating the FCC on the wonderful work being done by them. I was then called upon to receive, on behalf of the FCC, the 'Judges' Special Award'.



Andy Potter of Radio Derby (left) presenting the Judges Special Award to Mike Kelley.

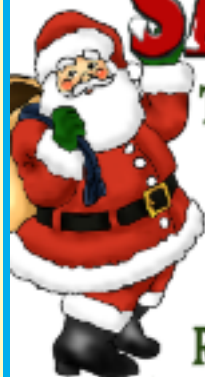
It was a great honour and pleasure to receive this for all the hard work the wonderful volunteers of the FCC carry out every week.

You may remember back in 2010 Derbyshire County Council invited Pat Morriss, our then Chairman, and myself to the Devonshire Dome at Buxton to receive an award for the FCC from them called, 'Excellence in the Community Award'. It is gratifying to know that such bodies respect the work carried out by the FCC.





SANTA SPECIALS



Treat the kids to a Christmas trip on historic narrow boat

BIRDSWOOD

Running throughout December on Saturday 3rd, 10th and 17th & Sunday 4th, 11th and 18th also Friday 23rd

Seasonal refreshments for everybody and presents from Santa for the kids

Under 5 years: £6, 5 - 11 years: £9, Adults: £9

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Trips depart at 12 noon and 2pm from Cromford Wharf, DE4 3RQ

Advance booking is essential

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By Email: sales@birdswood.org

Online: www.birdswood.org



The boat BIRDSWOOD is owned and operated by
The Friends of the Cromford Canal
Registered Charity 114648
www.cromfordcanal.co.uk Visit us on Facebook at [birdswood](https://www.facebook.com/birdswood)



Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

This project is supported by the Rural Development Programme for England. For additional details & to find out more visit www.birdswood.org





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NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate

Update - November 2016

**from Patrick Mountain - West Wider Area Ranger
Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service**

Autumn on the Canal

Autumn on the canal has been very late arriving and the leaves have hung onto the trees displaying a tremendous show of colour until the first frosts arrived and leaf fall is now well underway. The mild autumn has also had the effect of tricking many plants into a late flowering. Daisy, dandelions, hogweed, herb robert, pennycress, bramble, ox-eye daisy, yarrow, nipple-wort, bindweed, dead nettle, St John's wort, buttercup, dog violet have all been seen near the canal in October. Red Admiral and large white butterflies were seen well into October. The three cygnets that George & Mildred raised are now developing their independence and are spending most of the time away from their parents. I have not heard reports of any aggressive behaviour by the swans this year. I have not had any reports on mink on the top section of the canal but we remain vigilant.

As part of the world heritage week celebrations, Buxton Museum received some national lottery funding to reproduce and display a selection of historic prints of the area along the canal. The pictures were much appreciated by the public with many positive comments received. The exercise may well be repeated in future.



Volunteer work parties

The fortnightly team of Tuesday volunteers have been busy through the autumn managing vegetation, silt trap clearing and a host of other tasks to keep the canal in order. An additional Saturday group has started working and both are keen to attract more people.

New Interpretation boards

The wide range of notice and interpretation boards that have evolved over the years have recently been reviewed and new boards will be installed. This has been a project jointly undertaken by FCC, DWT, Derwentwise & DCC.



Water Levels

We have managed to maintain sufficient water in the navigable section of the canal so that *Birdswood's* operation has been sustained despite lower than normal rainfall through the summer and autumn.

Regular visitors to the canal between the aqueducts will have noticed that the water levels in that section of canal have been quite low in recent times. At the same time the old sewer beds have been notably damp. A connection had been made but despite

Hugh Potter



Above: Three of the leaks in the canal bed which developed into sink holes.
Below: The DCC Allroads team clearing the vegetation in the canal bed to enable the leaks to be located and sealed.



Hugh Potter





regular checks and examination, no leak could be pinned down due to the extensive growth of typha. Eventually the leak became large enough to be best described as a sink hole. On further investigation another significant leak was identified. DCC structural surveyor and DCC Allroads team were appointed to undertake the repair and consent to undertake the work was sought from Natural England. At the time of writing, the team had discovered that one leak was caused by a rotting tree root that had penetrated the canal bed and the second was caused by a breakdown in the far wall and erosion of the sub-structure. Both had probably been running for a while and will be fixed by introduction of Geotex binding membrane and new puddle clay.

Hugh Potter



Towpath issues

The towpath has been resurfaced in recent years and there are no major issues at the moment. If you do come across any deterioration or matters of concern then please let us know.

Tree work

The oak, ash and two of the birch trees north of Gregory tunnel that had fallen out of the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust reserve were cleared by a joint DCC DWT work party in early November. A number of hung up trees in the DWT reserve are to be removed and additional tree removal is planned for the autumn and winter season to open the canal to light and prevent damage to the structure.

Countryside Service on the canal

Patrick Mountain & Sean Kent responsible for the monitoring of the canal from the Middleton Top Visitor Centre on 01629 823204 with Paul Finn being the Assistant Area manager in overall charge from Hayfield Information Centre on 01629 533345



CROMFORD CANAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY

OPEN DROP IN MEETING

Sat. November 12th

We attended the Consultation at Ironville today. Though we don't live in the area, we are FCC members and wanted to show some solidarity, while finding out what is going on with this stretch of the canal.

What a great turnout! We certainly weren't needed to swell the numbers! There was a buzz in the room, with someone at every available table. They were deep in conversation, consulting plans and making notes.

The displays around the room were also busy, as people orientated themselves, reminisced and asked for further information from the those members "manning the shop". The only criticism I would have about the large map displays (and who doesn't love a good map?!) was the lack of labelling, which meant we had to ask what we were looking at.

It was good to see The Friends engaging with local people, explaining the focus of the consultation and sincerely asking for their opinion. I suppose this issue of engaging with others could also apply to the Friends' wider membership. We certainly know of several people who pay their subscription and that is that until the next year. While aware of how important their subscription is, I wonder how we help people to go that step further and attend the meetings or join the work parties or share their knowledge and experiences? As you see, I have more questions than answers!!

Seeing the activity in the room today and aware of the depth of knowledge of those facilitating the discussions made me wonder if a similar format would work at the occasional monthly FCC meeting. Grant you I'm not the most passive of people, but surely I'm not the only member that would occasionally like to see a more proactive format to these meetings. I do enjoy talks by people who can put the flesh on the bones of my knowledge of the canal and related environs, but would occasionally like to see a question and answer session with committee members, or "brainstorming" sessions, similar to today when everyone puts their heads together (in small groups) to discuss fundraising, advertising, work party issues etc. Many people have transferable skills and experiences that they might feel comfortable sharing in a small group.

Gill Hirst. Sawmills

A pleasing number of people attended, mostly local but some from further afield.

Andy Cadman





IRONVILLE TOWPATH RENEWAL, STAGE 2

by John Barker

Phase 2 of the work on the towpath at Ironville started on Friday 4th November with the help of Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) North West. This was part of the annual WRG Bonfire Bash, the main party of which this year were working on the Chesterfield Canal. They were billeted at Chesterfield but a number of them made a daily run to Ironville. On the Friday we only had a few key guys with myself, Wayne Scarle, John Guyler and John Dyson assisting and we laid the edging boards ready for the stone laying.



John Guyler

Above: Installing the edging boards.
Below: Spreading the stone.....



John Guyler



On the Saturday, 10 WRG volunteers arrived in their van ready to start, 2 dumper trucks and a excavator and a roller were all buzzing about the tow path bringing and rolling stone. The usual gazebo was installed and in a very short time we had a tea break. I had a look at the water in the urn and it was almost as if someone had been washing their socks, but on a cold day it tasted fine. Sunday came and WRG came early. More stone was laid and rolled and we finished just the other side of the gate at Lock4. The clearing up then started in the pouring rain about 11.30am. The grassed area was swept and the tools cleared away for Phase 3 to be planned for next year. I would like to also thank Jack and Paul Brown for the use of their facilities and Sean Fields for allowing us to park 80 tonnes of stone on his land. As it happened we only used about half of this, but it is now on site ready for the next time.



John Guyler

Above:and compacting it with the roller.
Below: And the result is another length of 'yellow brick road'



Editor



DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE



DISCOVERY DAYS

by the Editor

The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days events, held in the last week in October each year, again culminated in another successful weekend for the FCC at Cromford Wharf. This is the last weekend in the year when our trip boat *Birdswood*

operates horsedrawn trips, which are always very popular.

The picture above shows the last of the passengers queuing to board the boat and Chelsea, the horse supplied and operated by Arraslea Shires, is waiting to get under way.

On the left, the boat is seen silently moving off behind the horse with a full load, the best way to see this beautiful length of the Cromford Canal in all its Autumn glory.



Editor



Above: On returning to Cromford Wharf, the horse line is cast off and Chelsea is being led back to the horsebox for some well earned hay and a rub down. The boat is being turned round under power prior to disembarking the passengers.
Below: Meanwhile, there was other equine activity at the wharf where children were able to take pony rides.

Hugh Potter



Editor



Editor

Above: Peter Keating, keeping us all entertained with his street organ, standing below the fine new FCC banner.



Editor

Below: Birdswood carrying a fine display of painted water cans. The larger one has just been repainted by waterways craft guild member and regular FCC supporter at this event, Jes Inglis.



Hugh Potter



Hugh Potter



Hugh Potter



Hugh Potter

Top left: Jes Inglis demonstrating traditional canal painting.

Top right: Some of the stationary engines on display.

Above left and right: There were many and various 'boats' on the canal from the Nottingham Model Boat Club.

Right: There was much else of interest inside the Gothic Warehouse, including the FCC sales stall, original paintings, knot tying, tombola and canal painting as well as a continuous slide show of FCC activities.



Editor



LANGLEY MILL BOATYARD LTD.

A new phase for the only boatyard on the southern Cromford Canal!

Dear all,

For those who aren't aware, Pete Newman, the final, original director of Langley Mill Boatyard Ltd has announced his retirement after being involved with the company for over 40 years. We were approached by Pete to see whether we were interested in purchasing the Limited Company, and the Lease for the operation of the Boatyard. We gladly accepted and so began the mission of purchasing!

So, who are we? I am Dan Cauldwell, and with my wife Vikki and my father, Hugh, we have finalised the purchase and been appointed company directors to the company. We have been asked to write a short passage introducing ourselves. My father, Hugh has been involved in the local canal scene for over 50 years, and has had boats moored at Langley Mill since it was reopened. He has owned many boats over the years, from the Wooden Knobstick *Avon* to the wooden Keays tug *Judith Anne* with many in between. In previous years, he ran camping boats *Banstead* and *Meteor* under the name Boating for All for several successful years. In his spare time he likes to restore marine engines, currently on the "bench" is a Kelvin K2.



Editor

Vikki and I come from a theatrical background. Vikki trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in Lighting Design, and I am a Stage Manager. For 9 years we were 2 of the Management team of the Technical Department at Milton Keynes Theatre, where Vikki ran the Electrics department, and I ran the Stage department. We married in 2008, and our first daughter, Lily-Mae was born in 2010. Our second daughter, Daisy followed in 2013. At this point Vikki gave up work to look after our kids. About a year later we were sat on a train at Whipsnade Zoo and saw a post on social media that a friend was selling a pair of former hotel boats, *Oak* and *Ash*. We laughed and joked that we could be mortgage free and have more space than the house and went to look at more giraffes..... 2 weeks later we had paid a deposit and so began the craziest 12 weeks of house packing and moving. We lived adjacent to the Grand Union in MK so we tied the boats up at the end of the road and moved on one box at a time. Throughout all this we also had a former BCN day boat moored at Langley Mill, which is our restoration project, and I found I was spending more time around the boatyard and chatting to Pete, and the rest, as they say is history. In May I finally resigned from my job in MK, and we spent a lovely 5 days cruising back to Langley Mill, home. Finally the family boat fleet was united, and plans began in earnest for our new venture.



Having been around boats, and the yard all of my life, I have seen the excellent work by the former boatyard directors, and, we hope, we can carry that good work forward for the next few years. We look forward to welcoming you all, as do Lily-Mae and Daisy who are great talkers, and excellent at engaging with our customers. We have a website up and running, www.langleymillboatyard.co.uk, a page on Facebook and a Twitter feed, which we would love you to visit and share if you can. We are also happy to offer a discount to the Friends of the Cromford Canal for drydock hire. Please give us a call on 01773 760758, or drop us an email at enquiries@langleymillboatyard.co.uk if you wish to book, or are looking for moorings.

Kind Regards

Dan Cauldwell Langley Mill Boatyard Ltd.

On the subject of Langley Mill, Hugh Potter has recently sent in the picture below, which none of us have seen before.

This image, taken by J. G. Parkinson, is one of a large number of canal and waterway photographs taken by him now in the care of the Online Transport Archive. The archive, which is a UK-registered charity, provides a home for vulnerable film, slide and negative collections of transport and canal interest.

J. G. Parkinson/Online Transport Archive



The mystery is not its location - obviously Langley Mill, above Lock 14, but when was it taken and what was the occasion? It is obviously pre-infilling as there is water in the canal, including in the entrance to the Nottingham Canal under the intact swingbridge, and the Cromford Canal lock house and toll office are still standing on the right, so it was taken well before the subsequent restoration of the lock by the ECPDA in the early 1970s. Our guess for a date therefore is the early 1960s, or possibly late 1950s. There is evidently some sort of event taking place with a tent erected and what could be a number of scouts standing around. The small speed boat is also a mystery and looks rather out of place here. The Firestone Tyres hoarding on the roadside is shown in another picture, but was probably there for some years. If anyone has any ideas as to the date and the occasion, we would very much like to hear from you.

Editor



MEMORIES OF HORSE BOATING

by John Boucher

I enjoyed the editor's article on horse boating in *Portal* 58, but am pleased that he only said it *nearly* came to an end before the second world war. I was born close to the side of the Shropshire Union Canal above Chester the month war was declared, and I remember regular long distance horse boating for twelve years after that. Most of this was by Thomas Clayton tanker boats, which regularly carried heavy fuel oil from Stanlow Refinery to Langley Green up the Tifford Arm at Oldbury in the Black Country.

The boats were interchangeable with the tar boat illustrated in the article, but with one important difference. They all carried a large upended barrel for fodder, or occasionally a rectangular bin, placed just behind the mast, so that the horses could be fed en-route. A nose bowl (or bag) was used, fastened round the horses head so that it could munch away as it walked along, avoiding the temptation to stop and nibble grass at the side of the towpath. All the horses I remember were full sized cart horses and seemed well kept. As children in a rural area, the canal was one of our regular playgrounds, learning to swim in the summer or sliding on the ice in the winter. We often met horses on the towpath, normally standing to the outside to let them pass, but equally if we had been sitting on the bank, perhaps fishing, we just sat there, the horse went behind and we just ducked under the towline as it went over our heads.

As the horses used a regular route they knew the way, and there was no need for anyone to walk behind and drive them. They were encouraged to keep going by use of a long whip - not used on the actual animal, but cracked loudly by the steerer on the boat, the noise having the desired effect. The cracking was done by a smart back and forth flick of the whip in the air which resulted in a crack that sounded just like a rifle shot - on a cool winter's evening this could be heard perhaps a mile away, and we knew the boats were coming long before they actually passed. A year or two back there was a radio programme about horse boating where someone tried to demonstrate cracking a whip - their resulting sound was quite pathetic, a dull thud, nothing at all like the sharp crack I remember. *[About forty years ago, I had the privilege of seeing an ex boatman demonstrate cracking a whip. As John says, the loudness of the crack is amazing, and is actually a sonic boom - Ed.]*

The horse boats normally worked in pairs, with two horses. Although the Chester Canal section had wide locks, most of the journey was along narrow canals where a horse per boat was advantageous. Even with the motorised pairs, where a horse boat became a towed butty boat, the crews liked to get hold of a horse to take the butty up the long flights of locks on route, particularly at Wolverhampton. I remember on one occasion being asked to write a postcard saying "We'll be at Hampton on Wednesday - please bring the horse". No time was given, I was told the horse man would know, but I never did find out whether they actually met up! Occasionally when a pair of horse boats had loaded at the same time as a pair of motor boats, one of the motors would lead the way along the long lock-free pounds pulling all three of the other boats - the boat horses would be attached to their boats in the normal way, but walked along quietly without having to expend much effort until they got to the next locks.

Horse boat traffic lasted until 1952 when the Manchester Ship Canal Company withdrew their tug from Ellesmere Port so that in future all pairs had to be motorised for the two mile journey up to the loading point at Stanlow. Not all boating families were happy to have to change to motorboats and at least one returned to horseboating when the Stanlow traffic finished in summer 1955. In the later years I managed to get a few trips out onto the



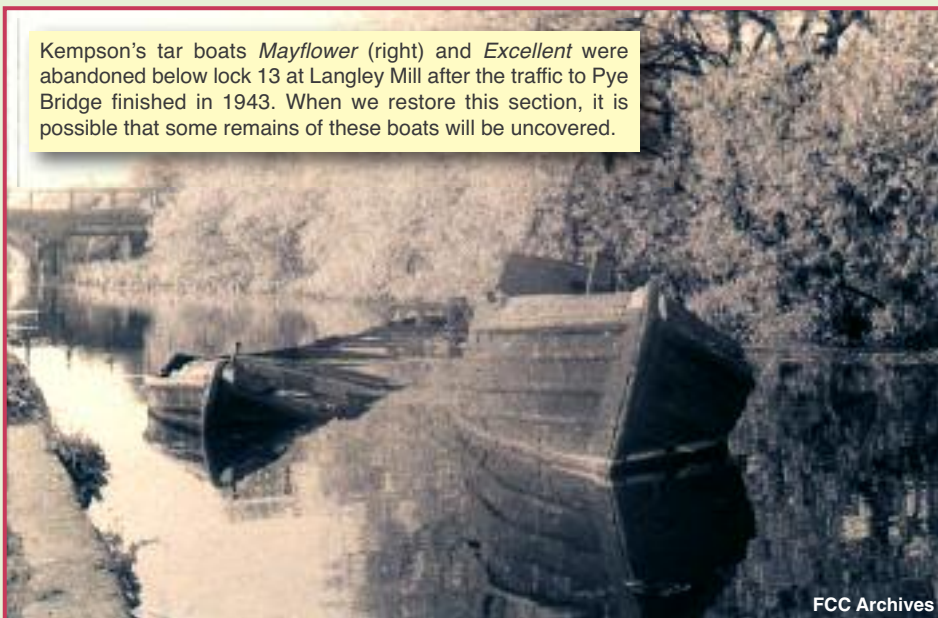
Ship Canal up to Stanlow to see the boats loaded. That could be quite exciting at times, and if the water was choppy it would break over the decks at the front of the loaded boats for at least a third of their length. At the loading point motor boats, with their engines weighing down the stern, were stable, but I was quite alarmed on my first trip out there to learn that the butty or horse boat would, at the start of loading, heel over 20 degrees or so as it started to fill but then settle down to level when it was full. The same heeling took place in reverse at the unloading point, which was probably beneficial in allowing the last drop of the load to be pumped out.

The editor's article in *Portal* 58 also includes a picture of a Thomas Clayton horse tanker boat on the Birmingham Canal system. Clayton's had a large fleet of tankers, and carried gasworks tar oil and other liquid products over a large part of the canal system. When I visited Clayton's yard at Oldbury in 1954 I noted that one of their older boats was called *Cromford*. Now this was most unusual, as nearly every boat in Clayton's fleet was named after a river, but I have not been able to discover a River Cromford, so it must have been named after the village or the canal. Why so?

The original *Cromford* was one of three wooden boats built for Claytons at the yard of Rudkins of Leicester - *Erewash* in 1899, *Cromford* in 1900 and *Soar* in 1904 (as wooden boats only had a working life of 20 -30 years, each of these boats was replaced in the 1920s with another boat of the same name). Were they intended for traffic in the East Midlands? There were gasworks around the system, and Kempson's at Pye Bridge received tar by boat from Loughborough right up to the end of traffic on the Cromford Canal through Ironville in 1943, although by then in a pair of their own boats, the motor boat *Mayflower* and the butty *Excellent* (see below). Is it possible that Claytons also worked on this traffic, using locally built boats with local names to please their East Midlands clients?

There is apparently no documentary evidence of this, and the *Cromford* was spotted in the London area about 1905, and I noted the *Erewash* working through Chester in 1955. Still, it does make one wonder...

Kempson's tar boats *Mayflower* (right) and *Excellent* were abandoned below lock 13 at Langley Mill after the traffic to Pye Bridge finished in 1943. When we restore this section, it is possible that some remains of these boats will be uncovered.



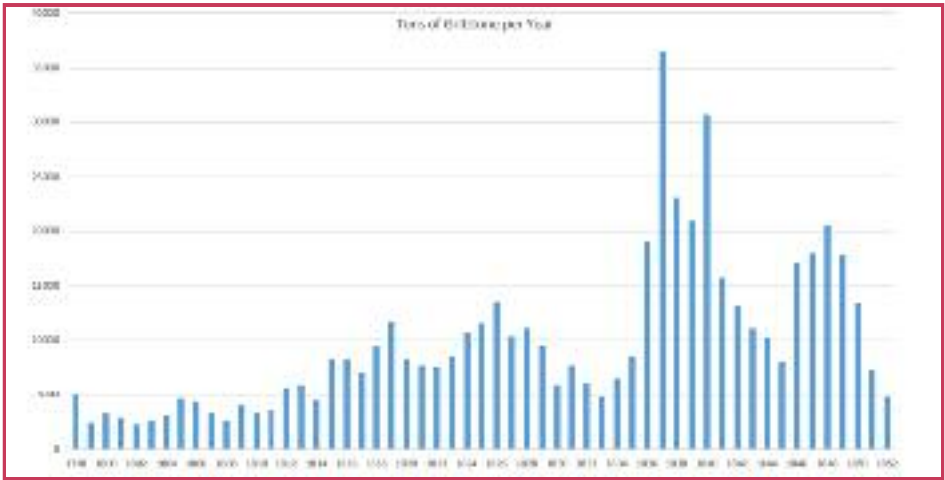
FCC Archives



A GRITSTONE PEAK

by Grenville Smith

Compared to the huge volumes of coal and limestone carried on the canal, gritstone from our region is possibly overlooked as a major commodity, but was one of national importance in the first half of the 19th century. The annual accounts of the Cromford Canal Co helpfully list this tonnage as a separate category and so when graphed, we have a clear picture of activity over time. See below.



The striking peak for the year ending April 1837 is due to a single factor; the construction of the London & Birmingham Railway and the following information has been taken from the minute books held at the National Archives.

Most of the gritstone tonnage in 1836/7 was for stone blocks, each measuring 2' x 2' x 1', weighing 578lbs and supplied at a delivered cost of between 5 and 7 shillings. A pair were placed every 3 feet to support the newly laid rails. Wooden sleepers were also used, but to a much lesser extent. Because the quantity required was so large, the separate London and Birmingham Committees decided to contract directly with suppliers.

Yet this boom in trade almost didn't happen here. After the first tenders were issued the London Committee chose primarily Cornish granite and Yorkshire gritstone and the Birmingham Committee awarded their entire contract to Jesse Rutherford who operated quarries in Wingerworth and Little Eaton. However, it soon became clear that Rutherford had priced his offer too low and the Committee realised that a single supplier would not be able to fulfil their requirements in the time available. There was also a spat between Rutherford and Robert Stephenson, the chief engineer, over the quality of the stone supplied. The relationship never recovered although Rutherford was retained as a contractor.

The Birmingham Committee approached other suppliers to provide an initial order of 500 blocks, a task easily completed by William Sims from Duke's Quarries at Whatstandwell, close to the Cromford Canal. By this time Duke's had a reputation for supplying large engineering projects in London and the Midlands. Schedules of delivery were established and destinations were canal wharves between Birmingham and Stoke Bruerne as the construction progressed towards London.

The supply of the blocks proved to be somewhat of a bonanza and every stone merchant wanted a piece of the action. The Lord Mayor of Dublin made a personal



representation to promote the merits of Irish granite and perhaps the strangest offer was from the Nottingham Marble Company whose high prices were understandably declined.

Contributing to the total in our graph were two other quarries in addition to Duke's. Gabriel Brittain had a long association with the canal both as a boat operator and stone supplier, having fulfilled contracts to build both Leicester and Derby prisons in the 1820s with stone from Duke's and White Tor. Brittain was supplying stone blocks from the Ridgeway quarry on land he now owned near Heage. Hugh Allen was also supplying blocks from Birchwood quarry on the west side of the Derwent valley just north of Whatstandwell. In addition to blocks, building stone was also being supplied to the contractors constructing each section of the railway for use in bridges and tunnels but documentation of these shipments has not been found so far.

In the year to April 1837, the Birmingham Committee paid Duke's Quarry a total of £19,500, an astonishing sum. The next highest payment was to Jesse Rutherford who received £6,300. William Sims died in July 1836 and his son Samuel took over. The Sims family continued to run Duke's until 1915 and the quarry is still active today. For Gabriel Brittain this was his last project and he put his land and quarry up for sale soon after. Jesse Rutherford became bankrupt in 1838. A £1,500 shipment of stone to London was lost in an uninsured shipwreck off Grimsby and the business was sold off. The use of stone blocks as rail supports was found to be flawed and the entire stock was replaced by wooden sleepers within 10 years. *Grenville Smith is a member of the DerwentWISE quarry heritage group and has been studying the history of quarries around Whatstandwell for the last two years.*

CANAL REGENERATION IN BULLBRIDGE (CRIB) UPDATE

To refresh the readers' memory, CRIB was set up to attempt to convince the future owner/developer of the Stevensons Site at Bullbridge of the benefits of reinstating the Cromford Canal through the site at the same time as they develop the site. This would ensure the future of the canal as it is believed that reinstatement would be impossible after development.

Working with an architect, engineer and planning expert we are assembling a case for reinstatement that we hope will influence both developers and local planners. Developers, however, are likely to be wary of putting forward plans that could prove unpopular with local residents (such as denser housing to fund the reinstatement). We believe that if we can demonstrate that residents support our vision for the site, they are likely to view it more favourably.

Our understanding is that we need to capture the views of at least 20% of the target group, that is of the 350+ households in the area, for a consultation to be considered viable. We have decided to hold a Consultation Evening at Sawmills Village Hall when local residents can come along to view our suggested design and talk to the architect, engineer and planning expert and members of the CRIB group. Prior to this evening we have posted to all those households a CRIB Sheet(!) setting out the background of the campaign and how reinstatement can benefit the locality and an attached questionnaire to capture their views. This they can fill in and post at given local addresses, bring it along to the Consultation Evening or fill in electronically via our website. So, we now have our fingers crossed that we can inspire local people to come on board.

If any FCC members would like to come along to see our vision for the site they will be made most welcome.

Thursday 1st December 2016 between 6.00 and 8.00 at Sawmills Village Hall DE56 2JQ.
Gill Hirst CRIB.

www.cribderbyshire.org

PS. The Planning Application that lapsed in April 2016 has been resubmitted for approval.



COTTON ON THE CUT

by Hugh Potter

The fascinating article by Mike Kelley (Portal 57), about transport of cotton in the industrial revolution, had me searching through the Cromford Canal archives. It has always been a mystery as to why so little cotton appeared to be carried on the canal, despite Richard Arkwright's prominent part in its promotion. He chaired the committee for several years, but his interest may have been more in it passing through his land than in carrying cotton on it. After all, cotton was a light cargo, far better suited to road transport than, say, coal, and if imported via Liverpool, had to come a long way round by canal to Cromford.

Searching through the permit books that record the passage of goods onto and off the canal at Langley Mill, a search for 'cotton' as a cargo reveals a limited amount. Out of over 42,000 cargoes now transcribed, there are only 53 of cotton. Of these 8 were going to Buckland Hollow (probably for onward shipment by road to Belper – see below), 12 to Pinxton, and 30 to Cromford, which we must assume were for Arkwright. A typical load for these boats was around 7 tons of, presumably, bales of raw cotton. Most came from Derby or Shardlow, suggesting it had come along the Trent & Mersey Canal (but from which port – London, Liverpool or Bristol?); there are a couple from Preston Brook suggesting this was imported through Liverpool.

There are no cotton goods recorded as exported by the canal, but because of the way tolls were recorded, no specific cargoes from Cromford are listed at all (such cargoes were gauged instead at Sawmills and we sadly have no records from that office). However, there is one document in the Derbyshire Record Office at Matlock (D3772/E48/5) that throws an interesting light on the carriage of cotton to the Derwent Valley Mills in general. It relates to the loss of cotton in a fire in the Union Company's warehouse in Manchester, whilst in transit between Liverpool and Belper via Buckland Hollow. The carrying business was being run by Alexander & David Wheatcroft trading as German Wheatcroft & Sons.

They apparently carried large quantities of raw cotton from Liverpool for Strutts of Belper. It was carried by the Union Carriers Company from Liverpool to Manchester by canal (presumably the Leeds & Liverpool) then unloaded and placed in a warehouse belonging to that Company. It was then reloaded onto a narrow boat, and brought "by canal and railway to Buckland Hollow, or Cromford: at both of which places Messrs Wheatcroft have establishments from which it is forwarded by wagon to Belper". My presumption from this is that the cotton to Buckland Hollow was carried by canal and that to 'Cromford' on the Cromford & High Peak Railway (what is now called High Peak Junction was formerly known as Cromford Wharf) - but it is ambiguous.

In December 1841 the Union warehouse caught fire and a great portion of Strutt's cotton was destroyed. The report continues: "Wheatcrofts having other goods to carry, and because Messrs Wheatcroft had been directed by Strutts not to forward to Belper more than a few wagon loads per day and there being large quantities of cotton then in Messrs Wheatcroft's warehouses at Cromford, Railway, Buckland Hollow, and other places, it was a matter of convenience for them to allow a part to remain in Manchester, and be brought as occasions presented."

In a letter to Strutt, Wheatcroft states: "we moved the cotton as quickly nearly as received. It was convenient for us to do so being full of flour to Manchester and boats returning empty back, our loading to Manchester being much greater in weight than from." This is supported by the large tonnage of flour recorded as travelling from Nottingham, via



the canal and the Cromford & High Peak Railway, to Manchester.

In a letter to Wheatcroft on 2nd April 1842 Strutt states: "the reason we have had our cotton by way of Derby is that we are full of cotton here but have room at Derby", explaining the Derby origin of some of the cargo.

So, whilst it is clear that Strutt obtained some of his cotton by canal, there is still little positive evidence of Arkwright doing the same, apart from those few cargoes of cotton recorded as going to Cromford. Furthermore these all took place between 1814 and 1830 - before the completion of the CHPR, hinting that once that railway was opened any cotton that had come by canal was transferred to the railway.

Below is an extract from the table which has been compiled from the collection of toll tickets in the FCC archives. It shows details of boats carrying cotton on the Cromford Canal from 1814 to 1823 as described above.

<u>Permit No</u>	<u>Boat No</u>	<u>Origin of Cargo</u>	<u>Destination of Cargo</u>	<u>Cargo</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Date of Passage</u>	<u>Steerer</u>	<u>Owner</u>
2574	31	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		27.10.1814	Sam Wragg	N & G Wheatcroft
2574	31	Derby	Cromford	Cotton	9.50	27.10.1814	Sam'l Wragg	N&G Wheatcroft
3255	853	Leicester	Cromford	Cotton	8	6.1.1816	Sam'l Kenney	N & G Wheatcroft
3317	24	Derby	Cromford	Cotton	3	11.1.1818	Tho's Thacker	N & G Wheatcroft
3360	824	Derby	Leicester	Cotton	1	13.1.1818	John Hoon	N & G Wheatcroft
3577	848;	Nott'm	Cromford	Cotton	17	30.1.1818	Wm Hardy	John Eaton
3656	883	Leicester	Cromford	Cotton	8.5	21.2.1818	Sam'l Kenney	N & G Wheatcroft
3679	6	Preston b/k	Cromford	Cotton	8	22.2.1818	John Buxton	Loresby Flack
3687	51	Preston b/k	Cromford	Cotton	7.75	22.2.1818	W'm Dablie	W'm Acton
3768	863	Glinson	Cromford	Cotton	4.25	27.2.1818	Sam'l Kenney	N & G Wheatcroft
3809	848	Nott'm	Cromford	Cotton	5.75	1.3.1818	W'm Hardy	John Eaton
180	848	Nottingham	Cromford	Cotton Sn?	8.5	30.5.1818	Hardy, Wm	Eaton, John
1662	884	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		27.4.1820	Benm. Goodman	N & G Wheatcroft
1715	486	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		1.5.1820	Ralph Slack	N & G Wheatcroft
1718	828	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		1.5.1820	Jno. Johnson	N & G Wheatcroft
1820	929	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		5.5.1820	Jno. Key	N & G Wheatcroft
1852	45	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		8.5.1820	Wm Wiston	N & G Wheatcroft
1863	830	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		6.5.1820	Jos. Mather	N & G Wheatcroft
1887	1022	Derby	Pinxton - Empty	Cotton		10.5.1820	Jos. Key	N & G Wheatcroft
1922	976	Derby	Pinxton	Cotton		11.5.1820	Thos. Strutt	N & G Wheatcroft
1941	929	Derby	Pinxton	Cotton		12.5.1820	Jno. Key	N & G Wheatcroft
2109	824	Derby	Pinxton	Cotton		22.5.1820	Sn Vallance	N & G Wheatcroft
2110	976	Derby	Pinxton	Cotton		22.5.1820	Thos. Strutt	N & G Wheatcroft
2127	890	Derby	Cromford	Cotton		23.5.1820	Thos Redfern	N & G Wheatcroft
2127	890	Derby	Pinxton	Cotton		23.5.1820	Thos Redfern	N & G Wheatcroft
1152	918	Shardlow	Cromford	Cotton	3.75	11.4.1823	Tho's Key	Wheatcrofts
1152	918	Shardlow	B. Hollow	Cotton	0.50	11.4.1823	Tho's Key	Wheatcrofts
1152	918	Shardlow	Pinxton	Cotton	3.75	11.4.1823	Tho's Key	Wheatcrofts
1620	984	Derby	Cromford	Cotton	1.75	7.5.1823	Ralf Slack	Wheatcrofts
1620	984	Derby	Pinxton	Cotton	3.25	7.5.1823	Ralf Slack	Wheatcrofts
1795	825	Derby	Cromford	Cotton	5.25	19.5.1823	Ja's Key	Wheatcrofts
3119	45	Shardlow	Cromford	Cotton		15.8.1823	Sam'l Wragg	Wheatcrofts
3119	45	Shardlow	Cromford	Cotton	7	15.8.1823	Sam's Wragg	Wheatcrofts
4272	890	Derby	Cromford	Cotton	7.25	20.10.1823	Geo. Vallance	Wheatcrofts



A ROYAL PASSAGE THROUGH IRONVILLE

by Liz Holgate



Liz Holgate

Above: Princess Elizabeth on a trial run out from the Midland Railway at Butterley prior to a charter on August Bank Holiday, approaching the old Codnor Park Station.

Below: Returning over the Cromford Canal above Lock 5 at Ironville. The locomotive looks very smart in the livery of the LMS railway, one time owners of the Cromford Canal.



Liz Holgate



STELLA THE DINOSAUR

by Simon Waller

One of my heroes growing up was Waterhouse Hawkins, who built an early Jurassic Park at the Crystal Palace in London in 1854. His life size statues inspired me to build dinosaurs. Plasticine was OK but didn't last very long, so I went over to something more permanent - concrete. I found the ideal location for a lifesized model one afternoon travelling from work and calling at Poples Plant Nursery at Cromford. I had a walk around the woodland paths and there was the perfect place - huge rocks next to a pool, surrounded by rhododendrons. I asked the owners if they wanted a dinosaur, (*as you do? -Ed.*) and their deal was - I could use any materials from the site and unlimited sand, ballast and cement courtesy of the road repairers who had been allowed to use the top car park for storage and vehicles. So for the next six weeks I built Stella the stegosaurus, scaling up a 3" plastic natural history museum model, using metal tubing from a demolished poly tunnel as reinforcing for spine, legs, neck and tail, surplus metal-framed deck chairs wrapped with chicken wire for her back plates and pieces of wine bottle for eyes. Many barrows of concrete were poured into a trench to fix the surrounding boulders in place and support the leg reinforcement, then many more barrows of sand and cement were supported around the framework with hardboard shuttering, then more barrows were worked into the chicken wire and shaped. The finished skin texture was by stabbing it with my fingertips - would have been a good advertisement for Marigold gloves if I'd thought about it earlier in the process. My friend Doug Sanders, who I met there at the time, was putting the finishing touches to the wharf, steps and pools by the canal, and the whole area was well maintained. The garden centre then changed hands, Stella was repainted a couple of times, then the place closed and turned into a jungle. Recently I was contacted by a lady named Sarah to say she was about to rescue Stella from the undergrowth to make her again visible from the canal, and more recently the Friends had put a work party ashore and cleared more of Doug's wharf. It would be good to run some repairs on Stella to combat damage, mostly caused by kids climbing up the plates on her back over the years. I didn't realize at the time that I had built the perfect climbing frame. Now Stella looks back down the slope towards visitors travelling past on *Birdswood*.



Stella in her canalside grotto, as seen by towpath walkers or passengers on *Birdswood*.



2017 Horse Days and Leawood Pumphouse

April 16th, 17th & 30th
 May 1st
 June 3rd & 4th
 July 2nd
 August 5th, 6th, 27th & 28th
 September 16th & 17th
 October 7th, 8th, 28th & 29th



*Departure 11.00 or 14.00 from Cromford Wharf
 (single or return)*

*12.15pm or 15.15 High Peak Junction
 (single only)*



Prices held from 2015
Booking Advisable
07552 055 455
sales@birdswood.org
www.birdswood.org



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Organism is registered under the
 Rural Development Programme for England,
 funded by the UK Government and the
 European Union. For more information, please contact the
 Local Development Entity for your region.





WEBSITE UPDATES

by Chris Wilding

www.birdswood.org

It has been a year now since we started putting together the *Birdswood* website. It was a real challenge to deliver an ecommerce platform to meet the needs of *Birdswood's* complicated booking requirements but necessary to move forward with what has become the very successful public face of the FCC.

In its first season the website has worked well, we had a few minor issues such as family tickets only reserving 1 seat instead of 4 but with close monitoring until it was fixed we didn't over book any trips.

We have had 400 customers book trips via the website with purchases ranging from 1 to 30 seats per order. Public trip ticket sales via the website totalled £10,000 which accounts for a quarter of the public trip tickets sales for *Birdswood* this season.

Towards the middle of the season *Birdswood* crew volunteers were finding it difficult to keep on top of the increased volume of trips and charters on the crew rota, mainly due to information overload, so we introduced a new electronic rota system via the *Birdswood* website. This has enabled crew to view only their rota with an option to show all if they want to see who they are crewing with. It also means the Operations Manager can update the rota during the month and this is immediately available for the crew to see. The added benefit to this is that the volunteer hours are automatically calculated therefore saving time in counting the total time given by the volunteers. This has been beneficial to show the amount of work which is put into individual projects and the business. Funding organisations use this information when allocating grant money.

I would like to also thank the *Birdswood* Operations Manager, Vix Wilding, who has had to adapt to a new business model which has significantly changed the way she works.

www.cromfordcanal.org

The FCC's website cromfordcanal.org has been a longstanding part of the FCC's public presence. The website was originally developed and maintained by George Rogers and more recently maintained by Hugh Potter. It has been recognised in recent years that the technology used to implement the website is outdated and no longer meets the requirements of the FCC and their goals going forward.

Trustee David Martin, with the support of the committee took on the task of putting a team together to review the website and produce a proposal for a new website that will be a primary means of communication with multiple audiences. It will project the professionalism and capabilities of the FCC and be a virtual hub for the communities, members, volunteers and potential funding organisations in the regeneration of the canal and its surrounding areas. The team - David Martin, Hugh Potter, George Rogers and myself have now been working on this for several months and we have identified the information, services and audiences we need to deliver to. We are now finalising the proposal to be sent out to potential suppliers and aim to deliver the project in the second quarter of 2017.

For those of you who are looking for the results of the Poetry Competition, I am sorry to have to say that we have unfortunately received only three entries, meaning that the proposed booklet will not now go ahead. However, all entrants will receive a small prize and the poems will be displayed on posters in *Birdswood*. I must thank Adrian Minshull whose idea this was, supported by Vix Wilding. Ed.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mike

I am writing regarding the article about transporting cotton in Portal 57. I discussed this matter at the last meeting at Ironville and it was during this conversation it was suggested that I write a letter to *Portal*.

What interested me was the use of the word freight regarding transport by water. This is the first time I have seen this word used in England prior to 1914. My main interest is railways and as a younger man I notice with curiosity that the Victorian & Edwardian railway companies had goods & coal engines whereas BR & the LMS etc had freight engines. Later I learned that freight was an American word which entered our English language and came to be used by our railway companies after 1917 when the Americans joined in WW1.

The earlier use of the word freight interested me and prompted me to ask. However, since I last spoke to you, I have looked in a Collins dictionary which gives the meaning: - Goods meaning transport by land and freight as Hire of Ship; cargo in English and freight means transport by rail in American. To a large extent the Collins dictionary answers my question but I write out of interest. Does anyone have anything to add to my comments?

I will end by saying thank you for sending an interesting *Portal* on a regular basis.
Ian G. Handley (FCC Member)

Dear Mike

Some months ago I wrote a letter to urge the committee in charge of the restoration of the Cromford Mill to erect a replacement mill wheel in the existing wheel pit in the yard arranged to drive a dynamo to produce electricity for sale to the grid. Thus using the apparently 50 hp or so of water flowing uselessly 24/7 hours to make thousands of pounds annually to restore the place. The wheel would be as original with the "temporary" production of money for the site. It would aid the efforts of fund raisers in the shops and cafe. When looking round the site and talking to the guide about the waste of a source of revenue, I immediately felt the disappointment he had at lack of progress in this direction.

So it turned out for me too. They thought a turbine more appropriate, but still did not take advantage of such an arrangement to raise funds. I want to express my frustration that the restoration seems to have stopped or diverged from its logical path of showing the World Heritage Site at a point in time say in its heyday. As I recall, the exhibiting of a few examples of looms as used in the mill was not a priority either.

If you could publish my letter it would be nice to be told that I had got it wrong.

David Bartrop

Dear Mike

Re the September talk by David Brown of CRT on reservoirs and Dave Ratner's article Portal 58 page 31. We have thought of two possible reservoirs which have a canal running past them possibly on the head bank. One is on the Worcester/Birmingham, Lower Bittell which we have cruised past numerous times. The other is not on an open canal or one managed by the Canal & River Trust: Cold Hiendley on the Barnsley Canal.

Also we have an example of a canal running through a reservoir adjacent to the head bank. Mytchett Lake on the Basingstoke Canal is now designated as a reservoir although we suspect it exists only because it was cheaper not to build a second canal bank rather than intentionally create a reservoir.

Dave & Izzie Turner



ON THE BOATS

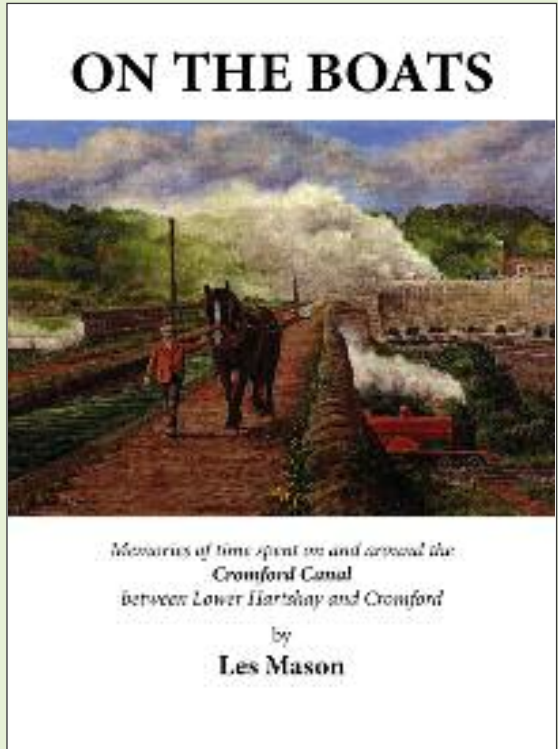
FCC is delighted to have been given permission to publish the recollections of Les Mason about his journeys on the horse-drawn narrow boats carrying coal from Hartshay to Cromford in the early 1930s, the last years of their operation. The boats operated a regular twice-weekly service, with two loaded boats being pulled by a single horse. Most boats went to Cromford Wharf but some went down the Nightingale, or Lea, arm to unload at the wharf at the end.

Les also recalls the locomotives that shunted the wagons at Hartshay Colliery and much about the local village when pubs, collieries and canal were all still working.

The story is fully illustrated with maps and images of the boats and of the canal as it was over 80 years ago.

Published in time to help fill

the Christmas stocking, the book costs just £5 (£6 inc p&p) from FCC Sales, Weighbridge Office, Gothic Warehouse, Mill Road, Cromford DE4 3RQ. You can also order it online through the associated Birdswood shop website at www.birdswood.org/shop.



FORTHCOMING MEMBERS' SOCIAL MEETINGS

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

The following are scheduled for the first part of 2017.

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

- **January 16th** - TIMES PAST ALONG THE CROMFORD CANAL CORRIDOR
- Brian Key
- **February 20th** - BULLBRIDGE TALK - Geoff Simms
- **March 20th** - STANTON AT WAR - Stephen Flinders
- **April 24th** - **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**
including an engineering update by George Rogers (free admission)
- **May 15th** - THE CHESTERFIELD CANAL AND *DAWN ROSE* - John Lower
- **June 19th** - MR BRUNSTONS ENGINE AND THE FRITCHLEY TRAM ROAD
- Dieter Hopkins
- **September 18th** - PITS IN THE ASHFIELD AND EREWASH AREA
- David Amos



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

from Yvonne Shattower



I sometimes struggle with items to put in the 'Membership Matters', but on this occasion I have no problem, although I am afraid it is not good news for you, the Members.

It is with much regret that your Committee has found it necessary to increase the Membership subscriptions for the Friends of the Cromford Canal. This is due to the rising cost of many items, including postage of the *Portal*, and the day to day costs of running a restoration group like the FCC. We have put off this decision for as long as possible, but regrettably we must now make this increase.

The new Membership rates will be:

Single - Annual - £9.00 Life Membership - £125
Couple - Annual - £14.00 Life Membership - £180

We realise this will be a disappointment for many of you, but our Membership rates are still one of the lowest amongst Canal Restoration groups, especially ones like ourselves who are actively working on their canal. The increase, which is the first for several years, will take effect from 1st January 2017.

An important change that will come with the new subscription is that we will be transferring your Standing Order payments from HSBC to the CAF Bank, where we now have our main account. CAF Bank is especially designed for Charities, and gives us the chance of a better rate of interest than the main banks. This means that the HSBC account now deals only with Standing Order receipts, and will be closed by the end of 2017. It is therefore, very important that those of you who pay by Standing Order complete the enclosed form and return it to me so that we can arrange for your subscription to be transferred to our new account. It is important that you complete the form and return it to us. We cannot make changes to your subscription without it. If you normally pay your renewal by cheque, these arrangements will not apply to you.

There are still a considerable number of Members whose Standing Orders are for less than the current correct rates, despite requests and reminders to update them. This is resulting in an underpayment of some £60 per annum into our funds. We have allowed this situation to continue, but once our HSBC account is closed, any monies paid into it will not reach us, and in that case we will, regrettably be forced to cancel your Membership, so you can see that it is very important that you complete and forward the new form to me as soon as possible.

Having given you the bad news, I hope we will still retain you all as Members. Your Membership is important to us, and we value you all for your support, whether you are an 'arm chair' member many miles away, or a Work Party volunteer beavering away at Cromford clearing the channel for *Birdswood*. Without you we will not have a Friends of the Cromford Canal to restore this lovely waterway.

I would like to end this report by wishing you all a very happy Christmas, and looking forward to bigger and better things for the Friends in 2017.



**Our membership continues to grow and
we give a warm welcome to the following new members
who have joined us since the last edition of *The Portal***

Mr R C Goodliffe LOUGHBOROUGH	Mrs J Preston, MATLOCK
Mr A C Owen, NOTTINGHAM	Mr K M Bailey, MATLOCK
Mr L Allkins, BELPER	Mr & Mrs P Stevens, DERBY
Mr & Mrs D Cundy, MATLOCK	Mr R Elton, BARNESLEY
Mr B Schofield, BELPER	Mr G M Turner, MATLOCK
Mr D Moore, BELPER	Mr & Mrs S J Pollard, RIPLEY
Mr & Mrs H Baker, HEANOR	Mr & Mrs R Hallsworth, NOTTINGHAM
Mr & Mrs I Kirby, NOTTINGHAM	Anita Pembleton, ASHBOURNE
Mrs L Coleman, ALFRETON	Miss J Jenkins, HEANOR
Mr & Mrs G Partridge, ALFRETON	Mr D Newberry, ILKESTON

TRANSCRIBERS REQUIRED - AN APPEAL FROM OUR ARCHIVIST

A large number of Cromford Canal 'Permit Books' still survive in various archives up and down the country. These record the passage of boats through Langley Mill in the 19th century, giving details of steerers' and owners' names, types of cargo, where loaded, where destined etc. Each book is a unique record of the boats passing onto and off our canal and covers around one month. Once transcribed and put onto a database, these offer an invaluable research tool for both family and industrial historians, and bring the FCC to the notice of many who would not otherwise have heard of us.

Many of the books are held at the Derbyshire Records Office at Matlock and our indefatigable transcriber June Crump is gradually working her way through these - but there are many still to do. More recently I was able to photograph the collection held in the Waterway Archives at Ellesmere Port.

I am therefore looking for more volunteers to transcribe the information in these books onto some (any!) kind of computer file - it can be a simple Word document, an Excel spreadsheet or a database, whichever you are most happy with. From that I can import the data into my database and add to the 42,000+ records already recorded. The books in the DRO need the transcriber to visit and transcribe the information to laptop or tablet in the reading room. However, those that I have photographed can be done in the comfort of your home as and when you have a few spare minutes.

If you would like to help in this important project, please contact Hugh Potter at
hugh.potter@cromfordcanal.org or call 01773 852009

**THE PENTRICH REVOLUTION BICENTENARY 1817 - 2017
HARTSHAY VILLAGE SCHOOL OPEN WEEKEND**

December 10th/11th 2016 10am - 4pm Pentrich Rising Awareness Exhibition
Archives from Hartshay Historical and Cromford Canal
www.pentrichrevolution.org.uk

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