

THE PORTAL

Issue 89 - Summer 2024

Price £1.00 - Free to Members



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

CONTENTS

Contents	3
Editorial	4
Chairman's Notes	4
Work Party Report	6
Aqueduct Cottage	10
Cromford Canal Inspection 1954	12
News From the North	15
Water Depth Survey at Leawood	16
Birdswood's MCA Survey	17
Cromford Canal Map	19
Feeding The Cromford Canal	20
Circular Walk - Whatstandwell	24
Spring refresh and here we go again!	26
FCC Volunteer Hours 2023	28
An FCC Guided Walk	29
Leawood's Sunken Boat	30
Events and Meetings	32
Letters	34
News from the Canal Shop	34
Wills and Legacies	35

Front Cover:

Hugh Potter steers *Birdswood* past High Peak Junction on a rather wet day at the end of May.

Photo: Ken Brockway

Back Cover:

Top: Our resident swans have produced a half dozen eggs this year at their 'traditional' Whatstandwell nesting site.

Photo: Ken Brockway

Bottom: Mr King mentions two sunken boats in his Inspection of the canal (p12). These were the *Mayflower* and the *Excellent*, the last boats to trade on the canal to and from Kempson's works at Pye Bridge.

The copy date for the next issue is 23rd August 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

After a winter of hard work on the boat and frustration with a faulty engine, it is great to know that *Birdswood* has successfully completed her Maritime & Coastguard Agency certification (p17) and is now busy carrying passengers again. This is thanks to our amazing maintenance team fixing the original issue before the replacement motor arrived from Bulgaria! We now have the resilience of a 'spare' motor which can be fitted in a day should problems arise in future!

Whilst the boat was out of action at the beginning of the year, the shop on Cromford Wharf was doing well. We have been donated a lot of canal books, some of which are quite rare, and these are offered at a very reasonable

price, so why not pop in and see if you can find any to fill the gaps on your shelves? The shop is generally open when the boat is running, ie Wednesdays and weekends.

Now the better weather has arrived (well, that is the theory!) we include a couple of walks on different sections of the canal which we hope you will be tempted to try out. Let us know how you get on.

Finally, a reminder that you can keep up to date with what is happening on the canal by letting the Membership Secretary (address on p2) have your email address and by following our busy Facebook page where you will find the very latest information on what is happening on and around the canal. **T**

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

By David Martin

Well, what a wet year so far! The weather has stopped us completing the two drainage diversion pipes down at Beggarlee because they are both in the floodplain and consequently the corresponding ditches are still full of water from the swollen River Erewash and obviously the stream from the Beggarlee Brook hasn't stopped running nor have the A610 road gullies! We shall bide our time and hopefully resolve these issues later on this year.

In the meantime, our engineers have successfully navigated the complex planning system that exists here. We have now been granted full permission to reconfigure the expansion of the flood plain adjacent to the Beggarlee Dyke. This in turn means that we can now apply to the Environment Agency for a permit to carry out those works in July.

Our work parties cleared away the shrubs and brash earlier on this year. They are now concentrating on a few root stumps that need removing after the recent tree survey which identified those still worthy of protecting during the proposed works on the floodplain extension. So, we still have plenty to go at in the summer if and when it finally arrives, and if you feel you could be of any help in anyway please do get in touch. There are many different roles available, for which all training is given; the volunteer days at Langley Mill are generally Wednesdays and Fridays.

We held our AGM on 15th April and had quite a crowd in Ironville Church Hall, where the serious business was carried out early on. Then after a short break our engineer Chris Broome went into the more technical side of our ➤

endeavours down at the Beggarlee Extension which hopefully gave members a more in-depth knowledge on how complex these applications actually are and the processes which have to be completed before anything can be done at all!

A week later we had the first of our talks at the Gothic Warehouse on Cromford Wharf: 'The *Birdswood* Story' by our former chairman and founder member Mike Kelly explaining the success story of our famous trip boat and how the charity came about bringing her onto the Cromford Canal here at the UNESCO World Heritage site in the Derwent Valley. *Birdswood* entered her eleventh year in service for the charity this year and as if by fate last year's profits were the highest that they have ever been – truly bouncing back after the pandemic!

These are contributing not only to the maintenance of our 86-year-old world famous canal trip-boat but restoration projects along the top section of the canal too, such as towards Aqueduct Cottage, the horseshoe sluice in Arkwright's yard, and Brown's Bridge at High Peak Junction, among many other tasks and ongoing projects. *Birdswood* has to date now carried around 65,000 passengers up and down the cut from Cromford Wharf to Leawood Pump House and back. To do this we rely on a huge number of volunteers who give their all and are absolutely amazing in their common aim for the benefit of the canal, contributing a huge 43,500 hours since our records began in 2015 to the end of last year.

In June our talk at Ironville Church Hall will be given by David Amos – '40 Years after the Miner's Strike' and our other talk will be by Ian Hooker in the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford – 'The Aqueduct Cottage Story'; we are limited for so space at this venue so it's bookings only (see p 33).

Despite some mechanical failings with *Birdswood* earlier on this year and the MCA in-water inspection, she is now back up and running thanks to the great efforts and achievements of our dedicated volunteers whose talents seemingly have no bounds!

There is also another team of volunteers who have also been making an ever greater impact on the charity's income; they are our dedicated sales team up on the wharf at Cromford. Despite the inclement weather, they had their best month in March this year, so if you do have a trip up to the wharf do take your time to have a look; they have some great gifts on offer!

We are still promoting the use of our online membership forms to our current membership which can be found on our website at www.cromfordcanal.org, so if you are one of the very few people still paying by cheque we will be in touch when that time comes around, asking you kindly to swap over. In a changing world two things have become very obvious to us. One is that it is much easier to manage our membership via the direct debit system because it automatically renews and so to those who have made the change, we say thank you. The second one is that people don't appreciate the benefits of being a member any more so let me explain.

Not only do you get to hear all of our latest news first hand, you get to find out in greater detail what we are doing with the canal and where it's all happening. You also get to find out about our social events, read some great articles, see some great pictures, and receive the excellently edited *Portal* magazine four times a year which is posted through your door, or you can just receive it online via an email. From our part the fact that we have around 200 life members and around 500 annual membership renewals makes a real evidence base when we are applying for grants or funding because some grant donors like to have that solid background evidence of support.

By comparison we now have 3,600-plus members on our Facebook group along with around 360 followers on Twitter who don't all receive a *Portal*. That is the change in our society today because social media interaction is on a different level to our actual paying members who are contributing, all be it in a small way, to our charity every year. So again, if you would like to become a member you can sign up easily on our website at www.cromfordcanal.org. **T**

WORK PARTY REPORT

By John Guyler



Vegetation clearance for the flood plain extension at Beggarlee

On 1st February, two FCC volunteers, who were certified to use chainsaws, assisted the Friends of the Forge at Codnor Park in removing a large fallen tree. Sally Fisher of the Friends discovered the windblown tree down across one of the walkways at the Forge and required it to be removed. So, that's where the FCC volunteers stepped in with their equipment. They cut the tree into small sections and then stacked the wood at the side of the path; after a couple of hours it was all cleared.

Beggarlee Extension

From the first Wednesday in January, the work parties have worked to clear the flood plain extension at Beggarlee. This was the dense area of vegetation which in places had some very thick bushes, brambles and self-sown trees including a lot of Blackthorn and Hawthorn. On a couple of work parties, heavy rain cut the work short. We finished the actual cutting and most of the clearing by the end of March. ►



The team take a break for a photo at Beggarlee.



The fallen trees near Pinxton Weir.

On 10th April, 13 volunteers finished clearing all the brush on the flood plain extension, all the volunteers having been briefed to look out for birds' nests and any animals that might have been in the piles of brush. They were instructed to pull piles of brush apart and not burn piles as they were; this was adhered to. The heavy



Work to improve the towpath at Lower Hartshay.

rain started at about noon and the wind picked up, but the task was finished

The next work on the flood plain was pulling out the remaining tree stumps. A large number were pulled by the ECPDA work party in April, led by Dave Turner. The FCC job over the coming weeks will be now to collect and dispose of the stumps: a daunting task.

On 24th April, the job was clearing and cleaning out the welfare unit, putting all the stored wood and other items under a waterproof sheet, on a pallet in Wernick's yard. After that was done, we had another

job. Because the FCC is hosting the Northern Canals Association at Langley Mill next March, the very boggy footpath from Langley Mill boatyard will have to be upgraded to allow those of the association who choose to visit Beggarlee site to do so.

The work party concentrated on clearing and backfilling the footpath towards the boatyard, to get rid of all the muddy patches. Material used was clean aggregate which had been put on the flood plain and which we had permission to use. We are being very careful not to get any soil and rubbish in the gravel, because we cannot guarantee non-contamination. We cleared around 50m at the Beggarlee end and also started to fill in some boggy sections. The whole lot will require a lot more work and a top dressing and compacting to complete the job.

Pinxton Wharf

In March at Pinxton Wharf, three trees had been brought down by the high winds and were lying across the canal channel and on to the roadway to the woodyard. Our group set to and cleared these and some others which were likely to fall. On another work party, litter picking and clearing and tidying up from fallen trees was the order of the day. ►

High Peak Junction

At High Peak Junction, a delivery of coir rolls was unloaded and stacked at the wharf shed. Some were then fitted along the section from HPJ to Lawn Bridge and towards Gregory Tunnel.

On another Wednesday, three volunteers went to HPJ to fit three coir rolls that had been placed ready for fitting. The coir rolls could not be found after an extensive search; maybe the coir roll fairies had done the work for us.

Codnor Park

The FCC work parties have been requested by Canal & River Trust to work on several jobs on their behalf, starting at Codnor Park Reservoir. John Barker was asked if the FCC had certificated wood chipper operators. We have two volunteers with the correct certification, Malc Chisnall and John Dyson. I made a method statement for them which CRT accepted. A wood chipper arrived at Codnor Park Reservoir early on the morning of Monday 4th March. The chipper was worked for four days by the FCC with the assistance to supply the chipper with cut material provided by CRT and several FCC volunteers.

On Wednesday 6th March a work party at Codnor Park Reservoir going towards Golden



The poor state of the towpath before work began.

Valley worked to remove a fallen tree from the canal channel on the abandoned section. It required winches to pull the tree up to a position where it could be cut up. It was a long, difficult job reported Les Hall: the tree was severed from the root and it had to be winched slowly out of the canal and cut up; it was a big one. The volunteers didn't finish until 4pm after starting work at 9am.

The following week another work party cleared up the piles of branches that had been piled in the area of the memorial seat to the last serving soldier in Northern Island to be killed on active service and so had to be cleared as a matter of respect to his family. ►



Transferring the granite chippings from the road bridge to the work site.



Preparing to lay the granite chips at Hartshay.



Hartshay towpath after being re-laid.

There were several work parties renewing fencing. John Barker and Malc Chisnall fitted new top rails on fencing at the section going towards Golden Valley from Codnor Park Reservoir and, at the end of April, three FCC volunteers reinstated the 5m of fencing at Lock 4. The original fencing was not in the best of condition and had also been vandalised, so had to be replaced. Also, in April two FCC volunteers fitted new steps at Butterley Reservoir, near Ripley; this is the second set of steps fitted by the FCC there recently.

Lower Hartshay

At Lower Hartshay there was some urgent tree removal done at the canal bridge at the end of February, two trees on the offside bank had been brought down by the high winds and had fallen across the canal channel and towpath. An inspection found three other trees in an unstable condition in the same area and they had to be dealt with. Our hastily arranged work party dealt with the resulting mess.

In the middle of March, two work party

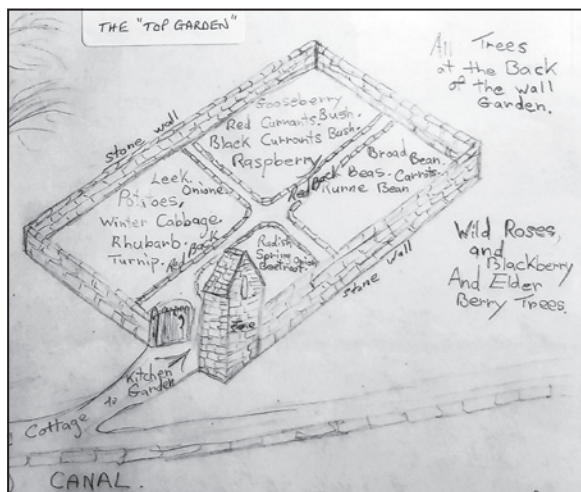
groups dug out and re-laid the towpath near the canal bridge. Using seven bags of granite chippings (5 tonnes) we re-laid some 50m of what was a muddy and greasy track in patches. The bags of granite were delivered and placed at the canal bridge and our convoy of wheel barrows got into action moving the granite to site. We had a 'whacker plate' compactor hired from the same company that the granite came from, but it proved very unreliable and lost us a lot of time. In the end a replacement was sent out to us. It is intended to have more sessions at relaying but because it is now the nesting season, the work parties are postponed. The finance for this project is a grant from the Co-op.

Total volunteer hours on FCC work parties from February to the end of April was 783 hours with 126 travel hours.

If you would like to participate in the work parties, the volunteers are a sociable bunch, they look out for each other and are great to work with, contact John Barker: [work@cromfordcanal.org.uk](mailto:work@ cromfordcanal.org.uk). **T**

AQUEDUCT COTTAGE

Ian Hooker reports on reviving an old garden and an exciting new project



Fay Bark's remarkably detailed drawing of her memories of the Top Garden.

The exceptionally wet and cold spring weather that we experienced this year delayed all our projects around Aqueduct Cottage. Lime mortar cannot be used when overnight temperatures drop much below about 8°C so we could do no building work and no pointing-up to complete our work on the lean-to pantry at the south end of the cottage.

Work on the top garden was hampered too. Working with heavy stones on sloping ground that is muddy and slippery is tiring and can be dangerous, so progress has been limited. But we are getting there. This Top Garden is a walled space of nearly an acre used by cottage residents to supply their fruit and vegetables. It is about 200 yards south along the canal, situated on a south facing slope about 50 yards above the canal. There is a revetment wall along the lower side of the garden and stone walls around the other three sides. At one corner stood a stone-built tool shed.

This seems a large space for what was effectively an allotment garden for the cottage (even when there was a family of ten living there) and the old estate maps seem to show it as one of the fields farmed as a part of the Lea Wood farm that extended across the top of the hill and around the hillsides on either side of the cottage as well as fields down along the river. The farmhouse stood on top of the hill above the cottage. It was subsequently converted to two cottages, known as the tunnel cottages, after a tunnel for the railway was built through the hill beneath them.

When Fay Bark, who lived in the cottage with her family as a teenager in the 1950s, revisited

the cottage before the restoration began, she drew us a picture of the garden as she remembered it and marked in all the varieties of fruit and the vegetables that they grew there. But it seems unlikely that the garden was used after the Bark family left in the mid-50s and so what we have there now is 70 years of rewilding – mainly sycamore trees and brambles. We intend to restore the walls and clear a part of the ground to make a tree nursery that will eventually serve the rest of the woodland reserve.

Lock Gate

But perhaps of much greater interest to *Portal* readers will be our plans to install a lock gate at the entrance to the Leawood Arm. Readers will recall that Aqueduct Cottage was built as accommodation for a lock keeper who was required to manage the lock gate that was a condition on which the Cromford Canal ►

Company had agreed that Peter Nightingale could join his half mile arm to the main canal. The lock gate was to serve as a stop lock to ensure that no water from the Cromford canal would ever be lost to the side arm.

Evidence of the position of the gate, or rather of two gates backing onto each other, can be seen in the stonework that remains at the entrance to the arm. The condition required that water in the arm should be kept one foot above that in the main canal. When they were levelled to open the gate, water would supplement the Cromford Canal and never go the other way. It seems unlikely that the condition was ever fully observed; indeed before the arm began operating it seems the condition had been reduced to 6in.

Even so, it can't have been thought that the gate would be opened often because to reduce the head of water nearly half a mile long through a single paddle on the gate (there is no evidence of ground paddles) would have taken a considerable time. It is surprising that the stop lock was not built as a full-length lock, but there is no evidence of lock walls and certainly no sign of a top gate 70ft up the arm.

We have been given, by Canal & River Trust, an old gate of approximately the right size that has been removed from elsewhere on the system. Our intention is to install it in the recess created originally in the stonework, to be a physical statement of what the Leawood Arm was, and why the cottage was built there.

To do that, will require us to fit stop planks and clean out – that is dewater and remove the silt – from the area where the gate will go, check the socket for the bottom of the heel post that will fit against the hollow quoin in the stonework and prepare a collar to hold the post in place. Then we need to get the gate, weighing about a ton, delivered to the wharf shed from where we expect to float the gate on pontoons across to the aqueduct and then along the aqueduct (after temporarily raising and then lowering the levels so that the aqueduct functions as a lock itself) through

the swing bridge and around to the stone dam that was built across the entrance to the Lea Wood arm in 1935 when it was closed, lift the gate over the bridge and drop it into place. Phew! What can possibly go wrong?

We have all the necessary consents and permissions in place and have been offered help from local businesses in providing some machinery and equipment. Further details, and I hope a report of a satisfactory conclusion, to appear in the next *Portal*. **T**



There are plenty of stones to replace in the garden wall.



Putting in the stop planks to enable the gate recess to be drained for the fitting of the lock gate.



The stop planks in place

CROMFORD CANAL INSPECTION 1954

Part 3: British Waterways' Mr King walks from Lock 1 to Langley Mill

Down the Locks

[Continuing the story from Portal 88]

Wednesday 14th July 1954

Above the Top of Flight Lock (1) there is a weir on the towpath side, the water passing over and in culvert under the towpath to a stream which flows parallel to the canal on the towpath side and via another culvert towards the east. The first lock gate was holding but did not look as though it would open and shut. The second gate was open and is in a decrepit condition. There is a high wall, apparently ours, on the towpath side along the length of the top pound.

The top gate of Boat Dock Lock (2) was closed and holding water but looked as though it was on its last legs; the lower gate was open, its condition was moderate but it did not look workable. The Pottery

Lock (3) top gate was closed and holding, the bottom gate open and its condition appeared to be sound and workable. The walls of all locks appeared to be sound.

Ironville Bridge 37 looks as though it is ours; it carries a public road over the canal. At Smiths Lock (4) the top gates were just holding but in very poor condition, the bottom

gates are derelict. Just east of the Railway Bridge 36 there is a 'Rights of Way Act 1932' notice. At Gas House Lock (5) the top gates are in poor condition though holding the water; the bottom gates look workable. The position at Marshalls Lock (6) is much the same. The buildings near Marshalls Lock look as though they are the HQ of the local canal ►



The weir above Top Lock is clearly seen a few years after Mr King's visit, and what remains of the gates are still holding water.



Probably taken a few years after Mr King's visit, the top gates of Lock 2 are still, just, holding water, but the balance beam has broken. The bottom gates of Lock 1 are bare framework. The high wall Mr King referred to is on the right and was made of slag from the Butterley Co furnaces.

maintenance organisation [indeed they were] but up to now I have seen no canal employees working on the canal anywhere. The Bottom of Flight lock (7) gates are much like those of the other locks.

The canal just here, opposite Butterley Co works on the offside, is not so clear; there are weeds on the towpath side. There is a bridge just north of the disused Portland Basin which is the private property of the Butterley Company for the passage of vehicles over the canal. The Portland Basin is separated from the canal by a road bridge over the Erewash. Is this bridge ours? It only carries a road over the River Erewash which road joins the towpath. Along here there is much duck weed on the canal.

Some distance south of Portland Basin there is a brick dam built from the sides of the canal towards the centre. Between the ends of this dam, a space of about 15ft, there are stop boards. Below here the canal is stagnant; weeds grow for its full width though there is some water at the foot of the weeds.

At the Butterley Co Lock (8) the top gates are sound and are fixed in a closed position; the bottom gates are open and derelict. The water was running out by a stream on the offside. Could this be to the Butterley Works, which are a considerable way north of this point? Below here, the canal is completely weeded with a little water in the middle. Slaleys Bridge 40 is a stone bridge in good condition, which appears to be ours; it carries an occupation way between fields but the surface is grass grown and does not appear to be used.

At Stoneyford Lock (9) both the top and bottom gates are open and in a derelict condition; from here there is a full width of water in the canal and no reeds, but thick duck-weed on the surface. Stoneyford Lane Bridge 41 is a brick arch in sound condition and appears to be ours; it carries a minor country lane over the canal. At Stoneyford Deep Lock (10) the top gates were just holding but on their last legs, and water



Above Lock 8 Mr King noted this dam with stop boards in the gap. Today that gap is a concrete cill.



The only known photograph of Slaley's Bridge 40 which was demolished in 1959, despite Mr King's report that it was "in good condition".



An idyllic scene below Bentley Bridge at Stoneyford around 1960 but sadly soon to disappear.

was leaking past the gate on the offside. The bottom gates were opened and derelict. The position is much the same at Stoneyford Shallow Lock (11). Bentley Bridge 42 is a sound brick arch, looks as though it is ours and carries a public footpath over the canal; just north of this bridge a stream enters the canal on the north side.

The Railway Bridge leading to Pollington Colliery has been demolished. [Curiously he ►

does not mention the canal aqueduct over the River Erewash.] For some distance above and below Vicker's Lock (12) the water is clear, clean and about 6ft deep; the lock gates are like those at previous locks. Here there are quite a number of small perch in the canal. Stoney Lane Bridge 45 is a sound brick arch and appears to be ours. At Strutt's Lock (13) the gates are as at previous locks. Marshalls Bridge 46 is a sound brick arch bridge, appears to be ours and carries a footpath only.

Just below Beggarlee Bridge (Railway) there are two sunken long boats lying across and almost entirely blocking the canal. There have been a few fishermen along the last half-mile of canal. Langley Mill Lock, condition of gates as above. The road bridge over the canal at Langley Mill appears to have been rebuilt. It carries a main road which is a bus route, and looks as though it has been taken over.

Looking from the end of the Cromford Canal down the Erewash Canal from the bridge, the latter appears to be wide, full and clear of weeds. Just north of the road bridge over the Cromford and Nottingham canals there is a swing bridge across the eastern arm at low level, south of which and north of the road bridge there is a pool of water largely covered by weed growth but with a little water in it [Great Northern Basin, now restored]. This pool extends on the other side of the road bridge to the Nottingham Canal where it is also weed grown. Along the south side of the road bridge there is a 2ft diameter water main of the Nottingham Corporation. The Nottingham Canal is stagnant and weed grown. ■



Vicker's Lock 12 in the early 1960s.

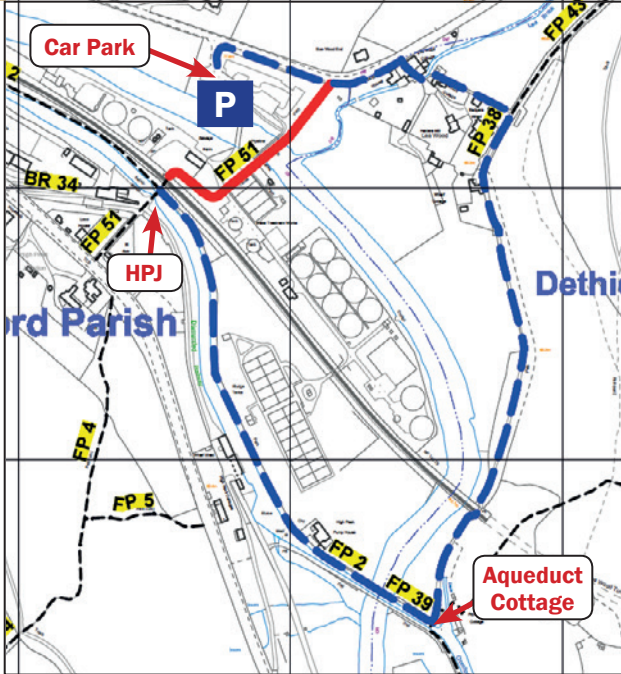


Stoneyford Shallow lock with the deep lock in the distance, a few years after Mr King's visit.



Langley Bridge Lock a few years after of Mr King's visit, by which time the lock gates have deteriorated further. The Cromford Canal toll office is on the left, the Nottingham Canal office on the right.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH



The footbridge across the river that gives access from the car park to High Peak Junction is currently closed for repair. It is scheduled to reopen on 28th June or earlier if work is completed. There is a diversion that takes you along the road and then the Leewood Arm via Aqueduct Cottage – a pleasant walk and about the same distance to the cottage, but further to HPJ.

Elsewhere on the Derbyshire County Council section, the reeds pulled over the winter have been moved and the run-off paddle at Sims Bridge has been replaced. The Forge Days at High Peak Junction have been successful and details of further events there are listed on page 33. **T**



Repairs to the footbridge across the River Derwent on the route to HPJ.



The sluice at Sims Bridge has been replaced.

WATER DEPTH SURVEY AT LEAWOOD

By FCC's Honorary Water Engineer Chris Broome

One of the aspirations that FCC has over the next year or two is to start up a second trip boat on the Cromford Canal, this one starting at Aqueduct Cottage and going south as far as Gregory Tunnel, a distance of 1.3km (0.8 miles). The current idea is to have a smaller, lighter boat than *Birdswood* that could also have access for disabled passengers in wheelchairs, something that *Birdswood* cannot cater for. We have had meetings with Countryside Services at Derbyshire County Council about the project and they are generally



Surveying the canal depth.

supportive of the aim, but we have to first sort out the bank stability issues along this section.

Following an investigative study that was undertaken by GEA Ltd on behalf of FCC last year, their report on its findings showed up a couple of locations where the strength of the bank is questionable. With the current water level in the canal along this section, which is about 300mm below the original operating level, DCC are concerned over the stability of a 30m section of the embankment in the location where there have been two historical overtopping events, one in 1920 and the much more recent one in 1989. No significant works have been undertaken to the bank following these incidents and the bank as a result has been weakened at this location.

There is a second location between Gregory Nip and the tunnel where again the bank's stability is not great but is satisfactory if we leave the water at the current level. If we wanted to raise the level to the original operating level, as it was in 1989 for instance, then we would need to address the issue

at this location as well. Both of these sites would require remediation works involving the loading up of the bank toe to prevent the toe from slipping.

Access to both sites for plant and machinery is very restrictive, effectively having to use the towpath. Loading the bank with heavy machinery would be destabilising and risk failure. A suitable remediation scheme will be looked into over the summer and proposals put forward for consultation in the autumn. The aim would be to seek the necessary approvals by the end of the year and to plan to undertake the works in the first quarter of next year – subject to funding of course.

Along with dealing with the bank stabilisation issue we also have to consider the suitability of the channel for a trip boat. Until recently, the first 300m of the canal between Aqueduct Cottage and the railway aqueduct has had a lot of reeds and other vegetation in its bed. DCC have now cleared about two thirds of the width of the canal of vegetation. This included some of the silt that was around the roots of the vegetation. They ►

went as far as they could across the canal from the towpath, limited by the reach of the excavator they used for the job. The work was done in order to improve the flow conditions in the channel.

FCC had a detailed canal survey done by Greenhatch Group in March 2023 of the 1.3km stretch of the canal to aid the investigations needed and to help to determine what remediation works would be required. The canal cross sections at the time gave us a good indication of the water depths. By excavating the vegetation and some of the silt we wanted to know what difference this has made to the depths. FCC volunteers did a water depth survey along the 300m section of canal in May using a small boat loaned to us by Countryside Services.

As it was in the middle of the bird nesting season, we undertook a bankside walkover survey to identify where there were nesting birds within the canal, of which there were two, and we ensured that we kept well away from them

so as not to disturb them. The boat was hauled out of the canal and wheeled along the towpath between each survey cross section. We surveyed nine cross sections in all. Soft and hard bed depths were recorded at each cross section.

The overall result was that the average water depth over the central third of the canal width, ie in the channel, was typically between 0.7m and 0.85m. In places there was virtually no silt depth, in others there was up to 0.15m depth of silt. By removing the silt we should be able to achieve a water depth of around 0.9m – sufficient to operate a smallish lightweight trip boat. The challenge for FCC will be finding a suitable boat! This would be quite an achievement and I'm sure it won't be straightforward – for example the boat would have to be electrically powered and where would we get the electrical power from? There is also the cost of purchasing and licensing; not straightforward I'm sure, if the experience with *Birdswood* is anything to go by! **T**

BIRDSWOOD'S MCA SURVEY

By Mike Kelley

On 24th April this year *Birdswood* had her annual inspection by the MCA (Maritime & Coastguard Agency). These are always pretty rigorous affairs, but this one more so than normal. Why? I don't know, but maybe because we were entering our eleventh year of service to the public.

Several of the crew and masters turned out as requested and were the targets of the flood of questions emanating from the inspectors. After going through the paperwork, of which there are mountains, with a fine-tooth comb, the inspector then checked that the information therein was the same as the knowledge of the crew. Which did always correlate! As a result we were told to upgrade our crew training system, which we will do.

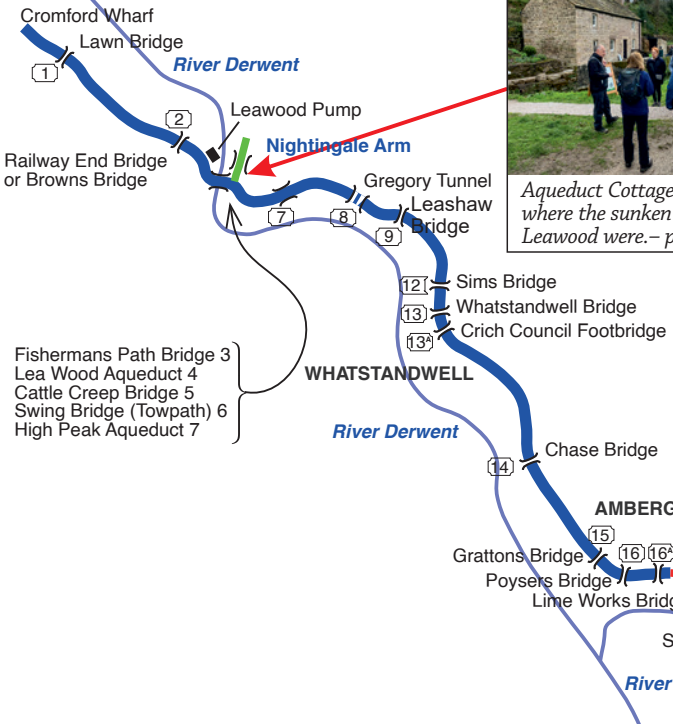
So now we have the required licence

from the MCA to operate again this season, which unbelievably will be our eleventh year of cruising along the beautiful Cromford Canal.

For the maintenance team, and others, it has been a long, hard winter to get the boat ready. All the back cabin and toilet fixings had to be taken out and the floor plates lifted throughout the whole length of the boat. Not to mention outside painting, which was frequently ruined by repeated heavy rain. So thanks to our wonderful volunteers we are now up and running.

We run every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday throughout the season, departing for a 2-hour trip at 11am and 2pm. We also run special trips such as Charters, Premium and Heritage trips. Why not look them up on our website: www.birdswood.org? **T**

CROMFORD



Aqueduct Cottage near where the sunken boats at Leawood were. - p10 & p30.



Towpath near Hartshay - p

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

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

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.

THE CROMFORD CANAL

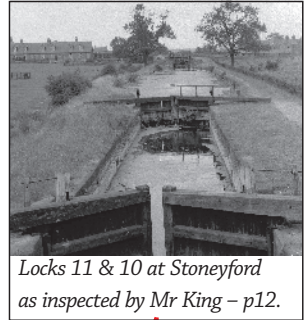




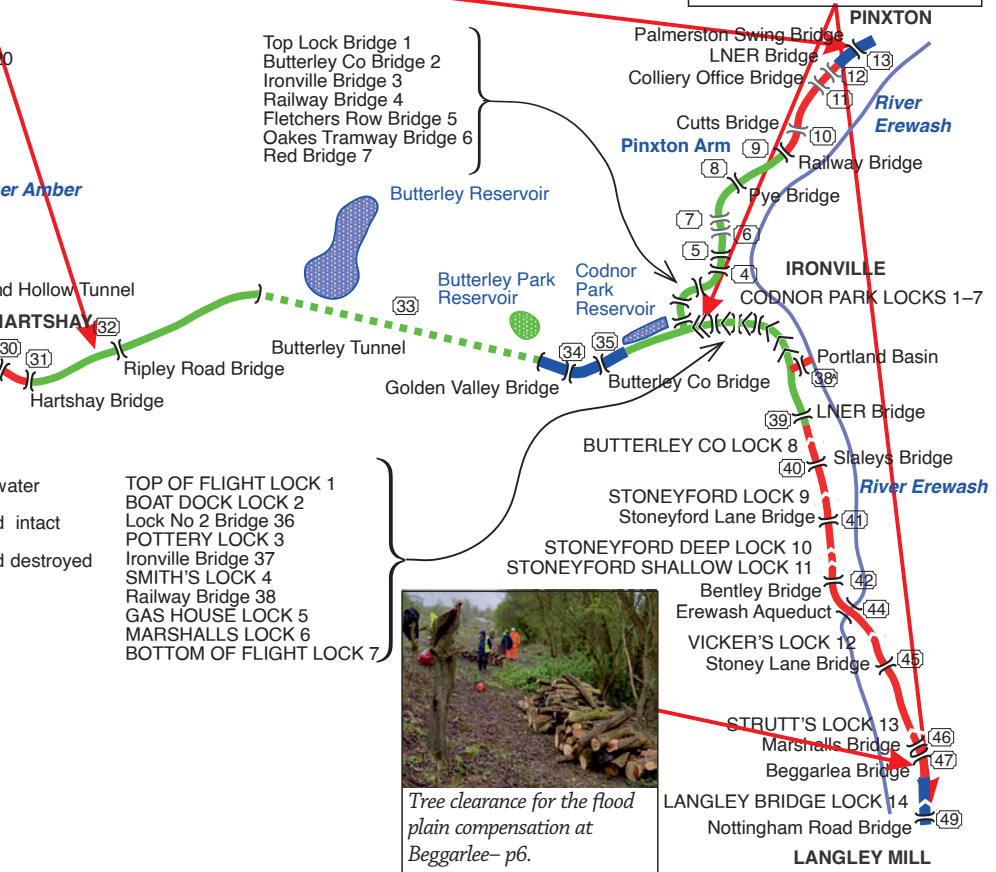
Water wheel at
Pinxton p.6.



Trees to clear at Pinxton – p6.



Locks 11 & 10 at Stoneyford
as inspected by Mr King – p12.



FEEDING THE CROMFORD CANAL

By Simon Waller



Butterley Park Reservoir. Overflow. 22nd June 1909.

In 1909 the inlet from Butterley Park Reservoir was changed from a long culvert exiting near Golden Valley Bridge to this dramatic stepped structure by the eastern portal of the tunnel. Once the reservoir was drained the excess water was channelled into a new stepped channel between the GVLR and the canal.

Although the mighty Arkwright wanted the proposed Cromford Canal to be fed from his weir close to Masson Mill on the River Derwent near Matlock Bath, it was eventually built to receive water from Cromford Sough and Bonsall Brook, bringing the terminus of the canal literally into his backyard. If Arkwright's plan had been accepted, the canal would have started further away from his house across the meadows by the bridge over the river.

The water from both the sough – built to drain lead mine workings around Cromford

– and the brook was first directed over the road into Arkwright's cotton mill, originally by using a wooden trough and later a more robust cast iron one – which proved no match for the tall lorry which smashed it to pieces a few years ago. After turning the water wheel in the mill yard it ran by a culvert back under the road, skirting the base of the rock face below Arkwright's Rock House, to the canal.

Through amazing surveying there are no locks between Cromford, Codnor Park and Pinxton, an unbroken ribbon of water over 12 miles long following a level by twisting ►



The former outlet sluice channel from Codnor Park Reservoir, which is in the background of this photograph.

around hillsides and burrowing through high ground. Only when the land falls away into Nottinghamshire near Golden Valley is there need for a flight of locks – and for a lot of additional water.

The pumping engine at High Peak Junction is a spectacular solution to replenishing water reserves. In 1839 Arkwright lost the rights to the water from Cromford Sough and in 1841 a new lower level sough, the Meerbrook Sough, took the water away, so the pump was built to supplement supply. At this point the river is 35ft below canal level. The huge steam beam engine could lift four tons of water every stroke, 470,400 gallons an hour. There were restrictions put on the amount of water taken and it was only allowed to run between 8pm Saturday and 8pm Sunday.



The valve set into the dam wall of Butterley Reservoir that releases water into the tunnel beneath.

When the canal was free of boat traffic, the pulse of the engine could be seen as small waves running for hundreds of yards along the canal. During restoration of the pumping engine, divers went into the intake shaft from the river to clear it of debris and ended up dragging out the remains of a cow's carcass which must have been sucked in during the pump's working life.

Towards Buckland Hollow (near the Excavator pub) and into Hartshay, coal mining ➤



A rare photograph of Butterley Park Reservoir, taken in 1909, with the outlet to the canal in the foreground.

makes an appearance and collieries were generally encouraged to pump their drainage water into the canal. In a reversal of fortune, one mine in the area was flooded by the nearby canal through a leak and had to close.

Avoiding the need for pumping, the Carr colliery on the outskirts of Ripley had access to the underground canal wharf of Butterley Ironworks. Using a system of tunnels, coal could be loaded directly into narrowboats or hoisted up to the coal hungry ironworks above.

Although the main reservoir in the area, Butterley, fed into the Cromford Canal, it was built for the eventual benefit of the distant Nottingham Canal. It wasn't directly above the canal tunnel, so water was dropped down a pipe set in the bed of the reservoir, via a large hand operated valve and into a side adit which then ran to the canal. The adit has a series of mysterious baffles at water level – maybe they broke the flow and stopped erosion of the far wall of the tunnel. The valve in its chamber is still there, nestling at the base of the 37ft clay and earth dam, just off Butterley Lane at the bottom of a set of steps in the woodland.

Butterley Ironworks took water from the reservoir too, via a culvert from the corner nearest the works. The reservoir is built on land once owned by them so probably they would have had the water supply as part of the land deal. Butterley Park reservoir, now drained and a nature reserve, was just north of the eastern portal of the Butterley Tunnel. The brooks flowing into it were supplemented by a pumping station situated in the area, now the caravan park, on the coach road adjacent to the turn off to Swanwick Junction. It took the water from the many mines around that area and pumped it into a holding pond. From there it was culverted under the coach road to the reservoir or drained directly into the Butterley canal tunnel below.

During their years of use, both Butterley Park reservoir and the canal tunnel had their water holding ability compromised as they were undermined by local collieries and this was the main reason for the tunnel's eventual collapse. In 1907 the colliery owners actually sought legal action on the canal owners, blaming them for ►



Seen from the Pinxton Arm junction bridge the main canal to the left is separated from Codnor Park Reservoir only by the narrow towpath. In the 1980s the canal was infilled and the reservoir lowered.

flooding their mine tunnels and the shaft of the pumping engine! To avoid further maintenance work, Butterley Park reservoir was drained in the 1930s first by the stepped culvert on the far bank of the canal, then by holing the dam wall with the present day spillway over which the Golden Valley Light Railway runs.

When GVLV first laid rails into the country park it was still wetland, full of reed beds. Since then, its nature, literally, has changed and nettles and trees have taken over the drying silt of the reservoir bed. Even after the collapse of the canal tunnel, its owners (the Midland Railway) were legally responsible for providing a water supply for the Butterley-owned forge site at Codnor. The steam powered machinery and industrial processes used a staggering amount of water, so pipes had to be laid through the debris inside the unstable tunnel to bring water from the western end.

The last of the three reservoirs is Codnor Park. The water level has been reduced from its original depth by over three feet because in the 1980s British Waterways removed the top lock of the lock flight and scooped out a huge channel as flood defence. The reservoir used to be kept at the same level as the adjacent canal, which ran between the Coach Road and reservoir, only a path separating them. The feed into the canal system was in the corner of the reservoir near the existing Pinxton Arm junction bridge and ran under the arm.

In winter when vegetation has died back it is possible to go into the small valley behind the bridge to find the now bricked-up exit from the culvert and the stone-lined gully which fed the water into the canal below Lock 3.

Finally, to supplement the water supply, the canal's summit level was built deeper than usual to act as a self-contained water reservoir, which could act as a 'buffer' in drought conditions. ▀

CIRCULAR WALK - WHATSTANDWELL

Ken Brockway offers a varied walk using new paths from the canal



Distance: 5 miles; 8km
Start point: Whatstandwell or 'Ranch Corner'.
How to get there: Train, Transpeak bus or car – limited parking by canal or pay at station; also Ranch Corner lay-by.
Refreshments: Half way at Cric plus Family Tree, Whatstandwell.
Safety: A walk for now while the Holloway road remains closed.

©Crown copyright 2024
 Ordnance Survey. Media 052/24.

Take the canal towpath south which shows how river, canal, road and rail share the narrow valley. At Chase Bridge, an original stone-built arch bridge, leave and cross the canal (If parking at Ranch Corner you join the walk here, having crossed the A6 and walked to the left and through the gate). A track heads left and right, ignore these. Take the path ahead. This well walked path is not recorded as a public right of way although application to make it public was made to Derbyshire County Council and it has been recommended it be adopted as a public path.

At a fork keep left then ignore any further paths left. After a gentle climb our route meets a waymarked path by a solid stone gatepost. Turn sharp left here, soon with open fields on your right. Turn right with the path and follow this to a stile onto the road.



Great views from The Tors.

Turn right along the road to Chadwick Nick where the road is cut between rock; here the road bends to the right. Take the signed footpath left up steps then cross the fields ►



Canal, rail, road and river all share the valley.

with a wall to your right, this is The Tors with views of Crich Church and Stand ahead. The wall is for your safety and protection but where it sets in do stray from the path and admire the view.



Do take a look into the telephone kiosk in Crich Market Place.



The currently closed road was once a turnpike as evidenced by the milestone.

Continue straight along the path to a road and turn right to where an information board tells us about the money making side of the Railway pioneer, George Stephenson. There is a seat and picnic table here. The road descends to Crich Market Place for shops and refreshments. Don't miss the stained-glass telephone kiosk nor the information about the Butterley Gangroad on the bus shelter. This tour stays on the road passing the Post Office, Black Swan pub and a public loo then bears left after the school to pass the church. At the T-junction turn left passing the



A glimpse into the Tramway Village.

'Road Closed' signs (2024) and entrance to the Tramway Village. Exit the village passing the Cliff Inn. There is no pavement on this next section so with the road closed now is the time to make this tour.

Just before a farm drive take the signed field path left, passing Coddington Farm. Join a quiet road, turning right and admiring the views. Look out for a house named Tanglewood, take an unmarked track here that forks left in front of an old stone building with a green post box. Take a path right down steps, then a right-left dog-leg at the first road to descend more steps to rejoin the road at Crich Carr.

At Middle Lane leave the road, turning right along a track which passes allotments before entering Duke's Quarries. Observant map readers will note that the walked path does not follow the path on the map; use of the latter would result in serious injury or death! The walked path winds safely through some of the fascinating long disused Duke's Quarries.

Meeting the road, cross and take the unrecorded track through the gate. At the foot turn sharp left to cross Sims Bridge and now follow the canal back to Whatstandwell. ■

SPRING REFRESH AND HERE WE GO AGAIN!

By Marie Brown

The arrival of the cygnets on Codnor Park Reservoir is always a welcome sight and signals better weather to come and throwing off the layers of thermal clothing that we have had to work in over the winter months.

The ongoing maintenance plan and work for the grant from The National Lottery began in earnest in March and we held our first event.

Some 22 people attended the Bat Awareness Night and we were lucky to see four different species within a couple of hours. Having cancelled our event last September due to poor weather, we were lucky that it was a dry evening with light winds and even a little bit of sunshine just before dusk.

The bats didn't disappoint, despite the cold they were out hunting for insects, wowing us



with their aerial displays and calls. We identified four different species of bats by listening to their varied calls on our bat detectors and watching their behaviour and pattern of flight. The Noctule bats were out first, flying high above the reservoir, next came the Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, twisting and turning in flight and finally the Daubenton's made an appearance, dashing across the reservoir and scooping insects from the water.

Look out for a further bat night in the late summer.

Our Thursday work party volunteers installed two new benches, giving visitors a welcome place to stop and take five minutes to relax. They are already being well utilised and many of our less able walkers have commented

how useful they have been. The team have also been busy doing the reed bunding to prevent path erosion and flooding. Despite the wet weather that we have all endured this year there were only a couple of isolated spots of flood water so we are already seeing great strides since the work was completed.

Our first litter pick of the year was attended by new volunteers and old ►



Cygnets are a sure sign of spring.

Photo: Mark Foxall

and it was refreshing to see so many young people being interested in local wildlife. We did mention the fact that 8 years ago, when we first started work, we collected over 60 bags on our first pick and this time only one.

It is a clear indication that there are lots of people who are regularly looking after the area and that less people are dropping their litter. We would obviously like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who gives their time to help out.

Later in the year we will be doing a Water Vole monitoring course which is already over-subscribed despite us not advertising it yet. It will allow more people to keep an eye on the population we are lucky to have.

We are also planning on a dragonfly and butterfly identification course, a social event to celebrate our volunteers and many other events throughout the year.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details but if you would like to get involved then please send an email to cromfordcanalgroup@outlook.com or have a chat with any of the committee as you pass them. **T**



The work by the group on clearing the channel has encouraged voles to return.

Photo: Brian Birch.



The first litter pick of spring - and only one bagful collected!



The hard-working volunteers take a well-deserved rest on a seat with a view.

FCC VOLUNTEER HOURS 2023

The total time given by FCC volunteers in 2023 was 14,948 hours. The volunteer hours given by FCC are continuing to rise after the severe drop in 2020, and the range of activities is increasing as well. We are now giving a lot of hours on digger and dumper driving and general work associated with the construction area at Beggarlee. The *Birdswood* business gave just under 5,000 hours on diverse activities as crew and master training, maintenance, cleaning and operating the boat on trip days; maintenance alone gave 1,680 hours. Meetings hours remain constant year on year. On work parties, we had some extra jobs at the request of the Canal & River Trust working at Moorgreen, Butterley and Codnor Park reservoirs as well as 157 hours given to Friends of the Forge on the drainage pipes and the dry footpath. The FCC work parties gave:

	Actual hours	Travel hours
DCC sections	887.25	171
CRT sections	572	88
FCC worked sections	616.75	111.25

	Actual hours	Travel hours
Executive hours (FCC officers, all administration hours)	2994	148.5
<i>Birdswood</i> business	4995	319
SRC hours (engineers on planning)	431.5	14.5
Wharf shop	987.5	150
Work parties	2076.5	370.25
Beggarlee	1408.75	193
<i>WRG (Not included in FCC volunteer figures)</i>	988.5	278
Meetings	478	0
Transcribing documents	167	0
Wayne Scarle (CRT Ranger at Ironville)	99.5	0
Lock Keeper's garden, work parties	105	10
Total	13,742.75	1205.25

The volunteer total over nine years recording is 111,086.25 direct hours.
The value of volunteers for 2023 is £248,211.25, made up of:

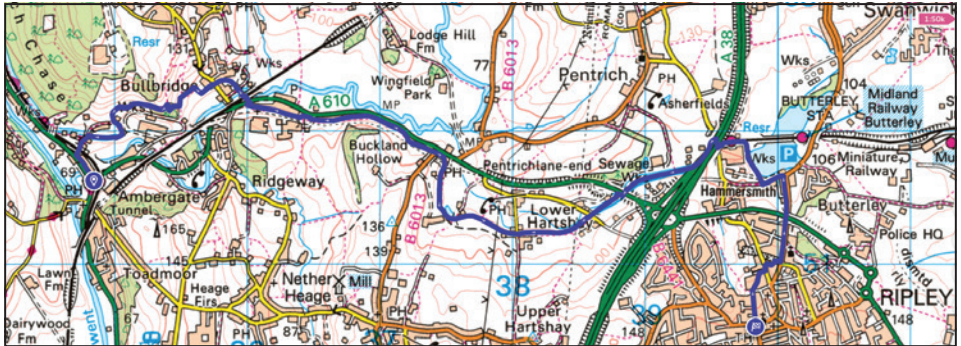
Basic volunteering: 9,964 hours at £77/day	£109,604.00
John Boucher, engineering consultant: 160 hours at £517/day	£11,817.14
Chris Broome, waterway consultant: 156 hours at £517/day	£11,521.71
Birdswood Masters: 778 hours at £233/day	£25,896.28
Lime mortar qualified personnel: 25 hours at £233/day	£832.14
Chain saw operators: 142 hours at £233/day	£4,726.57
Chipper operators: 377 hours at £233/day	£12,548.71
Digger operators: 1541 hours at £233/day	£51,293.28
Dumper truck drivers: 600 hours at £233/day	£19,971.42

Since January 2015, when I started recording the voluntary hours for FCC, the calculated total value is £995,750.10.

Whilst my valuation of the voluntary work may not be accepted by various bodies, it is primarily an indication to the membership of the achievement towards the aims and objectives of the FCC. Here's to 2024. **John Guyler**

AN FCC GUIDED WALK

Ken Brockway joined Hugh Potter on a walk from Ambergate to Butterley



©Crown copyright 2024 Ordnance Survey. Media 052/24

Boat crew and other volunteers, while being keen supporters of FCC and knowing much about their own field of volunteering, were invited by Hugh to explore our canal beyond that in water and owned by Derbyshire County Council. We met in Ripley and took a bus to Ambergate from where we walked the final few 'in-water' yards from Poyser's Bridge, under the Derwent Aqueduct (pipeline) bridge, to watch as water left the canal down a pipe towards the River Amber.

Ahead of us was the vast site which destroyed a large chunk of the canal and is now used mainly to store gas pipes. We climbed the diverted footpath around the perimeter noting Stephenson's tramway which took limestone to the kilns that stood alongside the canal. Passing through new houses on the former Stevenson's dyeworks site we considered the improvements and challenges to restoring the canal here. A short section in water followed, and more changes and discussion about planning policy.

While the aqueduct over Drover's Way and the River Amber remain intact they can be missed due to thick vegetation. The new footbridge over the railway is just off the canal line but offers a safe crossing.

Over the road the well walked towpath line, a recorded public footpath, is easy to follow. The old gauging lock has been cleared and a board offers more information. A feature easily missed is the old bridge by Lockwoods where the canal line was moved to accommodate the building of the railway. Here FCC volunteers have done some excellent bridge restoration work. The short Buckland Hollow Tunnel has a towpath, then we turned away from the road to arrive at the tranquil fishing pond crossed by Starvehimvalley Bridge.

The path continues across a muddy field where the canal has vanished after opencast work. Beyond Hartshay's Bridle Road Bridge, John Barker guided us through the length now owned by FCC. Soon we had more hard work, with a climb of sixty steps to the A610 then back down into an in-water section made attractive as the sun shone through the thin leaf cover of the overhanging trees. The tunnel portal was noted, this being an extension caused by the building of the A38.

Almost the end of our inspection but one last delight was crossing the dam of Butterley Reservoir which originally fed the canal via a shaft directly into the tunnel. An enjoyable, social and informative outing that might be repeated. ■

LEAWOOD'S SUNKEN BOAT

Hugh Potter on the changing scene near Aqueduct Cottage





For many years a wooden narrowboat lay sunk close to the junction of the Leawood Arm and the main canal, close to Aqueduct Cottage. We know this from a series of photographs, two of which were issued as postcards. The gradual deterioration of the boat can be seen as time took its toll on the wooden structure.

In the first postcard, the photographer has commandeered a couple of young men to pose in the background to complete his composition. The date is unknown but is most likely around 1900 or earlier judging by the date of the next card.

The second postcard shows virtually the same scene except that in this one the photographer has posed a lady in the place of the two men. This looks remarkably like Ann Eaton who lived in Aqueduct Cottage for many years. One copy of this card is franked 23rd July 1915 (so wartime) and is addressed to Mrs Pool in Birmingham saying "Dear Mother, We had a walk down to this spot this morning, it is so lovely, you can walk to Ripley at the side of this canal. Love from Eva."

So we know that the second image was taken probably 1910 or earlier. From the decay that has taken place, including the total loss of the cabin timbers, the photographs must have been taken

at the very least 10 years apart. That both photos were taken in winter with the trees bare of leaves and with almost identical composition suggests that they were taken by the same photographer. In both images part of the cottage, the aqueduct parapet and the swing bridge across the main canal can be seen.

The third photograph is clearly taken on an amateur camera, although it does not appear to be much later than the second as the decay on the boat looks similar. The viewpoint is matched perfectly, but the summer leaves obscure much of the boat and background.

To bring the story up to date, the photograph below shows the scene more recently. ■



EVENTS AND MEETINGS

What's On this Summer

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. There is no meeting in July or August; the programme will resume with the September meeting.

17th June

'40 Years after the Miners' Strike' by David Amos.

16th September

Stanton Ironworks on film: A presentation by Stephen Flinders.

FCC - Cromford Meetings

Following a recent survey we are piloting a new series of talks in Cromford, in conjunction with the Arkwright Society. The following meeting will take place in the Gothic Warehouse on Cromford Wharf starting at 7.00pm. *Seating is limited and booking can be made on the FCC website. Admission is £5 including refreshments.*

Monday 24th June

'The Aqueduct Cottage Story'. Ian Hooker, an FCC trustee and founding volunteer on the cottage restoration, tells the cottage's history and how the acclaimed restoration came about. Followed by a presentation on the machinery from the Belper North Mill Trust collection at Cromford Mills.

Birdswood Special Interest Trips

FCC's traditional narrowboat *Birdswood* runs 3 hour trips that coincide with the open days of the Leawood pump house and the HPJ forge. Premium Trips run on selected Sundays at 2pm and include guided tours of the Leawood pumphouse in steam, The Nightingale Arm, Aqueduct Cottage, the HPJ Workshop. Heritage Trips run on selected Wednesdays at 2pm and take in the Pumphouse static, the Nightingale Arm and Aqueduct Cottage and the HPJ forge in operation. All Special Interest Trips include complementary refreshments. See www.birdswood.org/bookings.

Premium Trips

Sunday 7th July
Sunday 4th August
Sunday 25th August
Sunday 15th September
Sunday 6th October

Heritage Trips

Wednesday 31st July
Wednesday 7th August
Wednesday 14th August
Wednesday 21st August
Wednesday 28th August
Wednesday 30th October

Derbyshire County Council Events

The visitor centre at High Peak Junction is open daily. Refreshments and souvenirs are available and the Cromford & High Peak Railway Workshops (the oldest in the world) open to visit. The nearest car park is on Lea Road (DE4 5AA); there is no car access from the A6. It also a pleasant walk from Cromford Wharf. Cromford is served by buses from Ashbourne, Buxton, Derby and Sheffield and by train from Nottingham and Derby. The TransPeak bus stops on the A6 at High Peak Junction.

Make a Poker

Sunday 16th June
Wednesday 31st July,
Wednesdays 7th, 14th August

Wednesdays 21st, 28th August
Saturday 14th September

Introduction to Blacksmithing

Saturday 6th July

Saturdays 3rd & 24th August

An opportunity to learn basic blacksmithing techniques. Enthusiast blacksmiths will walk you through the creation of a simple metalworking object such as a BBQ fork, a fire poker or a coat hook. Along the way, you'll learn about the history of blacksmithing, lighting and managing the fire, and all the techniques you need – using the workshop's original forge and hand-pumped bellows dating from the 1830s. At the end of the half-day session, you'll end up with a wonderful hand-made object that you can take away with you!

At High Peak Junction workshops on Saturdays 10am to 1pm and 1.30pm to 4pm. £50 half-day session. *Booking Essential: 01629 533298.*

High Peak Junction Audio tours

When the visitor centre is open, you can hire one of DCC's audio handsets and let Tapper Jack take you on a self-guided tour of High Peak Junction and the Cromford Canal for only £1.50. it is a great way to learn the area's history.

Leawood Pumphouse Open Days

The 1849 coal-fired Leawood Pump is open from noon to 4.30pm on the following dates. On 'in steam' dates the pump will be fully operational. Entrance is free but donations are encouraged, especially in view of the current cost of coal. Access is as per High Peak Junction.

Saturday 6th July *In Steam*
Sunday 7th July *In Steam*
Wednesday 31st July *Static*
Sunday 4th August *Steam*
Wednesday 7th August *Static*
Wednesday 14th August *Static*

Wednesday 21st August *Static*
Sunday 25th August *In Steam*
Monday 26th August *In Steam*
Wednesday 28th August *Static*
Saturday 14th September *Static*
Sunday 15th September *Static*

LETTERS

Headline News

I enjoyed this feature in *Portal* 88. My attention was caught by 'Boys help in towpath clean-up' which told of 'Boys from four local schools' taking part in 'Operation Towpath' in 1974. One of the schools was the Ernest Bailey Grammar School in Matlock. I thought *Portal* readers might be amused by the way in which their work was written up in a contribution to that year's *Bailean* school magazine. Please see the attached. Mr Wood was the Senior Geography teacher, and Mr Curry the Senior History teacher. Incredible to reflect that 'the first stage in the restoration of the canal' began almost exactly 50 years ago!

Best wishes in all your most valuable work,

Gary Backler, Twickenham

The report in *Bailean* read as follows:

A HAPPENING AT CROMFORD CANAL

There is a mystique about canals, both their building and their regeneration. In pursuit of the latter, and the request of the Cromford Canal Society, a score of happy souls spent a Saturday in March cleaning the towpath, and investigating the murky depths. Much otherwise destructive energy was spent in the removal of undergrowth, and the uncovering of a multitude of pots, pans, tins, tyres and the ill assorted flotsam of 20th century life. Thanks are offered to D. Gray, K. Gregory, S. Russell, J. Thomson, P. Thomson, M. West, C. West, R. Gray, R. Killer, H. Littlewood, A. Smith, A. Jones, S. Thornley, S. Townend, D. White, J. Clay, I. Davey, S. Walker-Smith, G. Davison, G. McGregor, G. Cantrill, G. Smith, R. Nightingale, P. Macdonell, P. Holden. While the most splendid sight was that of Keith Gregory mud-bound in mid-canal with water inundating his wellingtons, mention must be made of Mr. Wood, who cultivated so magnificent a bonfire, and Mr. Curry who burned his eyebrows in it. ▮



NEWS FROM THE CANAL SHOP

The FCC's Gothic warehouse shop on Cromford wharf has a good selection of pre-owned donated general canal books - history, architecture, people, boats. There are lots of cruising guides for waterways across the country, useful for walking and exploring, not just cruising. Very reasonable prices: 50p-£1.50 for most.

There are also a wide range of traditional canal painted ware, canal map tea towels, and hand-made wooden items such as hedgehogs and locally crafted mushrooms. Why not call in and have a browse?

The shop is generally open when *Birdswood* is running: Wednesdays and weekends 10am to 3pm. ▮





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

