

# THE PORTAL

Issue 87 - Winter 2023

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Friends of the Cromford Canal

Registered Charity No. 1164608

# FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

## The Officers

### **Chairman - David Martin**

1 Lawrence Park, Underwood, Nottinghamshire NG16 5QZ  
**Email:** chair@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 01773 813310

### **Vice Chairman - John Barker**

106 Main Road, Underwood, Nottinghamshire NG16 5GN  
**Email:** vicechair@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 01773 760358

### **Executive Secretary - Richard Handley**

12 Holymoore Road, Holymoorside, Chesterfield S42 7DX  
**Email:** secretary@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 07831 550731

### **Acting Treasurer - John Barker**

106 Main Road, Underwood, Nottinghamshire NG16 5GN  
**Email:** treasurer@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 01773 760358

### **Membership Secretary**

**Email:** membership@cromfordcanal.org.uk

### **Archivist - Hugh Potter**

Bankfield, Chase Road, Ambergate, Belper DE56 2HA  
**Email:** archivist@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 01773 852009

### **Editor - Hugh Potter (Layout & Design - Keith Bailey)**

Bankfield, Chase Road, Ambergate, Belper DE56 2HA  
**Email:** editor@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 01773 852009

### **FCC Sales**

Weighbridge Office, Gothic Warehouse, Mill Road, Cromford, Derbyshire DE4 3RQ  
**Email:** sales@cromfordcanal.org.uk

### **Social Secretary - David Martin**

1 Lawrence Park, Underwood, Nottinghamshire NG16 5QZ  
**Email:** chair@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 01773 813310

### **Local Authority Liaison Officer - Steve Parish**

26 Leamington Close, Warrington WA5 3PY  
**Email:** steve.parish@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 07909 001399

### **Webmaster**

**Email:** webmaster@cromfordcanal.org.uk

### **Work Party Organiser - John Barker**

106 Main Road, Underwood, Nottinghamshire NG16 5GN  
**Email:** work@cromfordcanal.org.uk | **Phone:** 01773 760358

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**Front Cover:** FCC Pipedreams? Pipedreams no longer as work starts with a vengeance on the Beggarlee Extension with fully trained volunteers carrying out work that would normally be undertaken by contractors at much greater expense. See report on p6.

**Back Cover:** *Birdswood* being lowered onto boat trestles on the peninsular at Cromford Wharf on 16th October in preparation for her biennial Out of Water inspection by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency which she successfully passed on 27th October. See p12.

**The copy date for the next issue is 16th February 2024**

President – Brian Blessed

Patron – Julian Richards

## 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

This is always the last piece to be written, so I am pleased to report that work was able to proceed at Beggarlee in early November (see p6) and that the 'missing' parts were delivered and fitted by our volunteers with the invaluable assistance of WRG.



We have a wonderful team, but we always welcome more. The more volunteers we have the more we can do. Please consider offering your help if you are able to. If you are not able to, then please continue to support us with your membership and spread the word about what we are doing.

We have a superb volunteer team within FCC right now – the best we have ever had. Whether it is 'on the ground' at Beggarlee and along the canal, in the shop at Cromford, crewing and maintaining *Birdswood*, or 'in the background' dealing with FCC administration, we have never had a stronger, more willing or more able team. We are blessed with volunteers who devote hours – days even – to essential tasks that would cost tens of thousands of pounds commercially.

As we approach Christmas, one way you can support us is to purchase items from our shop. Although the Cromford shop may not be open at this time of year, you can still purchase online, or you can visit the FCC sales stand. Switching hats, I am inviting you to a slide show of historic canal images at the annual 'Pots & Pix' event on 25th or 26th November at our house in Ambergate, where the FCC Sales team will have some excellent Christmas presents on offer! My address and contact details are on p2.

There is a temptation to 'name names' for dedication to specific tasks, but that would be unfair; everyone gives as much as they can in terms of time available, skill set etc. Every single volunteer helps advance the charity's aims and hopefully gains enjoyment and fulfilment in doing it.

If I don't see you there, I wish you season's greetings and a 'Good Road Ahead' for the New Year. **T**



*WRG helping to fit the top slab on the headwall of the 900mm pipe at Beggarlee on Remembrance Day.*



*Will it fit? Yes, it will!*

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

By David Martin



Where has this year gone? We are about to receive our third and final visit this year from the Waterway Recovery Group who've graciously agreed to come back to finish the job they started back in July. We are very lucky for them to be able to work on the Beggarlee site after all the recent storms and flooding of the River Erewash, which flooded most of Cromford Road in Langley Mill.

We couldn't get the two head walls for the ends of the two piped culverts that have been constructed, nor the newly constructed manhole lid for the 900mm Beggarlee Brook culvert in time for their last visit at the beginning of September. On any other building site it wouldn't have mattered but because WRG are all volunteers they only come for four days at a time, so here we are in November ready to go again.

Meanwhile, our diligent engineer Chris Broome has been working away at obtaining permissions for the flood compensation zone for which we will need a licence from the Environment Agency. In preparation for that to happen next spring, this winter FCC volunteers will be clearing out more brash and self-set saplings before the bird nesting season begins. Our work party days are generally on Wednesdays and Fridays weather permitting; if you feel you could help with anything – even if it's just for a few hours – we always extend a warm welcome to new volunteers.

Since September we have had two FCC Social evenings in Ironville: Ian Hooker with his talk on the restoration of the Aqueduct Cottage, and 'Wheels of Industry' by Robert Mee in October. By the time you receive this *Portal* our last talk of the year will have taken place by Mick Golds on the Great Northern Basin – a restoration success story 50 years on!

In October for some reason, we didn't get as many attendees as we have had in the past which is a shame because it was a great talk; this prompted the trustees to do a survey about the socials because obviously they cost money and the only way we can stop them costing the charity is if they are

well attended. The results are summarised on page 11.

Nearly all of our talks are heritage, canal or railway related, although we have ventured into broader subjects. We have always held them on the third Monday of each month. I'm proposing to alternate them between Ironville and Cromford later next year to see how it goes. We will send out emails about them to all of the email addresses that we currently hold, so please make sure yours is up to date. Do keep your eyes open and look out for our social event posters done by Angela – otherwise you may miss out on some great talks!

I'm sure there will be someone else talking about *Birdswood* being lifted out and the anti-fouling being done but when you consider what a big job it actually is, it is no wonder that we are so proud of all of our volunteers and the amazing work that they do every year without fail!

And so each year now for the last few that we have been able to we have held a 'thank you' event for all of our wonderful volunteers from across the charity. So you don't miss out we move it to different locations. Next year's will be at the Great Northern at Langley Mill on 13th July so make sure all you volunteers put it in your diary!

It just remains for me to say Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year to you all! **T**

# PROGRESS AT BEGGARLEE

John Guyler reports . . .

The second pre-work stage for the Beggarlee Extension took place over six days, from 31st August to 5th September with the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG). This was the third visit by WRG to Beggarlee this year. Their work this time concentrated on the 900mm headwall chamber which, as you look towards the A610 bridge, is on the left.

Three of the original walls (back and two sides) of the structure are being used to make the chamber; these walls are from when the A610 road was built.

The fourth wall, at the front, was constructed by WRG using a wooden backboard securely fixed into place, then a structure of enforcing rods was built and concrete poured in.

A pipe had already been fixed into place joining the original pipe in the headwall and this protruded through the new chamber wall.

Benching out was finished, this is at the exit of the pipe and is a form in the concrete which follows the contour of the pipe to be fixed, and supports the attached pipe.

The gully from the chamber was dug out by digger, gravel laid, level of flow established and pipes fitted and laid on the gravel.

Pipes were lowered into place by the digger and, with a great deal of effort by FCC and WRG workers, fitted to the other pipes previously fitted, progressing along to meet the pipework from the 600mm chamber which had been laid previously. That was as much as could be done by the WRG due to the



*A screenshot from drone footage made during a WRG visit to the Beggarlee site. The former railway bridge under the A610 on the right is where the canal will pass after being raised by a staircase pair of locks at the bottom right of the image.*

build being delayed by the non-delivery of the pre cast top slab of the inspection chamber and the connection pre-cast pipe-work to join the two pipes together for the water to run down to the river Erewash.

The pre-cast parts were promised by the manufacturer for the start of this particular build, but they failed to deliver, which meant that there will have to another building session to finish off. This was planned for early November, but at the time of writing at the beginning of November, an inspection of the area was to be undertaken due to the amount of rain we have had; the ground may be too soft for the heavy machinery and the river may be at a high level. With part of the site being the flood plain for the Erewash, this may cause the work to be delayed. The digger required to lift the specially made top slab is a minimum of 22 tons, so this could cause problems. If work is delayed, it will be early next year before any further progress is made.▶

After WRG went to their various homes in London, Manchester, Cheshire and other far flung places, the FCC volunteers carried on for a further three days compacting earth, dressing the area, making it safe and looking reasonable. The last job was to make all the chambers and pipe terminals safe with fencing. One job which they were able to complete was filling the original gullies and opening up the drainage pool on the other side of the track.

WRG are part of the Inland Waterways Association and have their own magazine called *Navvies*. In the August–September issue there is a lengthy report of their visit in July to Beggarlee, putting the pipework in and building the first chamber, the 600mm. The article, goes into detail of working and the problems encountered, with much technical jargon.

What I did pick up was the fact they were billeted at the Ironville Social Club and they have their own cook, who is very much appreciated. On the first day of the work party, he did a proper shop in the local Co-op. For their meal that night, he served up a lasagne, with seconds and thirds (he had made rather a lot!), with fruit salad for afters, which was declined; they went to the bar instead.

Next day after work, they went back to their billet and had jacket potatoes and a chilli that bore an uncanny resemblance to the lasagne of the previous evening (How much did he make?); this time they ate the fruit salad.

One of the WRG group had a shock when he was inside a large diameter pipe dressing it, he met a dog coming from the other end. Who owned it and where it went is still a mystery.

At that work party they were using a generator to power, amongst other things, the concrete mixer, which proved very unreliable; they finished up mixing the concrete by hand as it was quicker. The upshot of that, the FCC are now the proud owners of a brand-new generator, for the concrete mixer and other portable tools, funded by a grant secured by Marsha Miles Consultancy.



*The 900mm pipe trench being filled in.*

There was a visit on site, whilst FCC and WRG were working on the 900mm headwall, of Broxtowe councillors; they were shown around the site by FCC Chairman David Martin and a number of other FCC trustees. From the feedback of the visit, they were very impressed with the professionalism of the site, considering it was all done by volunteers.

WRG gave 545 hours with 120 travel hours for the September work party, with the FCC volunteers giving 474 hours and 54 hours travel. The combined total of volunteer hours on all aspects of the Beggarlee project (excluding planning hours, which I still have to calculate) up to the end of September 2023 is 3,420 hours.

*Thanks to Ian Hutchinson, Malc Chisnall and John Barker for help compiling this article. Also, acknowledgement to the WRG magazine Navvies, from which part of this article was taken. ■*

# WORK PARTY REPORT

By John Guyler



*Laying the dry path at the Forge site.*

Well, what an end of summer experience, we lost two complete days, having to abandon the work parties and two more days where we had to call off proceedings part way through because of the weather. They all happened when we were working at, or planning to go to, Pinxton. First, high winds and heavy rain brought an abrupt end to tree work; the trees were moving in all directions with the squalls. Then the following week, high winds were again forecast so we abandoned, only for the weather to be OK on the day.

We took shelter one day in the wood yard at Pinxton, when heavy rain started at lunch time. Mick, who owns the wood yard, invited us in and I have to say it was very cosy – thanks Mick. We did actually get to do some work, clearing wind-damaged trees, pulling reeds near the weir, strimming along the towpath road and generally clearing vegetation. It happens to be quite convenient that the Boat Inn is always open when we have to abandon a work party.

At Pinxton, the weir is usually very slow, with only a trickle going over the top. In the third week of October, when we had that storm, the water was about a foot above the top of the weir; I bet they lost a lot of fish out of the fishery at to top end of the Pinxton Arm.



*Some of the produce from the Lock Keeper's garden.*

## Down at the Forge

We had three work parties in August at the former Codnor Park forge site, helping lay a dry path for the Friends of the Forge. The idea is to lay a path which is slightly higher than the surrounding ground so that when areas ►





*The new two wheeled strimmer for the Lock Keeper's garden.*

get boggy there is somewhere dry to walk. French drains were dug and pipes laid to take excess water away from the walking area. A large number of old bricks which had been donated were laid and edged with small birch trees which had been cleared prior to the path route being cleared.

There was also a large amount of rubber gridding (used in car parks with gravel thrown in); this proved invaluable, as it was easy to lay, can be cut for bends and, to back fill it, just tip a barrow-load of gravel on and rake it flat. I think over three work parties we must have achieved about 300m. We ran out of materials, which brought an abrupt end to the build.

So, if you have old bricks or gravel you don't want, or gridding that is redundant, I'm sure Sally Fisher of the Forge would love to hear from you.

### **Elsewhere on the Canal**

There was a day at Poyser's Bridge, Ambergate, pulling Himalayan balsam, which, with the weather being very summery, was a good day.

We had several work party days at Ironville, pulling balsam, removing litter, mainly drinks cans, and even rescuing an 8in-long roach from shallow water near Lock 3. It was put in a large bucket and returned to the reservoir.



*Tree cutting at Codnor Park Reservoir.*

It must have been a good growing year for balsam, because the height of some of it, and the size of the stems, was something else. We cleared a very large patch of balsam in the abandoned channel adjacent to the fishing pegs on the reservoir. A number of wind-damaged trees at several places around the reservoir, which were in danger of falling across the footpath, have been removed by the tree team led by Malc Chisnall and Chris Martin.

The work party have had two sessions down at Golden Valley, clearing the brambles and bushes which were in danger of closing the footpath. The footpath should have been a metre wide but was down to about one third of that.

At the Lock Keeper's Garden, Chris Martin has removed an ash tree which had a serious case of die back. As in the previous three years, produce from the garden has been donated to local food banks, this year to Age Concern at Eastwood. There has been a large quantity of potatoes, beans, cauliflowers and other produce. The garden is worked by Shirley Bullock and her sister Carol, assisted by Shirley's husband, Steve. The FCC now have a new two-wheeled strimmer for the lock keeper's ►



*The dwarfs on their way home, Hi Ho!*

garden, courtesy of The Mansfield Building Society.

We were asked to do a special job just over the steel bridge at the end of the reservoir going towards Golden Valley. There is a memorial seat, one of three the FCC have put in, that vegetation was taking over. The seats are in memory of Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick, who tragically lost his life on active duty in Northern Ireland. His family contacted John Barker to ask if the work party could clear the vegetation which was preventing anyone sitting on the seat from seeing the canal. Four of us cleared it, found a mobile phone and I nearly slipped in the canal. We left the area improved, giving a view from a very restful spot.

Good news on the Himalayan balsam fight. I saw on a program a few weeks ago – they are testing Rust Fungus which stops the balsam reproducing. I am going to look further into it.

*Birdswood* was lifted out of the water for the biennial hull inspection and some of the work party joined the crew to scrape the hull prior to inspection (see p12).



*Pulling reed and blanket weed at Pinxton.*



*Reed clearance from beneath Ironville Bridge.*

With the building of the Beggarlee Extension getting closer, we need a Site Manager, someone who has the experience of managing contractors and keeping the job on track. If anyone has the experience and is interested, please contact David Martin, chair@cromfordcanal.org.uk, to discuss terms and conditions.

If you would like to join us on the work parties, the volunteers are a sociable bunch; they look out for each other and are great to work with. Contact John Barker at work@cromfordcanal.org.uk. **T**

# WHAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN

**As a member-led charity, we strive to understand what you are interested in. Richard Handley gives two examples of recent research.**

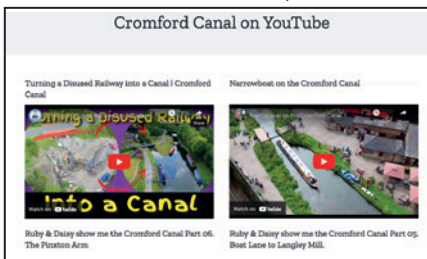
## FCC Website

Our fantastic, relatively new, website gives us the ability to derive lots of statistics on what pages have been visited. For two years now – since the website was launched – we've been keeping track of website visitors' interest areas, so that we can understand where our focus should be. Page visits over those two years have been relatively constant at about 30,000 page visits each year. The top 10 pages in the last 12 months are as follows:

- Restoration
- The Canal
- Trip Boat
- FCC Events
- Visit Us
- Butterley Tunnel
- Cromford on YouTube
- Membership
- High Peak Railway
- About the Charity

The 'Visit Us' page popularity has nearly doubled in 12 months – possibly something to do with us adding in 'Pubs along the Canal'? The YouTube page is brand new, added in February 2023, and has jumped straight into the 'Top 10', having had 700 page visits in the last 8 months.

So, we can clearly see what folk are interested in (and less interested in – there's a bottom 10 as well!).



## FCC Social Events

As you will know, Trustees have been striving to put together a monthly social event schedule over the last few years, and there have been some notable speakers and presentations. These events help us build a rapport with attendees – whether FCC members or non-members, again helping us understand what people are interested in.

So, on 23rd October a survey was launched via a free-of-charge application and sent to 1,200 FCC contacts for whom we have email addresses (which includes 500 members) and 2,400 followers of the FCC Facebook group.

The preface of the survey said: "FCC have been holding monthly, evening 'social' events (when members and public are able to meet FCC Trustees etc) for the last twenty years – mainly at Ironville Church Hall. Dwindling attendances have made Trustees of the charity think long and hard about future events. We are interested in hearing your views to shape our thinking."

Well, the results are in – and the headlines are as follows:

- A small number of people still value these social events, but travel/distance to the venue is an issue;
- People strongly prefer less frequent – probably quarterly – events;
- 60% of respondents want the venue to be somewhere other than Ironville.

Trustees will be debating these results to better shape our future activities.

Meanwhile, we would also welcome further comments for consideration and for publication in the next *Portal*. Details of next meetings are on p34. **T**

# BIRDWOOD HAS ITS ANNUAL MOT

## Richard Handley on our boat's annual check-up

Regular readers know that the FCC's chief recurrent generator of funds must have an 'MOT': *Portal 79* described in layman's terms what happened in 2021.

We've had *Birdswood* for ten years now, but looking through previous *Portals* it may not have been clearly explained why these MOTs/inspections occur at all.

Well, since the *Marchioness* disaster on the river Thames in 1989, regulations have been in place to help ensure better Health & Safety when operating passenger vessels.

Since our charity chooses to operate *Birdswood* with more than twelve passengers, the regulations specify that our boat is a "class V vessel operating on class A waters". What this means is we are subject to a specific inspection regime by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA).

That means:

We are supposed to have an out-of-water inspection every year (because we are covered by a specific temporary exemption, we only have to do this every other year). This essentially covers the structural integrity of the boat.

Additionally, we also must have an annual in-water inspection; this is to test the stability and manoeuvrability of the boat whilst in the water, as well as testing the competency of a sample of masters.

Over and above these inspections, we must prove to the MCA that our operational policies and procedures are fit for purpose: referred to as a Domestic Safety Manual test.

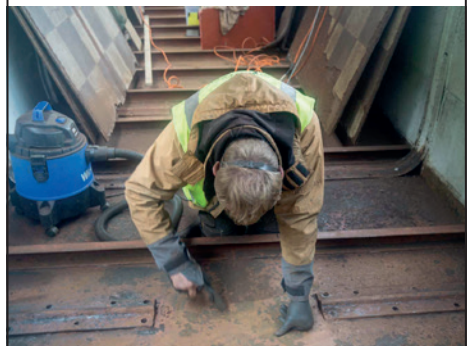
Clearly, the most onerous of these inspections is the out-of-water one; the last such inspection happened in the winter of 2021. That inspection highlighted that the large angle brackets that hold the ►



*Lifting the floor plates.*



*Phew! All up.*



*Getting down to it!*



*Once the floor plates were lifted and the battery boxes moved, the bottom plates were cleaned and repainted.*

bottom of the boat to the sides (known as knees), needed to be focussed on this year. In particular, the knees in the aft of the boat in the galley and cabin area, and the ones under the battery boxes and those in the front of the boat under the toilet compartment. None of these knees have been inspected during FCC's tenure of the boat.

So, since the 2021 inspection we have had some considerable anxiety about the inspection of these knees – especially as they are/were significantly covered and nearly completely inaccessible.

Through the whole of the 2023 season, our maintenance team - led by Dave Webster, Ian Hutchinson, Norman Wileman and Nigel Neale - have undertaken delicate and thorough work to ensure that the knees can be easily exposed and inspected.

The MCA inspector was booked in the summer to attend site, but we also needed to have to hand a refreshed hull thickness test report, as the previous one was “not up to scratch”: these reports are only required by the MCA every 5 years, but nevertheless, we have had to organise a professional non-destructive testing company to do the testing and provide a report.

We had to do some pre-inspection work removing and safely storing the boat's ►



*Tea up!*



*DCC's John Thompson pressure washing the hull.*

seats, and getting all stakeholders and other interested parties involved – such as Derbyshire County Council, Arkwright Society, FCC work parties etc once we finished cruising on 8th October.

The crane was booked for 16th October, and once the boat was lifted out of the water and safely landed on the Cromford wharf peninsular, floor plates were lifted and the internal battery boxes shifted so as to give access to the knees underneath, in readiness for the MCA inspector.

The inspector attended site on the 27th October, and after a morning complimenting us on our pre-work exposing the previously hidden knees, gave us a thumbs up for this part of the process: full re-certification will only happen when we've successfully navigated the in-water inspection and Domestic Safety Management examination, both planned for the spring. Whilst these two hurdles are yet to be overcome, we have a high level of confidence now that we will be able to cruise through 2024.

Whilst the boat is out of the water, our volunteer maintenance team and work parties are taking advantage of being able to access parts of the boat that are not available to us when in the water, so we are having the hydraulic drive motor overhauled, and doing lots of 'blacking' and other painting of the hull and superstructure.

The boat will be craned back into the water sometime early in December, and then all the floor plates, internal structures and seating can be re-assembled and re-fitted.

So, you can see that this is an enormous task – that we can only achieve by the hard work and dedication of numerous volunteers, and one which will cost FCC this year over £8,000!

Hopefully this account gives a better and more detailed understanding of what we must do to keep *Birdwood* cruising with its maximum passenger potential – or at least cruising with more than 12 passengers! **T**



*Battery boxes moved – phew!*



*Mike touches up the rudder.*



*FCC volunteers 'black' Birdwood's hull. When posted on the FCC Facebook page, this image was viewed by over 30,000 people – our highest figure yet!*

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Farewell** We have now moved from Bonsall to West Wales and it is unlikely that I will again be visiting the Cromford Canal or contributing to FCC. However, before we left I met Hugh Potter for the first time and gave him a boxful of canal and waterway-related books for FCC to either add to its archive or to sell at Gothic Wharf to raise funds. I didn't wish to embarrass him at the time, but in my opinion *The Portal* is one of the best waterway/canal society publications around: always a variety of interesting topics, concisely written, accurate, with excellent photos (and as an ex-editor of NABO [National Association of Boat Owners] News, I have seen most of the others for comparison).

You should all be justifiably proud of the work you do, whether it's work parties clearing the canal bed and towpaths, the huge amount of preparatory work that is needed before work can start to restore new lengths, behind the scenes meetings with local authorities and potential funders, or the more public face crewing *Birdswood*.

So it is with some regret that I am giving up my membership, but I wish you all the very best with your important ongoing restoration work to protect this lovely waterway for future generations.

**Peter Fellows**

**A Grand Day Out** My wife and I have been wanting to get out on the Cromford Canal in *Birdswood* for a few years now, but things have got in the way (mostly Covid).

One Bank Holiday Monday I resolved, despite not making a booking, to just turn-up and see what happened...

The lovely couple of volunteers at the stall at the Weighbridge Shop were only too pleased to help, and in a minute we had paid and were booked on – no tickets necessary, just our names.

We had a lovely lunch despite the wasps and had a good look round, and being of 'a certain age' tested the toilets. Since my wife uses a mobility scooter, we checked where best to leave it. Good advice was: Put it back in your car, since

it was very busy day.

The main reason for my communication is to praise your volunteers who are/were so pleasant and helpful with all the visitors/customers on *Birdswood* that Monday.

We observed that there were a number of families aboard with children. The boat team anticipated many children's needs for a little more stimulation and information and were able (and willing) to provide that help – to the relief of many carers, who we thought, were getting a bit fraught.

I even got to see the Pump House in steam and working, and *Birdwood's* lovely traditional back cabin with the guidance of a knowledgeable volunteer who was happy to answer my points and questions.

It was a lovely experience, which because of my need to get out of the way and bring back my wife's mobility scooter, I missed the chance to thank all the crew – all volunteers – for their real care; they demonstrated true professionalism and lots of 'life skills'. It was truly: A Grand Day Out!

**Mike & Barbara Peat, Sheffield**

**What's in a Name?** One of the Steeple Grange Light Railway's volunteers, who has recently moved to Cupola Park at Whatstandwell, has been asked by a friend if anyone knows why Gregory Tunnel is so named. I can see on the internet that you've been asked this too; have you any recent information, or is it still the case that it is presumed, but not proven, that it was named after the landowner at the time the canal was built? A brief answer will suffice! Thanks.

**Tim Jeffcote**

*Hugh Potter replied: Not so much a personal name but a place name. 'Gregory' is the name of the (very) small hamlet just to the north. But that of course begs the question of where that name came from . . .* ■

# NEWS FROM THE NORTH

An update on the section owned by Derbyshire County Council



*In late September, Cromford was the centre for a Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Georgian Weekend, in which Birdswood's crew participated by dressing in traditional boater's costume.*

Derbyshire County Council brought in Somerset Boats' weed cutter for a week in September. On the first couple of days it worked between Brown's Bridge and Leewood Aqueduct. This allowed our trip boat *Birdswood* to recommence full trips; these had terminated at Brown's Bridge for a few weeks previously owing to the density of the weed preventing the boat getting through to the winding hole by the pump house. The weed cutter then headed south (by road!) to cut the section from Gratton's Bridge north towards Whatstandwell in an attempt to restore water flow down the heavily silted and weeded canal.▶



*Launching Somerset Boats' weed cutter at the Wharf Shed.*



Planned works this winter include reed/weed pulling from Gratton's Bridge to the Ambergate end and reed pulling south of Whatstandwell towards Crich Chase.

DCC would have liked to do some dredging works as well but with current budget restrictions it looks like won't they have any money to do that, unless Natural England approve an application that DCC have sent in for financial support to manage the canal.

Meanwhile, it is planned that the repairs to High Peak Junction workshop's roof will be completed by mid-December to enable the Christmas events (see p34) to take place. **T**



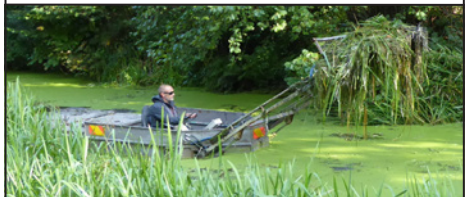
*Work on the roof of the High Peak Junction workshops began in October and should be finished before Christmas. During this time the shop/café and toilets remained open.*



*The weed cutter at work near Brown's Bridge.*



*Slowly cutting through the heavy reeds between Ambergate and Whatstandwell.*



*After weed cutting, the boat's blade is changed for a rake so the cut weed can be collected and dumped for later removal.*

**CROMFORD**

Cromford Wharf  
Lawn Bridge  
Railway End Bridge or Browns Bridge

River Derwent

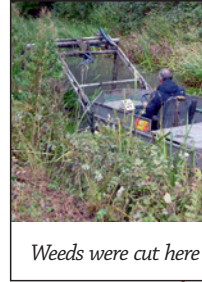
Lea Wood Pump

Nightingale Arm

Gregory Tunnel  
Lea Shaw Bridge



Mr Bowler lived in Aqueduct Cottage - p22.



Weeds were cut here

Fishermans Path Bridge 3  
Lea Wood Aqueduct 4  
Cattle Creep Bridge 5  
Swing Bridge (Towpath) 6  
High Peak Aqueduct 7

WHATSTANDWELL

River Derwent

Sims Bridge  
Whatstandwell Bridge  
Crich Council Footbridge

Bull Bridge 19  
Towing Path Swing Bridge 20  
Bull Bridge 21  
River Amber Bridge 22  
Railway Bridge 23  
Culvert Bridge 24  
Bridge 25



The 'Route over the Pennines' starts here - p32

Chase Bridge

AMBERGATE

Grattons Bridge  
Poysers Bridge  
Lime Works Bridge  
Hag Tunnel  
Starvehimvalley or Starvern Bridge  
Saw Mills Bridge or Brick Yard Bridge  
Buckland  
Railway Bridge  
Malthouse Bridge

River Derwent

**Walking the Canal**

We are fortunate that the canal's towpath was designated as a Public Footpath before it closed, and the entire route is still walkable today, with some minor diversions. Full details of the route are given in our Walker's Guide, available from the FCC shop.

**Canal Ownership**

The 5.5 miles between Cromford and Ambergate are owned by Derbyshire County Council, but the remainder is in various ownerships. Details are published on the FCC website.

- █ Canal in w
- █ Canal bed
- █ Canal bed
- █ Rivers

**THE CROMFORD CANAL**





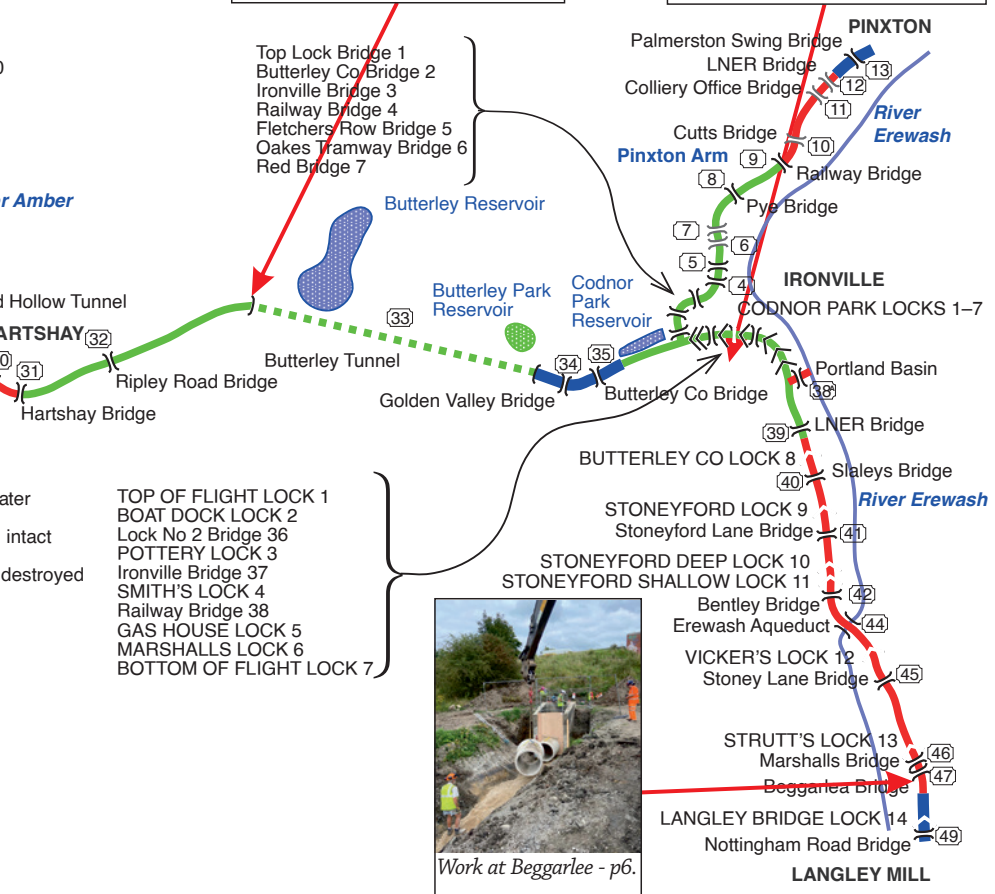
- p16.



Butterley Tunnel west portal has changed over the years - p30.



Path building on the Forge site - p8.



# BIRDSWOOD EXPERIENCE IMPROVED

## Richard Handley reports . . .

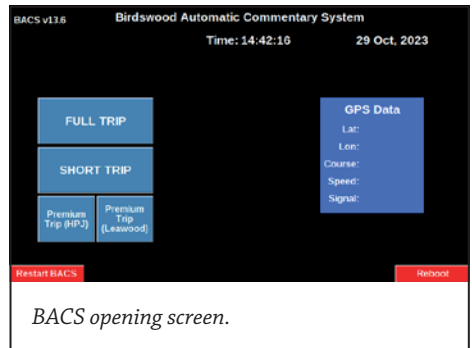
If you've recently taken a trip on *Birdswood* you will have noticed a few changes that have greatly enhanced the 'visitor experience', a couple of which have perversely spun out of the Covid pandemic.

### Auto-commentary

When I first started volunteering as a member of the crew on *Birdswood* in 2019, we had lots of comments from passengers about the commentary given by on-board crew members: to be blunt, it was variable in both content quality and accuracy and also in length. I remember asking the question "why don't we have a pre-recorded commentary?" The question was responded to with derision...

But then Covid happened, and our brilliant volunteer Keith Bailey set about undertaking a Covid lock-down project designing and constructing some technology that we now call the "Birdswood Automatic Commentary System" (or BACS for short). The essence is that we have a carefully scripted pre-recorded commentary spoken by one of our masters, Bob Staveley, who used to be a broadcaster. The commentary is played over the vessel's PA system and is triggered by *Birdswood's* GPS location. This means that exactly at the same spots on the cruise/canal, the same commentary is delivered to the passengers. This also had the advantage of allowing greater social distancing (remember that?) when we opened up again in June 2021. BACS has been so successful that we've exported the idea and design to the local Derby Riverboat!

Details of how it works were published in *Portal 77*, copies of which can be downloaded from the FCC website.



### Booking Reminders

The vast majority of our bookings are made online and when a booking is made, confirmation is automatically sent to the booker, which gives us the opportunity to further improve the visitor experience.

We hate it when we have to delay the start of a *Birdswood* cruise due to late arrivals, as it means other passengers can be left sitting around on the boat waiting for the latecomers: this can also have knock-on implications for follow-on cruises and crew welfare.

So the brilliant Keith Bailey has now implemented a system by which the booker is sent both an email and an SMS text message reminding them to turn up early (or at least on-time), and when there are known travel hold-ups, water supply issues etc, advice and guidance is offered to passengers through such messages. These messages can be sent automatically using information that the booker gives us on the web-based booking system.

Again, this was important in the early days of Covid lockdown release as we were closely managing social distancing of passengers on the boat, but we are now able to run much more closely to our target cruise schedules.▶

## Passenger Manifests

Pre-booked passengers used to turn up at the wharf side clutching paper copies of their booking confirmations (or in some cases mobile phone facsimiles), that then were checked against a manifest that was provided at the last minute to the Master of the day. All very inefficient and sometimes unwelcoming and uncomfortable for the queues of passengers waiting to embark.

We have a brilliant volunteer – I can't quite remember his name now – who has developed a system to automatically harvest data from our booking system, crew rota and

calendars, which publishes a manifest report to the Master and crew of the day, on the day before a cruise by email. This means is that the crew are able to much more efficiently meet and greet the passengers, and embark them safely and efficiently. It also fulfils our Maritime & Coastguard Agency and statutory licensing requirements.

We think that these innovations are at the leading edge for the type of heritage visitor attraction that we are, and customers/visitors obviously appreciate them – as witnessed by our outstanding reviews on the *Birdswood* website and TripAdvisor. **T**

# CROMFORD HYDRO SCHEME

Over the summer, work has progressed on the installation of a turbine and waterwheel in Cromford Mill Yard. This will not only supply some of the site's electricity but also create the spectacle of a 5m waterwheel in operation, something which has been lacking from the site for over a century. **T**



*Several times this year, Arkwright Society have had to drain off the Bonsall Brook as it flows through the mill yard. This cuts off the water supply to the canal, which normally flows over the semi-circular weir in the foreground, but is done in consultation with FCC so as not to disrupt Birdswood's operation.*



*Installing the 5m waterwheel at the end of October.*



*A new run-off paddle has been fitted half way along the channel to enable water to be drained directly to the River Derwent.*

## AQUEDUCT COTTAGE – MR BOWLER

Ian Hooker updates the story of the last resident



*In this well-known but undated photograph, Mr Bowler is carrying two buckets hanging from a yoke across his shoulders. He is on his way to fetch water, probably from the horse trough near the winding hole. There was at that time a temporary bridge across the aqueduct; he obviously did not trust the plank that can be seen where the swing bridge had been (and is now). It is clear that George took pride in his appearance. He is clean shaven (assuming that not all his face was scar tissue), he is wearing a tie and waistcoat, and there seems to be a handkerchief in his breast pocket. He always wore a trilby hat and was always accompanied by his dog, Gypsy, seen here behind the bucket.*

The story of Mr Bowler has been told in these pages before (*Portal 67*), but over the summer when the cottage has welcomed visitors, we have had more recollections from people who knew Mr Bowler, or at least remember conversations with him as they walked past on the towpath, so it seems worthwhile retelling something of the tale.

George Edward Bowler was born in Starkholmes, near Matlock in December

1891. He emigrated to the USA in 1913 and there married a woman significantly older than himself but who was also from Matlock. They returned to England in 1915 and George signed up voluntarily to serve as a gunner in France until two weeks before the Armistice, when he had the misfortune to be run down by a cart behind his own lines. He was discharged from the army as fully recovered in 1919 and found work back in Matlock at the gas works.



*More casually dressed, in June 1962 Mr Bowler was photographed talking across the aqueduct to a passer-by. His dog Gypsy was just visible in the original print. The temporary bridge across the aqueduct can be seen towards the far end of the aqueduct. This was in place until the erstwhile Cromford Canal Society rebuilt the swing bridge near the cottage.*

His wife having died in 1945, George was looked after by a part-time housekeeper, Eleanor Wragg. She was a married woman but had been separated from her husband for several years. By the summer of 1949 it seems that the relationship must have progressed beyond that of housekeeper because Eleanor thought that he should marry her when she became free to do so.

It seems George was not so keen and asked her to leave his home. She then became very jealous because, she said, she had seen him with another woman in the house. She bought a quantity of nitric acid that she heated in a pan on the stove and then tipped over his head saying "If I can't have you I will make it so no one else can".

George was badly scarred and blinded in his right eye. Eleanor pleaded guilty to a charge of causing Grievous Bodily Harm and was sentenced to imprisonment for 5 years.

It is unclear where George lived then, but it is possible that he found accommodation in Holloway because, after the Bark family left Aqueduct Cottage in the mid 1950s, it seems likely that he moved into Aqueduct Cottage where he lived alone (it is said that he was no longer keen on women) as a semi recluse.

But not entirely. He spoke to people walking by the cottage. The local children played around the cottage and at times George would allow them to come in a sit around his fire. He also allowed them to play with the boat that was, for a time, moored near

the cottage (though that almost certainly belonged to British Waterways, then the owners of the canal).

He used to visit a pub in the village because we know that he rode a bicycle along the towpath of the Lea Wood Arm to go up the hill to the Yew Tree in Holloway. He had painted white flashes on the trunks of trees along the arm, the better to see them as he returned in the dark and thus avoid falling off the path and down into the field below. We know too, that he caught the bus out on the Lea Road to go to Matlock, because he

would knock at the door of one of the houses at Lea Wood before boarding the bus and ask if his glass eye was in straight!

George was regarded by most of those passing the cottage as a frightening person. He was badly disfigured, and he had a rather abrupt manner. He was accused of shouting at people and following them along the towpath, though that may have been only an attempt to have some company in what was, then, a far less frequented place. And certainly, he was kind to those he knew needed help. One of the residents living alone at Lea Wood suffered from Multiple Sclerosis. George visited him twice daily to lift him out of bed and return him to bed at night.

It seems likely that he left one mark upon the cottage that lasted until our restoration was complete; the yellow paint around windows and doorway is not apparent in a photo taken in the mid 1950s so that may have been down to the hands of George.

In 1968 George was 77 years of age. He was by then living in just one room of the cottage, having brought a bed down into what is now known as the parlour. (Ivy Turberville



*This photograph taken in 1969, probably the year after Mr Bowler had left the cottage, shows the yellow surrounds to the windows that Mr Bowler may have painted.*

described it as Granny's parlour into which no one was allowed without her permission.) He had a stove there on which he could boil a kettle and a pan.

The Fern family, who lived at Lea Wood out on the Lea Road, would bring him necessary supplies of coal and things like candles. When George became ill that year Mr Fern called upon the Social Services Department of the local authority and a lady visited. It seems likely that it was she who decided that his living conditions were unacceptable and probably had him admitted to Babington Hospital in Belper.

We know that his death was registered in Belper in 1970. Whether he died in the hospital or had been rehoused is unknown, but it is unlikely that he ever returned to Aqueduct Cottage. Certainly, when new neighbours arrived at the High Peak Cottages across the canal in 1970, the cottage was unoccupied. So, the answer to the question most often asked, "When was the cottage last lived in?", is almost certainly 1968.

*I am indebted to Catherine Hill (née Fern) for much of the information above. ■*



# CROMFORD CANAL INSPECTION 1954

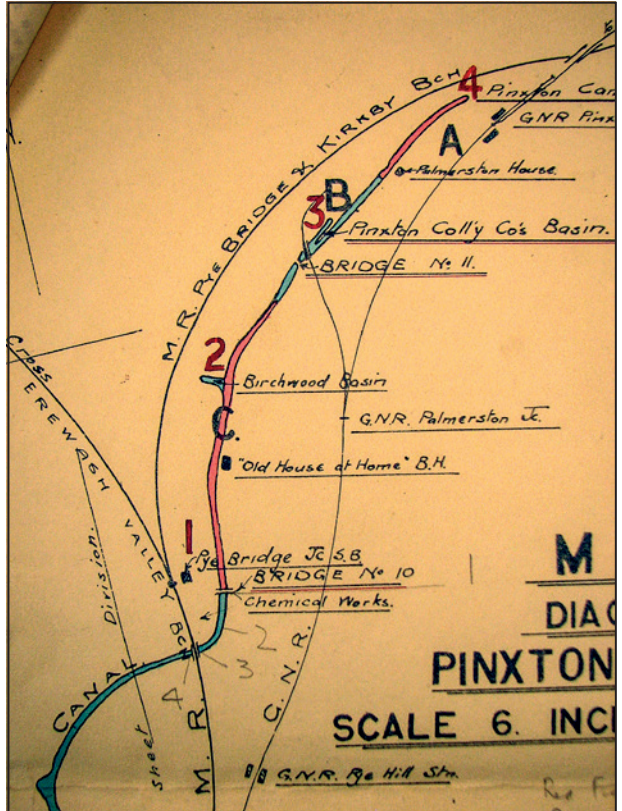
The first of four articles based on notes made by Mr King on walking the Cromford Canal in July 1954

In Portal 77, we looked at surveys of the Pinxton Arm made in 1921 and the early 1960s. We mistakenly said we had no documents between those two; however, this detailed report was made in 1954.

Mr King, who was thought to be a Redevelopment Officer for British Waterways, walked the entire length of the canal in several sections in July 1954, presumably as part of a review on its future following official closure ten years earlier. His report below is largely verbatim.

## Pye Bridge to Pinxton

I took the 8.45am bus from Nottingham (Mount Street, Service B3) which goes to Somercotes and got off at a place where the road between Selston Green and Somercotes crosses the canal near Pye Bridge [just off our map, to the south]. The bridge [8] carrying this important road over the canal looks as though it had been taken over by the Highway Authority, I presume the County Council. I turned north towards Pinxton, towpath on east side of the canal; it is a well-used cinder path of which about 3ft is worn by use. The canal looks as though it is about 30ft wide. The canal wall at towpath side is in good condition. At this part the canal is largely clear of weeds but the water is black and has an acrid smell.



A map drawn in 1919 showing the state of the canal at that time, but marking the key places seen by Mr King in 1954. The red sections were those that were dry or infilled in 1919, the blue ones in water.

Just north east of the railway bridge [9] over the canal on the offside a 2in diameter pipe projects into the water and appears to be for the extraction of water to the adjoining works which look like tar manufacturing works [Kempson's]. Next to these tar works on its north east side is a chemical works. Facing the tar works the water is very dirty; ►



*This image sums up the dire description given by Mr King perfectly! Kempson's chemical works is on the left, with Cutts Bridge 10 beyond.*

the works had a pump which looks as though it is pumping water from the canal into the works. Opposite the chemical works the water was clear but of a blood red colour, but this changed to opaque water strongly coloured yellow opposite the north eastern end of the chemical works. At the end of these works the canal was filled and blocked.

There is a level road over the filled canal adjoining the old hump-back bridge, Cutts Br No.10, and on the south side of the bridge; the bridge appears to be now unused but the road leads to a group of buildings and cottages on the western side of the canal. Continuing north the canal bed was practically dry for about 100 yards, after which there was a small amount of water in it. The chemical works lie on the west of the canal from Cutts Br for a distance northwards and effluents from the works run into the canal bed at various points. The cinder towpath is wide and in good condition and appears to be a good deal used as a way to and from Pinxton. [There is no mention of 'The Old House at Home' pub which had closed the previous year.]

The yellow chemical effluent continues about as far as the small Arm shown on the Railway Executive map half-way up the closed canal between Cutts Bridge and the Pinxton

Arm [Birchwood Basin]; from there the canal is largely overgrown with a 'three foot ditch' about in the middle with some water in it. A short distance before Colliery Office Br 11 a stream passes under the 'dry' canal bed in a culvert. Some men were engaged in clearing out the mud from this culvert in a field on the towpath side. They told me that they were employed by Alfreton Council and said "The Council do not know who is really responsible for looking after this culvert". The towpath hedge is good along here and there is a good sleeper and wire fence on the offside. Just before Bridge 11, which appears to be in sound condition, there is on the towpath a "Rights of Way 1932" notice to the effect that "This is not a dedicated Right of Way".

Bridge 11 carries a rough road to cottages [Office Rows] on the offside and the towpath leading to this bridge is used by vehicles for getting to and from these cottages. From here the canal is nothing but a narrow ditch near the towpath edge, the rest of the width being filled in or very heavily weeded. On the other side is a colliery which did not appear to be working; the National Coal Board properties adjoin the offside of the canal. Along here the canal bed is entirely filled in, on the offside a 'stream' flows down a bank ►

and crosses the canal bed into a culvert which passes under the towpath at the place marked 'Palmerston Swing Br 13' [by Palmerston House, marked on map]. There is now a level sleeper vehicle track over the canal, apparently for vehicles going to and from the colliery.

At the end of the canal which just 'fades away' the River Erewash is quite near; its water is black and smells badly. There are one or two manholes in the towpath along here which suggest the presence of storm-water or sewage pipes running along the towpath.

[Mr King seems not to have proceeded further, as surely he would have mentioned The Boat Inn if he had. It appears instead that he retraced his steps to Pye Bridge.]

In a field on the towpath side south of Bridge 11 there are a number of 'MR' metal plates some distance into the field from the towpath hedge, apparently indicating the boundary mark in the time of the Midland

Railway ownership. Opposite the previously mentioned little Arm on the offside half-way between Bridges 10 and 11, a ditch, probably leading to the nearby Erewash, passes under the towpath which is carried over it by a sleeper bridge.

Between my starting point and the railway bridge over the canal the canal is supported by a bank on the towpath side some 10ft to



*"Bridge 11 carries a rough road to cottages" – seen here a few years after Mr King's visit.*



*The site of Palmerston Swing Bridge a decade or two after Mr King's visit.*

12ft high; there are some cottages below the towpath. In the north eastern angle between the canal and the Selston Green-Somercotes Road there is a Gas Works, probably causing the black and acrid smelling condition of the canal water. There are a number of pipes projecting for the conveyance of water etc from these works into the canal. I do not think there are any agricultural water users between my starting point and Pinxton. ■

# LEAWOOD JOTTINGS

By Ian Yates



*The Pumphouse has changed colour over the years. From its faded Midland Railway 'red' in 1958, first the main doors were painted green, then by 1965 it was all green. It was repainted in the MR red by the erstwhile Cromford Canal Society when they restored it.*

This is the close of another steaming season at the Leawood Pumphouse. It has generally been a very good year with a large number of visitors and good donations easily covering all the steaming costs. Luckily the weather has been kind to us and we have not lost many visitors to the rain which can totally spoil a day's steaming and waste fuel. The volunteers are now starting to clean the boilers and drain down for the winter, both now requiring inspection and re-certification before next year.

## Coal Supply

The main issue arising is the supply of coal. The sale of domestic coal was banned from last May but it can still be supplied for commercial and heritage purposes. The result of this is that most coal merchants are not holding loose stock but some pre-packed is available which we require for handling purposes, not having the use of a boat any longer.

The coal being used at present is classed as doubles but gradings have changed and this is now on the small side. Because of this, a new set of fire bars has been made for half the grate using steel rather than cast iron which works out somewhat cheaper. These bars are welded into sets of three partly to enable the gap between the bars to be reduced and also prevent them from warping which has happened with the cast iron bars. The results have been favourable, less coal being burnt and more to the point less falling through the bars unburnt. Upon removal, the tops have stood up to the fire very well with little damage. The rear set will now be replaced as well.

With coal being an issue, some biomass fuel has been tried as well. One type was a large wood chipping sourced from an estate near Northampton but unfortunately this burnt too quickly. The second type comprised waste wood chippings from the manufacture ➤

of tool handles in Sheffield compressed into solid pieces. This was more successful and burnt more like coal.

Another type made from the waste after rape seeds have been crushed and then compressed into large pieces may be trialled as well. This has been trialled at Clay Mills Victorian Pumping Station in the Lancashire boilers and whilst it burnt well it did require some coal adding to keep up the heat and maintain steam pressure. The big problem with all of this is storage as biomass is much more bulky and requires keeping dry, something our coal store is not noted for. That said, the boiler house roof at Clay Mills has been replaced and a quantity of reasonably good second-hand wiggly tin sheets have been obtained which it is intended to put over the existing sheets which are leaking.

### Red to Green

As some of you may have noticed, the Pumphouse has changed colour: now the doors are green. The existing red paint was in a poor condition, faded and flaking off in places. Quite a few weeks were spent removing the paint from the doors on the front of the building, knotting, undercoating and applying a coat of gloss. Unfortunately the weather has closed in and the second coat of gloss has not yet been applied. The reason for change is twofold. Red is not a good colour, fading badly in strong sunlight – of which the front doors get a lot facing south. Secondly referring to photographs on Picture the Past and from recollections of various people the doors were green certainly in the sixties when it had the notice 'British Waterways High Peak Pump House' (its real name and the one it is registered under with Heritage England) on the gate.

Heritage England were approached and agreed to the change. General comments are very favourable, a lot thinking the green looks better in the location and alongside the stone colour. At present only the outside of the doors has been treated but when the weather



*The sign that once stood on the Pumphouse gate, in British Waterways blue and yellow.*

improves again work will carry on and the rest of the doors will be treated. Options are being considered for the interior, but the engine will definitely stay green.

### Future Plans

A little work is required on the engine itself, namely the seal on the water pump that leaks badly during a steaming but seals quite quickly when the engine is at rest. It is intended over winter to replace the packing or at least add some more to maintain the seal. This will mean having to stank off the inlet pipe to prevent the canal water coming back down the pipe and flooding the pumphouse when the seal is removed.

Next year's steaming dates have been agreed subject to everything being in order with the boilers, which hopefully will not be a problem. There are some changes which hopefully will encourage more visitors. The pumphouse will be open but static on some Wednesdays during the year to coincide with the workshops being open and the forge in use. All being well *Birdswood* will operate on these days and discussions have been made with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to open the cottage as well. If all these can be brought together it will make it worthwhile for visitors to come along and spend more time in the area.

That's the position at the moment as winter approaches. Work will proceed steadily and the Pumphouse looks forward to the season starting again at Easter next year. ■

## OUR INHERITANCE – BUTTERLEY TUNNEL

By Hugh Potter



*A rare view taken inside of the eastern end of Butterley Tunnel when the canal was dry!*

In the late John Baylis's collection is a booklet that I had not seen before entitled *The Cromford Canal – Our Inheritance*, subtitled “an interim study of the Cromford Canal from Langley Mill to Butterley Tunnel” prepared by the Inland Waterways Association and the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association. This “preliminary study of the feasibility and desirability of restoration to navigable standards” includes a fascinating diagram and description of Butterley Tunnel, covering parts of the eastern end which were rarely explored. It is undated but was probably compiled in the late 1970s.

The diagram used in the booklet is reproduced opposite and the following text refers to it:

“A concrete wall has been built a little way in from each end of the tunnel as indicated in the

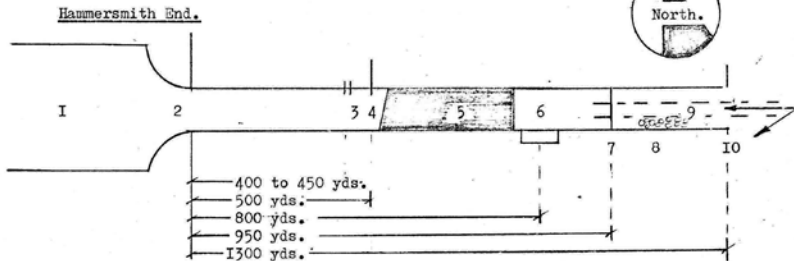
diagram. A pipe was laid along the length of the tunnel between these two walls and the ends of this pipe protruded through the concrete walls. A gap was left between each section of pipe and stones were laid over the top of the pipe to form a soakaway for water that found its way through the tunnel lining. It was common practice for canal engineers to utilise natural springs within a tunnel to augment the feed of a top pound. The pipe at the Hammersmith end of the tunnel is open and this water, plus water from the Butterley Reservoir, runs to waste into the River Amber. The pipe at the Golden Valley end is at the moment buried under silt but if cleaned out, water could once again flow to the Golden Valley portal of the tunnel towards the top pound.”

There is also reference to water feed at point 13 which is suggested as a source for

# BUTTERLEY TUNNEL

(Plan)

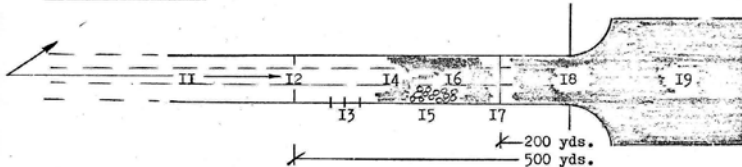
Total Length 3036 yds.



- 1 Canal filled in to original water level.
- 2 West Portal.
- 3 Substantial water feeds into tunnel.
- 4 Feeder from Butterley Reservoir.
- 5 Heavily silted.
- 6 Loading bay.
- 7 Concrete dam.
- 8 Loose rock infill to 4 ft. from arch.
- 9 12" to 15" pipe.
- 10 Limit of knowledge.

Considerable water outflow from west end of tunnel.

## Golden Valley End.



- 11 Condition of tunnel unknown for 1200 yds.
- 12 Limit of knowledge.
- 13 Water feeds into tunnel.
- 14 12" to 15" pipe.
- 15 Loose rock infill to 4 ft. from arch.
- 16 Heavily silted.
- 17 Concrete dam.
- 18 East Portal.
- 19 Canal silted to approx. 4 ft. above original water level.

The pipe is functional with an equalisation of levels at both ends whenever the water levels fluctuate.

Levels at the portals do not equalise due to the silting.

J.J.E.Homes.

N.T.S.

the restored eastern section, something which would be necessary if the locks were to be reopened. I had not come across this before; certainly water was forced through from the Butterley Reservoir feed by stopping up the west portal with stop planks, thus forcing it to flow east.

It seems likely that the inlet marked at 13 was a much smaller feed as the Midland Railway went to great lengths (and expense) in the 1920s to lay the pipes mentioned above in order to be able to continue to supply the Codnor Park Forge, which they were under an obligation to do. **T**

# OVER THE PENNINES

By Ken Brockway

It's easy for us to consider the Cromford a dead end canal, and it was until 1831 when the Cromford & High Peak Railway was opened. Many visitors



A recent walk around Chapel-en-le-Frith, Whaley Bridge and Buxworth soon reminded me that this area and the Peak Forest Canal was what

made our canal a thoroughfare. The north west end of the CHPR met the Peak Forest Canal at Whaley Bridge and the route can still be followed, ending at the basin with its large wharf shed. A linear park now follows the course of the line and at Horwich End a housing development is named Cromford Court, a reminder of the horse-drawn

made our canal a thoroughfare. The north west end of the CHPR met the Peak Forest Canal at Whaley Bridge and the route can still be followed, ending at the basin with its large wharf shed. A linear park now follows the course of the line and at Horwich End a housing development is named Cromford Court, a reminder of the horse-drawn



*The transhipment warehouse at Whaley Bridge where goods from the CHPR were transferred to/from boats on the Peak Forest Canal, thus enabling a through route for goods between Cromford and Manchester before the main line railways were built.*





*A glimpse inside the transshipment warehouse at Whaley Bridge. On the left is the crane to lift goods between boats and rail wagons.*

wagons that once passed by on their way to or from Cromford.

Not far away is the impressively restored Bugsworth Basin complex and here there are more connections with our canal. Benjamin Outram, who had been superintendent of works under Jessop on the Cromford Canal,

was here appointed consulting engineer, and our very own German Wheatcroft of Buckland Hollow was the first wharfinger at the extensive basins. When you next have a day off volunteering for Friends of the Cromford Canal, why not take a trip over the Pennines – you won't be disappointed. ▀



*A boat gathering at Bugsworth Basin showing just part of the complex site.*

# EVENTS AND MEETINGS

## What's On this Winter

### FCC Meetings

Illustrated talks take place on the third Monday of the month at 7.30pm at Ironville Church Hall, Casson Street NG16 5NN. Car parking at rear. Bar, tea/coffee, raffle and FCC sales table. Admission £2.50 (AGM free).

#### 15th January

'A Brief History of Coal Mining in Nottinghamshire' by Dr David Amos. Learn how coalmining developed (with the aid of the Cromford Canal) and declined in the county.

#### 19th February

'The Slow Road' by Mike Hobden. Join Mike on an extensive cruise through the canal system, illustrated with modern and archive photographs

#### 18th March

Why was King Alfred called Great?' by Mike Kelley. An illustrated look at England as it was when Alfred became king, his rule, and his legacy.

#### 15th April

FCC AGM plus Updates from the Trustees.

#### 20th May

'Well Dressings and the People Who Make Them' by Jan & Paul Barrass.

### Derbyshire County Council Events

#### Saturday 23rd December

*Build a Bird Box with Santa's Elves in the High Peak Junction Workshop*

Give wildlife a present this Christmas by building a bird box for you to take home. You are advised to book your place early to avoid disappointment. Cost: £10 per bird box. (Children must be accompanied and supported by an adult.)



#### Wednesday 27th December

#### Saturday 24th February

#### Saturday 30th March

Have-a-go at being a blacksmith on the historic forge and make a poker to take home and keep. Participants must be 11+ years old. Cost: £15 per poker. *Booking Essential.* 'Tapper Jack' Audio Tour also available.





# Friends of the Cromford Canal



## **YOUR WILL COULD MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE LEGACIES MEAN FASTER PROGRESS ON CANAL PROJECTS**

Our aim is “The restoration, reconstruction, preservation and maintenance of the Cromford Canal”, but that’s an expensive business: a gift in your will could make a huge difference to the pace at which we can restore our unique canal.

### **HAVE YOU MADE YOUR WILL ?**

Making a will ensures that your money and property go to people and organisations you choose to support. Leaving a financial gift to the Friends of the Cromford Canal will help secure the projects that are needed to complete our canal's restoration.

If you have already made a will and would like to include FCC as a beneficiary, a simple codicil (amendment) can be added. Leaving charitable gifts in your will can help you reduce the value of your estate liable for Inheritance Tax as charitable bequests are tax-exempt – so a gift to FCC could reduce the amount to be paid to HMRC after your death.

**Please contact the FCC Executive Secretary;  
secretary@cromfordcanal.org.uk or the FCC Treasurer;  
treasurer@cromfordcanal.org.uk for a confidential discussion. We  
can also supply a blank codicil for you to complete and attach to  
your will. This can also be downloaded from our website.**

The Friends of the Cromford Canal – registered charity 1164608



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