

THE PORTAL

Issue 62 - Autumn 2017

Price £1.00 - Free to Members



Friends of the Cromford Canal

Registered Charity No. 1164608

CONTENTS

Editorial	4
Chairman's Notes	5
Membership Matters	6
IWA National Raffle	7
Birdswood & Cromford Shop	8
Strategic Restoration Committee	10
Work Party Progress	12
Coir Roll Bank Repairs	13
Pipe Bridge Replacement	16
The Construction of Sims Bridge	18
Jacksdale Bridge	20
Langley Mill Pumping Station	21
News from the North	24
All Aboard for Art Afloat	26
A Gothic Tale	28
Walking for Wildlife	30
Remembering the Boats	31
Autumn Events	32
Letters to the Editor	34
Autumn Wordsearch	35

Front Cover

Using the canal as it was intended: *Birdswood* takes a break from carrying passengers to carry coir rolls from their road delivery site at Cromford Wharf to the installation site half way to High Peak Junction. *Photo: John Guyler*

Back Cover

Duchess, loaded with 2 tons of coal, is poled away from the Wharf Shed; arrives at Leewood Pump; is ready to unload; is unloaded bag by bag; and finally the coal is tipped down the chute into the bunker (see page 4). *Photos: 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

by Hugh Potter

Still Carrying



First of all, CJ (our design wizard) and I would like to thank you for all your kind comments about the new look *Portal*. And our thanks once again go out to all the contributors who sent their copy in on time to make what we hope will be another up-to-date, fact-filled and informative magazine.

Two events recently caused me to consider how remarkable it is that the canal is still fulfilling the function for which it was built over 220 years ago. The problem of how to get the coir rolls onto site (page 13) was solved by their carriage on a traditional narrowboat, albeit on the roof rather than in the hold. But there is another regular cargo carried on the canal, and one for which the canal was specifically built – coal (see back cover).

Consider Leawood Pump. It was built alongside the canal when coal was delivered directly from the collieries by boat. Thus it did not require any road access; nor does it have any today. So the problem now is how to get 2 tons of coal (the amount required for each weekend's steaming) to it every month. The answer (of course!) is by boat.

The apparently decrepit *Duchess* that you will have seen tied up alongside the Wharf Shed is loaded with bags of coal delivered via the road access at High Peak Junction. The boat is then poled across the canal to the pump house where it is unloaded and the coal tipped down a 'chute' into the store. The chute is in reality a clever re-use of an extractor fan hood combined with some curved corrugated iron – just the sort of concept that would have

been used in the past!

Incidentally if you fancy helping out, then the Leawood Pump volunteer work party meets every Monday evening – and if anyone fancies improving the looks of *Duchess*, they would be welcomed with open arms!



Leawood Pump House and the Duchess.

Photo: Editor

See you around?

As mentioned elsewhere, don't miss the chance to catch up with what is happening on waterways all around the country when the IWA Festival of Water comes onto 'our patch' at Ilkeston on August Bank Holiday. And do say hello on the FCC stall whilst you're there.

Then, on 28th–29th October, we hold the annual Discovery Days event at Cromford Wharf, where you can see a whole range of canal-based activities. See you there!

Diggum

Quickly changing hats, some FCC members may recall that the erstwhile Cromford Canal Society published a magazine called *Diggum*. This contained much interesting information, but FCC Archives has only a few copies and would very much like to acquire a full set. Does anyone by any chance have any of these in their attic, or know of anyone else who might? If so please contact the Archivist (or the Editor!).

Copy Date for the next issue is 31st October

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM

FCC's Chairman keeps you up to date



The postponed Annual General Meeting was well attended and the number of postal votes exceeded the number of

members present. After the notice of the postponement was sent out we had to change the venue, fortunately not very far, and our thanks to the churchwardens and parish council for allowing us to use Christ Church, Ironville, for the AGM. The result of the election of Trustees was as follows: Jude Berry and David Ratner were re-elected and George Rogers and Chris Wilding were the other successful nominees; my thanks to the two unsuccessful candidates Sean Dodds and Pauline McAllen for putting themselves forward.

The main item of discussion at the AGM was the accounts, following an introduction by Bob Bullock on the scope of the accounts and the importance of finance in the future progress of the Friends. *Birdswood* made profit for the year of about £20,000, but as most of this was spent on works on the Cromford Canal the actual profit was about £7,000. The auditor had some concerns on the authentication of all cash receipts and the trustees are revising the accounting and cash handling methods. *Birdswood* has come a long way since we first started in 2013 as a volunteer force and following problems reported with some other larger charities we need to improve our audit trails.

The Inland Waterways Association's National Water Festival is at Gallows Inn

Playing Fields on August bank holiday weekend; the Friends will have a stand there and I hope that we shall see plenty of old and new members. Then on the 30th September the IWA is holding its national Annual General Meeting at Aldecar High School, Langley Mill; this will be followed by a site visit to look at the Cromford extension at Langley Mill or a trip on *Birdswood* at Cromford.

John Boucher is working on spending the IWA grant from the Tony Harrison Legacy [on the water control sluice at Cromford – Ed] but this will not be until later in the year when *Birdswood* is not cruising.

In the local government elections in May the Conservatives once again became the larger group. I have written to Barry Lewis, the new Leader of the Council, expressing our support of the Cromford Canal Partnership and our financial and voluntary support of the maintenance of the Cromford Canal. We have not yet heard officially who will be the new chairman of the Partnership.

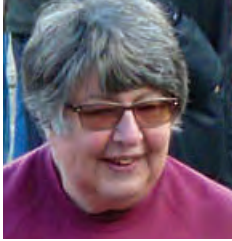
My thanks to John Barker's team of volunteers who are currently laying 150 metres of coir roll on the Cromford section to repair damage to the towing path edge (see page 13).

I was very pleased to hear the Chesterfield Canal Trust had been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in the Birthday Honours List; this is equivalent to the personal award of the MBE. Having started my cruising on the Chesterfield Canal over fifty years ago and keeping more than a passing interest during my time as IWA Region Chairman I am sure that they are to be congratulated on this achievement.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Yvonne Shattower

An Update on People and Events



As I sit here writing this report, the rain is pouring down and I wonder if we should be running *Noah's Ark* at Cromford rather than *Birdswood!*

The one good thing about the rain is that it will keep the water levels up on the canal system, but there is enough of a good thing.

We will be hoping for fine weather at the end of August when the Inland Waterways Association will be holding their festival at Gallows Inn on the Erewash Canal at Ilkeston. This used to be a big annual event held at different locations on the canal system each year, but there has not been a festival for a couple of years, so it is good to see it returning. It will be held over the Bank Holiday weekend, 26th–28th August, and admission is free. The Friends will have a stand there, so we hope you will call in to see us. There will be lots to do and see, and I am sure it will be well worth a visit.

One thing that we hope to do at Ilkeston is increase our membership numbers, which have been rather slow of late. Do you have a friend or family member who would like to join us? I think you will find there will be a special offer at Ilkeston, so we are hoping to swell our numbers. It is vital to have a strong membership when it comes to applying

for funding, as well as spreading the word about the Cromford Canal and getting more volunteers to do the many jobs that arise. And speaking of jobs – we are still looking for a team to run the sales stand for us. Wendy Scarle has attended a few local events, but she does not have the necessary transport to go 'further afield' and we are losing out on publicity as well as financially.

Enclosed with this magazine you will find a book of tickets for the IWA raffle. This year the profits will go to the IWA rather than the individual groups, and although this may not benefit us directly as it has done in the past, the IWA are very supportive of our restoration efforts and I would encourage you to buy the tickets if you are able.

Many of you will know Val Roberts, a founder member and one time sales officer. Val has been very poorly lately and spent a considerable time in hospital. It is good to see her up and about again, and we wish her a full recovery. Get well soon, Val!

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 P Roberts, Belper

Mrs P Taaffe, Scunthorpe

Mrs I Ratcliffe, Matlock

Mr P Mellor & Mrs S Warne, Alfreton

IWA NATIONAL RAFFLE 2017

by Bob Bullock

FCC's Treasurer asks you to support the IWA Raffle



You will find enclosed with this issue of *The Portal* a book of five tickets for the Inland Waterways Association's

Restoration Raffle 2017.

This is the fourth year the raffle has been run and in the previous three years, thanks to your support, the Friends of the Cromford Canal have received more than any other canal restoration organisation.

For this year only instead of the funds being distributed to participating organisations, all funds raised will be for one very important cause – IWA's Restoration Hub.

The Hub is a central point for restoration enquiries and requests. The Hub provides access to the collective knowledge and expertise of IWA volunteers and staff as well as to the experience of the National Restoration Group (a joint IWA/CRT task group).

The Hub supports all restoration groups and projects in whatever areas they most need it – so every raffle ticket sold will benefit restoration.

The IWA Restoration Hub will be very useful to the FCC as we begin restoration work at Langley Mill and other sites on the Cromford Canal.

After years of planning and preparation we are now entering a new phase of restoration. The FCC has

received a lot of support from the IWA, most recently the grant of £15,000 from the Tony Harrison legacy towards the installation of a water control sluice at Cromford Mills to control water levels on the canal at Cromford and help keep *Birdswood* operating.

Further details about the IWA Restoration Hub can be found on the IWA website. I hope you will support the raffle by buying or selling the tickets enclosed. More tickets can be obtained from me, Yvonne Shattower (contact details on page 2) or from the FCC shop at Cromford. Alternatively you can buy tickets online from the IWA shop.

Ticket stubs and cheques should be sent by post to the IWA – details are on the back of the ticket stubs. Alternatively you can hand the ticket stubs and cash/cheques to any member of the FCC Committee or at the shop at Cromford and I will ensure they reach the IWA.

Thanks for your continued support in whatever capacity; without it we would not be able to achieve anything.



BIRDWOOD & CROMFORD SHOP

by Vix Wilding

An update from the boat operations and shop manager



The June 'Once Upon a Time' event was about literacy. Attending the event was Usborne books to showcase their children's books and early years activity packs. These proved to be very popular and some children stayed to read their books in a quiet corner which we had prepared with soft mats and beanbags. Alongside this was a demonstration from Tiny Talk who are an early years sign language provider who run classes across Derbyshire.

We also had a stall of book-folded crafts and a workshop on how to make book-folded hedgehogs; this was recently trialled as an Easter project and will become the annual theme in the spring holidays.

The whole weekend was a great success and money was raised for the community engagement project. This is being accumulated to pay for the free forest school activities that are provided for families throughout August.

The Community Engagement Scheme was set up in 2016 when we initially had an intern from Derby College to assist with the set up and sourcing partnerships links. Her 100 hours were of great value and we now have an extended reach with partner organisations who support people across

Derbyshire and surrounding areas. Last year, as previously mentioned, we held several Roll and Stroll events for people to come together with varying mobility issues. We also provided free charters to a disabled school, residents of a group shelter who were homeless at the time and a children's holiday club. This year we have secured another Derby intern and she will be focused on raising corporate funds for us to carry on the efforts of those involved.

The benefit of this scheme is that the FCC are seen to be giving back to the community who support them. This in turn opens up the avenues for larger grant bids in the future.

The canal wharf shop has seen an increase of products both for gifts and souvenirs for all ages. A particular favourite has been the Russian dolls made by the families who still live in Belarus. They are descendants of the



people affected by the Chernobyl disaster who attend respite care in the UK every year to boost their immune systems. The Chernobyl Children's Life Line charity in Bonsall has taken children into their homes for the last several years and fundraise all year round to help pay for the trips. We have sold some dolls but the most popular item has been the novelty magnets. Other items in the shop have been well received and the children's pinwheels, friendship bracelets and novelty pencil sharpeners have been a real hit. We have been lucky enough to be able to afford new signage for outside of the shop and this has been wonderfully designed incorporating the canal art roses into the border. I think you will agree that this looks extremely professional and has increased the visibility of the shopfront to the public.

As always, I'm still looking for new staff to join the team and help with the day-to-day running of *Birdswood*. I'm currently looking for people willing to come along and help with the tea and coffee preparations on the trips. This can be 11-1pm or 2-4pm. The shop is a friendly environment where tickets are also sold for the boat trips. This requires a little concentration but then you can sit back and relax. Please ask around for me and if you or a friend could help once a month I'd love to hear from you.

Over the next couple of months there will be several workshops ranging from



The Canal Shop's smart new signage.

Rag Rug techniques to iPad art. These will all be delivered by well-known local artists and seats will be limited. This new adventure has been developed by two crew members who are very passionate about art (see page 26). Their efforts have been paying off and there will be a full schedule arranged for 2018.

If you have any ideas for a workshop or would be interested in delivering one, please get in touch on my usual number: 07552 055 455 or victoria@birdswood.org.

As always Halloween and Christmas will be popular events so watch out for these adverts as seats book up really fast.

Volunteers needed for Narrowboat Birdswood and The Canal Shop

BIRDSWOOD

Can you spare at least one day per month?

STRATEGIC RESTORATION COMMITTEE

by George Rogers

Growing the structure – and some jobs to volunteer for



At the last SRC meeting, I set out how I see the structure of the SRC developing as it grows. This was done partially for the

benefit of a new bridge engineer who has joined us, and partially for the rest of the committee so that they can understand (and comment) on my plans. It therefore only feels right that I should also explain it to you, the FCC member.

To understand the structure, it is worth reminding ourselves of the focus of the SRC; it is there primarily to plan for restoration. Its focus is not so much on delivery of projects as getting them to the point where they can be delivered. Once they are ready to be delivered, I expect to hand them over to a delivery body (eg a contractor, the FCC work party or the Waterway Recovery Group) and then to progress with planning other projects.

I believe this distinction is fundamental to the work we are doing, because it focuses our minds from the beginning to ensure that we do not stop planning for the next step. If the same group plans the project and then delivers it, the likelihood is that when the project is complete, the next one isn't ready to go. If the FCC wants to develop a strong volunteer work party and keep motivation and skills within that group, it will need to maintain a consistent work flow – so we can't stop for a year after each project whilst the next one is prepared.

So that brings me back to the

current SRC structure. At the moment, it is one group, currently consisting of ten members, one corresponding member and the invaluable services of Judy Berry, who acts as our minuting secretary (and always comes armed with tea and biscuits). With the work we are currently undertaking planning for the Langley Mill extension, a number of those members are very busy, whilst a number are not so. This is through no fault of their own; much of the time there is a sequence to these things and their skills will be needed later down the line.

However, the impact this has is that the project can only move as fast as those people can do their work. It also means that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to start planning other projects without impacting on the planning of the current projects. As such, I am looking to grow the volunteer base of the SRC significantly, and then divide it into a number of project groups. So many of the current members would stay focussed on Langley Mill, whilst a combination of new members and existing ones will start to develop the next projects. Which projects a volunteer is involved with will depend on their specific skills, interests and availability; some people will be focussed entirely on one project whilst others will have a lower involvement in several projects.

I see this approach having two useful effects. Currently, the SRC is meeting once a month, but as the new project groups are formed, my intention is to focus meetings on one project a month, so the number of members who attend meetings is kept manageable and the demand on

any one member is reduced. Secondly, it is inevitable that as some of the projects start to be delivered, a number of the planning team may wish to move from the SRC to the delivery body and not to progress on to planning the next project. If this happens, a project group structure should ensure that this does not prevent the next projects being available.

Strategic Restoration Committee - Volunteering

Growing the structure of the SRC will obviously require more volunteers. In the past, I've typically issued a wide general plea for new volunteers to come forward. However, I recognise that the idea of volunteering is, for many, actually quite scary – and a big part of that is not really knowing what commitment you will need to make.

As such, over the next few issues I will be writing some specific 'job descriptions' to give you some idea of the roles we are looking for. Many of these are intentionally designed to be low intensity roles that can be done for an hour or two a month without ever needing to attend a meeting, or without any specialist skills. Other roles are more intensive and require professional skills.

I would strongly encourage anyone who wants to get involved to get in touch – we will find something you can usefully do. This issue, I have written two basic job descriptions for a record gatherer and a geotechnical engineer, but I need far more than that: people with expertise in heritage, ecology, architecture, archaeology, publicity, public liaison, business planning, tourism, funding, civil and structural engineering, pumping system design . . . the list goes on. We also need to gather data to help the cause: data on the current status eg footpath usage, habitats, ecology, asset condition, public opinion . . . again the list goes on. If you

think you can help with any of this, in any capacity and with any amount of time to give, please get in touch.

It is also important to emphasise that, although we are particularly focussed on the section of the canal to the east of Butterley Tunnel, this does not preclude us from doing work elsewhere. As I noted above, I am keen to match people with the area they are interested in or have particular expertise; ultimately we still need to develop the plans for Butterley Tunnel any beyond. So if your particular interest is to design an aqueduct for Bullbridge, we still want to know.

Record Gatherer

As we progress, we need to gather various records, in particular land registry information and utility records. These can be gathered by filling in a form with basic information and sending it off to the relevant authorities. We will supply the locations, but we are looking for somebody to spend one or two hours a month completing the paperwork and sending off.

Geotechnical Engineer

Clearly a canal involves a lot of interaction with the surrounding ground, both as a channel within it but also all the associated structures. We are looking for a geotechnical engineer who can help with any or all of the following:

- searching for and reviewing existing ground investigations;
- specifying new ground investigations;
- interpreting ground investigations to determine geotechnical design parameters, chemical classification etc;
- coordination with geotechnical consultants where necessary;
- geotechnical design of embankments, foundations etc.

WORK PARTY PROGRESS

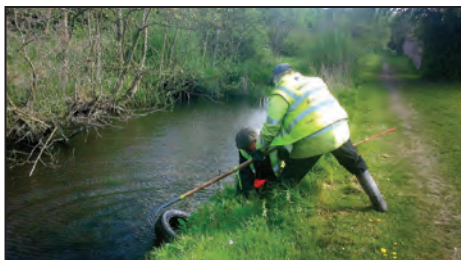
by John Guyler

FCC's regular work parties help keep the canal neat and tidy



Wendy and Shirley spruce up the swing bridge at High Peak Junction.

Photo: Author



Extracting car tyres from Pinxton Wharf.

Photo: Author

Regular FCC work parties at Cromford and High Peak Junction have tackled a variety of jobs over the last few months including filling sandbags to repair damaged sections of towpath and cleaning the swing bridge at High Peak Junction. An extra job has been retrieving some large edging stones and backfill from the wall adjacent to the swing bridge, which had been pushed into the canal. The usual summer job of clearing Himalayan Balsam is under way on the stretch between High Peak Junction and Whatstandwell.

Working at Pinxton Wharf, six large bags of rubbish, three car tyres, a complete car wheel and one dog waste bin, complete with contents, were removed from the canal. There has been a general clean up and cutting back of shrubs and removal of plastic bottles from the sump at the closed end – again. We have cleared this area three times and it still seems to attract more rubbish.

Fences have been repainted from Codnor Park Reservoir all the way to Lock 4.

The notice boards at the reservoir have been repainted by FCC volunteers and the usual litter pick every fortnight seems to be having an effect on the users of the towpath; the amount of litter compared to when FCC adopted the stretch between Codnor Park Reservoir and Lock 5 is now low, as is the amount of dog fouling. This is monitored by the CRT volunteer ranger, who is a member of the FCC.



John Dyson and Wendy Hollis proudly display the amount of rubbish collected from around Pinxton Basin.

Photo: Author

COIR ROLL BANK REPAIRS

By John Guyler

Bank repairs are now underway

FCC has now procured the coir rolls and other material to improve sections of the towpath edge where historical erosion and damage from dogs climbing out of the canal is causing concern. This follows on from the award of the grant of £3,100 from DerwentWISE Landscape Partnership (*Portal 61*).



The daunting pile of coir rolls at Cromford Wharf.

DerwentWISE is supported by the National Lottery, through the Heritage Lottery Fund. Derbyshire County Council supports this project for which consent has been given by Natural England. The project is also supported by the WatersideCare Group that helps to care for waterbodies throughout the Midlands; they are funded by the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, Canal & River Trust and Keep Britain Tidy.

The grant is to provide

materials and equipment to make a permanent repair using dry coir rolls, locked into position at several points between Lawn Bridge and High Peak Junction. Coir is a natural product and the rolls being used are termed dry, as opposed to pre-seeded; the section of canal is an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific

Interest), so care has to be taken not to introduce non-native species. The coir rolls are each 3m long by 300mm diameter (approx 10ft by 1ft). The main materials in the grant are 150 linear meters of coir rolls and 15 tonnes of puddling clay, which has now been delivered. The work will be carried out by volunteers from FCC, under the direction of DCC

Countryside Services. The value of the volunteers' work is estimated at £2,500.

To fix the rolls in place, a minimal amount of bank is cut away with the



The easy way to carry the coir rolls!



Birdswood with coir roll cargo about to pass under Lawn Bridge.

is on a cart from Cromford wharf, but it is a heavy job. The first big job was to fill hessian bags with the puddling clay; at the first filling session some 100 bags were filled, but several hundred will probably be used. Logistics will be a vital part of this project; the cart will be well used, moving clay and coir rolls to the site. But after fitting further rolls, we realised that we had to have a system of getting the rolls up to the worksite in bigger quantities and faster, to prevent the fitting team being kept waiting; this is where Birdswood came in. We used Birdswood on a non-working day to carry 19 rolls to the work site; this should give a buffer on the supply of rolls. It is estimated that the one trip saved us 20 hours.

When talking to visitors on the towpath the work is appreciated, but there are some dog owners who resent being told that part of the problem is caused by dogs clawing at the bank to get out of the water. But on the positive side there have been dog owners who admitted that they didn't realise the damage that dogs caused.

vegetation carefully put to one side, a roll is locked in place with bags of puddling clay and long pins, back-filled with clay and finally a covering of top soil before the vegetation is put back. Vegetation will also be placed in the holes provided in the coir rolls, with the intention that the roots will grow through to establish a permanent and long lasting repair. The ends of the rolls are laced together by twine giving a neat fixing. Work started at the beginning of July with a trial fitting and will finish in the late autumn.

We have found by trial and error the best way to haul the rolls, two at a time,



A cunning way to unload when the canal is too shallow to approach the bank.



The coir roll in place . . .



. . . and backfilled with clay, awaiting the original vegetation to be replaced.

If any members have any two or four wheel trollies that they would like to loan or donate to the work party, it would be much appreciated. The work will be moving clay and topsoil. Please contact the Email address below.

The group working very hard on this project is very enthusiastic and much appreciated, but more volunteers would make the task so much easier.

If you can help in any way, please contact work@cromfordcanal.org.



The finished job; in a few weeks nature will have taken back over.

All Photos: Author

PIPE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

by George Rogers

A replacement pipe bridge has been installed at Lower Hartshay

In *Portal 60* back in the early part of the year, I reported on a site visit I attended with NMC Nomenca, looking at a pipe bridge that crosses the canal on the stretch that Geesons had recently cleared at Lower Hartshay. NMC Nomenca were going to be replacing the pipe bridge and wanted to give us the opportunity to look around and see what they were doing. They were also scanning the bridge and the surrounding area before and after replacement, and they have offered to share that data with us for future

reference.

I visited the site again in the beginning of July to see the progress. Due to my work commitments, I unfortunately could only manage to visit on a slack day; progress was going so well that all the works had been done ready for the new bridge to be craned in – but on the following day! My thanks to the team at NMC Nomenca – particularly Wes Draycott, Matt Limb and Luke Vardy – for the invite and the chance to share this story with the reader.



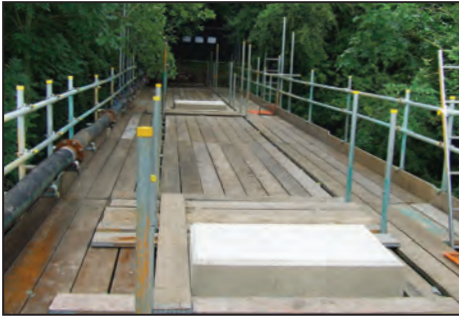
The old bridge carrying the pipes over the canal. The bridge was in pretty poor condition and this was causing the pipes to deform as well.

Photo: Nomenca



The old bridge is out and replaced by a large scaffold working platform.

Photo: George Rogers



Now on the scaffold platform, looking at the tops of the bridge piers. The original intention had been to try to repair the existing stone copings, but when the old bridge was removed they were found to be too damaged and so these new concrete pad stones were cast instead. Notice the bypass pipe taking the flows past the work site, fixed to the scaffolding on the left hand side.

Photo: George Rogers

Looking back to the scaffolding access. The biggest issue on the site was clearly the access constraints – it took a team of scaffolders 5 days to erect this scaffolding to enable the work force to carry out all the repairs safely. The ladder on the left goes down to additional platforms around each of the piers, as repair work had to be carried out on these as well.

Photo: George Rogers



This gives some idea of the scale of the scaffolding. The steps at the far end (close up inset) were fascinating to me – they are adjustable so they follow the slope of the bank. I've worked on many canal sites where access is required into the bed, and I have always ended up with a sloping bank or rough cut steps – which often disintegrate with use or rain. NMC have sent me the data sheet for these steps so that we can look to use them in the future.

Photo and Inset: George Rogers

The finished bridge. Somewhat simpler in profile than the old one! This photo also shows the works done to the piers, now that the scaffolding has been removed. The brickwork has been repointed in several places and new reinforcing rods inserted to prevent the cracking in the masonry from getting worse.

Photo: Nomenca



THE CONSTRUCTION OF SIMS BRIDGE

by Grenville Smith

Research has shown that the bridge near Whatstandwell – that was always thought to have carried a railway – in all probability did not

Sims Bridge (No 12) over the canal just north of the Whatstandwell road bridge is used today by walkers heading up towards Robin Hood, Holloway and Crich. Known as Sims Bridge because of its association with the family who operated Duke's Quarry for over 100 years it is, in appearance and orientation, very different to other canal bridges locally and was built very much later – in 1867 – in response to the changing economic conditions of the time.

railway in 1849 provided a more efficient alternative.

The goods loading area at Whatstandwell station was on the far side of the line from the quarry; this entailed moving large blocks of stone by 'drugs' – low carts with 9in-wide 18in-diameter wheels, pulled by teams of up to eight horses. There are newspaper reports of horses being fatally injured while negotiating steep descents in the area. Horses could earn seven shillings a day in this period, double the rate of a labourer, and could be valued at £50 or more.

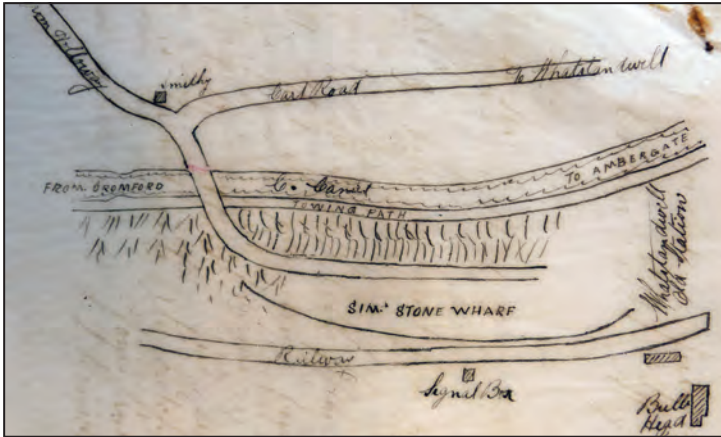
The suggestion for a new bridge over the canal connecting the quarry to the railway came in 1866. Samuel Sims had run Duke's Quarry until his death in December 1865. His son William inherited the quarry but he was only 15 years old so the business was overseen by John Charles Jones, a merchant and accountant in Manchester who was married to Samuel's cousin. The quarry operation was supervised by Henry Cowlshaw, a second-generation gritstone quarryman from Crich.

Jones initially wrote to the Midland Railway Traffic Committee in Derby in June 1866 pointing out "the insufficiency of the present wharfage accommodation at the Whatstandwell Station" and offering to find stone for a retaining wall, and also for the foundation of the crane, if the company would provide the additional



Sims Bridge in its original form in the 1960s or 1970s, prior to its replacement by the current bridge.

Duke's Quarry had experienced massive growth in output during the 1830s, initially by supplying stone to the London & Birmingham Railway – the HS2 of its day – and subsequent railway and civil engineering schemes. All this stone was transported by canal to distant markets but the arrival of the



A copy of the sketch drawn by Midland Railway's canal inspector S. Winson in 1902.

accommodation. Jones would have also been mindful of the fact that the railway line to the north, that then terminated at Rowsley, was due to be completed all the way to Manchester later that year. This would potentially open new markets for stone to the north.

Cromford Canal so that the proposed new stone wharf could be used by the public. Ordered that the work be proceeded with." This work involved improving the existing roads down to the canal wharf and building the bridge over it. The railway wharf was built between the end of the bridge and the retaining wall, hence the skewed angle. A sketch map from 1902 by the Midland Railway's canal inspector shows the layout.

The bridge had gates on the road side and the large gritstone gateposts remain in place today. Transport was still by horse and cart; it seems unlikely that a tramway was used on the bridge. A six-ton crane was installed in September 1867 and further cranes were added later.



One of the surviving gate posts at Sims Bridge. The present Sims Bridge, seen in the background, is of much lighter construction than the original.
Photo: Author

A plan was drawn up to provide the new wharf and sidings at a cost of £480 and was finally approved in February 1867 with the comment that "the Trustees of the late Mr Sims had agreed to find a road on the north side of the

The Sims family – quarrymen, stone merchants and proprietors of the Duke's quarries, Whatstandwell.

c.1802–1813: Samuel Sims
 1813–1836: William Sims
 1836–1865: Samuel Sims
 1865–1872: William Sims
 1872–1878: John Sims
 1878–1891: Anthony Sims
 1891–1915: John Sims

JACKSDALE BRIDGE

by John Boucher

An update on progress at the proposed replacement bridge by Portland Wharf

For some time the residents of Codnor Park, Ironville and Jacksdale have been pressing for a link across the canal at the site of the former Lawn Bridge, at the mouth of the Portland coal loading basin. This will replace the wartime 'iron bridge' formerly at the site which had to be demolished as its extensive corrosion had made it severely dangerous. Derbyshire County Council, who are leading this cross-border project, accepted the project in principle and set up a steering group within their Countryside Department, on which the FCC is represented, and allocated some funds for initial designs and other studies. While the basic design for the bridge and its associated brideways has now been agreed, further funding is proving very difficult and little further progress is being made at the moment.

One area where some progress

should be possible is investigating the archaeology of the site. This will help inform the design of foundations for the new bridge, and hence the form of the bridge itself. There are remains of at least three different generations of bridges on top of each other, so locating remains could have a significant effect on the design. The site is on the part of the canal taken over by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, and the crayfish and voles inhabiting the area require careful consideration. DWT and FCC volunteers have started a study of the exposed remains on the west bank of the bridge site, but a more detailed study requiring excavation below water at the edge of the canal needs careful advanced planning and can only be arranged with detailed assistance from approved wildlife handlers. Plans are proceeding for full 'community dig' in the not too distant future.



In 1997 the wartime Butterley Standard Bridge became unsafe and was demolished. Today there are only stepping stones to cross the canal, but there are plans to build a new bridge after archaeological investigation of the site.

LANGLEY MILL PUMPING STATION

by John Baylis

A redundant sewage pumping station now helps to fill the lowest pound on the Cromford Canal

Alongside the Cromford Canal in the small copse of evergreen trees at the back of the sanitary station at Langley Mill is a symmetrical Victorian building, but what you see is only half the building as it extends to about 15ft below ground level.



The restored pump house. The green metal cabinet marks the new STWA installation.

Photo: Author

Towards the end of the 19th century Joseph Bazalgette in London and Marriott Ogle Tarbotton, Borough Engineer in Nottingham, were improving public health and the quality of life by improved sewage systems and pure drinking water free from contamination by human detritus. But these improvements were not only in the cities; new urban areas such as

Eastwood were improved by the building of a sewage works.

At Milnhay, by Anchor Bridge on the Erewash Canal, these works were carried out by Basford Rural Sanitary Authority in 1894. Eastwood, at the top of the hill, was relatively easy as gravity carried the effluent to Milnhay, but below the Eastwood & Langley Mill Station on the Great Northern railway line, sited on what is now the large traffic island on the A610, it was uphill to the sewage works.

In fact there was a considerable area between the old GN railway and the River Erewash, including the station, the Great Northern Inn and its ten cottages, and the cottages between the canal and the river. The solution was to collect all the sewage at the lowest point and then pump the effluent back up to above the GN Railway from where it could then run by gravity to Milnhay; that collection sump was underneath this little Victorian building. The sewers from the west side run down Boundary Lane, between the filling station and Selwood Plant, and those from the east run along the road from the back of the Great Northern to just outside the Nottingham Canal Toll Office and then underneath the Cromford Canal to the same sump. We have a copy of the agreement between the Midland Railway Company, then owners of the Cromford Canal, and the Guardians of the Poor of the Union of Basford dated

September 1st 1894 to construct the two sewers under the canal, but no idea of how the work was carried out.

Development Association, was very keen on heritage buildings and thought it would be a great shame for STWA to demolish the building as they intended and suggested to them that the ECP&DA could take it over. STWA agreed to a 99-year lease with a one-off payment of £1,000, which was accepted by the Association. After considerable work by ECP&DA volunteers in cleaning out the building and making it safe inside, repainting, fitting new doors and ventilator made of teak by David Francis, and installation of a two-ton lifting beam, STWA offered the original sewage pump back from where it had been in store at Swithland pumping station in Leicestershire.



*Fitting the new Selwood D150 pump (l to r):
John Baylis, Hugh Muir, John Nixey, Ken George.*

Inside the building is the original double-acting reciprocating pump with a bore of 12in and stroke of 24in, which was powered by a Crossley gas engine worked off town gas. The pump pushed the sewage back under the canal in a cast iron pipe running alongside the collection pipe back to the site of the old Great Northern station. The gas engine was maintained up to about the time of the Second World War by Mr Shilling from Shilling & Bridge's garage that became the filling station. Probably after the war the original pump was replaced by an electrically driven submersible pump operating on the same sump. But then in about 1985 Severn Trent Water Authority decided to construct a new system which is in a deep manhole underneath the green metal cabinet at the side of the building.

Bob Peck, then Treasurer of the Erewash Canal Preservation &



*The original 1894 reciprocating pump.
No makers marks have been found.*

Photo: Author

The pump was stripped down and cleaned, but the flap valves and brass bore were in very poor condition. Les Allsop seated the valves with thick sheet polythene and John Baylis fitted a new stainless steel bore and leather washers. Stan Hine later connected the old steam engine from Shipstone's brewery and

the pump has been worked by an air compressor or by steam from John Boucher's steam roller. It was rumoured that the original Crossley gas engine went to Bestwood pumping station but it has never been found. In the middle of the downstairs floor is the manhole into the sump which is the same floor area and about 8ft below this floor level. Nowadays it is only the receptacle for ground water but still needs occasional pumping out depending on the rainfall.

and installed an electric centrifugal pump donated by the National Coal Board in the pump house.

This pump was never successful as it took a long time to prime and suffered from air locks, so in 2005 ECP&DA decided to take a serious look at a long-term solution. Following letters to Sykes Pumps and Selwood Plant the latter suggested we try a diesel powered D150 pump temporarily rigged outside; this primed and started full bore pumping within five minutes. The Association decided to fit a D150 6in vacuum priming pump powered by the existing 24hp electric motor. New flanges were made for reinforced rubber pipe to connect the new pump to the existing pipes and on powering up the new pump was operating at full bore within 2 minutes. The total new installation cost just over £9,000 and will back pump at about a lock full every 90 minutes.



*Building the outlet weir (left to right): Arthur King, Carole Golds, Mike Harrison.
Photo: Mick Golds*

The original position of the pump had been in line with the doors, but the rather large plinth took up most of the floor and so ECP&DA built a new, lower plinth along the back wall which left more room in front. The steel-floored platform on entry was built by ECP&DA with the steel stairs being donated by Metal Box at Mansfield.

Bob Peck thought that this was an ideal site for a back pump round the lock and persuaded some colleagues to install a 6in-diameter plastic pipe from below the lock to the pump house. Below the lock the ECP&DA constructed a concrete sump and grilled entry from the canal



Single-cylinder steam engine from Shipstone's Brewery. Made by Matthew Paul & Co, Levenford Works, Dumbarton, engine number 5864.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

by Rick Jillings

Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service's Assistant Area Manager reports on the Cromford to Ambergate section

Over the spring and summer we have been commemorating 50 years since the closure of the Cromford & High Peak Railway. Do visit Middleton Top Engine House, open from 1pm to 4.30pm each Sunday in August and also 9th & 10th September. Leawood Pump will be in steam 27th & 28th August,

16th & 17th September and 7th & 8th October from noon until 5pm and also for Discovery Days on 28th & 29th October from 11am to 4pm. Do also visit High Peak Junction, open daily; it is now free to explore what are some of the oldest remaining railway workshops in the world. There are new displays and why not enjoy the fascinating heritage audio tour, which now costs only £1.

Summer on the Canal

The towpath is a haven for nectar producing plants, look out for meadow sweet with its small white flower heads; it contains the active ingredient of aspirin. Sections of grass along the High Peak Trail near High Peak Junction are managed as wildflower meadow; this summer it has been ablaze with orchids. The towpath flowers and the canal plants support a wide range of insects including butterflies, hoverflies and dragonflies. The summer growth has been prolific; we cut back a narrow strip at the side of the towpath each summer, allowing public access but trying to retain the important plants.



Meadowsweet, which grows in profusion alongside the canal.

Water Levels

The water flow into and out of the canal is controlled by hand. With dry spells, then flash floods and showers, the canal levels have been up and down. We hope to work with the Friends to try and regulate the inflow through a scheme to install a paddle on the canal inflow at Cromford Mill (see *Portal 61*). There have been times when all the available water from the mill has been directed to the canal and the levels were still falling.

FCC Volunteer work parties – Thank you

The fortnightly team of volunteers has been busy with work including canal towpath bank repairs, controlling the invasive Himalayan balsam and clearing the water channel and silt traps. Work

is underway to protect sections of bank edge using materials including coir rolls purchased with grant funding from DerwentWISE.



FCC work parties carry out regular bank maintenance work for DCC.

New Interpretation boards

New notice and interpretation boards have been installed at Cromford and High Peak Junction. This has been a project jointly undertaken by FCC, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, DerwentWISE and DCC.



The new notice and information boards at High Peak Junction. Similar boards have been installed at Cromford Wharf.

Wheel Pit Conservation

The wheel pit adjacent to High Peak Junction workshops served the engine house at Sheep Pasture Top, enabling wagons to be raised and lowered on the incline. With 50 years passing since the closure of the railway many of the timbers have started to decay, as has the metal work. It is hoped that a grant from Natural England will enable the conservation of this important heritage. If all goes to plan work will start very shortly. This will require the High Peak Trail to be diverted onto a narrow path at the end of the workshops building. DCC apologises for any inconvenience during these works.

Get in Touch

You can contact DCC Countryside Service at Middleton Top Visitor Centre on **01629 533298**.



The huge pulley wheel in its pit (note rotten timber) at High Peak Junction.

ALL ABOARD FOR ART AFLOAT

by Nic Barfield

Birdswood finds an alternative role as a floating art studio



Eric Gaskell with his press and workshopper Anne Clark.

Photo: Nic Barfield

This May and July, *Birdswood* found a new part-time role as a floating studio for budding artists, hosting sell-out workshops by a renowned printmaker and an acclaimed local landscape artist.

The foundations of Art Afloat, our innovative boat-based hands-on arts programme, were laid by *Birdswood* volunteer Marie Keane when she was researching linocut printmaking for her college course and came across some striking canal prints by Eric Gaskell. Contacting Eric, who is a member of the Guild of Waterways Artists as well as the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists and the prestigious Printmakers Council, Marie found that he was already aware of the FCC and *Birdswood*, and had visited Cromford briefly a few months previously.

Eric liked the idea of running a workshop day on a narrowboat; we were thrilled to partner with a 'name' artist with strong inland waterways links; and so the idea became a plan, then a sales campaign, and finally a workshop with eight participants paying £65 each for a full day's programme of tuition including materials and light refreshments.

Online promotion using targeted social media plus an editorial mention in *Artsbeat* magazine created lots of interest, and participants came from as far afield as

Birmingham and the London area, as well as from the Derwent Valley. They ranged from a couple of talented amateur printmakers wanting to work with Eric to absolute beginners who had never picked up a lino-cutting tool.

It was a fine day 5th May as we started off with a slow cruise down to Leawood Pump House, stopping to observe, photograph and draw features such as Lawn Bridge and the High Peak Junction buildings. All the while, Eric imparted his expert knowledge and tips about how to think about light and shade and black and white (the plan being to make simple monochrome prints).

After lunch, the group sketched out their final designs and started the

intricate process of cutting away their lino block. What remained would print black, what they cut away would show as white paper. At the end of the afternoon, after inking the finished blocks and printing on Eric's neat portable press, everyone compared their results and went away happily with their artwork.

Feedback was very positive (one lady even asked if she could book another session with Eric), so we felt confident enough to approach Ruth Gray, a Belper-based landscape artist with a strong interest in the Derwent Valley's heritage, to lead our second event. Ruth chose 'A Day of Reflection' as her theme, playing on the word 'reflection' to encourage participants to think about how water and light work together. This concept helped to attract another eight attendees keen to advance their skills in painting in acrylics.

The morning of 4th July saw a huddle of keen amateur artists clutching their pencils and sketch pads on the wharf, and we set off to draw and collect reference material. Ruth's tip to concentrate on one aspect of the waterscape rather than attempt to capture the whole scene paid off, with finished works ranging from expressively minimal to delicate exercises in shades and tones of just one or two colours.

Both Eric Gaskell and Ruth Gray are joining us again this autumn to lead further workshops - Eric on 11th September, and Ruth with an 'Autumn Colours' session on 3rd October. In addition, we've been fortunate to sign up Liz Wellby, who is another talented



Ruth Gray (L) with Day of Reflection participants.

Photo: Nic Barfield

Derbyshire artist/tutor and member of Peak District Artisans as well as artist-in-residence at Scarthin Books in Cromford, to lead a cutting edge digital art session on 26th September. Liz will show participants how to use specialist graphics apps on their iPhone or iPad to create artworks, and we're hoping this will appeal to artists wishing to embrace and experiment with the possibilities offered by digital drawing and painting programs.

Places are still available on all three workshops, and anyone who would like more details can simply email sales@birdswood.org with ARTS EVENTS as the subject header. We'll only use your details to inform you of the Art Afloat programme and won't share them with any other organisation or company.

If all goes to plan, April to October 2018 will see *Birdswood* hosting a further six or seven workshops. Expect more painting and printmaking, along with photography, drawing in pastels and charcoal, and probably a mixed media session. These will be advertised in a future issue of *The Portal*.

A GOTHIC TALE?

by Hugh Potter

FCC Archivist Hugh Potter looks back to early days at Cromford Wharf



George Robertson's drawing portrays, from left to right, Willersley Castle, Cromford Bridge, Arkwright's chapel and the canal warehouse.



An enlargement of the previous picture reveals a tower at the end of the warehouse.

An intriguing idea about the origins of the 'gothic' warehouse at Cromford has emerged from a 200-year-old drawing. It is a pencil and wash drawing by renowned Derby porcelain painter George Robertson (c.1776–1833), who worked at Derby from 1797 and was rated one of the finest landscape painters on ceramics. About forty watercolours by Robertson are preserved at Derby Museum & Art Gallery.

He is known for the accuracy of his paintings, so when an enlargement of the canal warehouse revealed it to have a tower on its northern end, my interest was aroused. It has always been thought that the castellated end wall that gives the warehouse its name today was to enhance Arkwright's view from Willersley Castle, offering something slightly more exotic than a workaday warehouse.

The warehouse was built in late



The 'gothic' warehouse as seen today is so called because of its castellated end wall facing Willersley Castle – but was this wall once part of a tower?

1794, and at the same time a weighing machine was commissioned. There is a school of thought that says such a weighing machine could have been incorporated into the tower, the outside wall supporting an elevated balance beam, with the weighing scales outside and the weights and other machinery inside. On the other hand, by the 1790s, weighing machines with mechanisms beneath the ground had been in use for some time and were more popular. Of course there is a weighbridge there today on the site of where the tower would have stood, but that is a much later structure.



The weighing mechanism inside the FCC shop in the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf, with the front panel removed.

There seem to be three possibilities;

1) A tower was built to give the 'gothic' image as well as to incorporate a weighing machine and both were subsequently removed, leaving just the single wall. However, a study of the remaining wall shows no evidence of there having been a tower attached.

2) A tower was planned when the painting was being made and Robertson added it in anticipation. However, if Robertson did not start painting in the area till 1797, the warehouse and weighing machine would already have been built.

3) It is simply artistic licence. Robertson is not known for this, and the detail in the rest of the warehouse is remarkably accurate (the canopy over the canal was added later). However, the angle is 'wrong'; it would be seen more end on from his viewpoint so he has obviously altered this – could he have added the tower too to make it more interesting?

The jury is out. What do you think?



A rare glimpse of the weighing machine mechanism. If any members can throw any light on this device, then please contact the Editor. We would love to know more of its history.

WALKING FOR WILDLIFE

by Andy Moon

Funds raised by a sponsored walk will help restoration to benefit wildlife

The Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Reservoir group held a sponsored walk on 16th July from Cromford Wharf to the basin at Jacksdale and then on to the Dixies Arms at Bagthorpe for a well-earned drink. The 15-mile walk followed the canal route where possible.

The walk was to raise funds to progress work on the canal at Ironville/Jacksdale.

The total amount raised will be around £1,700 from which the group has already purchased a wheeled strimmer to keep the vegetation down along the towpath so it can be walked for twelve months of the year.

Most of the work so far has been clearing rubbish and vegetation from the canal so not only can the wildlife thrive but also the water has a near constant level. This prevents the young

wildlife being washed away after heavy rain; last year, before the work, chicks were washed downstream and no doubt countless water vole young would have drowned.

This year, after a channel had been cleared from Codnor Park Reservoir, the water beyond the stepping stones by Portland Basin has stayed at more or less the same depth even after heavy rain in July.

The aim of the group this year, working under Derbyshire Wildlife Trust guidance, is to clear more reed and trees growing in the channel so the canal will not only be a fantastic habitat for all types of wildlife but will also resemble a waterway once again.

There is regular updated information on the Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Res Facebook group.



*Sponsored walkers about to depart from Cromford Wharf.
Photo: Author*

REMEMBERING THE BOATS

by J.W. Gadsby

In a letter to the Editor of the *Ripley and Heanor News* in September 1964 entitled 'Boating on Cromford Canal', a reader signing himself "J.W. Gadsby C.C." wrote the following recollections of the coal boats from Hartshay. These differ slightly in detail from those recalled by Les Mason in his book *On The Boats*.

Sir,—The passing of the late Mr Joseph Bilbie, of Ridgeway, Ambergate, reported in your last issue, will recall to many the memories of boating and coal transport on the Cromford Canal. It is now 30 years since the familiar sight of coal barges was last seen operating between Lower Hartshay Wharf and Cromford. Three boats with an unladen weight of 15 tons each were used to carry 30 tons of coal on each boat. These were towed along by a stout horse, which travelled along the towpath with a young man as driver.

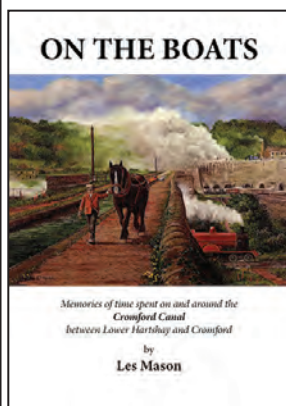
Loading and unloading were the heaviest tasks of the business; but once loaded, transport in bulk was cheap, 90 tons of coal journeying the seven mile stretch of canal at little cost. From Hartshay coal was delivered to Cromford Colour Works, Lea Mills, Willersley Castle and Lea Lead Works.

In summer the passing boats were a pleasant sight, but winter brought its difficulties, particularly with the need for ice breaking to keep the waterway open for the passage of boats. Since the cessation of the boating undertaking the proprietors, Mr German Key and Mr John Key have passed away, and also Mr Maurice Taylor, now Mr J. Bilbie, all residents of Ridgeway. However, the following men who were also engaged in the boating work still remain: Mr Joseph

Poplar of Ambergate, Mr Jim Needham, Mr J. Hinds, Mr Enoch Shore, of Heage (horse driver) and Mr R. Jones, of Nether Heage (the last horse driver employed by the undertaking).

The canal in those days was kept in an excellent state of cleanliness and many will remember Mr Len Barber, who was possibly the last man employed in caring for the canal.

But now the boats are gone, the canal derelict and forsaken, the younger generation will never realise its usefulness, nor the way it benefited commerce and industry of past years. There seems little possibility of the canal being reclaimed or the sight of passing boats ever to be seen on this former waterway.

	<p>On The Boats is still available for just £5 (£6 inc p&xp) from FCC Sales, Weighbridge Office, Gothic Warehouse, Mill Road, Cromford DE4 3RQ.</p>
---	---

AUTUMN EVENTS

26th–28th August

IWA Festival of Water

The annual Festival of Water is coming to Ilkeston over the bank holiday when over 100 boats will be moored along the Erewash Canal. The FCC sales stand will be there so do drop in and say hello. Admission is free.

27th & 28th August

Horse-drawn boat trips on *Birdswood*, plus Leewood Pump in steam noon–5pm.

Monday 11th September

'On the Cut' linocut printmaking masterclass

10.30am–4.30pm. With Eric Gaskell. See page 26. Eric's first workshop with us in May sold out quickly, so early booking is recommended. See some of Eric's work at www.canalprints.co.uk. 8 places only, £65 inc materials and light refreshments. More information and bookings: sales@birdswood.org.

Friday 15th September

Rag Rugby Workshop

10am–2pm. A contemporary twist on trad rag rug making at Cromford Wharf. Cost of £22 includes refreshments, materials and a trip on *Birdswood*. Bookings: 07552 055 455 or sales@birdswood.org.

16th & 17th September

Horse-drawn boat trips on *Birdswood*, plus Leewood Pump in steam noon–5pm.

Monday 18th September

Mining in the Ashfield and Amber Valley areas

A talk by David Amos
7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall; all welcome

Tuesday 26th September

Digital Drawing with iPad & iPhone

10.30am–4.00pm. Well known Derbyshire fine artist, tutor and print maker Liz Wellby leads a workshop on *Birdswood* to explore the possibilities of 'device art' using specialist

apps to draw and paint. Liz's digital work including some images produced as artist-in-residence at Cromford's famous Scarthin Books can be seen here: www.lizwellby.co.uk/digital. 10 places only, £65 inc light refreshments. You will need to bring your own Apple device. More information and bookings: sales@birdswood.org.

Tuesday 3rd October

Autumn Colours Painting

10.30am–4.00pm. A masterclass in acrylic landscape painting with Ruth Gray www.ruthgrayimages.net. See page 26. 8 places only, £65 inc materials and light refreshments. More information and bookings: sales@birdswood.org.

7th & 8th October

Horse-drawn boat trips on *Birdswood*, plus Leewood Pump in steam noon–5pm.

Monday 16th October

Titanic

A talk by Helen Monk
7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall; all welcome

Thursday 26th October

Then and Now on the Cromford Canal

7pm. Hugh Potter gives a brand new talk comparing historic images of the canal with the same views today. Free admission, but pre-booking recommended on 01629 536831. Gothic Warehouse, Cromford Wharf, DE4 3RQ

Friday 27th October

Spooky Halloween boat trips on Birdswood.

2pm–4pm. £8: includes food and a drink. Bookings: 07552 055455 or sales@birdswood.org or book online at www.birdswood.org.

28th–29th October

Discovery Days at Cromford Wharf

In the Gothic Warehouse there will be demonstrations of traditional canal 'Rose

and Castle' painting, peg weaving, a historical slide show, watercolour paintings for sale, and the extensive Friends of Cromford Canal sales stand, including books, souvenirs and locally themed Christmas cards. Outside there will be miniature traction engines in steam offering trailer rides, Nottingham Model Boat Club will be demonstrating their miniature boats on the canal plus a few more unusual items, and there will be a 'pop-popping' collection of historic stationary engines. And it's all free!

28th-29th October

Horse-drawn boat trips on *Birdswood*, plus Leewood Pump in steam 11am-4pm.

Monday 20th November

Lidar surveys in the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site

A pertinent presentation including the Cromford Canal by Steve Malone of DerwentWISE 7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall; all welcome.

A Floating History of Britain

We understand that BBC2 is broadcasting a new series this autumn called *A Floating History of Britain* and one episode is entitled *Narrow Boats*. In connection with this, BBC were spotted filming Leewood Pump in steam earlier this year, so it will be worth looking out for. No further details were available as we went to press, but we'll put details on the FCC Facebook page as soon as we have them.

Birdswood Boat Trips

Birdswood offers electrically powered 2-hour round trips from Cromford Wharf at 11am and 2pm every Wednesday, Thursday (Aug & Sept only), Saturday and Sunday until 25th October except when horse boat trips are running.

Events at Ironville Church Hall (Casson Street, NG16 5NN) take place at 7.30pm, with a raffle and tea/coffee and biscuits available in the interval. Entry is £2.

Further details for two of Birdswood's popular autumn events



Halloween
on trip boat Birdswood
 Cromford Wharf DE4 3RQ
£8 each including food & a drink
 (under ones free)
 Friday October 27th - 2pm until 4pm

Prize for the best Fancy Dress!
 Crafts, Activities & Games with Prizes
 Treasure Hunt

To Book & Further Info
 Phone: 07552 055 455
 Email: sales@birdswood.org
 Online: www.birdswood.org

The Friends of the Cromford Canal



Summer Rag
 Rugby Workshop

Friday 15th September
 10am - 2pm
 £22 Each

Create a summer wreath, mug mat or
 decorate a quality jute bag

Phone: 07552 055 455
 Email: sales@birdswood.org
 With Lynda Kinnard
 www.rebelliousrags.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

by Hugh Potter

Portal welcomes your thoughts, comments and queries at editor@cromfordcanal.org



Can anyone tell me what this small inlet at Cromford Wharf would have been used or built for? **Rod Thorne**

FCC's Editor and Archivist answers:

The original terminus of the canal was the basin alongside the 'Gothic' warehouse (seen in the left of your photograph). The water feed was from the Bonsall Brook and the Cromford Sough which first of all powered Richard Arkwright's mills across the road. From there it runs over the weir in the mill yard (for which we are currently designing and fitting new water control equipment – see *Portal 61*), under the mill buildings, under Mill Road to pop out in the 'feeder channel' that runs beside the road and into the canal along the second and later canal arm which passes behind the warehouse which is now Wheatcroft's Wharf café. This arm was built in the 1820s to serve limestone quarries close the driveway to Rock House (where Sir Richard had lived).

Before it was built, the water ran in a culvert (open or closed, we are not sure) which cut across what is now the peninsular wharf from the gap between Wheatcroft's Wharf and the smaller office/counting house (explaining its unusual shape) to enter the basin where your photograph was taken.

When the second canal arm was built, this culvert was no longer needed, or so it was thought. However, in winter the canal

was prone to freezing over, and the water from Cromford Sough (a lead mine drain) was relatively warm. So the culvert was reinstated to allow the warmer water to flow into the original basin again to help prevent freezing at the busy wharf.

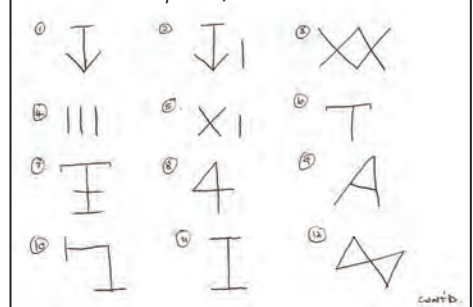
A Letter from Martyn Taylor-Cockayne

I have been making notes and taking photographs of the many and various masons' marks that occur at the locks and bridges at Ironville and I wondered how many of these can be observed at other points on the canal and others besides? I also wondered how many might occur on other canals in the region and beyond? These are the skilled masons working under Outram and Jessop and I thought it would be amazing if we could find some names to fit the marks.

I was also amazed at how many occurred at the bridge from Ironville over to the old Mechanics Institute by Pottery Lock 3. I wondered where and how they lived on site and where the stone came from. The lock masonry is different to the bridge masonry. The bridge stone looks local, while the locks look like gritstone.

Do any members have any thoughts or suggestions on this fascinating subject?

Some examples of the Masons' Marks



AUTUMN WORDSEARCH

by Vix Wilding

Can you find all of the words in the lists below?

It has been suggested that *The Portal* is far too serious and should include more light-hearted 'fun' features. So, Vix has compiled this word search based on and around the canal: no prizes, just to offer you a challenge. Please let the

Editor know what you think: do you like features like this; would you like to see more; do you have any other suggestions; and, importantly, would you be willing to compile something?

Have fun!

Autumn

Y T D I S C O V E R Y N F G V
Q N L K S C A R E C R O W N J
M O L M C P I H U I M G P I L
U I A O U P D W N V A O R G S
A T F G G N P U O K I E A D R
Y A D N S W K R I U N A U E U
Z T N E X G B G T H T M A R O
R E I E I Z P R C B E T J D L
X G W W D O M G E K N K P S O
D E A O G W G U L S A U L P C
B V T L I V V S F G N U U T X
Y F N L U F J D E S C H M U W
I Y J A K C O O R M E F Y Y D
S P O H S K R O W Q V Q B V Z
S G T T J B Q X X X R X N U A

COLOURS
DISCOVERY
DREDGING
HALLOWEEN
MAINTENANCE
REFLECTION
SCARECROW
VEGETATION
WINDFALL
WORKSHOPS

