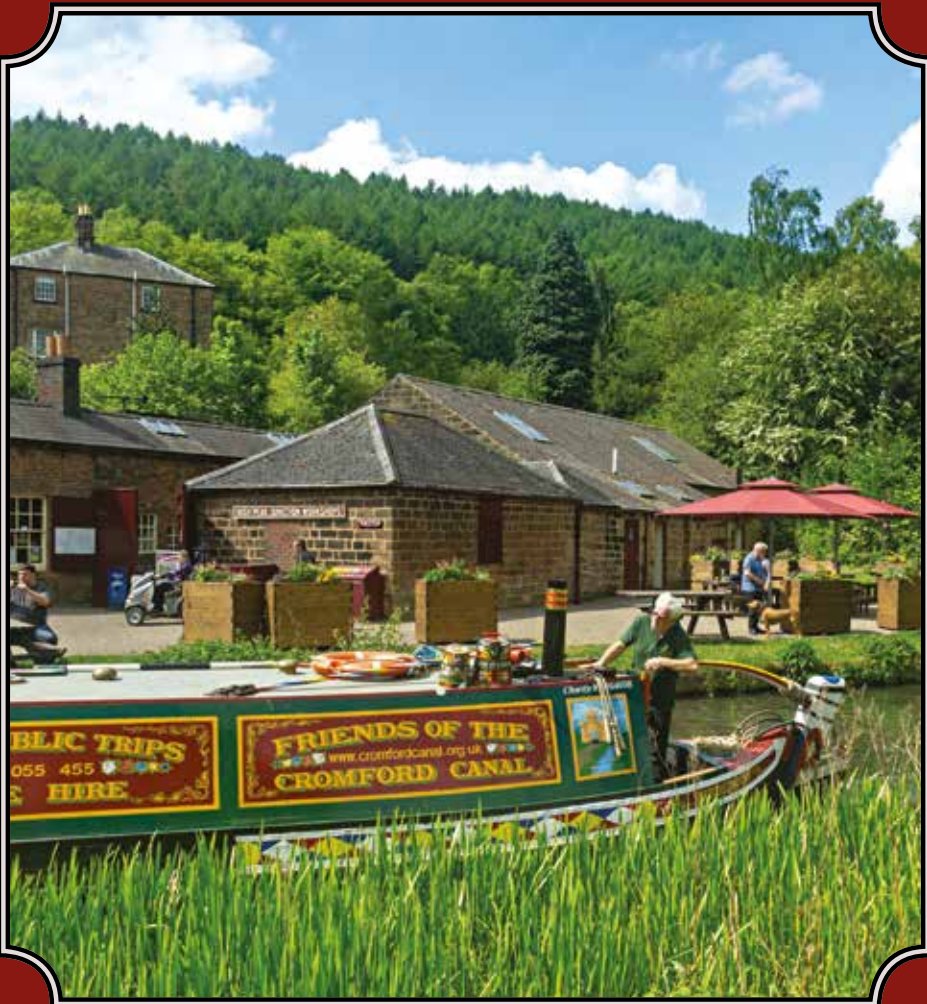


THE PORTAL

Issue 69 - Summer 2019

Price £1.00 - Free to Members



Friends of the Cromford Canal

Registered Charity No. 1164608

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Front Cover

Birdswood passes the new picnic tables and parasols at High Peak junction (page 15).

Photo: Keith Bailey

Back Cover

Work Party regular Shirley Bullock and her 'Wool Bombed' tree in Ripley Market Place. Wool Bombing is when trees around towns and villages are decorated with colourful knitted or crocheted creations, usually to create awareness for charities, as the wonderful displays easily catch the public's attention. Shirley has always been a great knitter and so decided to do her own tree for FCC in her local town. She decided on a canal scene of course!

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

Welcome to a very 'busy' issue of Portal reporting on changes and developments over the last 3 months as well as delving a little into the past.

Since the last issue, there have been several developments of note. Most exciting is the donation of land at Hartshay (page 6) – the first length of canal to be owned by FCC.

After very ably and patiently being a



'temporary' chairman for the last 5 years, John Baylis has finally found a successor in the form of local councillor David Martin who has been a member since the year FCC was founded. We welcome David to the position and look forward to working with him.

Congratulations to our 'own' George Rogers on his becoming full time Development Manager for the Chesterfield Canal. It would have been great for FCC to have that sort of funding available but, whilst we save up, we can rest assured that George is continuing to chair FCC's Strategic Restoration Committee (page 16).

The volunteers on Birdswood continue to achieve amazing results not only in passenger numbers, but in the quality of the service that they offer (page 12). And our volunteer work party carries out remarkably diverse projects all along the canal (page 18).

Although there is no report of it in this issue, the planning application for Aqueduct Cottage should be determined by the end of June. Meanwhile the fund-raising campaign is bringing in great results and you can find out more on their new website at www.aqueduct-cottage.com.

It is great to have a new enthusiastic group researching the Robin Hood area of the canal, about which very little is known (page 20). I look forward to hearing more from them.

Finally, we know that canals appeal to all ages, but I am delighted to welcome our youngest reader, who is pictured alongside.

I hope to see you out and about along the canal this summer – and don't forget to send in your photos, news and stories.

**Copy date for the Autumn issue of Portal is
15th August**



Sent in by Christine Johnstone, one of FCC's stalwart transcribers of historic documents, this charming photograph shows 10-month-old Jess enjoying the Portal.

PICTURE NEWS



The multi-talented Birdswood maintenance co-ordinator and crew member Keith Bailey turned his hand to some excellent design work in this new information board for Leawood Pump, where the old board was showing its age. The board was transported by Birdswood and is now fitted inside the pumphouse.



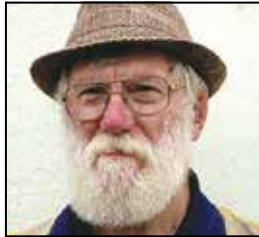
The gas pipe that outlived the former hump-back bridge at Bridle Lane, Hartshay, by several decades was partly removed recently during pipeline renewal, unbeknown to FCC. As the new low-level pipe would block a restored canal, FCC is investigating whether this should have been permitted, as the route is protected in the Local Plan.

CHAIRMEN'S NOTES

From our retiring chairman John Baylis BEM

I am relieved to report that after nearly five years of being what started as Acting Chairman we have found a replacement Chairman; David Martin who has been a trustee for several years offered to take over this role at the recent trustee meeting. My thanks to all those trustees, members, volunteers and others who have helped and advised me during this time. I shall revert to my previous role as Executive Secretary, John Barker will continue as Vice Chairman and Robert Sears-Piccavey will be Treasurer. I hope that the members will continue to support David, the trustees and all volunteers for their work for the Friends.

At the Annual General Meeting the following were elected as trustees: John Barker, John Baylis, Sean Dodds, Ian Hooker, Hugh Potter and Robert Sears-Piccavey. As there were six vacancies, all except Peter Astles were elected; my thanks to Peter for offering to stand as a trustee. At the AGM Chris Wilding resigned as trustee and I thank him for his



work over the past two years.

I am happy that my final Chairman's Notes has some good news. The Friends are very pleased to have been given a 485 metre length of Cromford Canal near Hartshay, and our thanks go to the donor, Mrs Joan Whittingham. The water level

on this section is currently well down but our engineers have ideas to increase the water level and improve the habitat so that it could be used as a refuge for flora and fauna during the restoration of other parts of the canal.

A second piece of land has been purchased at Langley Mill to improve the access of the restored canal through the old Moorgreen Colliery railway line under the A610 Langley Mill bypass. This purchase also includes a Right of Way from Cromford Road, which could be essential during the work outlined in the planning application and future work.

We were intending doing some dredging work last February on the section of canal used by Birdswood but, due to problems of



A work party removes tree growth on the length of canal at Hartshay which has recently been donated to FCC.

From our new chairman David Martin



As well as a length of canal at Hartshay, FCC seems to have acquired a boat as well. This wrought iron former working boat, apparently heading towards Cromford, was abandoned along with the canal and has gradually decayed over the years. Quite how or why it was left there has not yet been discovered.



*FCC's new
Chairman
David Martin.*

Hello! My name is David Martin. I am the County Councillor for Selston where the Cromford Canal is along our western border just beyond the Erewash River. I have always been passionate about this canal, becoming a member of the Friends of the Cromford Canal in August 2002 almost immediately after it was formed, and finally a Trustee four years ago.

During that time there have been many changes in the background which have helped to strengthen FCC; ensuring the sustainability of the famous trip boat Birdsworth is only one, which could not survive without its wealth of superb volunteers, boat masters, and Vix Wilding our boat manager.

We formed the Strategic Restoration Committee headed by George Rogers three years ago and there are now many exciting challenges facing FCC as a result of the sterling work the SRC has done. For the first time in the history of the society we have a live planning application to extend the canal from Langley Mill to Stoney Lane in Brinsley.

I shall take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to all four of my predecessors – Mike Kelley, Patrick Morriss, Matthew Rogers, and John Baylis – for their excellent governance and dedication, along with all the other committee members, past and present, for all of their endeavours large or small. Last but by no means least to you, the members, for your unswerving loyalty and steadfast support. I shall embrace this opportunity to make some of those dreams, plans, and long held aspirations become a reality.

Thank you for your support.

approval, this has been postponed. We are now seeking fresh tenders for doing the work in early 2020. However, I am very pleased to report anonymous donations totalling £3,000, which with Gift Aid from HMRC will amount to £3,750. This money will be 'ring fenced' for the dredging which is now due to take place in early 2020; this is a very positive illustration of the value of Gift Aid. There is no requirement on the donor except to complete a Friends Gift Aid Form and that the tax paid in that year is in excess of 25% of the donation. All the paper work with HMRC is carried out by the Friends.

On a related matter, also well worth consideration is a legacy to the Friends. We have occasionally received a legacy from a member who has passed away; and only recently I have been approached by a solicitor requesting our proper details to be used in writing a will. The Treasurer or Executive Secretary would be pleased to advise on legacies, keeping the donor's details anonymous.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Yvonne Shattower

From 1st July 2019 there will be a change in the way we collect some of the Standing Order subscriptions. When we first brought in Standing Orders for the payment of membership fees, the subscriptions were £6 single and £9 for a couple. Since then, we have changed our bank from HSBC to the CAF Bank and the fees have been increased twice and are now £9 single and £14 for a couple. All members were advised individually at the time of these changes and given the opportunity to amend their mandates; however despite several reminders and emails there are a number of members who are still paying the original amounts into the HSBC account. Our new Treasurer has reviewed this and has decided that the HSBC account should be closed. This will mean that those members paying into the old account will need to complete a new mandate or revert to paying annually by cheque or postal order. From 1st July, Members paying by standing order into the HSBC bank will have their payment returned



to their own account, but they will receive a subscription reminder from me which will give the option of making a new standing order into the CAF Bank or paying by cheque or postal order. We obviously hope that you will complete a new mandate and continue to support the work of

the Friends, especially as we prepare to carry out work dredging at Cromford and extending the canal at Langley Mill.

By the time you read this, we will have had our last member's meeting at Ironville for this season, but we look forward to seeing you all again in September. Unfortunately we have had to increase our entrance fee to £2.50 per person as the hall charges have gone up and speakers' fees have also risen considerably. There will still be a raffle and tea and coffee in the interval.

It is good to see some sunshine after all the chilly weather, so I hope that you will all have a good summer and there will be plenty of water in the cut for those of you who are boating.

BIRDWOOD

Boat Operations Manager Vix Wilding reports . . .

Hello again everybody! The season is now in full swing and Birdwood has had a very good start as the weather has been kind. Last year one of the Easter horse trips was cancelled due to Arraslea Shires being snowed in up at Alderwasley. Thankfully this winter was mild and there haven't been any such issues. This means that so far, in March and April, we have carried a total of 1,348 passengers. This

compares to just 1,042 last year. Figures have continued to grow into May and with all the hard work put in by all the volunteers, 2019 is set to be another fantastic year.

As other reports show (see page 11) there have been improvements made to the interior and exterior of the boat and the results are fantastic. Painting, lock repairs and worktop replacements have all been completed by

volunteers who have put in extra hours over and above their crew duties. One thing that still needs to be completed is the ever-problematic toilet bowl; this has developed a leak from a pump, and we are currently looking at the options to fix or replace the whole unit – an expense that we hadn't budgeted for that is unfortunate but necessary.

As previously noted there have been some new volunteers join us and they are getting into the swing of the boat routines nicely now and some are involved in the work parties and general maintenance tasks. I'm enjoying being able to take a step back from being at the canal every day and reduce the number of hours I have had to put in for the last 5 years. The business has a strong foundation and, with the training provided by trustee and master Sean Dodds and myself, the crew have the knowledge to continue to deliver an exceptional service to every passenger.



There are currently 5 people who are learning about the controls and responsibilities of the boat master role and will eventually be trained to a standard that allows them to be called 'Helmsman'. This requires full competence at the helm and to be able to understand all the roles onboard. The training is delivered by fellow volunteers and just takes time. Once I'm satisfied, they will be able to steer

the boat during a public trip with an MCA qualified master onboard. For some masters, like myself, we like the variety of being with customers and this will also ensure there are successors to become MCA qualified when others retire.

One new volunteer has been Bob Mitchell who is the owner of Brinard Joinery, Somercotes. He has given his time free of charge and had the rear deck floor plates made to measure. He has also started looking at replacing the ceiling in the galley kitchen which has become damp and rotten. His skills are greatly appreciated, and the work has been to an exceptionally high standard.

My personal time has continued to be dedicated to improving my knowledge within the business sector and I am currently studying Associate Project Management as I finished the Business Development course last October. This is furthering my knowledge

in organisational strategy and has enabled me to put into place a business case study for the rest of the Cromford stretch restoration to Ambergate. This work is all fictional as it's just for the course, but it's an ongoing course that focuses on future development through planning, so the work is necessary. I'm enjoying the learning and hope to put these skills to better use in the future.

Another project in development is the education provisions and I

have been working on upper school learning with Mike Kelley and Marie Washbrook. For my course I have been documenting our progress and this is a real project that will be delivered to local teaching staff in July. The teaching plans are drafted, and I hope to be able to add science into the subject matters already on offer. I recently met a retired science teacher who has offered advice on this.

PROGRESS AT NEWLANDS INN

Steve Parish reports on recent developments



Newlands Inn soon after its devastating fire.

The Newlands Inn at Golden Valley closed in 2007 and was devastated by fire in 2011. A planning application was approved last January that would restore the pub, converted to five apartments, and allow “enabling development” – 14 houses – to be built on land adjacent. The site backs onto the canal, with a steep bank down near the eastern portal of Butterley Tunnel. Canal & River Trust and FCC picked up on a mining report that said there was a risk of the clay bank slipping, especially if trees were removed.

Other than a gabion basket (stones in a metal cage) near the pub there’s nothing in the plans and no planning condition to address this directly, but any developer will presumably take care in their own interest as the top of the bank will be back gardens to some of the houses. Installation and future maintenance of garden fences was another issue if there’s a slope down immediately behind the fence.

We had no objection to the houses, rows

of cottages that look like a modern version of a mining village (or in that area, housing for ironworkers).

The whole site has been sold (subject to contract) to a developer to implement the approved plans. A Section 106 agreement will ensure that the work on the pub apartments and the houses are phased together. FCC will keep a watching brief.

Steve is a councillor in Warrington, who helps FCC with planning issues.



Some of the proposed new housing for the Newlands Inn site.

PRE-SEASON BOAT MAINTENANCE

Keith Bailey summarises work done to keep Birdswood safe and looking her best

February and March have been very busy months and, thanks to the help and determination of a committed group of volunteers, much has been achieved.

- The rear door lock has been replaced.
- A new worktop has been fitted in the galley.
- The outside steps have been re-welded.
- The bow of the boat has been repainted with non-slip grey paint.
- The raised black paint on the bow has been repainted & sprayed with a non-slip coating.
- The diamonds on the bow and stern have been touched up as has the black paint below gunwale level.
- The inside of the stern well has been repainted and the wooden slats on the stern covers and the gunwale have had new oak timbers fitted.
- The entire roof has been repainted with grey non-slip paint and the roof hatches have been repainted.
- The green paintwork at the front of the cabin (where the toilet is) has been repainted and the roof of this area has also been painted with grey non-slip paint.
- The front steps inside the boat have been repainted and sprayed with a non-slip coating on the treads.
- The window frames and the timber strip below where the menu clips are have been painted and re-varnished.
- The boat shafts and the chimney have been repainted and varnished.
- The signwriting and the sides of the boat have been re-varnished.
- Work has been done on the toilet to reduce the blow-back but more work is needed to address an intermittent leak.

Work is in hand to repaint the boat hooks and tiller and to repair the woodwork around the

roof hatch in the galley, but regular revenue-earning trips and charters make finding time slots for these tasks more difficult.

The following people, in alphabetical order, have given hours of their time to complete these tasks: Mike Backler, Keith Bailey, Sean Dodds, John Jones, Niall McPherson, Bob Mitchell, Nigel Neale, Alan Oakley, David Ratner, Bob Staveley, Brian Stevenson, Carol Stevenson and Norman Wileman.

Many, many thanks to them and to others who have contributed whom I have failed to mention.



The smart new boarding for Birdswood's well deck replaced former life-expired timber.

If you would like to help out with these often small but vital tasks, please contact Keith at maintenance@cromfordcanal.org.

CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

Mike Kelley reviews the reviews of Birdswood

The travel review website 'TripAdvisor' has awarded Birdswood its 'Certificate of Excellence'. This certificate is given to accommodations, attractions and restaurants that consistently earn great reviews from travellers on their TripAdvisor platform, a site which is viewed by millions around the world. All involved with the running of Birdswood, both directly and indirectly, have cause to be truly proud of their achievement, not only in bringing great pleasure and delight to so many people, but also bringing to the wider public's attention the need to see the Cromford Canal restored. Below are just a few of the wonderful, encouraging messages we have received.

Shona Holland, May 2019

Birthday Trip

We had a wonderful trip today to celebrate my son's 4th birthday. The crew were so kind and friendly, they even got everyone to sing happy birthday to him. We have a very happy little boy here tonight. Thank you for making the trip very special.

kate and jess, Cannock, April 2019

Very Enjoyable Ride on the Canal

We enjoyed a lovely, leisurely ride down the canal at the weekend, during our stay in the Peak District. We had prebooked and prepaid our (value for money) tickets in advance so were able to go straight aboard. Lovely welcome from the volunteers on board who told us lots of information during our trip down the canal. Refreshments and souvenirs are also available on board.

All in all, a very enjoyable couple of hours spent in a beautiful location. My teenage daughter approved and so did our staffie Maddie, who was very welcome on this dog friendly attraction. Highly recommended.

Andrew B, Etwall, Derbyshire, April 2019

In't Derbyshire brilliant

Whether you are local or visiting our beautiful county then you must visit Cromford Wharf. A beautiful spot. Choose to walk the length of the canal or take a trip on the narrow boat Birdswood as we did. A lovely leisurely two hour trip on a converted butty boat. So relaxing as the boat is electric powered. The crew were very friendly, helpful and gave an interesting on board commentary. Dogs are welcome and we enjoyed on board refreshments. Would recommend booking online as we did, a very simple process.

Chris n Louise, Leicester, April 2019

Barging through the countryside

Had a special trip along the Cromford Canal. All the staff on the barge trip were informative and very polite. We were very lucky with the weather.

Alestreet007, Derby, March 2019

Fabulous trip

A really interesting 2 hr canal trip on the Cromford Canal. The Friends of Cromford Canal were excellent and the talk was very informative well worth a visit. We will definitely go back when there is a horse drawn trip and to walk the canal path.

Kez, March 2019

Fantastic trip

Had a fantastic time, the volunteers were very informative and answer any questions. They are doing a great job, would highly recommend it. Snacks and tea on board are very well priced too.

Sunshine, October 2018

Birdswood Canal Trip

Spent an enjoyable 2 hours yesterday cruising along the canal. So peaceful with beautiful

scenery and knowledgeable and amusing commentary. The volunteers are doing a fantastic job.

alanraep, Lincoln, October 2018

Birdwood narrowboat on Cromford Canal

Wonderful holiday activity gently cruising along ancient canal route with fascinating commentary by enthusiastic volunteer team. Nothing was too much trouble for them and the scenery was stunning in the autumn sunshine. Excellent value for money and highly recommended.

Chris Hunt, Derbyshire, September 2018

Marvellous Meandering

Been on a marvellous meander on the

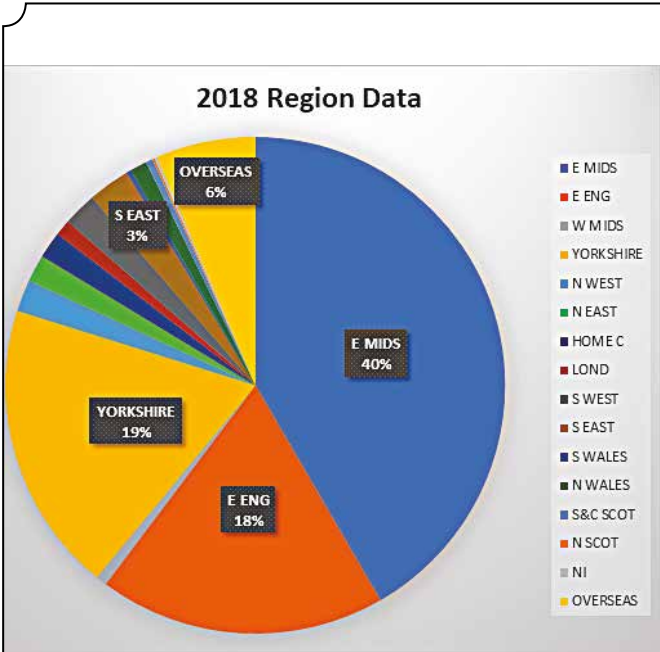
beautiful Cromford Canal today aboard this lovely old canal boat. The crew were helpful, friendly and informative. The trip was peaceful and relaxing. A bargain for the price. My husband and I both enjoyed ourselves (and the hot chocolate!) very much and will certainly be visiting again.

19Lucy14, Paeroa, New Zealand, September 2018

Nice little trip on the Cromford Canal

Went on 13th September. Excellent trip for 2 hours, great commentary. Got to look around the cabin too with an explanation from a volunteer. Well run by the volunteers very friendly and informed. Good snippet of history. Value for money.

2018 REGIONAL DATA



The geographical breakdown of where Birdwood passengers come from has proved interesting! Whilst the majority, as expected, come from locally in the East Midlands, the two next most popular origins are Yorkshire and Eastern England. Yorkshire is not too far away and has easy road access, but the almost equal number from Eastern England is at first surprising. However, when talking to these visitors on the boat you soon find out why - it's the hills that attracts them! The Peak District is a popular escape from their relatively flat home landscape! Also heartening is that 6% came from overseas

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Mark Brailsford of Derbyshire County Council Countryside Services reports on activities between Cromford and Ambergate



Dredging work at Ambergate has cleared a heavy build-up of silt at Poyser's Bridge.

Leak Repairs

The Derwent (Wigwell) aqueduct near Leawood Pump is still leaking and some canal water is being lost through each of its three spans, although recent repair works have resulted in this flow being much reduced.

Completed Works

At Leawood Pump, roof repairs have been completed; scheduled monument consent

was required for the repair which involved stripping all the stone flags from the roof and repairing rot within structural beams. The Leawood Pump and Middleton Top volunteer group worked through the winter and stripped the boilers to enable a regime of tests and checks to be carried out. The boilers have now passed their hydraulic and steam tests; however repairs are required on the boilers for them to be operational in 2020. Opening

dates for Leawood Pump are given on page 21.

DCC and DerwentWISE have felled several sycamore trees near Aqueduct cottage to enhance the views and improve wildlife by allowing more light to the woodland floor; this should encourage wildflowers and insects.

More silt was removed by contractors north of Poyser's Bridge at Ambergate as a stream had brought considerable material into the canal channel nearly blocking the flow.

Planned Structural Work

Middleton Top boiler house roof is still awaiting repairs. There is a wooden beam that supports the brickwork which in turn supports the roof and this timber beam needs replacing as it has rotted.

The roof at High Peak Junction Visitor Centre also needs repair. Many of you may have noticed the props supporting the roof beams; we hope these works can be carried out this autumn when the visitor centre is quieter.

Volunteer Work Parties – Thank You

The FCC volunteers, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and DerwentWISE have completed removing several sections of reeds along the canal.

FCC are continuing to install coir rolls along the towpath bank side from High Peak Junction to Cromford Wharf.

Picnic Areas

New picnic tables, parasols and planters have been installed alongside the canal at High Peak Junction, and on the High Peak Trail at Middleton Top; these improvements make it even more of a relaxing location to sit and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the Cromford Canal and the far reaching views at Middleton Top.

SUMMER EVENTS

Photographic Competition: 25th May–23rd July. Open to all non-professionals. Categories are High Peak Trail and Cromford Canal. All entries will be displayed at High Peak Junction visitor centre from 14th to 18th August; this is open to the public to vote for their favourite photo(s).



Pick up a free Events guide from High Peak Junction; it includes drink and cycle hire offers.

Hire One Get One Free: 8th–16th June. Cycle hire promotion as part of National Bike Week at Middleton Top. A fantastic offer for you to get out and explore the High Peak Trail, with the wildflowers in full bloom.

Runaway Train Treasure Hunt around High Peak Junction: 20th July to 1st September. Follow the trail and be amazed by the history of the runaway trains and the oldest railway toilet in the world! Pick up a pack for just £1.

Mini-Beast Safari at Middleton Top: 20th July to 1st September. Collect your bug catching pots and become nature detectives. Pick up your pack from the Visitor Centre for only £1.

High Peak Junction Sound Collage 4th August: 12pm and 2pm. Join recording artist Jay Dean in the historic railway workshops to experience a new sound composition and immerse yourself in the sounds inspired by the heritage and surroundings of the workshops within the World Heritage Site.

Heritage Open Days: 14th–22nd September High Peak Junction, 11am–3pm. As part of a countrywide festival, free Audio Tour and entry to the oldest railway workshop in the world!

Heritage Open Day: 15th September, Middleton Top Engine House, 1pm–4.30pm. As part of a countrywide festival, free entry to see this magnificent beam engine.

Cromford Harvest Weekend: 21st–22nd September. Autumn activities in Cromford Mill Yard; follow the scarecrow trail or take a ride on the historic narrow boat Birdwood along Cromford Canal.

STRATEGIC RESTORATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

by George Rogers

Beggarlee Planning Application

One of the most common questions I've been asked with regards to our current planning application is 'when will we know?' It has been a difficult one to answer – and all I can say with any certainty at present is that we don't know yet.

We were asked to accept a delay until June, as the number and detail of the responses has been large. This we have done, knowing also that we have to respond to many of the responses (particularly objections or any requests for clarifications) and we also needed the time to do this process justice. Currently, these responses are working their way through the system.



Clearing out the chamber of the former gauging narrows at Sawmills.

Photo: John Hawkins

authorities to express their support for the application, and to all of those who turned up to either the public drop-in session at Langley Mill or came to my presentation to the AGM. The support from you all has reminded us why we are doing what we are.



Working on the bund across the canal to the east of the narrows.

Photo: Darren Shepherd

Please note there is still time to write into the planning authorities – use references AVA/2019/0179 for Amber Valley or 19/00139 for Broxtowe.

Other Projects

Elsewhere, we welcomed WRG NW (the North West regional group of the Waterway Recovery Group) to Sawmills, to do some further work on the Gauging Narrows. We received a grant from Severn Trent Water several years ago to do this work, but it has proved difficult to

As this process is in a constant state of flux, and to avoid giving you any wrong or out of date information, I'm not going to go into any further details of the application at this time. I would, however, like to express my gratitude to all members who have written to the planning



*Work progresses on the path.
Photo: Darren Shepherd*

application for the Water Environment Grant was being determined, because this would have negated the need for the weir repair works.



*The diversionary path completed.
Photo: Malcolm Bridge*

schedule the work in, as the job is too small for a large group but too big and skilled for a small weekend group. Thankfully, WRG NW have started to run extended weekends recently, where the aim is to turn out a small number of volunteers for a longer period, with volunteers coming and going as they are able.

This approach proved ideal for the work at Sawmills, so we are very grateful to all of the volunteers involved. In all 10 volunteers came over 6 days, with a maximum of 7 on site at any one time. The work completed (see photographs) will allow the towpath wall to be reconstructed in the future, as it now provides a suitable diversion for users around the site.

Next month, we will be welcoming a group from London WRG (another regional group, though many of the faces will probably be the same!). They will primarily be working at Pinxton to do some repair works to the weir. This has again been in the pipeline for some time, but we had put it on hold whilst the

And Finally...

Some of you may have seen through various news sources that I am switching my professional career as a civil and structural design engineer for one much more involved in canal restoration, as I have now started full time employment with the Chesterfield Canal Trust as their Development Manager. This is an exciting time for them (and me) as they progress towards the goal of completing the restoration for 2027.

I will be continuing much of my work with the FCC, but I have decided to step down from my roles as a Trustee and on the Committee, and will be focussing entirely on leading the Strategic Restoration Committee in the future. This wasn't a requirement for me taking on the new role at Chesterfield, but even I need to create some time away from canal restoration. My thanks to all of the Trustees for their support and cooperation in my time in the role, and I hope you will continue to support them as they lead the FCC forwards.

WORK PARTY REPORTS

John Guyler reports on recent achievements

13th February: Pinxton Wharf, 13 volunteers. Finished off winter clearance of the far bank, from the weir to the position of the old swing bridge. Clearance of the channel with the reed rakes, removing any debris left by the JCB, which had cleared the wider sections of the watercourse. Generally tidied the area, removed 4 bags of rubbish, 1 full car exhaust system, 10 yards of stripped cable and 3 car tyres.

15th February: Spillway at Codnor Park Reservoir. Working under the direction of Canal & River Trust along with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust volunteers. The plan was to clear 30m of reeds out of the spillway from Codnor Park Reservoir, but the presence of water vole put an abrupt stop to proceedings.

22nd February: Lower Hartshay, 12 volunteers. Clearing brush from hedge bottom and channel. Difficult working in the channel because of the water level. A controlled burn was in action for the brush.

27th February: Sawmills, 12 volunteers. Clearing brush at several places towards the gauging narrows, controlled burning and rubbish collection. 2 full barrow loads and 1 bag of rubbish

6th March: Lawn Bridge, Cromford, 12 volunteers. Removing cleared reeds off the towpath, using the DCC tractor and trailer and using some reeds to fill dog outs. Poor weather; there was very heavy rain and the session finished early.

6th March: Leawood Aqueduct, 5 volunteers. Removing top stop plank at the Leawood Aqueduct Wayfarers Cottage, to allow more flow to next section. Had to jam the lower planks before removing the top plank, using improvised wedges. Poor weather, heavy rain.

13th March: Cancelled bad weather.

20th March: Cromford, 14 volunteers. Remove reeds with the DCC tractor and trailer. Moving

the 'dried reeds' which were actually very wet and made it a very heavy job. Managed to clear the section of towpath completely.

3rd April: Sawmills, 14 volunteers. Assisting Waterway Recovery Group working on the gauging narrows (see page 16). The FCC had provided two diggers and a dumper truck for WRG to create a temporary walkway on the opposite side to the towpath. We assisted by clearing the side walls of vegetation and the channel of large pieces of wall, which were taken away by the dumper. A whacker plate was also provided to compress the newly laid aggregate on the footpath. John Sparham trained on a digger and is now a fully qualified digger operator on our worksites.

10th April: Lawn Bridge, Cromford, 4 volunteers. Remedial work to three coir rolls on the railway narrows. They had to have the clay backfill removed and then pushed back and re-staked in the correct position. This necessitated two volunteers donning waders to work in the water. The clay backfill was then put behind the rolls. The cause of the



Angela, Carole and Shirley after they had completed the path reinstatement under the access bridge at Sawmills.

misalignment was not established.

10th April: Sawmills, 7 volunteers. Clearing up after WRG had departed. There was a large amount of brick rubble and medium sized stone from the walls to remove from the gauging narrows. All the rubbish and rubble was stacked just off the towpath ready for loading into a skip. Angela, Carole and Shirley filled the ruts caused by the dumper truck underneath the access bridge arch with approx. 1.5 tons of aggregate. After compression with a whacker plate, an extremely good wide footpath resulted.

17th April: Golden Valley, 8 volunteers. Kingfisher sighted at Pinxton Arm Bridge. Walked to the eastern portal of Butterley Tunnel and removed some shrubs that were lying across the towpath and removed 5 bags of litter from high up the bank where the narrow-gauge railway is. On the way back, we spent the rest of the day stripping 70m of ivy from the stone wall along the towpath.



Clearing the ivy off walling on the section up towards Golden Valley, adjacent to Coach Road.

24th April: Codnor Park Reservoir, 12 volunteers. Resumed where we left off last week, stripped more ivy from the stone wall. Removed some dead trees from the towpath which were encroaching. A water vole was sighted at distance marker ten and a half miles.

1st May: Pinxton Wharf, 10 volunteers. Cleared a pile of historical rubbish (long term dumped rubbish, not Roman or Anglo-Saxon) from around the sump area at the weir, including three car tyres, one car wheel, a large propane gas cylinder and loads of very old household rubbish. The gas cylinder was a bit of a problem; because of the nature of what it is, disposal is difficult. We also cleared branches from the channel, which is now open water from the Boat Inn. A female Mallard brought her brood of ten chicks all the way down to the weir while we were working. After lunch, most of the work party moved to the western portal of the Butterley Tunnel, to view and discuss work required in the autumn, which has to be cleared with CRT.

8th May: Sawmills, 5 volunteers. The main work party was cancelled because of heavy rain, but because a skip had been booked for the day, some of us needed to remove accumulated rubbish into it. It didn't take long and we managed to get everything in, all the metal and old carpets at the bottom and all the rubble that had been dumped on site over the years, on top.

So far this year the work parties have given 1044 volunteer hours with 193 travel hours, collected 58 bags of litter, 6 car tyres, 1 complete car wheel, 1 complete car exhaust and some 2.5 tons of assorted rubbish.

My thanks, for everyone's time and effort.



Clearing the old access to the bridge at Lockwoods.

*If you feel you would like to join the work parties, please contact John Barker on **01773 760358** or **work@cromfordcanal.org**.*

THE MYSTERY OF ROBIN HOOD

Hugh Potter goes on a quest



The view into the deep hole showing (left) the stream entering (after a longish dry spell) and towards the culvert under the canal.



The large stone that is thought to be the base of a crane used to lift stones from road wagons onto boats. The dogs give the scale! The purpose of the stone-lined water channel on the left is a mystery.

A new and enthusiastic group of residents at Robin Hood led by Steve Carver and his merry men has begun to investigate the history of the area. This is the former stone cutting hamlet by the canal just north of Whatstandwell where stones from Duke's Quarries (which are just above) were cut and loaded onto boats and, later, the railway. There is little recorded about its history.

I visited them recently to see what they had been up to. The most notable feature of the area (invisible from the canal) is a huge 'oval' pit in the garden of the canalside house into which the local stream falls. At the bottom is a culvert which passes under the canal to allow the stream to continue towards the River Derwent. This seems an excessive structure just to drop the water level to pass under the canal, and the obvious use would have been to drive a waterwheel to power the stone sawmill. However, no physical evidence of a wheel has



In the centre of the crane base can be seen an iron ring.

(yet) been found. And the culvert beneath the canal is tall enough to walk through!

Beginning on the ground, with the permission of the landowner, several items

have been discovered, some relating to historical maps. Most significant is a large stone with a circular hole cut in the middle, and an iron ring set into the hole. This is in the correct position on a map of 1905 to relate to a crane base.

There was once a footbridge here across to Dawbarn's timber works (which were destroyed by fire in 1909 and again in 1935) and its location has been found. Also a stone sleeper from a tramway was found – whether this was for a tramway on site or elsewhere is not yet known.

There is much to discover in this small area, and anyone who may have information that would help is invited to get in touch with Steve Carver at stevecarver260@gmail.com or 01773 853600.

SUMMER EVENTS

FCC social meetings take place on the third Monday of most months at 7.30pm and will recommence after the summer break on 16th September at Ironville Church Hall, Casson Street, Ironville NG16 5NN.

Admission is £2.50 and there is a bar, raffle, tea and coffee. All are welcome to attend.

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

Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th July

Horse-drawn trips on narrow boat Birdwood depart Cromford Wharf 11am and 2pm. Leawood Pump open noon to 4.30pm: Saturday static, Sunday operating in steam.

Saturday 3rd & Sunday 4th August

Horse-drawn trips on narrow boat Birdwood depart Cromford Wharf 11am and 2pm. Leawood Pump open noon to 4.30pm: Saturday static, Sunday operating in steam.

Sunday 25th & Monday 26th August

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



THRIVING WILDLIFE

by Marie Brown, Secretary of Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Reservoir Group



Young water voles benefit from the improved state of the waterway.

Photo: Roger Breen

With worldwide attention on the birth of the new Royal baby Archie, we are celebrating a few new additions of our own here at Codnor Park Reservoir and the Erewash Meadows.

The water vole paparazzi were out in force during the recent good weather as it became clear that the conservation work and habitat creation is providing ideal conditions for our growing, thriving community.

Water voles have recently been surveyed at the Golden Valley end of the canal which hasn't happened for over 20 years. This shows that the vegetation is sustainable enough for them to disperse further afield and that the clearance is creating better light, cleaner water and sustainable wildlife habitats.

We also welcomed our cygnets to the reservoir and, as last year, six beautiful little balls of grey fluff are trailing along behind. This is always a delight for regular visitors and heralds the start of summer.

Coot and moorhen chicks abound and the barn owls, buzzards and others are in full parent mode now. The site of the mum and dad buzzard training the youngster in the sky is a fascinating, hypnotic site to behold.

All of the indications point to this year being a wildlife baby boom, helped along, in no small way, by everyone who takes responsibility for picking up litter and dog mess and for those volunteering to give a few hours a week to help out.

Of course we are also waiting to see the kingfisher offspring which, again, is bound to cause a stampede among our wildlife photographers in the group.

Their courtship this year was well documented.

We are attracting more visitors, some of it due to the two local caravan parks nearby and some due to the highlighting on social media about the bounty we have.



Two 'little balls of grey fluff'.

Photo: Roger Breen



Two baby coots, with their remarkable colours that look more like those of the adult moorhen, make good use of an old tyre.

Photo: Roger Breen

This brings me to a debate the committee have been having for some time and one which I don't know where it will lead. I would be interested in hearing the thoughts of Portal reader's on the subject.

When does it become a monster of our own creation? By doing more to increase wildlife, then, in turn, attracting more visitors, do we then begin to do more harm than good?

Our group's mantra has always been 'The Wildlife Comes First', so how do we ensure we strike the balance between conservation and pure spectacle? How do we best highlight the work which attracts the funding, allowing us to do more or quietly go about doing it and keep it quiet?

It's a tough debate that the group are, at least aware of and are willing to change if it

becomes a threat to our beautiful surroundings; the debate goes on.

Other News

Our thanks to members of Jacksdale Heritage Group who gave a donation of £500 towards the final amount needed for the Humpy Bridge project. We can't wait to show you the results of the restoration later in the year. Now that last frost is out of the way we can begin.

Our Facebook group reached 1,000 members at the beginning of May and to celebrate we held a free prize draw to win a year's membership to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. The winner was an active volunteer on the monthly litter picks, Julie Sheldon. Our congratulations to her, a worthy winner.

Get in touch

cromfordcanalgroup@outlook.com

Facebook: Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Res Group



Free rides for a baby grebe.

Photo: Roger Breen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some thoughts from FCC members

Enjoying Portal

I have really enjoyed this Portal (and the previous one, in fact all previous issues). I get about ten canal and restoration society magazines, and while they are all interesting, especially for me who lives too far from most of the canals to visit them very often, the Portal is outstandingly professional, which is exactly what I would expect from someone with your history! One observation about the online version – when I got a paper copy I almost always read it within 24 hours. The online copy is too easy to set aside (filed in the computer) while dealing with countless emails and not read for many days! Not much you can do about that! *[You can always have both – Ed]*

I have also joined the two Facebook pages mentioned in Portal 67 and very much enjoyed the history on those – what a gem is Aqueduct Cottage! I've seen it in its derelict state with trees along the front, and clearly didn't give it as much consideration for its history content as I should have done.

Tim Boddington

Stone Origins

Living to the east of Butterley Tunnel, I've been pondering the question of where all the stone came from for the locks etc. The proprietors specified the canal to be built in three sections which means stone could not easily have come here from the Derbyshire quarries west of the tunnel; some of the masonry is substantial, and far too big for a pack horse. I suspect the source is much closer to home and I believe Codnor Park may be one place where plenty of stone was available. In Foxholes plantation, close to the lock flight, there are substantial stones and they were certainly quarrying and dressing some very large blocks of masonry here.

Do other readers have any ideas?

Martyn Taylor-Cockayne

Old House at Home

In the list of pubs in last edition, you forgot the Old House at Home at Pye Bridge. It was a much loved pub, run at one time by my family.

Simon Waller



The Old House at Home, once run by the Waller family, sadly closed in the late 1960s. It featured in two articles in Portal 7, Autumn 2003. Copies of all Portals can be download from the News pages of the FCC website.

THE CANAL SHOP

CJ talks about the necessity of volunteers for the charming Canal Shop

Nestled at the end of the Gothic Warehouse, in what was once the Weighbridge Office, is a charming little shop that needs your help. The shop has become a focal point and 'front of house' for the FCC, acting as a ticket office for trip boat Birdswood, selling souvenirs and gifts and promoting and providing information about both Friends of the Cromford Canal and Birdswood.



Inside the tiny but appealing Canal Shop at Cromford Wharf.

The Canal Shop's future is in question and the trustees are considering its financial viability. The current lease expires at the end of November this year; but with reduced costs and increased sales, renewal of the lease would continue as a valuable public face of Friends of the Cromford Canal.

Unfortunately I cannot keep the shop open on my own (although I try to) and it desperately needs more volunteers. At the moment, we have just four. This lovely little shop needs your help to keep it open, at least during its

advertised hours, over the summer.

The shop is currently open on the days trip boat Birdswood is operating which is four days a week; Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10am until at least 4.30pm.

Volunteers don't have to work a full day; there is currently a half day rota system in place with mornings from 10am until 1.30pm and afternoons from 1.30pm until 4.30pm although full days are available too.

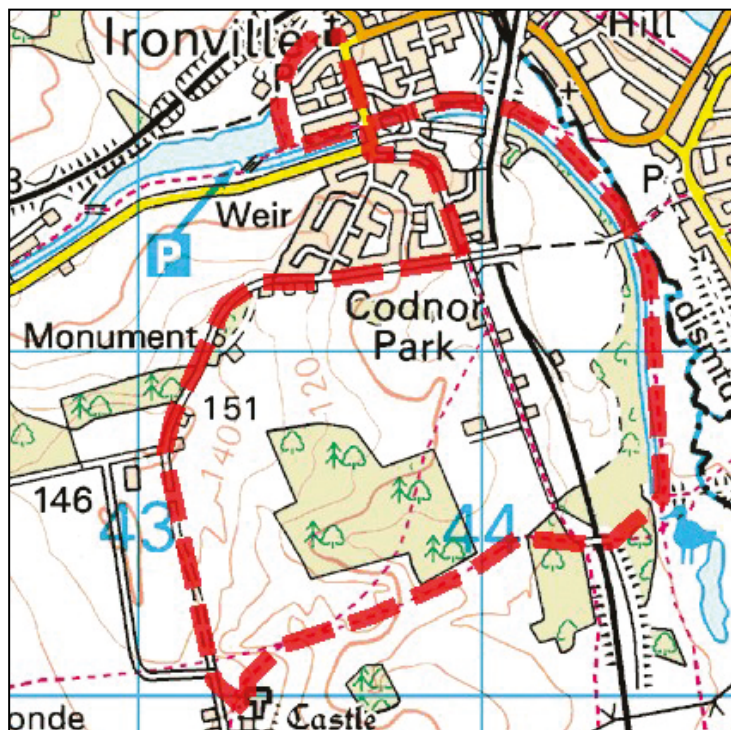
During the summer there tends to be busy periods just before the boat leaves and again when it returns, but the rest of the time the pace is a more steady one. As the shop acts as a focal point for Friends of the Cromford Canal good manners, a reasonably smart appearance and honesty are paramount but other than that no qualifications or previous retail experience are required. You'll be given training and won't be left on your own until **you** feel that's okay.

Whilst volunteer work obviously doesn't have any financial incentive it does have its own rewards. You'll be part of a friendly team of people all working towards the same goal; the restoration and maintenance of the historic and scenic Cromford Canal which is a worthwhile cause and satisfying in its own right. Volunteer work can also be a step in the right direction for people trying to get back into full or part time paid work and some of our volunteers have already been helped in this respect.

If you feel you can help please email **canal@birdswood.org** or phone/text on **07711 089431**. If you can't help 'man' the shop yourself but know of others who might like to, please let them know and between us help keep this lovely little shop going.

CANAL CIRCULAR WALKS – 3 IRONVILLE

Ken Brockway offers a 4-mile walk to Codnor Castle



Distance: 4 miles.

Start: Ironville Church, Casson Street, Ironville NG16 5NN.

How to get there: Rainbow One Nottingham–Alfreton and Ninety Ripley–Sutton. Parking to rear of Church Hall on the infilled bed of the Pinxton Arm.

To the left of Ironville Church is the Church Hall; take the path between church and hall which leads onto the infilled Pinxton Arm of the Cromford Canal. Turn left to walk behind the church hall through the car park then continue on a well-walked path passing under a footbridge.

The path turns to the left as Codnor Park

Reservoir comes into view on the right. The line of the infilled canal is to the left and has recently been cleared of vegetation.

The old stone bridge carried the Cromford Canal towpath over the entrance to the arm before re-profiling of the canal for reservoir safety took place in the 1980s. Turn left here away from the reservoir and follow the towpath for a short distance to Boat Dock Lock 2. Early maps will dispute the name of this lock as they show a canal arm from above the now vanished top lock running level alongside the main line to Codnor Park Iron Works. This allowed easy lock-free passage between Codnor Park and Butterley works. However, it was shortened after Cinder Bank

road bridged the canal and a dock built at the new terminus. Do not pass under the bridge; take the path up to the road then turn right to pass over the bridge.

Bear left along Vicarage Lane (note the old toll gate post on the right on Coach Road) passing Railway Row on the left. As the road bends right Forge Row can be seen, constructed of clinker, a waste product of the iron-making process. A map of 1835 shows only the iron works, while later maps and photographs show how the site grew to fill the area through which we now pass. It must have been very noisy, smelly and dusty – difficult to imagine now. You can see a film from 1943 here: bit.ly/2VUWzgn.

At the far end of Forge Row take a look at the new information board then turn right to climb Station Road – but where is or was the station? Codnor Park & Ironville station was just to the left where the road crossed the railway. Opened in 1847, it closed in 1967 and has now totally vanished, although you can still see and hear trains rushing past.

Station Road becomes Monument Lane and here are more information and pictures. Signs say 'Private Road' but the lane is open for walking. Monument Lodge, now hidden behind tall gates, once protected this early Alton Towers. Gaps in the trees on the right offer some far-reaching views. Spot the mast at Ripley police headquarters and Crich Stand. The Jessop Monument stands on the hill to the left and was at one time a popular site for recreation. Sadly access is no longer allowed and this is as close as we get. See www.codnor.info for more information.

The climb finally ends at Castle Hill by Codnor No 2 reservoir, which supplies drinking water. Take the track left passing a cottage on the left. Views to the left are into Nottinghamshire, and ahead in the valley are the new industrial sheds at Langley Mill close to the end of the Cromford Canal. Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station is straight ahead, a landmark for how much longer?

Just beyond where a well surfaced track comes in from the right ignore the track on

the left, but almost immediately take the stile in the left hedge and walk over to the stone ruins. This is Codnor Castle, but unfortunately there is no information on site although you will find plenty online at www.codnorcastle.co.uk. There are more great views so it's worth spending a little time here.



Codnor Castle.

When you are ready to move on, look for Jessop's Monument and head to the right of this, dropping down the field to a stile onto a track that you follow downhill into the valley, passing a wood on the left. Ignoring two footpaths on the left, go through a gate straight ahead that leads into scrubby woodland, take the fork right, follow the well-walked path to locate a footbridge, known locally as Monkey Bridge, and use this to cross the railway. After the bridge it's a bit messy. Take the better used left path immediately you leave the bridge, then take a left fork then turn right to arrive at the canal, in an area is managed by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Turn left along the canal towpath with the reed-infested canal bed on the left and open fields on the right. It's now a straight-forward walk back to Ironville, passing on the way the remains of several lock chambers. Seven, six and five are anonymous; only at four do the signs appear as you enter the length owned by Canal & River Trust. After passing under three bridges, alongside Lock 2 double back up the ramp for a second time. At the road, Market Place, turn left along Cinder Bank which leads to the church.

CROMFORD, GERMANY?

Dave Ratner looks at a European competitor

Today near Dusseldorf, there is an area of Ratingen, that is called 'Cromford'. Cromford was a mill complex built by Johann Gottfried Brügelmann in 1784.

Interested in British technology, because of the massively increasing demand for cotton, he sent a friend, Carl Albrecht Delius, to Britain.

Delius bribed people to start work at Arkwright's Cromford Mill. He learned the technology and made sketches and also stole parts! He even persuaded an English worker to emigrate to Germany, despite this sort of thing being considered a state secret with unpleasant sentences for perpetrators. However, he was smuggled over to Germany and took with him the secrets of the carding machine which Brügelmann had failed to develop.

This is how, what is quite possibly the first factory on the European continent came into being in 1784. It was a deserted oil-mill in the village of Eckamp. This had water extraction rights on the Angerbach. It was just outside the town walls of Ratingen, next to the moated castle of Haus zum Haus. The Count gave him 12 year exclusive rights to construct and operate a cotton-spinning mill in this building. (Brügelmann had wanted 40 year rights, to compensate him for his initial investment). Recruiting a workforce in poverty stricken Ratingen was relatively simple: few said no to work and there was none of the rioting by weavers seen earlier in the decade.

He denied industrial espionage, but had the audacity to call the mill Cromford! Production started in 1784. The mill was driven by the re-



routed waters of the River Anger, via a huge bucket wheel set in its centre.

He built two spinning halls and hired further English trained cotton workers to construct and operate water frames. In 1784, production started. All the machines were powered by waterwheels.

There is certainly no doubt that Brügelmann

saw himself as the German 'Arkwright'. He is even reputed to have said his cotton was 'Made in Cromford', therefore benefitting from the good reputation of Arkwright's product.

The business became prominent in the area: an imposing five-story factory building was erected, and then a luxurious villa for the owner. It also had a Baroque-style park, with an English garden. Ten years after the mill opened, it was employing 400 workers, at that time an unprecedented number for a business. It peaked in 1802 at 600, including children; then the exclusive privileges expired, and other manufacturers built bigger mills.

After the death of Brügelmann, his sons continued and expanded the business. After almost two hundred years of operation, production came to an end. Plans were afoot to demolish the five-storey 'High Factory', but it was saved and awarded listed building status because of its significance to the German cotton industry. The factory and the mansion were subsequently renovated and opened as an industrial museum, one of seven in Germany.

Similarities between the German and English mills continue, as both this and the site in England now provide interesting and informative venues for families to enjoy.

A STELLA(R) EXPERIENCE

Keith Bailey helps clean up our resident dinosaur



*Keith and Nigel do some dinosaur pampering.
Photo: Victoria Wilding*

During a recent pre-season training trip it was noted that Stella the Stegosaurus was looking decidedly jaded and in need of a Spring Clean. So, a working party was organised to approach the Old Girl and apply a bit of TLC.

On Sunday 3rd March Vix Wilding, Nigel Neale and Keith Bailey arrived at the boat in the rain. With storm Freya approaching, the weather forecast was far from Stella(r)! We loaded ladders, buckets, brooms and brushes onto the roof of Birdswood and set off with Keith Bailey helming – a brave, some may say foolhardy, choice by the others on board! Fortunately, we arrived at the landing stage at the now defunct Cromford Garden Centre

without running aground or bumping into anything, and moored up. Luckily, the rain had now left off. We made our way up to Stella with all the kit we had loaded together with buckets of canal water for the clean-up.

As we got up close and personal, we saw that Stella had quite a thick layer of moss on her back between the bony plates and was covered all over with a patina of green algae. Fortunately, the moss was quite soft and came off fairly easily. The algae put up more of a fight, but determined scrubbing and rinsing with further buckets of canal water had Stella looking perky again. The Old Girl is showing her age, however. The clean-up revealed that the light blue paint is peeling badly and she could do with a fresh coat, a job her creator, Simon Waller, says he might undertake.

After about two hours of clambering about and the application of copious amounts of elbow grease, the job was complete and the rain had held off! However, as we loaded the boat and cast off, it started again and continued all the way back, so, we finished as we started, in the rain!

Next time you are passing, give her a wave and say hello.

Some Stella facts:

- Stella was built in 1990; therefore she will be 30 next year. Perhaps we should organise a party for her.
- Stella has green glass eyes.
- Stella has different numbers of toes on each of her four feet.
- Stella is about 3m high and 8m long.
- When Stella was built she had other dinosaur friends, but these were removed when the Garden Centre closed.

TOWPATH RAMBLINGS

Ken Brockway wonders how our canal route became a public footpath



The two signs from different eras close to Brown's Bridge at High Peak Junction.

Today we are used to free access to walk and often cycle along canal towpaths. British Waterways and now Canal & River Trust actively encourage this use but it wasn't too long ago that I held a licence granting permission to cycle the towpaths and I well remember boating through Birmingham feeling very isolated, unable to gain access to streets from the numerous bridges.

A recent inspection of 'The Cromford Canal' by Hugh Potter reminded me of this significant change of attitude. A picture on page 20 shows two signs close to Brown's Swing Bridge 2. One plainly reads "No Public Right of Way". The other more wordy threatens prosecution to anyone riding or wheeling any bicycle without consent. Page 86 offers a sign from the BWB era once located on an office building on the Codnor Park flight. It reads "All persons found trespassing on foot or horseback on the banks of the Cromford Canal or leaving horses or cattle to graze thereon or fishing in the canal will be prosecuted under the acts of parliament regulating the said canal. By Order"

With so much of the Cromford Canal

destroyed by opencast mining we are, to my mind, incredibly fortunate that the old course is preserved by the inclusion of the towpath as a public footpath. The question is: with so much past effort made to prevent access, how did the towpath end up becoming public?

Since 1949 there has been a process to properly record footpaths, bridleways plus a bit more. It was the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act that required the drawing up of what is called the Definitive Map. The process started at grass roots; generally the County Council would ask the Parish Council to carry out a survey.

C.L. Soar of 17 Leabrooks Road, Somercotes, surveyed paths at Pinxton and Pye Bridge. One he describes as "starting near the basin (Pinxton), round basin through stile and on to canal side, continues through to Crimea Cottages". Another is from Crimea Cottages to Main Road, Pye Bridge; it states "path comes alongside canal. Opposite Acid Works is a FG [field gate]. Path then goes another 50 yards and crosses canal at bridge (canal emptied of water, bridge out of use, path now crosses canal which has been

filled up solid at this point). From this point road is tarmac through under Railway Bridge. Road maintained by Midland Acid Co Ltd. Feb 1952."

These are the only paths along the canal and most is on the non-towpath side so it's safe to say that in the Alfreton Urban District, which covered Ironville, Riddings and Somercotes, they did not claim as footpaths the towpath that is today recorded. It must have been a later addition.

We may never know who carried out the Ripley survey on 13th September 1952. Despite the form demanding the full name and address of persons who carried out the survey, we have only an initial illegibly scrawled. Whoever it was, we should congratulate them because path number 81 reads "Cromford Canal Towpath. Start point Hammersmith (Tunnel End) finish point U.D. Boundary Ambergate. All roads and footpaths along its route have access to it with the exception of Hartshay Hill near the Gate Inn."

The form also asks for grounds for believing path to be public. Here our anonymous pre-FCC supporter adds: "There is some doubt as to whether this is a public right of road although the public have used the towpath for as long as can be remembered." The path condition is recorded as good and passable in all seasons.

Thos. B Thorpe (Senior and Junior) of Leashaw Garage, Holloway, together with Thos. Walker of Leashaw, Holloway, and Walter G. Cooper of Chapel Lane, Holloway, carried out the survey for Lea, Dethick and Holloway parish. Many of the claimed paths link with the canal including the one that passes over Gregory Tunnel. Their real claim to fame however is Path 40 which became FP39 today, "canal towpath from Leashaw Farm at parish boundary, through Gregory Tunnel, over footbridge near aqueduct cottage to canal terminus at Lea Wood Wharf". They claimed uninterrupted public use of fifty years stating the general condition was good and it was passable in all seasons. The survey was carried out between August 1950 and

February 1951.

After the parish had returned the forms to the County Council they must have been inspected; most maps and forms have amendments. There was also a final tribunal stage but we have no records of this for Derbyshire. We should be grateful to the men of Holloway and A.N. Other of Ripley for at the very least setting a ball rolling that resulted in the whole towpath being protected and preserved.

Footnote: Leashaw Garage at Holloway is now operated by the great grandson of Thomas Thorpe.

Note from the Editor

So, just when did the entire (former) towpath of our canal become a public right of way - and why? Can anyone throw any light on this matter?

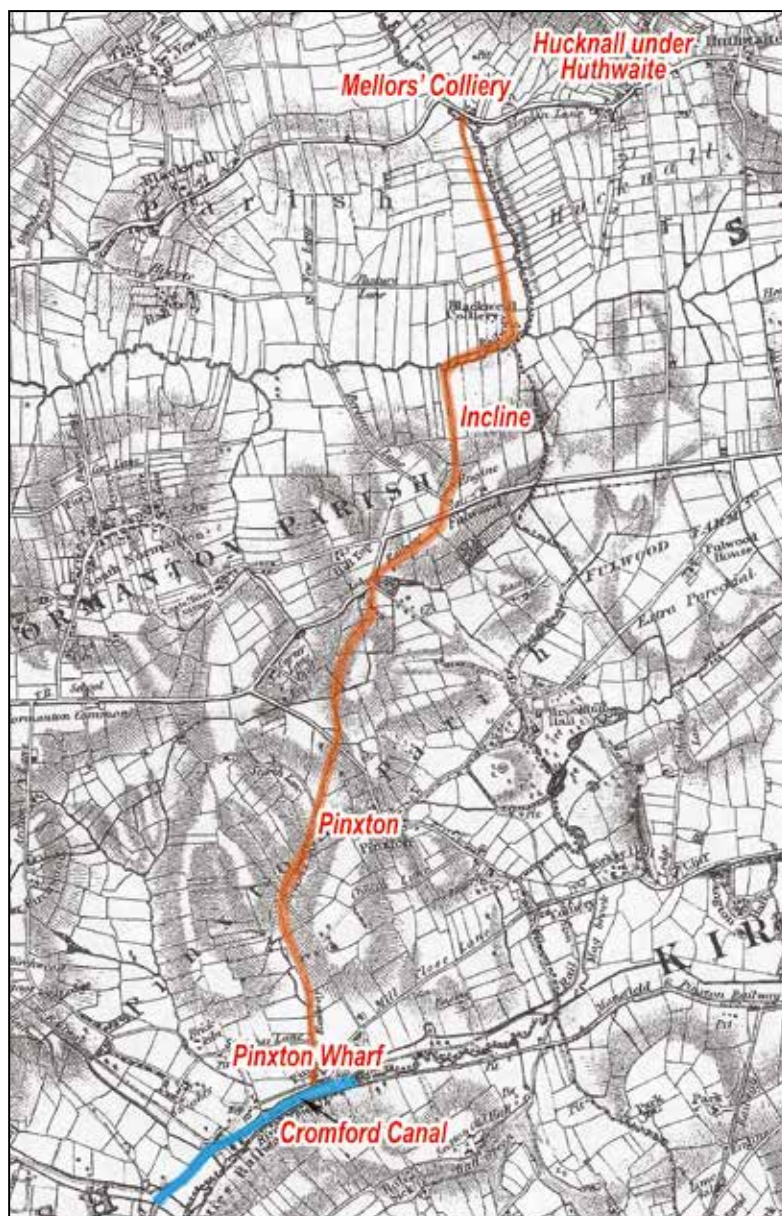
In case you want to take full advantage of the continuous footpath, you could do no better than purchase a copy of FCC's Walker's Guide to the Cromford Canal, available from the Weighbridge Shop at Cromford Wharf or from the FCC or Birdswood websites. As well as giving commentary on the route, it helps you trace the path where the canal has been filled in.



The sign on the outside wall of the small office building at Codnor Park.

HUCKNALL - BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

Hugh Potter on how a 'lost' colliery was found



This extract from Sanderson's Map '20 Miles Around Mansfield' shows the 3-mile tramway/ railway linking Mellors' Hucknall colliery to the canal at Pinxton Wharf. The construction of such a long railway shows how important it was for colliery owners to have access to the canal to sell their coal.

CROMFORD CANAL.									
Permit ⁴⁴³⁵		on board		F. G. Sharpe		Boat, No 1014			
to navigate the under-mentioned GOODS:									
SPECIES.	Where Loaded.	Where Landed.	Weight by Bill of Lading.	Dry Tons.	Tonnage Weight.	Miles.	Rate per Ton.	Amount.	
								£.	s. d.
Coal	Hucknall	Nottingham	43	43	43	6	9	1	12 3

One of the 150 known permits showing coal from 'Hucknall' being shipped to Nottingham, the main recorded destination of Hucknall coal. The permit number 4435 records boat 1014 on 10th September 1841, steered by Thomas Bramley and owned by F.G. Sharpe, carrying 43 tons of coal from Hucknall to Nottingham. 6 miles of this journey was along the Cromford Canal for which the charge was 9d (old pence, 3.75p) per ton for that mileage which worked out at £1 12s 3d, or £1.61 in new money.

As many of you know, I am on a mission to transcribe all the known Cromford Canal Co Permit Books onto a searchable database. Thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers, this is progressing well, and we now have over 85,000 entries in the database and have transcribed around 90% of known books.

Recently one of the transcribers, Christine Johnstone, questioned why coal from 'Hucknall' was going to Nottingham via Langley Mill. With Hucknall only 7 miles north of Nottingham this made no sense. After many enquiries, I floated the question at my talk last November to FCC members and (as usual) someone came up with the answer. John Sparham suggested that perhaps it was the Hucknall which was one of the older names of Huthwaite, and so it turned out to be.

The permits are from 1831 to 1849, but I could only find reference to pits from much later. However, Gary Elliott, who runs the Huthwaite Online website, assured me that there were earlier collieries that could well have sent coal to the canal via a branch of the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway, although it had not previously been known.

He wrote: "There was indeed an earlier colliery sited in the formerly named Hucknall Huthwaite which could have fed the Cromford Canal, loaded from Pinxton Wharf, when Huthwaite was often simply referred to as

Hucknall.

"Mellors' pit was located adjacent to the Derbyshire border below what is today addressed Blackwell Road in Huthwaite. Worked through the 19th into the mid 20th century, it was eventually closed, and later replaced by sinking New Hucknall Colliery. Mellors' earlier pit was then commonly referred to as the Old Hucknall Colliery.

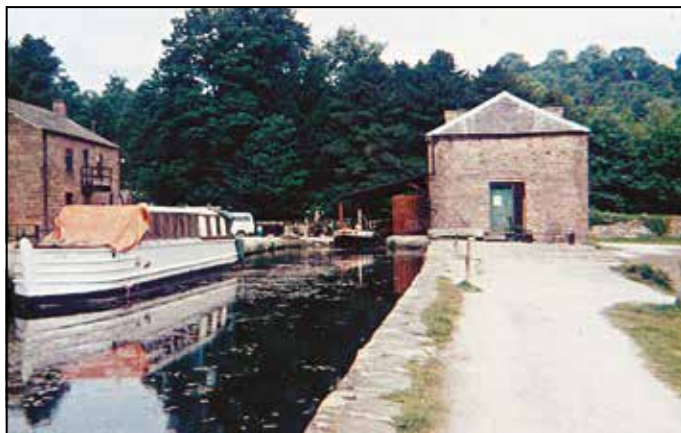
"Coal was mainly being carted to Mansfield markets, but as that town sought more from Derbyshire pits, its lack of a canal connection brought about the construction of the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway (see Portal 67). The later addition of steam-powered haulage would probably be the time that Mellors' Old Hucknall pit gained a branch line. First shown mapped in 1835, it used a pulley system powered by a static engine sited far above near the present A38 Alfreton bypass.

"It had been locally presumed that Mellors' Hucknall coals were still being bought at Mansfield, but evidence in the permits of it being shipped elsewhere via the Cromford Canal may indicate he'd been either outpriced by Derbyshire's far larger pits or his lower output perhaps needed to seek other markets."

So the permits have revealed previously unknown information about this colliery's activities.

CROMFORD WHARF IN 1985

Hugh Potter looks at photographs taken by Tim Dalton on 8th July 1985



Marjorie A was moored to the peninsular wharf where the other photographs were taken. John Gray is under the canopy next to the Gothic Warehouse, with a gate preventing public access.

As promised in Portal 67's Letters pages, here are some of the photographs taken by Tim Dalton when "on one of my teenage canal walks, back in the eighties, I took an Ilford 126, my first camera".



What is now Wheatcroft's Wharf café was surrounded by what can only be described as a scrapyard!



A more or less complete side-tipping wagon, of the sort used in sewage works. There were many remains of these on the site.

Tim explains: "At the time a mate and I were volunteering at High Peak Junction for Andy Pollock; we just did odd jobs around the place. Around then I got my first camera and I enjoyed taking photographs of railways, canals and industrial things. I still do. It was in pursuit of recording lost industry that the rusty rails diving into the canal caught my eye (I'm a narrow-gauge railway enthusiast too) so I had to investigate further.



The chassis of one of the wagons next to a turntable.



The maker's identity "Hudson 838 Leeds" cast into the axle bearing plate of one of the waggons.

"There wasn't anyone about so cautiously I picked my way through the rusty narrow gauge railway equipment and other machinery until I reached the mysterious rails, taking photographs as I went. I thought at the time they must have been for lifting things out of the canal.



The rail track that tempted Tim Dalton through the site.

"I still find old canals, railways and industrial places incredibly romantic and full of mystery. Food for the soul!"

The wagon chassis and rails across the site were used for launching boats during the 1980s restoration; the launch of a work boat can be seen on YouTube by searching for "Working the canal 1980s".



The rails entered the water at the point of the peninsular where boats were launched and recovered.

