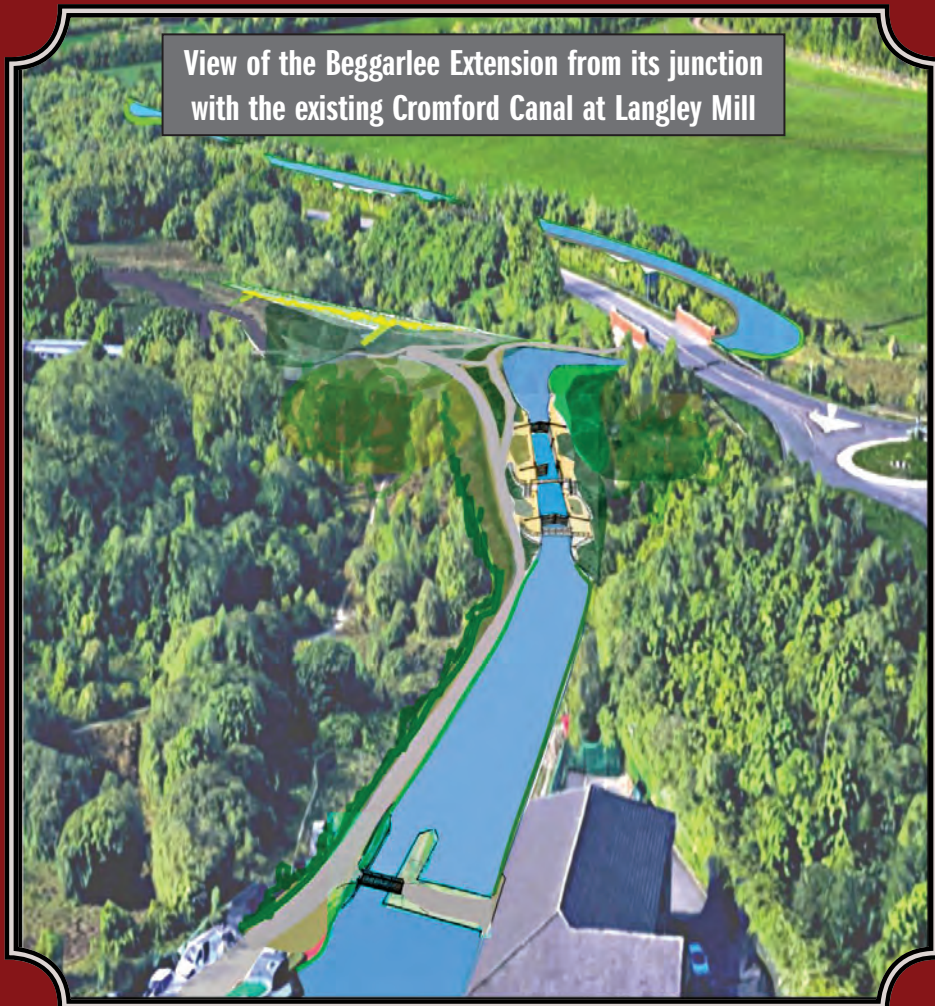


# THE PORTAL

Issue 68 - Spring 2019

Price £1.00 - Free to Members

View of the Beggarlee Extension from its junction with the existing Cromford Canal at Langley Mill



Friends of the Cromford Canal

Registered Charity No. 1164608

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## Front Cover

An overview of the exciting proposals for the extension of the Cromford Canal northwards from Langley Mill – see page 8.

## Back Cover

In mid-February, mechanical dredging took place on the north side of Poyser's Bridge at Ambergate to clear a build-up of silt that had taken place rapidly over the last 12 months. As this was in part due to a leak in a water pipe higher up the hillside, which had washed down a lot of sandy debris, the cost was met by Severn Trent.

*Photo: Hugh Potter*

**Copy date for the next issue is May 16th**

## 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

## Get Your Boots On!

Most people will consider that the northern 5 miles of our canal are the most scenic, and they do offer some spectacular scenery. But thanks to Ken Brockway's walk in this issue (page 30) I recently discovered just how scenic the southern sections of this canal are – more panoramic with wide, open views of the Erewash Valley. When we get a nice spring day, why not take advantage of this specially devised route which uses excellent footpaths parallel to the canal to make a pleasant and easy circular walk? Apart from the distant hum of the A610 there is remarkable quietness and solitude in the wide valley, and an abundance of bird life.

We all know it is going to be many years before you can enjoy our wonderful canal by boat, so in the meantime get out there on foot and appreciate our remaining heritage and our glorious scenery.

## Support Planning Applications

In this issue you will learn of two planning applications that have been put in recently. One is for our own Beggarlee Extension which, combined with our recent purchase of land, will take the canal northwards from Langley Mill boatyard up two locks and under the A610. This main road destroyed the canal around Lock 13 where it crossed but we are very lucky that the Barber Walker mineral railway bridge survives and is no longer in use, offering us an ideal way under the road at minimum cost (page 8).

The second application is from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust who are to be congratulated on their positive approach to the future of Aqueduct Cottage at Leewood. This iconic building was on the verge of becoming simply a pile of stones when, in the nick of time, along came lottery-funded DerwentWISE to commission a study and to plan a sustainable future for this historic structure (page 20). This was supported by the FCC with a donation of £400 to DWT and we are



helping with advice on the outside aspects of the cottage and the Nightingale Arm.

Both applications deserve the full support of members. Remember the public can comment on all planning applications and whilst many use this to object to a proposal, it can equally well be used to support it.

And as few people do this, comments supporting applications can have a major effect on the planning authorities. So I would urge you all to get onto the relevant planning authorities (via their websites is easiest) and explain the benefits that the proposals will have on the locality. The two authorities are Amber Valley Borough Council and Broxtowe District Council. Your response could make all the difference.

## Help Spread the Word

With these developments adding to the regular events and activities held by FCC it is all the more important that we get the message out there. At the risk of repetition, we do need someone, or ideally a small team, to attend events to publicise the work of the FCC and to offer its merchandise for sale. It's a vital role that does not take much time, but whilst we have no-one volunteering to carry this out, we are missing out on a big opportunity to spread the word about the restoration of the Cromford Canal. If you think you could help in any way, contact any committee member (details on page 1) or email [volunteering@cromfordcanal.org](mailto:volunteering@cromfordcanal.org).

## AGM

Finally, the April meeting at Ironville is the Annual General Meeting and I urge as many of you as can to attend this important event. Not only are there new trustees to appoint, but George Rogers will be summarising progress over the year, with particular emphasis on the huge amount of work which has gone on behind the scenes to enable us to extend the canal northwards from Langley Mill. See you there!

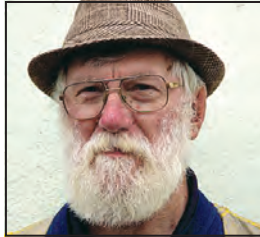
# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM

To start on a progressive note I am very pleased to report that we have a new Treasurer; Robert Sears-Piccavey has volunteered and has been co-opted as a Trustee by the standing Trustees. This means that his co-option only lasts until the Annual General Meeting when he must stand for election; I hope that he will receive good support from all the members. In the meantime we are changing mandate signatures to include Robert and getting him read in to the requirements of Treasurer. Robert started off in the printing trade before becoming a manager in a Utility Company for the last 12 years to his retirement. Robert has been a member of Ashfield District Council for 20 years, some of that time being the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services.

This AGM also marks the completion of the change from a Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation; the main change is that the CIO can own property and land in its own right rather than two members being the nominal owners. This is particularly appropriate as we starting to acquire land for restoration. After this AGM all the Trustees will have been elected by the membership to the new charity.

From its start in 2014 the DerwentWISE project has been operated by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust with a grant of £ 1.75m from the National Heritage Lottery Fund spread over five years. Several members of the FCC have been on committees, largely of volunteer organisations, supporting the various aspects of the project,



*Robert Sear-Piccavey, the new FCC Treasurer.*

cultural, heritage and landscape. For most projects volunteer work was a major part of each grant; the FCC was involved in five grants with a total value in excess of £15,000 spent on the Cromford Canal between Cromford and Ambergate. DerwentWISE has helped to

widen contact between FCC, DWT and other volunteers groups and hopefully will continue on an ad hoc basis to foster co-operation in the future.

The final major event was a specially commissioned musical evening at Derby Theatre when locally written 'Warp & Weft' was performed with Derwent Brass, singers and a modern group of musicians. This was attended by members of most of the groups who had received grants. Finally, on 23rd & 24th March there will be displays at Cromford Mill and Birdwood will be running special trips from Cromford Wharf.

After nearly 4 years Vix Wilding has resigned as manager of our Weighbridge Office shop at Cromford. The Trustees have appointed CJ Stokes in her place on a temporary basis whilst we ascertain the long-term viability of the shop. My thanks to Vix for establishing the shop and to CJ for taking over; members views on the shop would be welcomed by any of the trustees.

I was invited to give a presentation to Pinxton Parish Council a few weeks ago and they were very impressed by the work done by the FCC work party helping the County Council Countryside Services (For details of the type of work carried out see page 16 and other recent Work Party Reports).

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Yvonne Shattower

Things have been very quiet for me on the Membership front since the last edition of the Portal; we have had only three new members, and with no Members' Meeting at Ironville in December, and not being able to get to the January meeting, I have not had contact with many of you. We give a warm welcome to our new members, who include Robert Sears-Piccavey, who has agreed to be our new Treasurer, and keep our books straight.



the 'Friends' and the Cromford Canal. Although Wendy Scarle has attended several events (thank you, Wendy) she is unable to take on greater commitments, so we would dearly love to have a Sales team who would take responsibility for booking events, putting up the necessary stand,

ordering items for sale and being able to travel to venues outside the immediate area of the canal. Many of our Members have come from our attendance at outside events, and our Membership numbers have suffered since we no longer attend so many venues.

We are preparing for the Annual General Meeting which will be held on 15th April 2019 at Ironville Church Hall – our usual venue for Members' Meetings. This is a very significant meeting for everyone, and I would urge all of you who can, to attend. During the next few weeks you will receive voting papers for the election of Trustees. These are the people who run the Friends, and make the main decisions, and I would urge you to use your vote – and it is at the AGM that you will have the opportunity to ask questions about our plans.

Our next Members' Meeting will be on Monday 18th March when Nigel Carabine will be talking about the restored length of the former Midland Main Line which runs steam trains between Matlock and Rowsley. It's a trip I have done myself, but I think it will be on my list for this summer; the meeting is at the usual venue in Ironville. Don't forget that we have Web Sites for both the 'Friends' and Birdswood, as well as Facebook pages where you can keep up to date with the latest news of our meetings and Birdswood trips.

Apart from the election of Trustees, we are still seeking someone to handle publicity for the Friends. There are frequently events which should be brought to the notice of the general public, but they are ignored because we have no one to send items to the local press, radio or television. All the Committee members are fully committed to their own areas, and have not got the time to take on extra responsibilities, so we are hoping that there is someone out there who can take this on for us.

Another area where we are still lacking volunteers is in Sales. Val Roberts, and Beryl & Eric Singleton, ran a very successful Sales team for several years, and took the stand to many events, spreading the word about



**Members' Meetings**  
**Ironville Church Hall (NG16 5NN)**  
**Tea, Coffee, Bar & Raffle**      Admissions £2

**For further information: 01773 418 405**  
**[www.cromfordcanal.org](http://www.cromfordcanal.org)**



# BIRDWOOD'S 80TH BIRTHDAY BASH

A combined birthday party and 'thank you' for the volunteers



*Birdswood's specially modelled 80th birthday cake.*

Birdswood was delivered by Yarwoods of Northwich as Ross to the London Midland & Scottish Railway on 22nd November 1938. Originally built as an open boat for use on the Birmingham Canal Navigations, she was one of 12 boats converted by British Waterways between 1955 and 1957 for long-distance work by the addition of a boatman's cabin. BW then renamed these boats after railway stations, one for each of the first 12 letters of the alphabet, and they have been known ever since as 'Station Boats'. All the station names are familiar apart from Birdswood, which doesn't seem to have a station to be named after. The most likely railway source for the name is Bird's Wood flyover; the name for the railway flyover close to Dutton in Cheshire where there was a signal box and the line from Runcorn crosses over the West Coast Main Line to Scotland.

On 22nd November 2018, 80 years to the day after she was launched, historic narrow boat Birdswood's 80th birthday was celebrated by crew and other FCC volunteers at the Gothic Warehouse, Cromford. The event was combined with a 'thank you' evening for the many volunteers who help to crew the boat or work on the canal.

Chairman John Baylis thanked everyone for the huge effort that they had put in over the last year, and Boat Operations Manager Vix Wilding cut the cake. Everyone was well fed with jacket potatoes and pizzas and a 'mobile' bar was conveniently stationed just outside! An enjoyable evening was had by all.



*Birdswood's Operations Manager Vix Wilding cuts the cake.*



*Crew and other volunteers celebrate together.*

# BEGGARLEE & BEYOND

Reports from the Strategic Restoration Committee co-ordinated by Chairman George Rogers



*George Rogers taking spot levels at Cromford.*

As a break from my normal ramblings, for this report I've asked the three engineers involved with the Beggarlee Extension planning application to each write a few(!) words on their respective areas. This is particularly timely because the application should be being

submitted as Portal goes to press. We will need as many people as possible to support the application, through attendance at any public exhibitions and writing letters of support to the planners. Look on the website for more details.

Very briefly, before handing over to the experts, I'd just like to mention an opportunity that arose through ongoing attempts to improve coordination with other local canal restoration societies. The Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust were looking to carry out some surveying works, but the equipment was quite expensive to hire and so they asked the FCC whether we'd consider splitting the cost. This we did, and four of us spent a weekend in December taking spot levels on various parts of the canal. This work is ideal for supplementing the existing data we have without calling in the big guns for expensive surveying work. My thanks to Doug & Chris (who worked like trojans on a very wet Saturday) and to John Barker for joining me on a (much nicer) Sunday.

And so over to the experts - I hope you will all join me in a heartfelt thanks to these guys for the large amount of time consuming, technical work necessary to get this far.

*Please note, in order to make everything fit*

*within the confines of Portal, I have had to edit these down. Any mistakes are most likely mine in the editing - my apologies if so! Additionally, I'll be talking more about this application and other SRC issues at my annual update to the AGM.*

## Planning Application

**by John Boucher**

The planned extension starts outside the original Beggarlee coal loading wharf (hence the name). A short length will extend the present basin, and then climb through two locks to gain sufficient height to pass under the A610 through the existing mineral railway line bridge. The old canal line was obliterated by the A610 construction, so the section now proposed is a deviation onto a new line that will rejoin the old line at Stoney Lane on the edge of Brinsley. This will be the limit of the present application. The artist's view opposite gives an idea of the extent of the proposal.

On the old line there was only one lock up in the length (No 13), and a further lock (No 12) immediately beyond Stoney Lane. However, because of the need to get through the A610 bridge with minimum effect on the highway bridge's foundations, and the higher ground levels beyond, it has been necessary to site the two new Beggarlee locks almost at the beginning.

A further complication is that the line of the old canal has now been taken into the flood plain, and the Environment Agency has insisted on compensation works nearby, which will actually be more or less on the old line of canal beyond the new turn (see Chris Broome's article below). This has greatly restricted the space available for the new locks, necessitating a two-step staircase.

The planning has been undertaken in-house by the SRC, the detailed design

# Cromford Canal Beggarlee Extension

PRELIMINARY



- A Stoney Lane, Brinsley, Nottinghamshire
- B Winding hole at end of new canal
- C Canal feeder from side stream
- D A610 Road and bridge over canal. Boundary between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire
- E Flood risk compensation area
- F Link to Hall Lane
- G Beggarlee Locks
- H Former Beggarlee wharf
- J Canal Towpath forming part of Erewash trail
- K Swing bridge at start of canal extension
- L Langley Mill Basin, Derbyshire, head of existing Cromford Canal navigation linked to Erewash canal and River Trent



being undertaken by its four Chartered Civil Engineers (George Rogers, Chris Broome, Doug Readle and me). We are fortunate that Chris is an experienced Water Engineer, who has produced the extensive Flood Risk Assessment required by the EA, whilst Doug is an experienced Bridge Engineer and is able to produce all the engineering scheme drawings along with the Structural Statement and Sustainability Statement required by the planners.

We have also been fortunate that Susan White, the Derbyshire Canals Officer (who by background is an experienced environmentalist) was able to undertake the required stage 1 Habitat Survey.

I have completed the Archaeological Assessment and Coal Mining Risk Assessment, and have just about completed coordinating the application. Because the extension crosses the border between Amber Valley and Broxtowe, and about two thirds of the land take is in Broxtowe, a cross border application has been required to the lead authority, Broxtowe Borough Council, with a copy application to Amber Valley. By the time this issue of Portal is published I hope the application will have been submitted and the planning references will have been published on our website. Please look them up to obtain full details and follow the latest progress, and, very important, please send your letters of support to both authorities, which can most easily be done using their websites.

## **Flood Risk Assessment**

**by Chris Broome**

FRAs are mandatory for any planning application where the scheme is located partly or wholly within a floodplain. The lower pound of the Beggarlee Extension up to the lock lies within the River Erewash floodplain and therefore an FRA was required. It has to consider all aspects of flooding which could impact on both the development and the existing flood risk both upstream and downstream of the development. Where there is found to be a negative impact which

would worsen the flood risk then mitigation measures have to be implemented to offset the impact(s).

Many new developments would result in an increased surface water runoff, both in quantity and rate, which then has to be mitigated. Unlike buildings and car parks, we don't have this problem. In fact the canal will capture direct rainfall and intercept surface runoff and a diverted drainage ditch, which will all be managed to prevent any increase in flooding downstream. FCC have had meetings with the EA to establish what issues they wanted us to investigate and report on. They provided us with their computer models of the River Erewash free of charge which we passed on to our modelling consultant Jon Vann, of Riverscape Environmental Consultants Ltd, who used this information to build a more detailed model of the Erewash in the area of our scheme. This model was used to



*The River Erewash looking north from the mineral line bridge, where flood mitigation works have to take place.*

investigate the impact of the canal scheme proposals on the flood plain, its flood levels and impact on the flood storage within the floodplain.

Thankfully, from the modelling study, the construction of the lower pound along its original line has very little impact on flood levels in the area, so little as to be of no consequence and no mitigation measures were deemed to be necessary. The EA required us to set the towpath level high enough to prevent the canal from being overtopped by the river during a major flood. This is because

they already have flooding issues in Long Eaton and don't want to see these made worse by additional floodwaters entering the Erewash Canal. However, the raising of ground levels along the canal line does have the effect of reducing the amount of flood storage that is currently available today. This loss of storage has to be compensated for by lowering ground levels nearby including high ground currently outside of the floodplain to create new floodplain. Lost storage has also to be replaced on a level for level basis in band depths of 200mm as agreed with the EA. Two potential flood storage compensation areas immediately upstream of Hall Road were surveyed to see if either or both were suitable. This showed that we could get all of the storage compensation required from lowering levels along the eastern bank of the river so we elected to pursue this option.

The flood compensation scheme will create a linear wetland feature alongside what is already an important wetland area, creating new habitat that is desirable to DCC and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. It is always important to use mitigation schemes like this one to improve or create new environmental habitats for fauna and flora. Every opportunity should be taken with canal restoration schemes to benefit our environment in addition to providing for boaters, fishermen and other outdoor users of the towpath. We wait to see what comments we get back from the planners and consultees including the EA about the FRA in conjunction with other related planning documents.

## **Bridges, Drawings and Services**

**by Doug Readle**

One of the challenges of the Beggarlee site has been to get away from the confined urban site and out into more open country. The more developed site at the start of the extension means that there are more issues interfacing with existing properties, structures and services.

One example of the interfacing issues that the SRC has been addressing is the question

of how the new development will work with the existing bridges. There are three main bridges in the area that we will affect, two of which provide access to the site and the third we plan to use to go under the A610. To keep things interesting, all three structures were built at different times, for different purposes and with a varying quality of records information. We have attempted to mitigate our impact on existing structures by only accessing the site via specific structures with a quantifiable load rating and by reducing as much as possible the additional weight of material placed above the existing foundations of the A610 bridge.

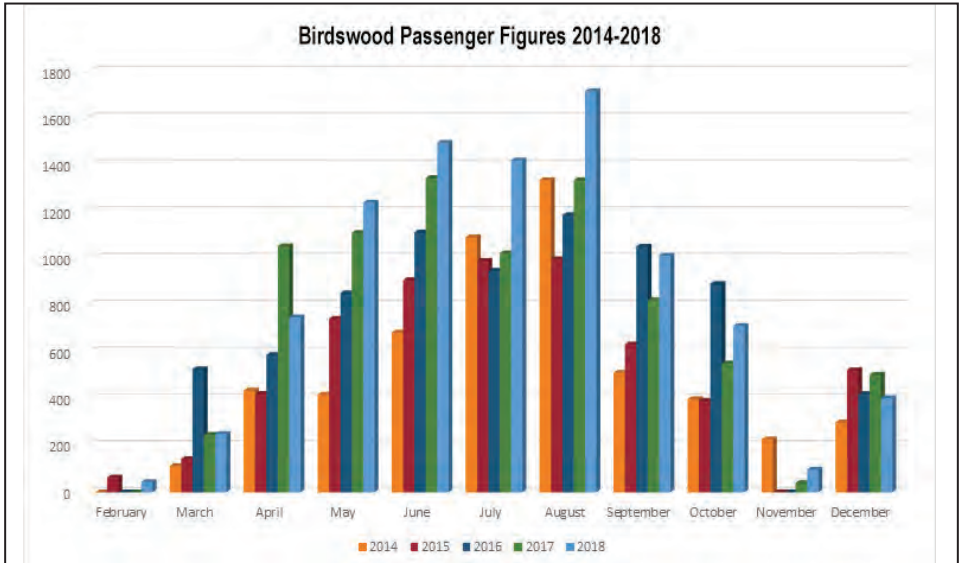
We have also had to undertake searches for known services within the site boundaries (similar to if you were buying a house) and to ensure the proposed scheme doesn't affect these. One sewer to the east of the A610 has had a large impact on our plans, changing the alignment and even the bank profile in places to ensure 5m either side of the sewer alignment is allowed for maintenance.

Bringing all the information together from various sources onto 2D Computer Aided Design allowed us to understand the extent of the works and the interface of various elements of the design both with each other and also with the wider area. This was able to give us a better understanding of areas where steep embankment slopes might require a 'hard' engineering solution (such as concrete retaining walls, gabions etc), or whether alignments of new access roads may need to change. Now that the final proposals are agreed, these CAD drawings form one of the key deliverables within the planning application.



# BIRDWOOD & DERWENTWISE

by Vix Wilding



Sometimes I really open my mouth before engaging brain and cause myself a little too much stress. This time I'm pleased to say that the last Portal article was really worth writing. Since I wrote about needing new volunteers to increase the numbers of our team, I'm pleased to say my mouth has worked magic! I've had contact from and trained 14 new members of the Birdswood Crew Team and some are even interested in becoming future masters. With these extra people helping out I'm able to confidently advertise our Private Charter offerings and promote the schools packages again.

If you have teaching experience in Upper Schools, old or new, or any ideas at all, please send a message to [victoria@birdswood.org](mailto:victoria@birdswood.org) or call me on 07552 055455.

Looking at the numbers for last year I am proud to announce that we carried over 9,000 passengers in 2018 – nearly 1,000 more than in 2017. The bar chart demonstrates

the continued success of Birdswood and the comparisons over the last 5 years of operation. You will see that there have been peak and troughs; this has been due to offers, discounts, Groupon and even just the weather, but the end-of-year figures have continued to climb and as always I must congratulate the strong team of volunteers who work alongside me to ensure this business reaches its highest capabilities.

The Boat Committee continues to meet monthly at The Bell Inn, Cromford, and work collectively to improve all things boat, advertising, recruitment and events.

Over the last year FCC have been collaborating closely with DerwentWISE, a project team within Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. There has been joint working and some available funding that has been accessed by FCC. Work continues with the coir rolls, which are used as bank support and regeneration of habitat for the wildlife along the Cromford



FCC has worked with DerwentWISE to produce five new information boards about the canal between Cromford and Ambergate. In this one at High Peak Junction, Birdswood is seen 'exiting stage left' on the attractive towpath cartoon at the bottom, whilst on the Cromford board there is a photograph of her being pulled by Chelsea.

and images to depict the area and wildlife, even a silhouette of Birdswood. These have been designed collectively to ensure that all aspects of the canal and surroundings were covered.

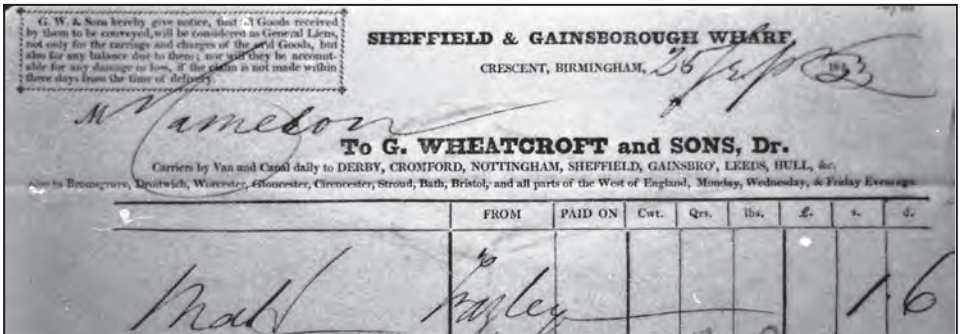
Due to DerwentWISE's funding being for a 5-year project there was always an end date and this is fast approaching. The Finale event weekend is to be 23rd and 24th March and

stretch. The work party team have already laid hundreds of metres and still have a third of the work to complete before spring. Areas have been identified from Birdswood, when Rick Jillings and John Barker took to the water to decide on placement locations of the rolls.

Another valuable project has been new interpretation panels at Cromford, High Peak Junction, Whatstandwell and Ambergate. These have local information, interesting facts

Birdswood is to be part of that. Arraslea Shires are to bring Chelsea and Ted to pull the boat in the traditional manner to mark the occasion and there will be free activities on Cromford Wharf, including displays and music. I'll be running a tombola to support running costs for Birdswood, so pop the date in your diary and come along to show your support for the work we continue to do for the pleasure of so many.

# THE WIDER WORLD OF WHEATCROFT



German Wheatcroft & Sons were the main carriers on the Cromford Canal for many years but they also traded further afield as is shown here in this docket recording Malt from Fazeley, presumably to Birmingham, on 25th September 1823. The printed legend reads "Carriers by Van and Canal daily to Derby, Cromford, Nottingham, Sheffield, Gainsbro', Hull &c. Also to Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Worcester, Gloucester, Cirencester, Stroud, Bath, Bristol, and all parts of the West of England, Monday, Wednesday, & Friday Evenings."



# NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Mark Brailsford of Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service reports on work between Cromford and Ambergate



*The DCC tree team at work below the aqueduct. with DCC Allroads digging for leaks on towpath by Leawood Pump which itself is having roof repairs.*

*Photo: Rick Jillings*

## Leak Repairs

Investigation work to find the leaks on the Derwent (Wigwell) aqueduct near Leawood Pump has been carried out by DCC's AllRoads team. The aqueduct has a black liner that was installed in the 1980s. Water appears to be getting behind this, especially where the liner ends by the sets of stop planks. Sections of the towpath were dug up to investigate and puddling clay has gone in to stem any water flow. This appears to have reduced the flow leaking from the south eastern arch. (For more on this see page 26.)

## DCC Completed Works

Contractors have abseiled the walls of the Derwent (Wigwell) aqueduct to de-vegetate the walls, to reduce tree saplings penetrating into the stone work and causing structural damage. DCC's Tree Team and DerwentWISE have cut down several trees at the base of the structure that were having an impact on it. DerwentWISE have also cut down trees



*Rope access contractors clear Derwent Aqueduct of unwanted vegetation.*

*Photo: Hugh Potter*

around Aqueduct Cottage; this has now opened up the views of the aqueduct and Leawood Pump.

Contractors have removed reed and silt from between the Derwent aqueduct and Leashaw Bridge with a digger, to allow a 4 metre channel of open water (See Portal 67). This not only helps with the water flow, but is also beneficial for wildlife as set out in the management plan for Cromford Canal.

A dozen alders have been felled below Pisani's, which were heavily leaning towards the canal; this will let in light and also benefit wildlife. Several small trees growing out of the retaining wall along the High Peak Trail towards Homesford Cottage have also been removed. These were damaging the structure.

Both Browns and Wayfarers swing bridges near High Peak Junction have had decking boards replaced.



*Vegetation clearance has enabled a full view of Jessop's aqueduct across the Derwent, including the huge buttresses that he had to put in after the structure's partial failure in 1793. Photo: Hugh Potter*

### **DCC Planned Work, Ongoing**

At Leawood Pump rotten roof timbers are being replaced. Work started in October, with the stone roof flags taken off to reduce weight to enable a splice repair on several rotted timbers. Work should be completed by the end of March. Middleton Top boiler house roof is also awaiting repairs.

Contractors are coming in February with a digger to remove reed and canal silt from

north of Poyser's Bridge, where a land drain has washed down several tons of sand and soil.

### **Volunteer Work Parties – Thank You**

FCC volunteers have removed reeds from the canal south of Leashaw, reeds that had been pulled up by two local volunteers over the winter.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and DerwentWISE have also done reed pulling along the canal this winter, at Leashaw and Ambergate, in conjunction with DCC.



*DCC staff clearing reed at Calladine Wide Hole near Ambergate. Photo: Hugh Potter*

### **New Interpretation Boards**

New site interpretation panels have been installed for the canal at Whatstandwell and Ambergate. This is with support from FCC, DWT and DerwentWISE.



*The new information panel at Whatstandwell. Photo: Hugh Potter*

# WORK PARTY REPORTS

By John Guyler

## **Crisp packet date beaten**

The previous long date crisp packet found by John Dyson (Portal 67) has been beaten by several years. The new record was dated 20th November 1997 and found in thick undergrowth at the boat dock beside Lock 2, Ironville. Meanwhile, here is the latest round-up of work carried out by FCC work parties.

## **14th November, Three Sites**

John Barker had a group at Whatstandwell, clearing a large load of reeds which had been pulled from the channel previously. This was very heavy work considering the distance to the area of disposal with wheelbarrows. After lunch they moved on to Sawmills to meet up with Vix and her group to continue the clearing work there.

John Guyler and George Rogers met with Canal & River Trust ecologist Imogen Wilde and the CRT area engineer Gareth Carter with responsibility for volunteer groups. The group worked through the site north of the Langley Mill basin discussing the line of the proposed extension of the canal under the A610. The discussion was on the various land boundaries, to allow for low level clearance of shrubs and saplings to create a path up the line of the proposed extension.

## **21th November, Pinxton Wharf**

Removing the remains of the trees which were cut back at the previous work party, on the opposite bank to the towpath. Cleared approx 50m.

## **28th November, Ironville and Lower Hartshay**

At Ironville, on the bank between the old Lock 1 site and Codnor Park Reservoir spillway, the previous week a number of trees and shrubs had been cleared by the CRT along the bank adjacent to the towpath, exposing a

large amount of litter. We set to and cleared the whole section within an hour, producing 8 bags of rubbish. Then the group relocated to Lower Hartshay to get on with clearance of dense undergrowth near the bridge.

## **12th December, Pinxton Wharf**

Approximately 50m of reeds cleared from the towpath side of the channel, and 25m on the opposite bank. 50m of saplings and undergrowth cleared and stacked into habitat piles along the back fence; two car tyres recovered.

## **19th December, Pinxton Wharf**

Working with three arborists from DCC, a lot of overhanging branches were removed. A long section of reeds was cleared by John Sparham assisted by Adrian Booth, allowing free flow of water in the channel. The group working on the undergrowth and shrubs cleared 50m. All the brush was stacked to form a continuous habitat refuge along the perimeter fence. As it was the last work party before Christmas, we had a good excuse to try the refreshments in the newly opened Boat Inn (see page34), which went down very well.



*A DCC digger at work near Pinxton Wharf in conjunction with FCC work party.*

*Photo: Chris Stamford-Burrows*



## 2nd January, Pinxton Wharf

Again working with DCC, this time with a JCB digger, which was clearing the weed and dredging some sections of the channel. There was a limit to the areas of working by the machine because of identified water vole habitats and also weight restrictions on the bank. The FCC team finished clearing the debris left from the previous work party.

## 9th January, Ironville, Pinxton Arm Bridge

Removing brash and trees which had been cut at previous work parties.



*Surveying the towpath bank from Birdswood to determine the best location for the latest batch of coir roll bank protection.*

*Photo: John Guylar*

## 10th January, Cromford Wharf

Survey of coir rolls from Birdswood. With the third phase of 56 rolls ready to be placed along the bank, a survey was conducted using Birdswood to identify places that either needed rolls fitted or remedial work doing. On Birdswood was DCC area manager Rick Jillings and ranger Mark Brailsford, FCC's John Barker and Chris Stamford-Burrows in charge of the boat. On the towpath Wayne Scarle and myself were marking the areas requiring attention and recording for future work parties. We travelled up to the swing bridge and then reversed back to Cromford. As we were mooring Birdswood, a walker came to us and reported that a tree had, in the previous 20 minutes, fallen from the side of the railway in front of them and was now laying across the

towpath and channel. At that point Rick Jillings got his fold-up bike out of the back of his car and was last seen pedalling quickly down the towpath. The tree was rapidly cleared by DCC allowing Birdswood to fulfil a charter on the Saturday.

## 16th January, Ironville

Work at Lock 3 removing saplings from the watercourse edge and litter pick in the undergrowth progressed towards Lock 2 removing 6 bags of rubbish directly underneath the pedestrian bridge. Then we moved on to the area known as the boat dock, adjacent to Lock 2, clearing saplings and removing rubbish. A damaged drone was recovered from a bush at Lock 3 (we did look to see if it had to be returned to Gatwick Airport). Total of 10 bags of rubbish collected, one car wheel and numerous scaffolding clamps and clips from the recent bridge renovation. Had a sighting of a kingfisher, just a blue flash.



*Impressive tree clearance at the Boat Dock alongside Lock 2. Photo: John Guylar*

## Wednesday 23rd January, Ironville

One group, working at Golden Valley at the end of the abandoned section cutting bushes back and litter picking, 11 bags of litter. Another group working at Lock 2 towards the spillway, clearing saplings and litter picking at the boat



dock. Several people saw the kingfisher. Total bags of rubbish for the day 13.

### **Wednesday 30th January, Ironville**

Working with Dave Wright, a licenced arborist, the trees which over the years had fallen across the boat dock at Lock 2 were cut up and the logs stacked in the dock.



*Deep into the undergrowth below Cinder Bank Bridge. Photo: John Guylar*



*Reed pulling near Lawn Bridge, Cromford, as a group of canoeists passes.*

*Photo: Hugh Potter*

### **Wednesday 6th February, Ironville**

Continuation of clearing the cut timber and litter pick from the boat dock at Lock 2.

### **Wednesday 30th January, Whatstandwell**

Clearing stacked reeds off the towpath edge.

### **Wednesday 6th February, Cromford, Lawn Bridge**

Clearing reeds from the channel on the towpath side. Who needs to be a member of a gym with this work?

Since the New Year, the groups have collected 35 bags of litter from the Ironville area and two bags from Pinxton Wharf.

**If you would like to join the work parties, please contact John Barker (01773 760358 or [work@cromfordcanal.org](mailto:work@cromfordcanal.org)).**

## **Enid Bakewell MBE**

*FCC work party leader John Barker congratulates a stalwart member*

Enid Bakewell played for the English women's cricket team in twelve Tests between 1968 and 1979 and 23 one-day international matches. A right handed bat and a slow left arm bowler, on her figures she has a strong claim to be regarded as the best all-rounder that the English game produced.

Enid worked as an FCC volunteer for several months at Ironville in 2015, after meeting a work-party group on the towpath, whilst she was out on a ramble with a large group. She asked all about our work and decided to join us on the following week. She worked with us on raking the historical litter that emerged when the heavy undergrowth was cut back. She was a pleasure to work with, but she didn't suffer fools, as one local lad who offered to help us found to his cost when he swore.

Enid has been awarded the MBE, by the Queen, for her service to cricket, in the New Year Honours List. May I congratulate Enid, on behalf of the FCC work party, on the Honour.

*All cricket details from Wikipedia*



# VOLUNTEER HOURS

## John Guyler reveals almost half a million pounds of volunteer work

I am very pleased to report that from 2015, when the Friends of Cromford Canal volunteer hours were first recorded, up to and including 2018, we have direct volunteer hours valued at £499,850.

FCC is a charity and charities are only as good as the volunteers who give their time freely; this figure proves FCC is active and effective as a worthwhile group. This is the fourth year that I can report the recorded volunteer hours and the travelling time for all active areas of the FCC have increased.

At the beginning of the year I contacted all the officers of the FCC and invited them individually to submit their volunteer hours and travel time, all information remaining confidential. My thanks go to all those who put up with my constant requests for information.

Throughout the year the average response has been about 90% of those I contacted, an increase from 2017. The volunteer hours record is invaluable when applying for grants or demonstrating the commitment of the FCC to potential donors or indeed to the membership.

FCC is acknowledged to be a very active

group and has a very good working relationship with Derbyshire County Council and Canal & River Trust. In 2018, we had work parties at Cromford, High Peak Junction, Whatstandwell and Pinxton Wharf, working under the direction of DCC.

At Ironville, Sawmills and Lower Hartshay we have had work parties under the direction of CRT. In Towpath Talk newspaper CRT reported that in 2017-18 volunteers gave 616,300 hours of their time and expertise. FCC contributed towards this total; painting and repairs to the fences at Ironville alone was 176 hours, then there are all the other regular activities we do on top.

Two new groups recorded for 2018 – the Strategic Restoration Committee who are putting in an increasing number of hours, and the transcribers of the historical canal ‘permit’ books – have added a significant number of hours to the total.

The 2018 total volunteer hours recorded for Birdwood, our fare paying passenger trip boat at Cromford Wharf, and the shop in the weighbridge office, are detailed below. All other maintenance jobs, other than detailed, have been included in the yearly total.

### Volunteer Hours 2018

Volunteer crewing of Birdwood	7,573.5
Shop volunteer operating hours	810
Volunteer hours for officers of the FCC	4,616.75
Recorded hours at all FCC management meetings	763
Work parties recorded activities	2,524.5
Heritage Weekend	210
Pinxton Gala Day	20
Spring Gathering	70
Restoration activities	770
Transcribing historical permit books	745
<i>Total recorded direct volunteer hours</i>	<i>18,158.75</i>
<i>Total recorded travel hours</i>	<i>1,142</i>
<b>Total recorded volunteer hours for 2018</b>	<b>19,300.75</b>

### Recorded Direct Volunteer Hours 2015-2018

2015	6,858.25
2016	10,784.5
2017	14,183.5
2018	18,158.75

The total direct hours over four years' recording (49,985) multiplied by £10 (a DerwentWISE figure) is **£499,850** plus travel time.

Thanks to everyone for putting up with my constant requests each month for their hours, but with the headline figure above, the Friends of the Cromford Canal have shown themselves to be a truly credible group.

# REALISING THE DREAM

## Ron Common has good news about Aqueduct Cottage



*Elevations of the proposed work on the cottage from the planning application.*

*Courtesy James Boon Architects*

It's been a long time coming, but the mission to restore Aqueduct Cottage took a huge leap forward in February with the submission of a formal planning application by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Drawing on earlier professional studies commissioned by DerwentWISE, plus my proposals to DWT in 2017, James Boon, from the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust, painstakingly prepared the restoration plans and detailed heritage statement required. Thanks also to fee donations from DerwentWISE, FCC and others, the formal

application was submitted to Amber Valley Borough Council on 12th February.

This long-awaited news is the critical first step in DWT's plans to 're-purpose' the building, and is the most significant development on the cottage since it was last occupied, almost five decades ago.

As revealed by Alex Morley at last October's Discovery Days talk (Portal 67), DWTs strategic plan is to continue to revitalise and improve Lea Wood, and restoring the cottage is a key part of the overall plan. Given the large number of annual visitors to the



*This photograph was discovered, perched on a shelf in the Homesford Tea Rooms. It was traced to the Greenhough family who lived at the cottage in the 1940s. Thanks to this discovery, we now know of four surviving occupants who lived at the cottage (previously thought to be just one!) which will no doubt lead to more interesting stories in due course.*

*Courtesy Paula Greenhough*

Cromford Canal, DWT recognises the potential of this ancient woodland, once part of the Nightingale estate, with its terraced walkways and wildlife diversity to educate and inspire visitors about the 'living landscape' in the Lower Derwent Valley.

There are plans to improve access to the wood, including rebuilding the steps behind the cottage, improving pathways and adding new interpretation to enhance the visitor experience.

Once completed, the combined impact of the restored cottage and more accessible nature reserve will enhance the appeal of this stretch of the canal, drawing people from High Peak Junction to a new 'destination point'.

It will also provide a natural and cultural heritage balance to the industrial heritage emphasis in the valley, thereby further enhancing the visitor appeal of the World Heritage Site.

### **Conservation Philosophy**

The philosophy behind the cottage rebuild is to undertake a 'light touch' restoration and informed reconstruction using traditional methods and materials as far as possible to recreate the main structure of the cottage, plus the privy/pig sty outbuilding, as close as possible to their original external appearance when viewed from the canal.

After an evaluation of various options, DWT decided that the cottage is ideally suited as

a visitor interpretation centre. In addition to informing about the biodiversity of Lea Wood, it will also explain about the history of cottage, who lived there, and the significance of these aspects to the Derwent Valley landscape. Full details of the planning application are available on the AVBC Planning website.

Meanwhile, in parallel to the planning process, some new pieces of the jigsaw of the cottage's 217-year history emerged recently.

### **Blacksmith's Workshop**

Documents recently examined in the Wakefield record office revealed that the stone privy was once a blacksmith's workshop! The blacksmith was a Mr Robins who rented the cottage during the 1870s. The original location of the workshop (a stone cabin) was on the opposite side of the cottage to where the privy is today (ie to the right as viewed across the canal). But it had to be relocated due to being outside the land covered by the tenancy agreement. It's not clear when the original building was dismantled but the rectangular stone cut-out at the end of the cottage garden remains – and now we understand its origins!

### **Pictures Into The Past**

Aqueduct cottage is probably the most photographed building on the canal. Little wonder then that delightful old photographs (some over 100 years old) continue to be discovered. Not only do these provide





*This dates from around 1895 and is one of the best historic family photos seen to date. Its discovery enabled local resident Caron Mellor to be become reacquainted with her ancestral home when her daughter traced ancestry records back five generations to the Ann Eaton family shown in the photograph. Quite a find!*

*Courtesy Caron Mellor*

important historical evidence of the cottage, but they help to establish a clearer picture of the families who lived in the cottage in the past.

### **Next Steps**

If planning consent for the restoration can be secured during spring 2019, the next step will be to start fund-raising for the build.

At the time of writing, the preferred approach is to start with a crowdfunding scheme with the objective of raising a portion of the funding quickly in order to get the building work underway by late summer.

It's an ambitious target, and is dependent on securing planning consent in good time and drumming up sufficient support for the fund-raising campaign. However, given the level of affection that local people have for this building, and the determination of the team, there's good reason for optimism!



*This is more recent but provides a rare glimpse of the front yard of the cottage in the 1950s. The people are June Bark, sister of Frank and Frances (Fay) Bark, with her mother, Violet. Photos like this will provide invaluable evidence for the restoration process.*

*Courtesy Mirander Girling Goldsmith*

# LEAWOOD JOTTINGS

by Ian Yates

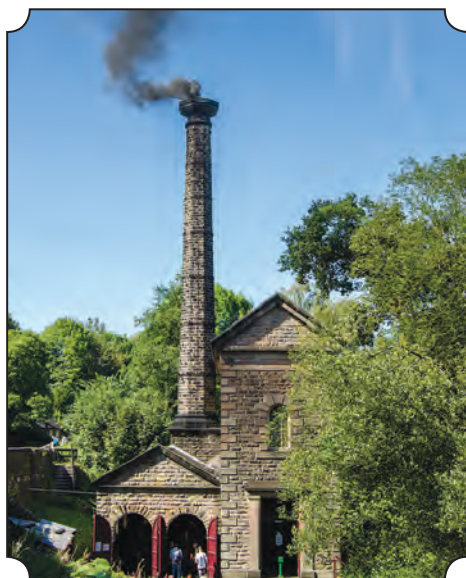
The work to the roof has is still ongoing with progress rather slow; hopefully the works will be completed before the Easter steaming. New pieces have been spliced onto the beams and some of the leadwork has been fixed.

Despite the works to the roof we have been busy with the boilers. We have brought forward the inspections so they can be carried out over the winter and at present we have removed all the cladding, mud hole covers and washout plugs. As this is a major inspection we have also removed the crown valves and the dome cover and the front safety valve casing and cover. The boiler inspector and non-destructive testing are due on 28th February when we will find out if the plates have deteriorated any further; we do not think they have as the thinning has taken place on the outside which is quite visible. There was quite a build-up of scale on top of the firebox crown and this has been removed with a vacuum cleaner. The existing crown girder plates,

whilst there is some corrosion, are visually in a good condition and the stays appear good even after 118 years. If the boilers pass the examination it will be all hands on deck to put them back together for a hydraulic test, followed by a steam test at Easter.

Anyone visiting the pump house will have noticed all the gates are in a poor condition and the handrail by the entrance steps is in need of attention. Derbyshire County Council are ordering the wood and we will build new gates and replace the handrails, probably after the boiler works are complete.

The steaming dates for next year have been agreed with some changes. The steamings in June, July and the first weekend of August have become very slow, so the intention is to open static on the Saturday whilst warming up and then run on the Sunday. The opening times will be from noon to 4.30pm as there are usually few visitors after then. If there are people about we will keep running as at present.



## Leawood Pumphouse Leawood Pump Steaming Dates 2019

Easter	21st & 22nd April
May Day	5th & 6th
June	1st (static) & 2nd
July	6th (static) & 7th
August	3rd (static) & 4th
August Bank	25th & 26th
September	14th & 15th
October	5th & 6th
November	2nd & 3rd

Also steam times from noon to 4.30pm.

From now on June, July and the first August weekend will be static Saturday and steam on Sunday.

# BRIDGING THE REGENERATION GAP

## Marie Brown on a successful campaign to restore a historic bridge



*The present sad state of Portland Basin Bridge.*

To date, through the support of the volunteers working along the canal and around the Codnor Park Reservoir, over 3,700 hours have been donated, worth a whopping £54,000 which has gone on to make a distinct and measurable impact



on the environment and the wildlife. So firstly, we would like to extend our grateful thanks to everyone that put on their wellies and came to help.

Forgive me if this piece is a little whimsical but it's a poetic thing when a community comes together and shows that they care about something.

There's a scruffy looking bridge as you near the village of Jacksdale. Her official title is Portland Basin Bridge No 38A but, locally, she is known affectionately as 'Old Humpy'. We all know the importance of looking after our elderly, and at over 200 years old we thought that it was about time that this 'old bird' got a bit of a facelift before the ravages of time were unable to be reversed. Little did we know

exactly what that would entail and where that would lead us.

There is an art to restoration, as opposed to repair. A repair could describe a local 'bloke' offering to nip down to the bridge with a couple of buckets of concrete and a trowel

for instance. Whereas restoration is a true art form which requires a delicate touch, years of training and a fundamental respect and understanding of the craftsmanship of traditional materials and techniques. In our modern throw-away society, it is nice to know that the work we do now will be leaving a legacy for the next 200 years and for generations of families in the future.

It is no surprise that the latter option is considerably more expensive than the 'bloke and buckets' option, but it was with the knowledge that it would take time and considerable effort that we decided to bring her back to her former glory and engage the services of a stonemason.

Just before Christmas we sent out a call

to action to our supporters, far and wide, and asked for help in securing the funding needed to repair the 'Humpy Bridge' and you all certainly came through for us and voted in your thousands. I can't help wondering if the original stonemasons who built the bridge would have imagined that over 200 years later a campaign to look after it would cause so much interest and excitement, but it is testament to their skill that it has stood for this long.

'I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples' – Mother Teresa

It was late on 24th January that we received the call from Aviva Community Fund telling us that we had been chosen as one of the Judge's Selection Winners and that although we wouldn't be getting the whole amount we applied for, which was £19,950, we would be receiving £14,600. A great result and one that would not have been possible without the support of this wonderful community of volunteers, helpers and our 900 supporters on Facebook. We are still £4,000 short of what we need but we are confident that lady luck will shine on us once again and that funding will be secured soon. Thanks everyone.

Over the coming months, our stonemason

Robert will be working away in the workshop carving out the stones ready for placement after the last frost of the year. Then, our volunteers from the group will be with Robert as he begins the painstakingly slow process of putting our 'old girl' back together. The ground around the bridge will be cleared, and native wildflowers will be planted so that the whole area will be completely transformed . . . we can't wait to show her off to you all.

'Alone we can do very little, together we can do so much' – Helen Keller

If our Humpy could talk, I think she would be humbled by the love and care people have shown and she says a huge thank you to everyone that took just 15 minutes out of their busy lives to take a pause, vote and ultimately bring her back to life.

On behalf of the volunteers on the Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Reservoir Committee may we thank you all again.

### Get in touch

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

**Facebook:** Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Res

**Instagram:** CromfordCanal&CodnorParkRes



*How it used  
to look, and  
hopefully how it  
will look again  
soon.*



# LEAWOOD LEAKS

Retired Chartered Water Engineer Chris Broome helps track down leaks at Leawood Aqueduct



*Simon Stoker (left) and Chris Broome “look into” a deep trench dug by DCC’s AllRoads team in the search for the elusive leak(s).*

*Photo: Hugh Potter*

At the Derwent Aqueduct (a Scheduled Ancient Monument of significant historical importance) near to the Leawood Pumphouse, investigations have been undertaken by Derbyshire County Council to try to find and reduce leakage through the structure. These have been partially successful but more still needs to be done, perhaps later in the year at the end of the Birdwood trip boat season.

Simon Stoker, formerly of the Cromford Canal Society in the 1970s and ‘80s, has been very helpful in sharing with us his knowledge of the aqueduct and in particular the liner that he was involved with installing back in the early 1980s. DCC have no records of this remedial work. The leaks in the structure have been evident for many years but appear to have got worse in more recent years, being particularly notable in the southern accommodation arch.

I also noticed, interestingly, that the rate of leakage significantly increased when the water level in the aqueduct channel dropped by 200mm or so below the level of the stop logs at the southern end. This happened last summer and the increased leakage made it quite difficult during dry weather periods to maintain minimum operating water levels in the canal for the trip boat.

Several trial pits were dug in the towpaths on both sides of the aqueduct channel to a depth of up to 2.5m. They were all dry apart from two that were excavated on the pump house side near to the ‘new’ stop planks. During excavation the

side of the trench nearest the canal collapsed into the trench and water from the canal filled the trench to approximately the same level as the canal. What had happened was the water pressure present at the masonry channel wall immediately behind the liner was sufficient to collapse the clay backfill layer behind it into the trench. The question then was: how is the water getting behind the liner?

When the liner was installed, Simon told us, it ‘ballooned’ in the bed of the aqueduct as water was being let back in. Clearly, water was getting in under the liner. As the channel filled up the water pressure flattened the liner back down onto the bed. Simon is convinced, as am I, that water still gets into the walls on both sides and finds its way along and down into the structure below the canal bed where it finds the path of least resistance and reappears through joints in the masonry as leaks.



*Near the Pump House, a portable pump was used to try to empty the trench dug, through which water was flowing around the stop planks. Note the liner visible under the coping stone and the water movement indicating a leak* Photo: Chris Broome

This structure has always leaked, right from when it was first built. There is no point in trying to eliminate all leakage as this would be impracticable, but we need to manage it to keep it at acceptable and safe levels that won't place the structure at risk of serious damage through the creation of significant voids.

A trial hole immediately behind the stop planks revealed a significant leak from around

the planks. It was clear that the clay packing in this area was not effective in preventing water from getting into the wall and underneath the liner which stops abruptly just short of the stop planks. DCC's team contractors AllRoads used clay to pack the trench and the area around the end of the stop planks as best they could. I think this will need to be done properly another time when we can lower the water levels in the area to allow full access to the stop planks on both banks to reseal these areas properly in the dry and so reduce the amount of water getting into the wall behind the liner.

We will never completely stop this from happening. It is also Simon's belief that, ideally, mini piles should be placed along both banks from the stop planks back to the overflow weir and the pump house as water is clearly getting into and behind the side wall of the channel all the way along this length which is also part of the aqueduct structure. This would be expensive to do and I'm not sure DCC would be able to justify such a cost without evidence that the leakage is too great and is placing the structure at risk. We will continue to monitor the leaks this year and also maintain the stop planks to minimise the water leakage through these as well.



*The installation of the liner in the 1980s certainly cured the worst of the leaks – as evidenced in this photograph by the late Frank Rodgers of the effect of the leaks in a very cold winter prior to the its installation. The problem leaks today are from under the two smaller side arches rather than the main span.*

# MANSFIELD & PINXTON RAILWAY

Ian Handley follows up the article in last issue



*The original stone face of Mill Lane Bridge with supporting beams.*



*The opposite side was brick faced, possibly because of collapse of the original stone facing.*

Many thanks for the recent Portal Article on the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway and for an enjoyable magazine, which we always look forward to reading.

With regard to the proposal to build a railway instead of a canal the reasons are well documented as to why a canal was not built. The water table in this area is at such a level as to not be high enough to supply the needs of a canal which would have resulted in high pumping costs and shortfalls in supply in hot summers. The later suggestion of building a railway is in today's terms a high-tech solution using state of the art technology.

As regards haulage, at lectures in the late 1960s I became aware of oral evidence that bullocks were used; this complements the comments on haulage in the article.

When the line was converted to steam haulage the reason for the change of alignment in places is because, with animal haulage, curves enhance the beasts' ability to pull loads up gradients. Steam engines, being

more powerful, work more efficiently with straighter tracks.

At the time of the closure of the Nottingham-Worksop line via Mansfield in October 1964, all trains but one ran via the direct 1847 alignment. The one exception ran via Pye Bridge and Pinxton as far as Kirkby-in-Ashfield. This train was omitted from the October 1964 closure notice. The last two trains were the 17.20 Nottingham to Kirkby on 3rd September 1965 and the 06.11 Kirkby to Nottingham on 4th September 1965.

The rail over-bridge on Mill Lane, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, was one of the oldest bridges in daily use when rebuilt in 2000 after a life of 181 years. The new bridge comprises a concrete box for the roadway retaining the original wing walls on the embankment. The reason for the bridge retaining the same width to the road carriageway was due to pressure from an agreement with local residents. Their fear was that an increase in road size would lead to heavier traffic flows, so the carriageway stayed the same but the road headway was increased.



On the new bridge the parapet wall above the embankment suffered serious subsidence shortly after building work was completed. An interesting feature of the original bridge

was that two sides facing the roadway were of different construction materials, one being brick and the other stone, as can be seen in the photographs.



*Replacing the historic bridge with a higher concrete structure. Photos: Ian Handley*



*Even modern concrete was no defence against subsidence as can be seen from the displaced left-hand section.*

## CODNOR PARK NOTICE BOARD

by John Barker



*The notice board at Codnor Park has had a total facelift courtesy of a host of FCC volunteers.*



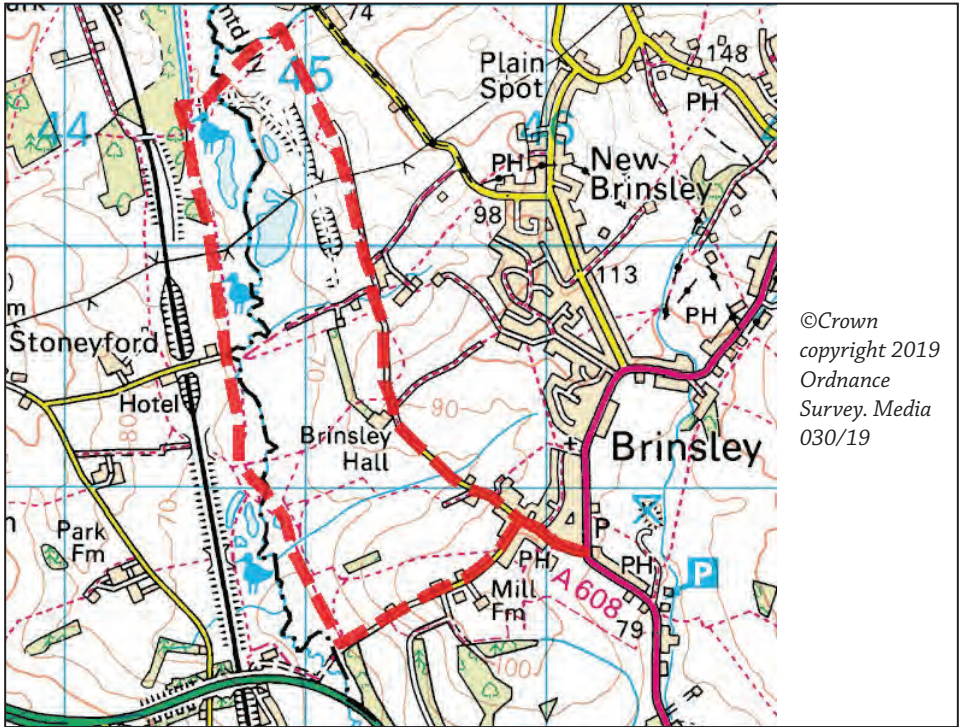
The FCC work party has completed renewing the notice board at Codnor Park Reservoir. Thanks go to CJ for designing the poster which gives details of our restoration plans together with news about our trip boat Birdswood and our next social evening. There is a large map

of the canal and details about volunteering for FCC.

Thanks are also due to Dave R for his work on the sign, to Steve Kemp for the signwriting and of course our very valuable work party for taking the it down, painting and replacing it.

# CANAL CIRCULAR WALKS – 2 BRINSLEY

Ken Brockway offers an easy but scenic walk



**Distance:** 4 miles.

**Start:** Brinsley Post Office, Church Lane/Hall Lane.

**How to get there:** Rainbow One (Nottingham–Alfreton) and Black Cat (Derby–Mansfield). Free parking at Brinsley Headstocks (NG16 5AE), 200 yards to south, adjacent to Brinsley Lodge Steak House.

**Maps:** The route is covered on OS Explorer maps 260 and 269.

This is a fairly flat walk with surprising views of the Erewash Valley, but there is a short climb at the end. It can be wet along the old line of the canal but generally an easy route to follow.

Start from Church Lane, Brinsley, near

the Post Office. Take Hall Lane, passing the telephone kiosk, now stuffed with books, and the White Lion pub. After Stoney Lane the road becomes more rural and the good surface allows you to take in the views of the valley to the left and, ahead, the Jessop Monument ([www.codnor.info/Monument.php](http://www.codnor.info/Monument.php)). Continue along the road to Brinsley Hall Farm; here bear right and continue along the track. The official line of the path does a strange detour into the field right but there is no evidence of it so stay on the track; similar detours occur later.

At Brinsley Gin pass the rather ornate farm on your right. After the buildings the track turns right but our footpath continues ahead as a field-edge path. There are more excellent



views into and across the valley to the left, but make the best of it because at a metal gate the path crosses to the other side of the hedge along a narrow fenced path. Take care there is a ditch on the left.



*The walk joins the canal at the former railway bridge, where the water now flows out into the river.*

The ground drops down and the houses of Westwood and Jacksdale come into view. Our path meets another track and the sign offers a route left to the Erewash Valley; take this. Follow the track but again the map shows the path should be across the field to the left. At the track end a bridge provides a crossing of the River Erewash to pass into Derbyshire. Follow the path with the embankment of a disused railway to the left; this soon leads to



*Former mining subsidence flashes are now nature reserves.*

the canal and the brick remains of the bridge which carried the railway over the canal. This was a branch from the Great Northern to Codnor Park Works and the Midland Railway.

Turn left to join the canal's route. The water runs out here towards the River Erewash and from this point south the canal has disappeared; only the footpath follows the line of the former towpath, but it's an easy route so no worries. To the left here is the Erewash Meadows Nature Reserve managed by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. The ground can be wet due partly to mining settlement so duckboards are placed along the path. You should look out for lapwing, snipe and redshank and at breeding time you may see or hear reed buntings and sedge warblers. Information boards will tell you more.

*Recent resurfacing of the route near Stoneyford.*



The path enters an open field then passes under overhead cables before it becomes a wide fenced track, whose muddy surface has recently been improved by DWT. Pass the buildings at Stoneyford on your right then take



*The rebuilt house at Stoneyford; a bridge formerly crossed the canal in the left foreground.*

care as the well-worn path stays along the river bank – this is not our footpath – we leave the river bank here. Continue across the field to a stile then across another field to a stile just right of a field gate.

Cross the next field and bear left, ignoring the stile on the right that would take you alongside the remains of the old Mills' Cut. Continue to the field corner where a bridge provides a second crossing of the River Erewash. This is the point where the canal crossed the river and there is evidence of brickwork in the river bed that could be the remains of the small aqueduct. The path continues between fences so no choices. Ignore all the gates on the left; follow the enclosed path which roughly follows the line of the canal with Aldercar Western Meadows Nature Reserve to your right.



*The footbridge across the River Erewash at the site of the aqueduct.*



*The remains of the old Mills' Cut are still clearly visible.*

Eventually a stile leads onto a lane. There is no public path along the line of the canal beyond this point except for a short isolated stretch at Langley Mill. Turn left here and walk uphill, again easy underfoot, giving opportunity to take in the views north up the valley. The track gradually improves and finally meets Hall Lane; turn right here to retrace the route back into Brinsley.

## **BRINSLEY HEADSTOCKS**

If you have time to spare it is well worth a visit to Brinsley Headstocks, a 2-minute walk from the car park. The headstocks were in use for mine access until 1970, then were preserved at the National Mining Museum at Lound Hall, Notts, until it closed in 1989, when they were then returned to their original home. They now stand dramatically on the hillside with a picnic site alongside.



# BIRDWOOD AT ANDERTON

Mike Harrison looks at two 'new' photographs of the FCC trip boat towards the end of her working days



*Photos: Lichfield Cruising Club Collection*

The FCC has just been given two interesting pictures of Birdswood in her working days with British Waterways taken in 1963.

At this time, BW had finally decided to give up long-distance carrying by narrow boat in the North West, and some of the boats are seen here laid up in the basin at the top of Anderton Boat Lift, which connects the Trent & Mersey Canal with the River Weaver in Cheshire.

Birdswood is breasted up to the Admiral Class motor boat Lindsay, which was built in 1960 by W.J. Yarwood & Sons of Northwich, the same yard as Birdswood had been built 22 years previously. This gives a good chance to compare the traditional front end style of Birdswood

with the 'modern' Lindsay, with its lighter, welded steel construction rather than riveted iron.

There are no cans or chimneys on the boats, meaning they are unoccupied and awaiting their fate after the work had stopped.

An ex Fellows, Morton & Clayton motor boat is emerging from the guillotine gate at the end of the left hand of the two

aqueducts leading from the lift, whilst the small pleasure cruiser Mabel, quite rare at that time, is waiting its turn to enter and pass down the lift to the River Weaver 50ft below. ICI's large Winnington chemical works on the opposite bank of the river can be seen in the background.



# THE BOAT INN (CROMFORD)

## Hugh Potter discovers how this Cromford pub got its name . . .

I've often pondered on why a pub in the heart of Cromford village was called 'The Boat' when it was nowhere near the canal. The answer lies on the walls of the pub!

Built in 1772 (very soon after Arkwright opened his first mill), in 1835 the name was apparently changed from the New Inn to the Hit or Miss (no explanation!). A few proprietors later, in 1867, William Allen became the beer house keeper. He was a local boatman on the canal and it was he who changed the name to the Boat Inn. He is recorded working on the canal for Wheatcrofts in 1847-49. In 1881 he

was described as a Publican & Boatman aged 59. His sons, Sam and Frank, plus Gemaliel, 28, who lived with his own family next door, were also boatmen; his daughters worked in the cotton mill.

Coincidentally, the (then) nearby Bulls Head at this time was kept by William Dawes, a coal merchant, whose name appears on at least one boat in early photographs of Cromford Wharf.

In the 1891 census, William Allen was recorded as Foreman labourer on the canal living at Cromford Wharf, then aged 69.

# OPENING TIMES FOR PUBS

## and has some good news . . .

When FCC was formed in 2002 there were no less than eleven pubs alongside or very close to the canal. Indeed, the major local brewery, Hardy Hanson, sponsored some of our first publicity leaflets. Unfortunately their takeover by Greene King meant we were not longer 'local' to the company headquarters and, anyway, half the pubs had closed!

Sadly, since 2002, the following have closed: Homesford Cottage, the Derwent Hotel at Whatstandwell, the Lord Nelson at Bullbridge, the Gate Inn at Hartshay, the Newlands Inn at Golden Valley, the Boat Inn at Stoneyard, and the Boat Inn at Pinxton.

On the positive side, two of these - Homesford and Derwent - have been reinvented as tea rooms, the latter being renamed The Family Tree. Both are very popular and perhaps reflect a changing trend in people's tastes. In addition, Wheatcroft's Wharf alongside Birdwood's mooring at Cromford is a thriving café.

Surviving the pub plague relatively



unscathed are: the Canal Inn at Bullbridge, the Excavator at Buckland Hollow, the Dog & Doublet at Pye Bridge, and the Great Northern at Langley Mill. In addition are the 'close by' Greyhound and Boat at Cromford and the Hurt Arms at Ambergate.

But the good news is that two pubs have (re)opened. After what seems like an endless wait, the Boat Inn at Pinxton is back in business following a major rebuild, and has quickly established itself as a place to eat. And in the formerly 'pub-less' Jacksdale, the Poachers Ale House microbar is now open.

In addition, if it's just quick grub 'on the go' then you could do no better than call in for a bacon cob at the mobile 'chuckwagon' Waterside in Condor Reservoir car park - but beware; it closes at 1pm!

So, next time you are visiting the canal, do please try to support these businesses which in turn help to keep our canal alive.



# SPRING EVENTS

FCC social meetings take place on the third Monday of most months at 7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall, Casson Street, Ironville NG16 5NN. Admission is £2 (except AGM) and there is a bar, raffle, tea and coffee. All are welcome to attend.

For further details of Birdswood events phone 07552 055455 or check out the Facebook page or website.

## Monday 18th March

### *Peak Rail*

Nigel Carabine on the restored length of the former Midland Main Line that now offers steam train rides between Matlock and Rowsley. 7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall.

## Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th March

### *Celebrating 5 years of DerwentWISE*

Family fun – music, activities, exhibitions, food, drink and performances inspired by the Lower Derwent Valley – based around Cromford Wharf. Arraslea Shires' horses Chelsea and Ted will be pulling Birdswood. See page 13.

## Sunday March 31st: Mother's Day

Standard fares apply (but Mothers travel free!): Adults £9, Seniors £8, 3–17 years £5, Under 3 free. 2pm departure only. Booking by phone only 07552 055455.

## Monday 15th April

### *AGM*

Followed by an update on FCC's progress in 2018 by George Rogers. 7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall.

## Sunday 21st & Monday 22nd April

Horse-drawn trips on narrow boat Birdswood depart Cromford Wharf 11am and 2pm. Leawood Pump in steam noon to 4.30pm.

## Tuesday 23rd April: St George's Day

Special treat with a savory luncheon and drinks provided. Fun raffle onboard, tickets £1 each. Departure at 1pm for a 2-hour cruise. Booking essential by ringing 07552 055455. All seats £12 (under 3 free).

## Wednesday 24th April

Easter egg hunt suitable for all between Cromford Wharf and High Peak Junction.



Pick up a check sheet from the Canal Shop between 11am and noon. Cost £1. Take the canal path at your own speed and stop for a picnic at High Peak Junction. Return sheet by 4pm to receive a certificate and prize keyring. Path suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Distance 1 mile each way.

## Sunday 5th & Monday 6th May

Horse-drawn trips on narrow boat Birdswood depart Cromford Wharf 11am and 2pm. Leawood Pump in steam noon to 4.30pm.

## Monday 20th May

### *The Ashby Canal*

An illustrated talk by Geoff Pursglove. 7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall.

## Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd June

Horse-drawn trips on narrow boat Birdswood depart Cromford Wharf 11am and 2pm. Leawood Pump open (static) Saturday; in steam noon to 4.30pm Sunday.





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