



# Friends of the Cromford Canal e-Newsletter

FCC primary aim is "The restoration, reconstruction, preservation & maintenance of the Cromford Canal, its associated buildings, towing path, structures & craft & the conservation of its natural character as a navigable inland waterway system for the benefit of the public."

Issue 11: September 2021

## **NEARLY A COVID FREE EDITION!**

Covid "Freedom day" arrived on July 19<sup>th</sup>, and we've been getting back into the swing of things: you'll read below how busy our work parties have been, and how we've been cautiously ramping up our income generating activities. We continue to recruit new volunteers, AND we have some good news on Browns Bridge restoration. Volunteer Angela Marsh is doing some excellent social media publicity for us. *Time to start thinking about getting your Xmas card stocks from our on-line shop!*



## **FCC core & general updates:**

Dates for your diary: Georgian Derbyshire Festival 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> September. Trustees are planning for recommencing our social events Church Hall, Ironville, 1930hrs: September 20<sup>th</sup> with an update of FCC progress: October 18<sup>th</sup> Bennerley viaduct presentation: November 22<sup>nd</sup> – Battle of Agincourt presentation. FCC's new website was launched in May, and is available not only for general information on the charity and the canal, but also facilitates new member sign-ups, allows online donations, and enables some of our merchandise to be sold. Our main sales outlet continues to be the Birdswood shop (including on-line), but a small selection of books are also available from the new FCC website. Following detailed debates, Trustees have agreed to introduce a new Direct Debit facility to improve the efficiency of membership subscriptions: this is available now for new members and existing members are soon to be encouraged to migrate from various legacy payment methods to Direct Debit.

## **FCC Conservation and Restoration:**

FCC work parties under the direction of John Barker have had a very busy month or so: *Pinxton Section*: strimming along the tow path and Himalayan Balsam Work. *Codnor Park*: all the main fencing replacement is now complete, and two more seats have been installed on behalf of C&RT around the reservoir. *Lower Hartshay*: balsam clearing and strimming tow path, clearing out drain from main culvert into our section of canal. *Sawmills*: strimming tow-path & hedge cutting. *Cromford*: clearing weed near Browns Bridge, fitting the last of Coir rolls and fixing "dog outs", with ongoing weed clearance. Also four volunteers attended a two day lime mortar course at the Pinxton Arm Bridge – with work ongoing

Browns Bridge: The swing bridge at High Peak Junction is owned by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and is a key feature on Birdswood cruises as it allows access to the Leawood end of the canal and the winding hole for Birdswood to turn around. The bridge is opened and closed twice on each cruise but it has become increasingly difficult to operate, and Trustees decided early this year to declare the bridge inoperable and since ever since our cruises have had to be somewhat curtailed. Trustees have now come to an agreement with DCC for a project to completely renovate the bridge and we plan to commence work in September: the project is jointly funded by FCC and DCC, and will be managed by an FCC project team. We are confident that when the work is completed, the bridge will be much more easily opened and we can run Birdswood right up to the Leawood Pump House again.

## **FCC's Birdswood & Shop:**

Online booking slots have been released to the end of October and a number of bookings and charters have been received: FCC's Boat Committee decided to open up post Covid Step 4 with a cautious stance, limiting capacity to a maximum of 25 passengers / cruise and we started to operate as from 23<sup>rd</sup> June. To date (18<sup>th</sup> August) the shop and boat (the trading arms of the charity) have generated sales of nearly £6000, 84% of which was paid to us via cashless means! In that period we've carried 711 passengers including eight charters: and we have thirteen further charter bookings, so as things stand we estimate that we may possibly reach a break-even financial trading position by the end of the business year. We're trying hard with publicity including seeking feedback on Tripadvisor and posting on other social media platforms. MEMBERS please help if you can...see below...



**PLEASE FOLLOW US @FriendCromCanal** – Tweeting and Retweeting is good!

**PLEASE FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK** We've had lots of "likes", "shares" & extra followers: [click here](#): group membership has nearly doubled in less than two years!