

THE PORTAL

Issue 90 - Autumn 2024

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Friends of the Cromford Canal

Registered Charity No. 1164608

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Front Cover: Fiona Bruce highlights *Birdswood* whilst recording an introduction to one of the episodes of Antiques Roadshow - see p4.

Photo: Bob Staveley

Back Cover:

Top: The scale of work undertaken by volunteers for the flood mitigation zone at Beggarlee is evident in this photograph – see page 6.

Photo: Chris Broome

Bottom: It was busy on the canal over August Bank Holiday for Paddle Peak’s Adventure Weekend – see p9.

Photo: Pete Astles

The copy date for the next issue is 8th November 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

Antiques Roadshow

We were very excited to be involved with filming for BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* at Cromford Mills as we went to press with the last issue. The BBC swore us to secrecy, although this did not stop others involved publicising it. The BBC took over the whole area for their crew of nearly 200, their vehicles and equipment, and the queues of visitors to get in stretched back towards Cromford village!

I was steering *Birdswood* for a charter in the morning, and their coach just about managed to let them off and pick them up again. Then for the afternoon we were on 'stand-by' to film an introductory piece with Fiona Bruce, who was going to 'arrive' in Cromford 'steering' *Birdswood*. However, the weather set in, in best Derbyshire fashion, and it rained and rained.

Plan B was for Fiona to stand on the towpath to do her piece under an umbrella whilst *Birdswood* cruised past (no umbrella!). I hung around getting drenched, waiting for the signal to go, and eventually we were off. To my surprise, there was only one take, which hopefully you will glimpse at the start of one of the three programmes from Cromford which are scheduled to be broadcast this autumn.

Precious Cargo

But the highlight came the next day when we carried possibly our most valuable cargo ever. Two passengers showed the crew this bracelet that had been valued at the *Roadshow* at a staggering £10,000. No surprise that they didn't leave it in the car, but they agreed we could take this photograph.

My fellow *Portal*-compiler Keith has pointed out that my statement above is not strictly true. The most valuable cargo is one we carry every trip - the wonderful volunteer crew,



without whom we wouldn't be able to run the boat. And I will be the first to agree with him. But the bracelet was quite something!

Work 'Up North'

On the canal itself, as we approach the end of summer, Derbyshire County Council have told us their plans for maintenance work, including repairing a section of supporting towpath wall north of Whatstandwell.

They are also getting specialist contractors Somerset Boats in again for weed cutting, this year from Brown's Bridge to Railway Aqueduct and from Gratton's Bridge to the end of the canal at Ambergate.

Also, Wheelplant contractors will be doing some dredging work from Whatstandwell to Gregory Tunnel and various tree works are planned again with Thompson tree services to reduce overhanging, dead or dying trees.

So there will plenty of things going on in what otherwise would be a quieter time on the canal. It is always a great walk along the towpath, and remember you can walk it one way between Cromford and Ambergate and get a bus or train back. ■

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

By David Martin

Well, it all happened in July! On the 13th we held the now annual volunteer 'Thank You' event, this year hosted at the 'Great Northern' in Langley Mill, right by Lock 14 of our canal. We had a great turnout – so many that we filled the pub. It was great to see everyone having a good time because we really do appreciate all the hard work that they do for the charity year in year out; it's truly amazing! If you would like to join in with our volunteers please get in touch, we have a very wide range of jobs to suit all, and you can do as much or a little as you like for our great cause.



Almost immediately after that on 19th July the Waterway Recovery Group landed at the Anvil Club in Ironville for their third visit, to continue work on the Beggarlee Extension at Langley Mill.

This involved the completion work on the two drains they installed last year and also the creation of the flood mitigation zone which the Environment Agency have insisted that we create prior to building the new canal. After a week with around a dozen volunteers this work is now almost complete and they are planning a short return visit in September to finish the task.

I would like to thank John Barker and his family for hosting a barbecue during their visit at his home; it was a great end to their week here.

This autumn we shall be getting to grips with the next phase: constructing the first section of the new canal up to the locks! The work parties will be clearing away any brash and self-set shrubs in the new work area from September onwards. Again, if you would like to become a part of this workforce please let us know; they

usually meet on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Our Social Events Calendar is listed on page 32. We normally meet every third Monday of the month. We are still varying our topics so hopefully there will be something for everyone. Also, we are having one more talk in the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford –

by Keith Bailey on the unique Cromford & High Peak Railway on 11th November. It is ticket only due to the size of the room – we look forward to seeing you!

Despite the slow start this year with mechanical issues, our trip-boat *Birdwood* is out-performing any other year and we are predicting that it will be its best year ever thanks to the due diligence of the Boat Committee chaired by Richard Handley and of course the boat volunteers and masters – a huge thank you to all of you who are involved.

We have plans to do some maintenance and clearance works on the top section where *Birdwood* operates this autumn in collaboration with DCC's Countryside Services.

Our shop now has three couples driving the sales figures up every month, so great thanks goes to Jan & Paul Barrass, Linda & Ken Brockway and Trina & Ray Hall for all their hard work and dedication to the charity – it's amazing!

Of course, it would be remiss of me not to add at this point that we have some great books and many other items for sale via our shop and online which would make excellent Christmas Gifts along with some fantastic boat trip offers, or maybe even a membership! So don't be shy – there is plenty to choose from, and there are some exciting new products – see page 33! ■

WRG AT BEGGARLEE

John Guylar reports

A group of eleven Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) volunteers came back to Beggarlee on 19th July to continue the uncompleted work on the 600mm headwall and to create a flood channel extension. The group came from Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and a couple from London.

Two days before their arrival, the stakes marking the area were again checked using a GPS positioning device. The day before they arrived, an environmental survey was carried out for Amber Valley Borough Council to ensure the area was OK to work; it was.

The digging out of the flood mitigation zone is necessary to compensate for land that will be taken when the channel and locks are built.

Two archaeologists were on site in case anything was discovered, which was the case with the original Lock 13 (Marshall's) appearing.

Before the main job of digging the flood plain extension, there was the finishing off of the 600mm headwall installation, left from last November because of bad weather and machine breakdown. After installation the headwalls were backfilled and compacted to a level to allow heavy machinery on to the flood plain.

At the 600mm manhole chamber, work was carried out to place an additional 700mm section on the chamber and the area around built up with material from the flood plain dig. This will have to be done once more to bring the chamber height up to the finished height for the embankment of the canal channel. The area was compacted continually with the 13-



A busy scene with volunteers operating specially hired equipment to excavate the flood mitigation zone.

ton vibrating compactor with a front roller with multiple tines.

On the flood plain, working to the stakes marking the area, the diggers dug out the far end of the extension, removing the spoil in the dumpers and then profiling the top edge and bringing the bottom level to the correct height. There was a little bit of concern about not finishing to schedule, so some very long hard days were put in. This concern grew when Marshall's Lock was uncovered, which slowed progress a little. It was expected that the lock would be uncovered because of GPS positioning and comparison with old maps. Some 2,500–3000 tons of hard clay earth was moved in the week.

Malc Chisnall and Ian Hutchinson were on site the entire week to ensure equipment was fuelled up and put in the work area from the secure compound in Wernicks yard before WRG arrived every morning to ensure a prompt start. On three mornings they were both on site at 6am and didn't leave until everything was back in the yard at 7pm – some very long days. ►

Cromford Canal Beggarlee Extension



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

JKGB Jan 2019

Neil Cuthbertson one of our FCC work party volunteers finished his training on large diggers on the Wednesday and so gave many useful hours loading the diggers which helped with the schedule. After WRG left on the Saturday, the FCC group set to removing tree stumps and placing them to make wildlife habitats

At the end of the visit some more work is to be completed by FCC volunteers to clear the area around the old lock and towards the 900mm chamber, mainly to remove more tree stumps and roots.

WRG may be able to come back for a long weekend in September to create the two runoff channels, one at each end of the new compensation area. These will allow flood water, which gathers in the channel, to gradually drain down to the Erewash.

Equipment used comprised two 6-ton dumpers, a 13-ton vibrating compactor, a small hand-operated vibrating compactor, several diggers of various sizes and of course the tea urn. A bowser was also hired to fuel the equipment every day using just under 1,000 litres of diesel. The FCC dumper has been hard at work in the week and was a really inspirational buy at the insistence of the late John Baylis.

WRG's cook was Martine, wife of site supervisor 'Moose' Hearnden. Not only did she cook breakfast and the evening meal in the Anvil Social Club in Ironville, where WRG were billeted, she came on site to cook midday meals and snacks. Martine was an absolute star, putting in 90 hours in the week!

'Moose' controlled work, movements and training. Ian, Neil and Malc received further training on various pieces of equipment, all three passed and have licences to operate diggers, dumpers and compactors of various sizes.

Pete Fleming, one of WRG's organisers, concentrated on technical issues throughout the week and there were plenty to keep him occupied.



A mean machine! The 13-ton compactor.

WRG gave over 600 hours at Beggarlee in July, the FCC over 300. The combined volunteer hours given to the Beggarlee project since the start is over 5,000.

Thanks to Ian Hutchinson, Malc Chisnall and John Barker for helping with this article. Thanks also to Wernick's company and staff at Beggarlee for allowing the secure storage of the plant and equipment. ▀



Placing the second headwall.

“THE DINOSAUR WILL NOT BE HARMED. . .”

Hugh Potter learns of exciting new proposals near ‘Stella’



Birdswood passes Stella, who may have new company in the near future.

Textile production will return to Cromford if Peak UK's plans are approved. 'Our' famous dinosaur Stella the Stegosaurus stands in what was once the Cromford Garden Centre. Since its closure over a decade ago, this site has become a dangerous wasteland awaiting a new purpose. It was purchased a few years ago by Pete Astles' paddle sport company Peak UK, and at a meeting in Cromford Mills at the end of August Pete outlined the company's exciting plans for the site.

Many of you may not know that much of the paddle wear used by Olympic competitors from all around the world (including the UK) is manufactured just up the A6 in Peak UK's Darley Dale facility. Pete's experience of canoe slalom and freestyle kayaking has enabled him to develop special textile printing to create unique medal-winning garments. He now wants to relocate this business alongside the Cromford Canal.

He also wants to give back to the community and to encourage youngsters to take up the sport with a view to creating future Olympic

medal winners. With this in mind, he runs the charity Paddle Peak to clean and improve access to the water locally and to inspire young people to take up the sport.

To be named Carrwood Mill, after an adjacent field name, the architect James Boon (who was architect for the Aqueduct Cottage restoration) has created plans for a low-profile building with access from the A6 and a second building for the charity nearer the canal to facilitate canoe launching. The buildings will be almost hidden from both the canal and the A6, and the work will overall improve the biodiversity of this site which is alongside the SSSI and within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

At the meeting I asked Pete about the future of Stella in the scheme. He assured the audience that she will remain – and suggested that she perhaps needed a mate!

Planning Application will be made in the next few months and FCC wishes Pete all the best for this exciting project which will add yet more interest alongside the Cromford Canal. ■

JUGGLING WATER

Richard Handley asks: Is that even possible?

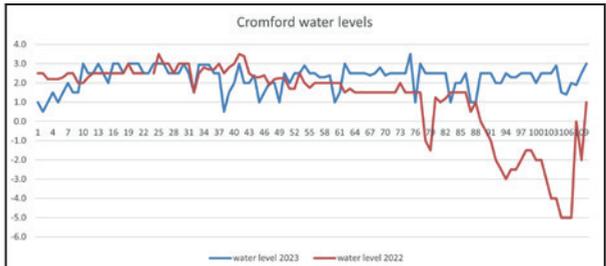
Canals are all about water – especially if they have boats running on them! On the northern end of the Cromford Canal this is the twelfth year that we’ve had our famous narrow boat *Birdswood* providing public trips. We do this to generate funds to allow us to deliver on our charitable objectives of conservation and restoration of the whole of the canal. But to do that we need water to float her on!

The general public may not understand that there are competing demands on the water in this section of the canal, so this article attempts to explain to the layman the complexities of water supply, and the parties involved in what often feels like a competition for that water.

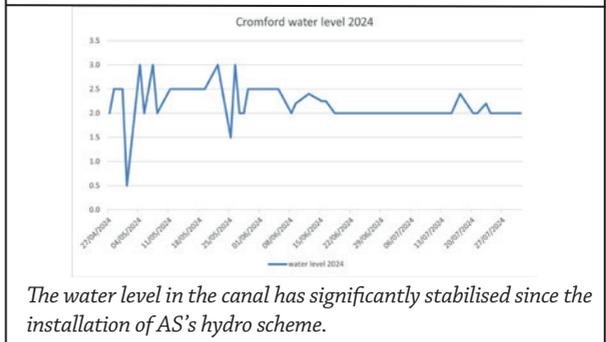
The canal from Cromford to Ambergate is owned by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and the main source of water supply to this section comes from the Bonsall Brook, which flows through the yard of Cromford Mills – operated by the Arkwright Society (AS).

Derbyshire County Council’s interests are:

- to prevent over-supply of water to the canal to protect the integrity of the canal banks: FCC funded a control mechanism several years ago in the mill yard to ensure that over-supply does not happen.
- on behalf of Natural England, to ensure a minimum water level and water flow to maintain the status of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation of this part of the canal.



Variations in the canal’s water level over the last two years.



The water level in the canal has significantly stabilised since the installation of AS’s hydro scheme.

- to keep FCC happy so that we can continue to contribute to the local visitor economy by providing public boat trips – that DCC license us for.

In the event of severe and officially declared drought conditions, DCC are required to act on behalf of the Environment agency and could implement ‘hands-off’ regulations to maximise the water flow to the river and minimise the water supply to the canal.

The Arkwright Society’s interests are:

- pre 2024, water was managed in the mill yard to aid their demonstration of the use of water in a historical context and support the wider water course management in Cromford including along the Via Gellia where AS owned several land parcels, and to the canal. ►



The semi-circular weir in the mill yard that feeds the canal, seen during hydro construction work last July.

- earlier this year AS installed a new hydro-electric scheme in order to generate their own 'on-site' supply of electricity (after significant grant funding).

FCC monitor water levels using a sight gauge at the Gothic warehouse and, in the last few years, *Birdswood* has operated in an environment where water level has fluctuated quite markedly as the first graph shows.

The new hydro-scheme and its potential impact on water supply has been a worry for FCC since we found out about AS's proposals a couple of years ago. The application included input from DCC which advised a minimum water level to do with the SSSI maintenance and did not acknowledge the slightly higher level that FCC really need for the operation of *Birdswood*.

The hydro scheme has been implemented (from a Planning Approval point of view) with only a passing acknowledgement of FCC's interests. Having said that, we now have an excellent relationship with AS's new Chief Executive and an understanding that they will try not to impact water supply in relation to our operation of *Birdswood*.

After our initial worries, the automatic water control mechanisms in the mill yard (installed as part of the hydro-scheme) so far seem to have had a beneficial effect for FCC.

This year, since we started cruising with *Birdswood* in April 2024, to when this article was written at the end of July, the water level seems to have stabilised somewhat, making cruising with *Birdswood* rather more predictable.

Fluctuations in early April did occur when the hydro-scheme and the new management arrangement were being implemented, but since then our *Birdswood* Masters can now turn up for duty on cruising days with a higher degree of confidence in being able to cruise with a stable water level. Mind you, we have had the wettest spring and summer for some time, so all we can say is "so far so good"!

So you see, juggling water really can and does take place!■

A lengthier article about the historic supply of water to the canal was published in the last issue of Portal – Ed.



The water level gauge by the Gothic warehouse, here reading 1.5.

WORK PARTY REPORT

By John Guyler

I'm pleased to report that produce from the Lock Keeper's Garden at Lock 4, Ironville, has again been donated to a food bank. This is the fifth year of donations and the food bank at Hucknall received the produce. The produce included cauliflowers, cabbage, onions and large amount of peas.



A small selection of the food grown in the Lock Keeper's Garden at Ironville.

Beggarlee

During May, two work-parties were at Beggarlee, Langley Mill, working on reinstating the footpath which in places is really boggy. Bricks from buildings demolished when the A610 was built in the 1980s, and recovered during previous digging out, were used to line the footpath and infilled with clean pebbles which were on site. All tools and wheelbarrows were placed in Wernick's yard for security after work. The welfare unit was also cleaned out of tools and made ready for the WRG visit.

In July, three volunteers worked establishing the datums, and rechecking the GPS markers in the ground from a previous positioning exercise, for the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) work on the flood plain extension. All marker locations were strimmed around and a rough line of sight was strimmed back down the extension length. Ian and Malc

worked on the FCC dumper to investigate and successfully repair the lower compound joint hydraulics.

High Peak Junction

In July at High Peak Junction, over five separate work parties, five volunteers worked tirelessly to paint Brown's Bridge, the swing bridge at Aqueduct Cottage and all the fencing at the winding hole and Leawood Pump House. They spent much time rubbing down and scraping the old paint work on the fences, undercoating and finishing off with top coat, which should last several years before needing painting again.

At the end of July, some of the FCC work party cleared the vegetation along the wall and the canal edge against Leawood Pump House. Instructions have been given out since, that no more vegetation clearance is to be undertaken past the pump house on the aqueduct bridge, because of a protected species identified living in the wall. ►



The damage to the bridge at the southern end of the four-arched bridge at Sawmills caused by tree growth.

Sawmills

A group worked at Sawmills, removing as much ivy off the four-arched bridge as possible. The car park side of the bridge was not touched because Lockwood's car park is directly below; a day will have to be arranged to cone off that part of the car park, to do the job.

At the northern end of the bridge, the crack in the brickwork seems to be wider. The work party cleared the shelf level behind the wall, trimmed the ash tree that may be causing the problem and generally cleared the stone work to show the damage on the whole corner.

Vegetation and ivy was cleared below the bridge and in the arches; it was clear that the ivy is growing through the bridge. On the southern end of the bridge, the ivy was cleared to show serious damage to the stonework caused by a tree, the roots of which had dislodged the stone plinth. A survey was also conducted of trees in the bridge area with several showing signs of instability.



Weed clearance by Sawmills gauging narrows.

Codnor Park

On 15th May at Codnor Park Reservoir, the work party split into three groups to work on the far side of the reservoir at fishing peg one. Three volunteers cleared out a stream that enters Codnor Park Reservoir via a small stone bridge, which was blocked between the bridge and the reservoir. Upon examination several large trees and branches had built up leaf and twig debris causing the water flow to back up and burst through on to the adjoining footpath. In the early afternoon white clawed crayfish were seen near the work area and all work was immediately suspended.

Two volunteers went to the Lock Keeper's Garden at Lock 4 to strim the grass around the vegetable patches and the rest of the garden, at the request of Shirley Bullock.

In the middle of June, there was a meeting at Codnor Park Reservoir to discuss and plan the replacement of the footpath on the far side of the reservoir, which is constantly very boggy.

Malc Chisnall and John Barker were there for FCC, along with two reps from the CRT and two members of Codnor Park Fishing Club. CRT are supplying all the materials. Volunteers on the project will be drawn from the FCC work parties, CRT workers and members of the fishing club. It is going to prove to be a very difficult job because the access to bring materials on site (30 tons of aggregate) is very limited.▶



Working near the four arches, with Lockwood's car park beyond the bridge.



The cracked wall at the northern end of Lockwood's bridge, with the ash tree which is the possible cause.

In May, Malc Chisnall and Baz Bazley, worked at the northern point of the reservoir at the zig zag point of the footpath from the reservoir footpath and the Pinxton Arm footpath. Part of the metal handrail and the attached brickwork was damaged and coming away from the structure, making a liability for an accident. The brickwork was drilled through and a vertical pipe was attached by bolts to the brickwork and a metal bracing plate. The bricks were held into place by a special adhesive. A solid structure was achieved.



Stone laid on the worst part of the footpath at Beggarlee.



Relaying the footpath at Beggarlee.



Digging out the footpath at Beggarlee before the stone is laid.

Training

In May at Lichfield some of the FCC work party attended the Waterway Recovery Group training weekend on diggers, dumpers and compactors. There were three volunteers on Saturday – John Barker, Ian Hutchinson and Neil Cuthbertson – and one on the Sunday; Neil stayed overnight on the Friday and Saturday, sleeping in the scout hut, ready for an early start, which I should imagine was an experience.

There were only two courses that John and Ian were involved in: bricklaying and operating two different sized vibrating compactor rollers. Neil completed courses on trailer towing, Stihl saw safe operation and storage, together with using the 360 excavator, with a swing boom and 360 excavator with a fixed boom. All the tasks included health and safety for site working as well as to operate the machinery safely, when moving up and down hill

Lower Hartshay

At Lower Hartshay, two volunteers replaced rotten timbers on a fence in the children’s play park area. Plastic protectors which supported the whips in the new hedge, put into place two years ago, were removed and weeding undertaken.

Himalayan balsam is really dense this year, probably caused by the wet weather.▶

Volunteers have pulled a large amount of balsam over six visits. There is a fallen tree branch in the canal channel which will have to be removed sometime, when time allows.

In the middle of July, Wendy Hollis reported that the footpath on the play park side up to the old A610 canal bridge was very difficult to walk because heavy vegetation growth. The following week the path was strimmed on the play park side and then strimming took place along the main footpath on the water meadow side.



No shortage of Himalayan balsam this year!

Ironville

At Ironville, we have cleared several fallen trees and branches at Cinder Bank in the channel between Lock 2 and the site of the demolished Lock one at the Pinxton Arm Bridge.

Another group worked on Casson Street, clearing the road side of the old canal wall, all the way from the church car park to the steel pedestrian bridge. Also, the footpath from the church car park to Codnor Park Reservoir was strimmed and cleared. One bag of litter was picked. Himalayan balsam was also pulled at Ironville between Lock 2 and Pinxton Arm Bridge.

Two volunteers worked at the youth club coach at Ironville clearing and pressure washing the block paving. The following week, a larger work party group were at the youth coach and continued clearing weeds from the paved area

around the coach and the wheelchair access ramp. The front steps were also cleared.

Five volunteers worked on the land at the rear of Ironville Church which used to be the Pinxton Arm, but is now infilled to provide an open grassed area. There was a request that we make the area ready for the Ironville summer fair. This year DCC had cut the long vegetation, but it was a bit of a mess. Our job was to trim some of the trees and vegetation back to make suitable space for bouncy castles and stalls. We cleared the whole length behind the church to the road bridge and then started on the car park trees. We finished up clearing vegetation in the car park back to the original canal wall for approx 40m. We also picked one bag of litter. Two weeks later, Chris Martin mowed the grass in the field behind Ironville Church, ready for the village fair.

Cromford

At Lawn Bridge, Cromford, five volunteers cleared two silt traps near Stella. There was a large fallen tree near Stella; this was cut up by hand saws which took a long time. With the work boat not being available, with permission, access to these sites was from through a residential property on the A6. On 10th July, a work party met at Cromford Wharf to clear the wharf of weeds, some of which were very high, then a few volunteers moved along the towpath clearing obstructing vegetation. **T**



Repainting the swing bridge by Aqueduct Cottage.

AQUEDUCT COTTAGE UPDATE

By Ian Hooker



Wheelbarrows were used to transfer the silt (removed from the lock area) further up the Lea Wood Arm. The 'spider' excavator and operator were provided free of charge by W. Smart Ltd. In the background is the pigsty/privy which is being rebuilt. Photo: Ron Common

Anyone walking past Aqueduct Cottage on the towpath of the Cromford Canal might be forgiven for thinking that not much was going on. Superficially it all looks much the same – still neat and tidy with the flowers in the garden doing well. But they would be wrong; the real surprise is just how many projects we are currently working on.

Externally the pantry has been finished, all pointed up and the window fitted. Internally we yet have it all to do: make the door frame, point the walls and apply some paint to increase the light level and then to furnish it for storage, but these things can all be done over the winter. Outside we have at least four projects on the go.

Top Garden

We have repaired a lot of the walls though this job will keep us busy for years. Some of the trees and much of the bramble has been cleared though we must now wait until the winter when we have arranged for a contractor

to remove a few more sycamore trees that are shading the area of garden that we intend to use.

A new path has been made running from the top of the steps behind the cottage around to the top garden. This avoids the dangers of the path that skirted the canal and winds its way through the bottom edge of the woodland that cloaks the hillside. Steps have been made at points on this path to accommodate those of our visitors less accustomed to forest tracks.

Rebuilding the Privy and the Pigsty

The small building to the left of the cottage was the privy (nowadays more often known as a lavatory) with a pigsty underneath. The roof and two walls of the building had collapsed; the other walls are reasonably sound. We have engaged stone mason/builder Richard Hunter to rebuild the walls and gable end. He has been there on Saturdays with his son, Finn, to help since July, and expects to finish soon. We then plan to build the roof and put in the ►

door and the floor of the privy. Unfortunately, it seems that it will still not be possible for us to install a lavatory and, although a pig would be nice, it is probably not a practical project.



The missing walls of the privy are being rebuilt by local builder, Richard Hunter.

Photo: Ron Common

The Lock Gate Project

Excitement is mounting as we anticipate the installation of a retired lock gate donated to us by Canal & River Trust. Readers will recall that the existence of Aqueduct Cottage resulted from the requirement to accommodate a lock keeper to manage the operation of what was effectively a stop lock at the junction of the Lea Wood Arm and the Cromford Canal.

We are planning to install the lock gate, not as a working gate, but as a static statement that shows people what the cottage was there for and why a supply of water was so important at the end of the 18th century. Ironically the lock gate was only in use for about 16 years; after that, complaints by the mill owners downstream on the Derwent, that the Cromford Canal was 'stealing' their water, led to the shortening of the Lea Wood Arm and the abandonment of the use of the lock gate.

By 1820 the shortened arm was allowed to fill with water from the Cromford Canal, the lock keeper was redundant, and so too was the need for his accommodation.

Stop planks have been fitted in the area where the lock gate is to be fitted. Water in that area has been pumped out once to reveal the silt and debris on the bottom but leaks in the walls soon allowed it to refill. A



The lock gate, donated by CRT, has been cleaned up ready for delivery.

Photo: Ron Common

few weeks later we had a 'spider' excavator come to remove about 5 tons of that silt etc. Unfortunately, on that occasion the pump we had hired failed to keep up with the rate of water leakage so although we are reasonably confident that we have removed the muck in the area where the gate will go, we have yet to see the bottom in the lock gate position.

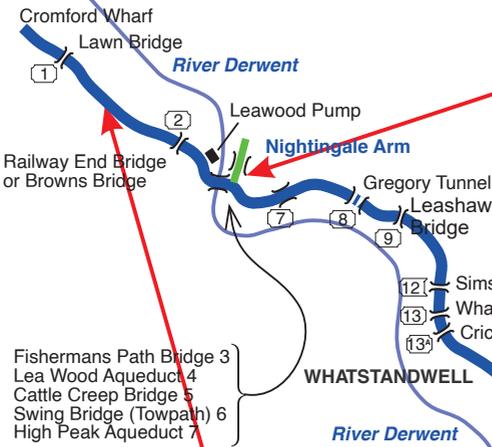
We have visited 'our' gate in Chesterfield where it is currently in storage and have cleaned it up ready for installation. By the time you are reading this I hope that we will have received it at Cromford, have floated it across the aqueduct and craned it into position, but please keep your fingers crossed for us. **T**



Removing silt from the Lea Wood Arm.

Photo: Ian Hooker

CROMFORD



Checking the swing bridge by Aqueduct Cottage works prior to lock gate movement – p16.

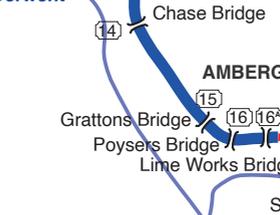
- Fishermans Path Bridge 3
- Lea Wood Aqueduct 4
- Cattle Creep Bridge 5
- Swing Bridge (Towpath) 6
- High Peak Aqueduct 7



Stella in 1990 in her original environment – p9.

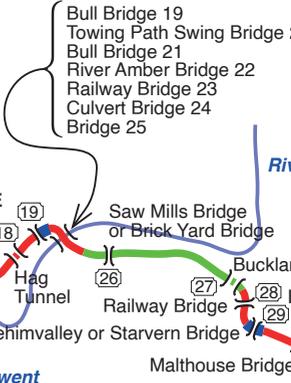
WHATSTANDWELL

River Derwent



AMBERGATE

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 v
- █ Canal bec
- █ Canal bec
- █ Rivers

THE CROMFORD CANAL

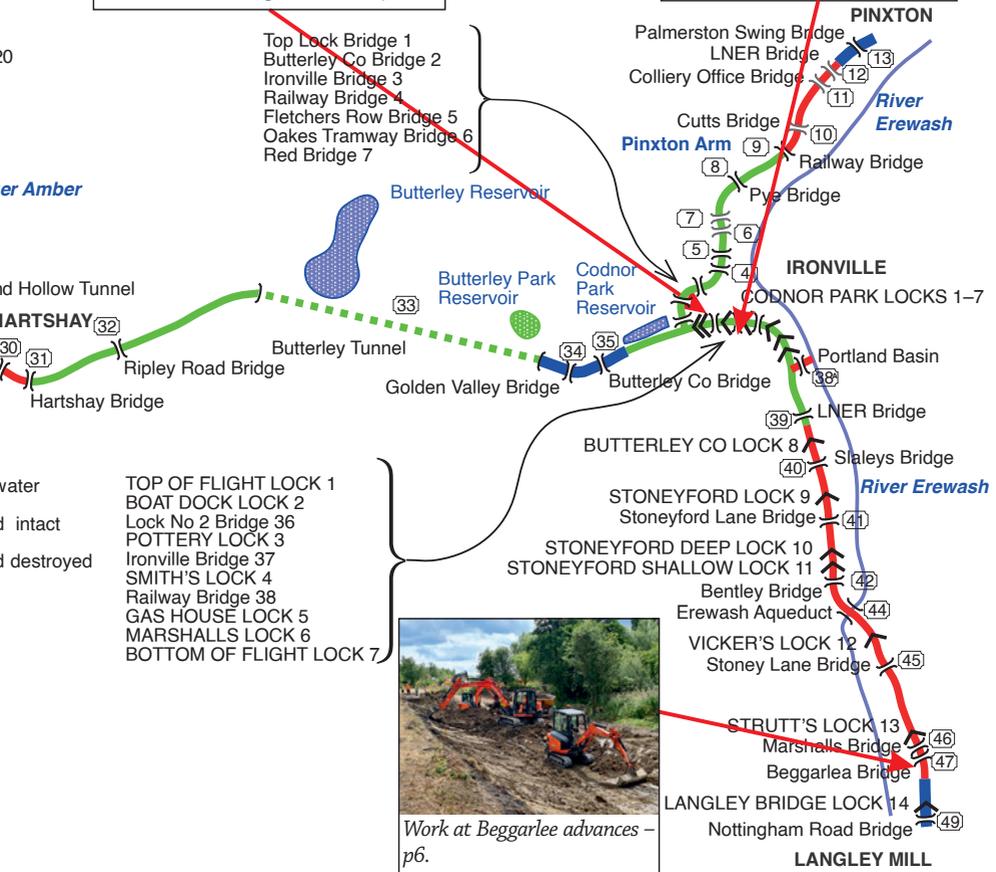




Ironville church is adjacent to the hall where FCC meetings are held – p32.



Produce from Lock Keeper's Garden – p12.



- TOP OF FLIGHT LOCK 1
- BOAT DOCK LOCK 2
- Lock No 2 Bridge 36
- POTTERY LOCK 3
- Ironville Bridge 37
- SMITH'S LOCK 4
- Railway Bridge 38
- GAS HOUSE LOCK 5
- MARSHALLS LOCK 6
- BOTTOM OF FLIGHT LOCK 7



Work at Beggarlee advances – p6.

CODNOR PARK

Marie Brown on the Cromford Canal & Codnor Park Res Group

What a wet and cold spring and start to the summer we had. There was an absence of insects, creating tough conditions for small insectivorous birds trying to feed their chicks. Ecosystems have evolved to be very resilient to change, but at the same

time can be vulnerable to a short-term swing in environmental conditions. As it eventually warmed up, nature appeared to bounce back with the reassuring appearance of butterflies, bees, loads of banded demoiselles and the twittering of young birds.

Our spring and summer seasonal work is limited to minimise any disturbance to wildlife, so we are mainly hands off. We've been monitoring the impact of our work building dams and opening up channels in the reed beds over the winter months, improving water flow and creating pools. We continue to remove litter, empty the bins and maintain the pathways. The bankside vegetation was slow to get going then quickly became a jungle!

We have been trying to keep the edges of the towpath clear from vegetation, using brush cutters on occasion, but we have also tried out our new slashers, clearing the vegetation in a much more nature-friendly way – and it's less noisy too! We have tried to get the balance right between enabling access along the towpath for people to enjoy and maintaining the lush and varied vegetation needed to support the wildlife.

Himalayan balsam is everywhere this year, along the roadside, the banks of the Erewash and many small watercourses



locally. It might look pretty but it is an alien invasive species that forms dense stands that eventually outcompete the varied native flora which our insects have evolved with. If left unchecked it will ultimately negatively impact biodiversity, with certain insects no longer having

access to their preferred food plant.

We've done our best to manage it along the canal but there are some clumps of it that we can't access without disturbance to potential nesting reed warblers and water voles. Once the flowers are matured, we've missed the opportunity to stop its spread. The seed pods explode when touched and scatter seeds up to 7m away. The seeds remain viable for a couple of years and are widely spread along watercourses. ►



Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler seen close up during ringing.

Pictures of water voles have dominated our Facebook page this year. They have very obligingly put on a show for the photographers and indeed we have attracted visitors and photographers from far and wide to see these endangered and protected species. They are Britain's fastest declining mammal, disappearing from 94% of their former sites, so it's very special that we have them and it's important that we look after them. We ran a Water Vole Survey Training event on 5th June which was supported by Notts Wildlife Trust. It was well attended and provided lots of interesting information on their life cycle and habitat and informed participants about survey methodology. We hope this will encourage champions for our local water vole population and improve the recording of water vole sightings in our area.

We organised a bird ringing event in conjunction with the Forge Nature Reserve and South Notts Ringing Group in July. It was an interesting morning, with opportunities to learn the value of monitoring bird populations. Ringing a bird helps to gather information on how long they live and where they move to, essential data for informed bird conservation. In total the South Notts Ringing Group caught and ringed 60 birds of 13 different species, including blackcaps, common whitethroat, great and blue tits and a garden warbler.

It was great to be able to compare a willow warbler and chiffchaff side by side as these are often difficult to distinguish in the field. Everyone who attended was able to see a number of birds up close and find out about the species. Bird ringing can only be done by experienced ringers with special training who ensure the welfare of the birds they handle. If you find a bird with a ring on you can report it by emailing ringing@bto.org or telephoning 01842 750050, quoting the ring number and details on when and where the bird was found and what happened to it.

The team installed six QR posts between the railway bridge and the entrance to Erewash Meadows. If you take a look on your



Work by the group has allowed water voles to thrive in the canal.

smartphone you will be able to see images of bygone ages from right where you are standing. Dave Wilson, with the assistance of Hugh Potter and Andy Cadman, provided the website, photos and write up for it. We hope you will all enjoy it.

Finally in August we held our free 'Wildlife Detective Day' where children and parents were invited to come along and learn more about the local wildlife. We had great fun with our detectives and did pond dipping, insect sweeping, took a really close look at ladybirds and bees and enjoyed looking at dragonflies and butterflies.

Look out for more events soon. If you would like to get in touch, please join our Facebook group or send us an email at cromfordcanalgroup@outlook.com. **T**



You can't start them too young!

CROMFORD CANAL INSPECTION 1954

Part 4: Mr King walks from Cromford to Butterley Tunnel

[On Thursday 15th July 1954, Mr E.E. King of the British Waterways Redevelopment Committee completed his report on our canal. For location of places mentioned, see map on p18-19.]

By 7.55am coach [train] from Nottingham to Matlock. By bus from Matlock to Cromford arriving there at 9.30am and starting the walk from Cromford at 9.45am. Water was flowing in the feeder at Cromford to the canal; this appeared to be stagnant and was covered with duck-weed.

After a short distance there are a couple of drinking places on the offside; on the towpath side there is a bank of about 8ft/10ft high. The towpath appeared to be used for foot passengers only and the worn part is only about 8in wide. Lawn Bridge 1 is a sound stone arch, appears to be ours and is an accommodation connection between fields; it looks unused as it is grass grown; the water in the canal here was just moving. At various places culverts bring in streams from the high sloping banks and fields on the offside. The water now becomes clear.

Railway End Bridge 2 is a timber turning bridge to carry a lane over the canal. The Leawood Pump House lies below the canal on the towpath side. All along here the canal is on a high bank on the towpath side; the Pump House appears to be out of commission. *[There is no mention of the Leawood Aqueduct - Ed.]*

The Leawood Branch is now merely a ditch largely filled in and dry. It is severed at the



Bridge 17 carried Stephenson's tramway from Crich to the lime kilns on the opposite side of the canal.

point where it is crossed by the railway at the entrance to the railway Leawood Tunnel. All along here the canal, and the walk along it, is really beautiful. There were a few fishermen fishing in the canal. The towpath through Gregory Tunnel is in excellent condition. Lea Shaw Bridge 9 is a sound stone arch, apparently ours, and carries an accommodation farm road. Sims Bridge 12 is a steel girder bridge in sound condition carrying a grass track over the canal.

Whatstandwell Bridge 13 is a sound stone arch bridge carrying highway B5035, Derby/Altrincham [sic; should be Alfreton] over the canal; it looks as though the bridge, or at any rate the road surface, is maintained by the Highway Authority. Bridge 13A carries a footpath over the canal; it is a timber floored bridge in steel lattice work and is not apparently ours.

Chase Bridge 14 is a solid stone arch bridge, apparently ours, and carries an accommodation road. There are not many 'footpath' notices but opposite Alderwasley Mills there is a 'private footpath' notice. ►

Grattons Bridge 15 looks like ours, a sound stone arch carrying an occupation way to a house and fields. Bridge 16 is a sound stone arch, apparently ours, carries a public road. Bridge 16A does not appear to be ours; it is a steel girder bridge carrying mains, presumably water mains. Bridge 17 does not appear to be ours as it carries a tramway to lime works located on the south side of the canal, the girders under it are sagging and are shored up.

There is a good towpath through Hag Tunnel, at the Cromford end there is a 'Highways Act 1932' notice. Bull Bridge 19 looks as though it has been taken over; this is a sound stone arch carrying a public road which is a bus route.

[I find it remarkable that he then makes no mention of the impressive and important structure of the Bullbridge aqueducts - Ed.]

Saw Mills Bridge 26 is a stone and brick built bridge on the skew, looks as though it has recently been rebuilt, has two or three arches [actually four] and carries a road into the works on the offside of the canal. Is this ours?

Buckland Hollow Tunnel Bridge 27 is a sound stone arch bridge with a high stone wall above it carrying a public road at a high level; it looks as though it is still ours. Starvern [Starvehimvalley] Bridge 29 looks like ours, a sound stone arch carrying a footpath only. Malthouse Bridge 30 is a stone arch; looks like ours, carries an accommodation way between fields only. Hartshay Bridge 31, as for 30, but carries public road. Ripley Road Bridge 32 is a rebuilt reinforced concrete bridge, looks as though it has been taken over by the Highway Authority, as it carries a big main road over the canal. A large 'main pipe' crosses the canal adjoining this bridge.

At the western entrance to Butterley Tunnel there is little or no flow of water, the water is stagnant and weed covers the canal for some distance back. The water is only a few inches deep and the mud is dark and smells. Pit slag heaps slope down to the top of the cutting in

which the canal runs, on the towpath side. The footpath, which starts from the end of the towpath at the tunnel entrance, climbs up the hill into which the tunnel passes and crosses the tunnel entrance. On the side of the hill, on the offside, there is a sewage works with outfalls into the canal near the tunnel entrance. From here I walked into Ripley (about 3pm) and returned by bus to Matlock to catch the 5.15 train to London. **T**

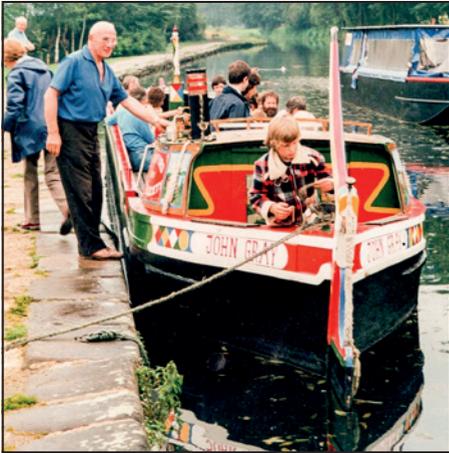


Bullbridge Bridge (19) in the late 1950s, still sporting its MR number plate.



The view from Bridge 32 in 1964, showing the 'main pipe' referred to by Mr King. The cottage was on the former Pentrich Colliery Wharf, and large waste tips can be seen in the distance.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



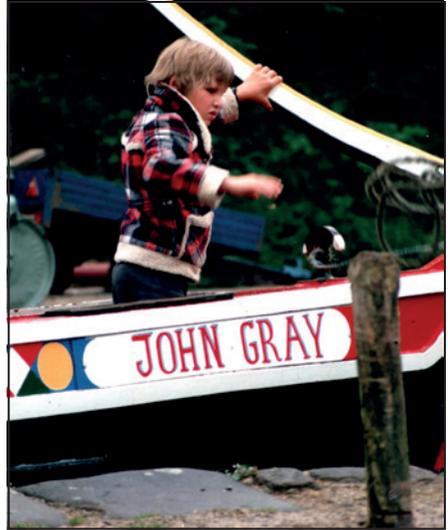
A Summer Saturday

I found these two pictures of a summer's Saturday afternoon in the mid 1980s. They show yours truly, aged about 10, and my grandad Roy Torrington. We ran the horse-drawn boat trips every Saturday in the summer. *Duchess* is in the background.

There is no horse and the tiller is up, so I think we've just arrived back from Leawood, turned the *John Gray* in the winding hole, and I'm tying up while grandad holds her steady. If this was the second and last trip, we would have untacked, groomed and put the horse away (probably 'Tina' at this point), stripped down and stored the removable items and tow line from the *John Gray*, then lock up and drive to Leawood wharf to pick my grandma up who had been running the little canal society shop in the small building next to the transhipment shed. Lovely memories.

Ross Molloy

This was originally posted on the FCC Facebook page (always worth a look!) and Simon Stoker replied: Unless Roy did otherwise we never turned John Gray with passengers on board, so this is likely just before taking off for Leawood. Great pics, thanks. People forget that with people like Roy and others we carried up to 15,000 passengers a year.



School Days Discovered

I was pleased to see my name appear in the last *Portal* on page 34; it seems my interest in the canal goes back further than I thought, although I must confess I have absolutely no recollection of this event.

For your information, the other boys in my year were Chris West, Ian Davey, David (S) Walker-Smith, Simon (G) Davison, George McGregor, George Cantrill, Richard Nightingale, Peter MacDonell and Peter Holden. John Clay was a year younger and lived at Castle Top Farm.

Grenville Smith

Thanks!

A very big thank you for making our trip with you [on *Birdswood*] so pleasant on 10th July. Everybody agreed it was such a peaceful, lovely ride and you were all so kind and helpful.

May you remain successful with all your efforts to maintain the canal and boat. You're doing a good job.

Mrs Maureen Tumman
on behalf of York Postal Veterans

LUCKY ME!

Judy Berry visited the Beggarlee Extension work site

As a relative local and being the minutes secretary for the Beggarlee Extension Committee, I can often visualise what is happening at the site of the Flood Mitigation Scheme currently being worked on at Beggarlee. However, nothing could have prepared me for seeing it 'for real'.

On 7th August I took up an invitation from John Guyler to have a guided tour of the site following the very recent Waterway Recovery Group camp. The clearance work that had previously been undertaken by the work parties was staggering, the scale of it much larger than I had imagined and all of it done within the parameters of the legal environmental requirements. Along with FCC volunteers, equally staggering was the work the WRG team had completed in their week-long camp. I was taken around all the various aspects including the new culverts as well as down along the wide drainage trench and back. It was amazing, and everywhere I walked I stood on shards of pots from the old Langley Mill Pottery.

As well as being overwhelmed by the vast amount of work which had been done, two things totally captured me. During the trench excavation work, one side of the former lock had been revealed with massive stones clearly supported by brick buttresses. On two of the stones were separately designed and engraved masons' marks and there appeared to be a worn groove at the end of another. Then, walking up the old Hall Road was a tree, an apple tree which, apparently, John Boucher had once said must be retained. It has been.

A big thank you to John Guyler for a thoroughly enjoyable and informative morning and it was great to meet some of the team who were working at Beggarlee that day, some of whom I had never met before. Thank you. **T**



Judy Berry, her beagle Brie, and the apple tree.

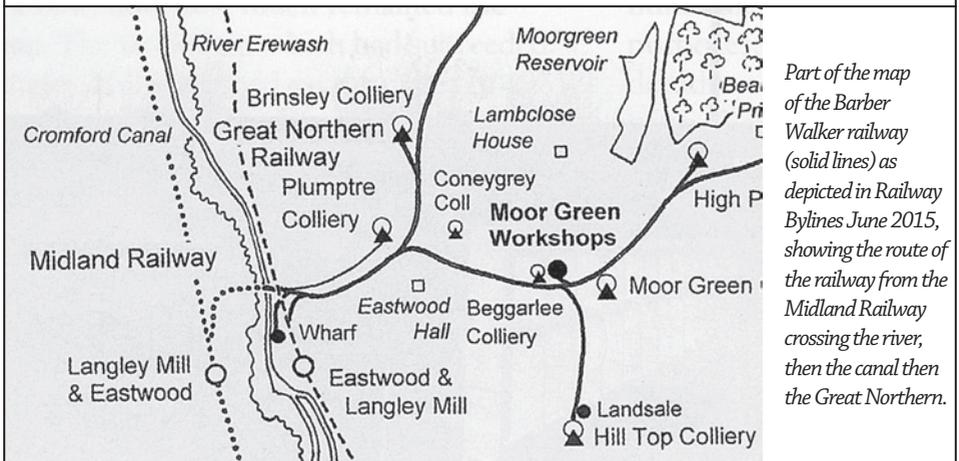
BEGGARLEE BRIDGE

Hugh Potter on the route north from Langley Mill



A trackside view of the bridge across the canal below Lock 13 looking towards the 3-span plate girder bridge of the Great Northern Railway. Only a year before the line was closed, this was replaced by the similar styled road bridge that is now part of the canal restoration scheme. On the left can be seen the wing wall of the footbridge across the canal immediately below Lock 13. Both these structures were subsequently demolished although remains have been found in the recent excavation work.

Photo: Railway Bylines



Part of the map of the Barber Walker railway (solid lines) as depicted in Railway Bylines June 2015, showing the route of the railway from the Midland Railway crossing the river, then the canal then the Great Northern.

As FCC members will know by now, our extension of the canal north from Langley Mill is possible because of a disused railway bridge that we can use to pass under the A610. This road, the Langley Mill Bypass,

blocks the original route of the canal north of Lock 13.

The bridge was for a private railway serving former Barber Walker collieries to the east, including Moor Green. The story of the railway is ►



Having passed under the Great Northern Railway, a coal train is propelled across the canal in the mid-1960s. Beyond is Lock 13 with its elegant brick tail bridge.

told in detail in an article in the June 2015 issue of *Railway Bylines* by Paul Anderson, to whom I am indebted for the information. Sadly the issue is no longer available.

The extent of the network was shown on the map which accompanied the article. As well as coal, the railway was used for six miners' passenger services per day until 1946. As pits closed, the line contracted, but after nationalisation the National Coal Board developed Beggarlee as the Area Central Workshops, officially known as Moor Green Central Workshops. Around March 1984 the railway between Langley Mill and Moor Green ceased to operate and the colliery itself closed in 1985.

Meanwhile, the A610 was being built north from Nottingham. The dual carriageway section to the A608 at Eastwood/Langley Mill was opened in 1974 along the line of the former Great Northern Railway. The next section (the single carriageway Langley Mill Bypass), which severed the canal route, was officially opened on 8th September 1983.

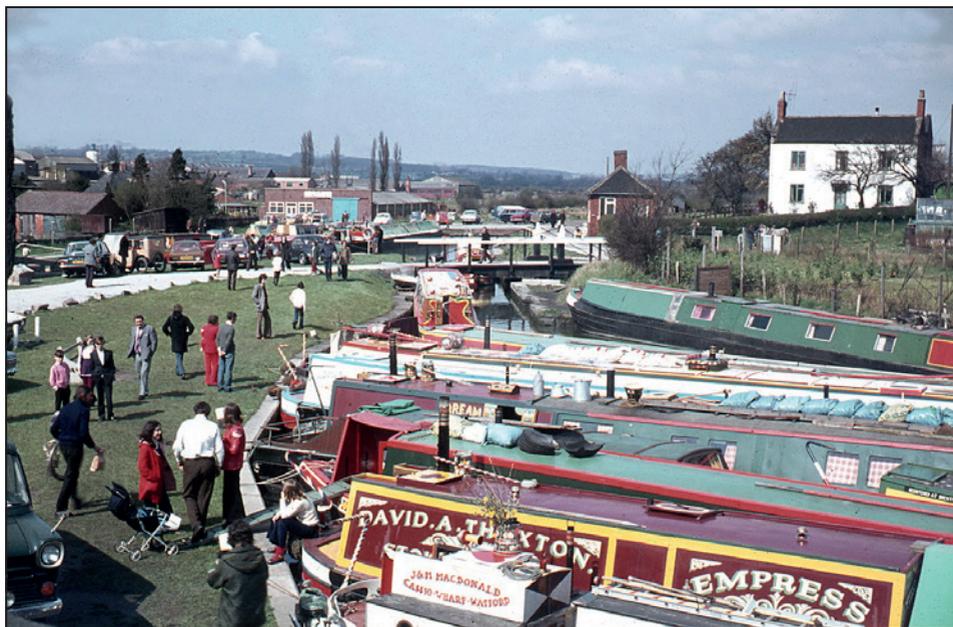
Because the railway was still in use (just!) at that time, a bridge for it had to be constructed, and that is the bridge we are utilising in the canal restoration today. Had that section of road been built just a couple of years later, the restoration of the canal would have been a whole lot more difficult. Phew! 🏗️



Taken from a similar viewpoint to the 1951 photograph, the replacement bridge carried the A610 over the railway for no more than a couple of years. Today, work is well underway to put the canal under it.

LANGLEY MILL EASTER RALLY 1974

Mike Harrison looks back exactly 50 years



Narrowboats packed into the Great Northern Basin, the start of a tradition for all future rallies at Langley Mill.

All photos by Michael Golds.

What was originally the Narrow Boat Owners Club, now called the Historic Narrow Boat Club, having been founded at the Inland Waterways Association's National Rally at Marple in 1966, soon established a tradition of holding its own rallies at different venues each year.

I bought my first boat *Mercury* (ex Fellows Morton & Clayton steamer *Colonel*) in early 1970 and joined the Club shortly afterwards. I also joined the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association about the same time. I was then involved with the restoration work on the lock and basin at Langley Mill which culminated in the reopening rally in May 1973.

After that, I wrote to 'Binkie' Bush, then chairman of the Narrow Boat Owners Club, suggesting that Langley Mill might be considered as a venue for the Easter 1974 rally. I was surprised and very pleased when the Club agreed.

The following is an extract from his Chairman's Notes in the Narrow Boat Owners Club Newsletter of June 1974, an unbelievable 50 years ago.

The Erewash and Easter Rally

Seven years have elapsed since we first encountered the Erewash and momentous things have happened since then. First, the formation of the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association and secondly the ►



Small Woolwich boat Capella, one of the first boats to sell traditional painted ware, in the Nottingham Canal stop lock.

appointment of Ike Argent as British Waterways Foreman, both of which more or less coincided with the announcement in the 1968 Transport Act that the canal north of Tamworth Road Bridge, which is not far from its beginning, was to be designated as a 'Remainder' waterway.

This was not good enough for either the ECPDA or Ike who has been recorded as saying that "you'd scarce float a dustbin lid on this bit of Cut when I came along", a sentiment with which we wholeheartedly agreed when we encountered its duckweed ►



Impromptu music at the Rally.



The wide-beam hotel boat Tranquil Rose made it up the canal, through the restored bottom lock of the Cromford Canal, and to the rally. Today it is almost unheard of for wide-beam boats to use the Erewash (or even the Cromford!) Canal.



Another view of the boats in the basin.

on our first introduction. His telepathic sense for anticipating where the next problem was to be found was legendary and was well demonstrated at Barkers Lock on our way home where the pinion on a bottom paddle had sheered. His arrival by van across a sports field was next to uncanny and the speed at which a replacement was found and fitted remarkable, so no boats were unduly delayed.

An autocrat who likes to have things done his way, which is usually the right way, suffers no argument so the job gets done. The Erewash is indeed fortunate to have one such as he to look after its destiny and all of us have a lot for which to thank him and his staff, not forgetting the prodigious and sustained efforts of the volunteers.

Someone must have done some inspired yet unostentatious negotiations to achieve the amount of restoration that has been done so far. I did not actually count, but there cannot be more than three sets of gates (out of a total of fourteen) that have not been renewed,

and that cannot be done for peanuts however large the volunteer force may be. I believe all of them will be completed this year.

Last time, our arrival at Sandiacre was heralded by a fanfare of motor horns, but this time, we were no longer newsworthy and we tied up in the lee of the splendid Springfields Lace Mill which, alas, no longer makes lace but is leased for a conglomerate of other uses though its ornately tipped chimney still smokes. Such brickwork must have added enormously to its cost, but our forefathers were not bedevilled by the arguments of 'cost effective' experts, or whatever they are called, so were able to pass down to us works of art of which they and we can be proud.

It was no disappointment to have a smooth passage, but rather a matter of wonderment that so much had been done in so short a time, particularly when we were shown pictures of complete dereliction in the locks and Langley Mill Basin, now dredged to approximately 6ft throughout.▶



Tranquil Rose moored in the very small water area above the lock that was available at the time. Later work was to extend this to include the dry dock and boatyard. Ike Argent is on the right in Trilby hat.

A large part of Stanton Ironworks is now closed so our brasses remained unaffected by pink smoke that once spewed from its chimneys polluting the air for miles around and we shall no longer have to contend with their engineer who blamed us for blocking his water supply each time 'his' lock was used. Things are not what they were but that's not a bad thing.

At the Rally

As for the Rally itself, 46 boats were counted packed so tightly and efficiently, thanks to Jim Macdonald, that it was quite possible to circumnavigate the Basin dry-shod if so inclined and it was nice to see many members at the dinner who were unable to be with us by boat. I must confess to being somewhat apprehensive when told that the best meal available within reasonable distance was the Co-op at Ilkeston, but my qualms were unnecessary for it was generally accepted to have been the best we have ever had.

On Sunday afternoon, a short consecration service of the new ECPDA flag was held. Prior to that what looked suspiciously like a pair of 'Long Johns' hung lazily from the flagstaff overlooking the basin – a reminder of the sweat and toil of the last few years.

Our thanks go to all members of BW and the ECPDA for everything they did to make our visit run smoothly and enjoyably. Their efforts over the past six years should serve as an object lesson to all others who find themselves in an apparently hopeless position and as an example of what can be done provided the spirit is willing.

This article is an abridged version of one first published in the ECPDA's magazine Erewash Outlook. Our thanks for permission to use it – Ed. ■

Three Canals Meet

It is important to remember that Langley Bridge Lock is the first lock on the Cromford Canal and that the junction with the Erewash Canal is below the main road bridge. Also that the Great Northern Basin is the start of the Nottingham Canal. It is unusual (unique?) for three canals to meet in one place.

The current ongoing work parties by the Waterway Recovery Group, FCC and ECPDA, on what has become known as the Beggarlee Extension, have made a good start towards building a new section of the Cromford Canal which will have a two-step staircase lock and will then turn sharp right under the A610 and then left to carry on up the Erewash Valley towards Stoneyard and Ironville.

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

What's On this Autumn

FCC Meetings at Ironville

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.

16th September

Stanton Ironworks on film: A presentation by Stephen Flinders.

21st October

Along the Foss - Chris Hewis.

18th September

The Silk Road in Central Asia - Phil Cooper.

FCC - Cromford Meeting

Monday 11th November

Gothic Warehouse, Cromford Wharf, 7pm (Book on FCC website)

'The Cromford & High Peak Railway'. Keith Bailey tells the story of this unique early railway that effectively extended the Cromford Canal to Manchester.

Derbyshire County Council Events

The visitor centre at High Peak Junction is open daily (weekends only November–Easter). 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

Saturday 14th September

Wednesday 30th October

Saturday 28th December

Have-a-go at being a blacksmith on the historic forge and make a poker or toasting fork to take home. Participants must be 11+ years old. Cost: £15 per poker. *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 14th September *Static*
Sunday 15th September *In Steam*

Saturday 5th October *Static*
Sunday 6th October *In Steam*
Wednesday 30th October *Static*

FCC BRANDED GOODS



1000 piece jigsaw £20
(66cm x 50cm)



Pens £2 each



Mug £7

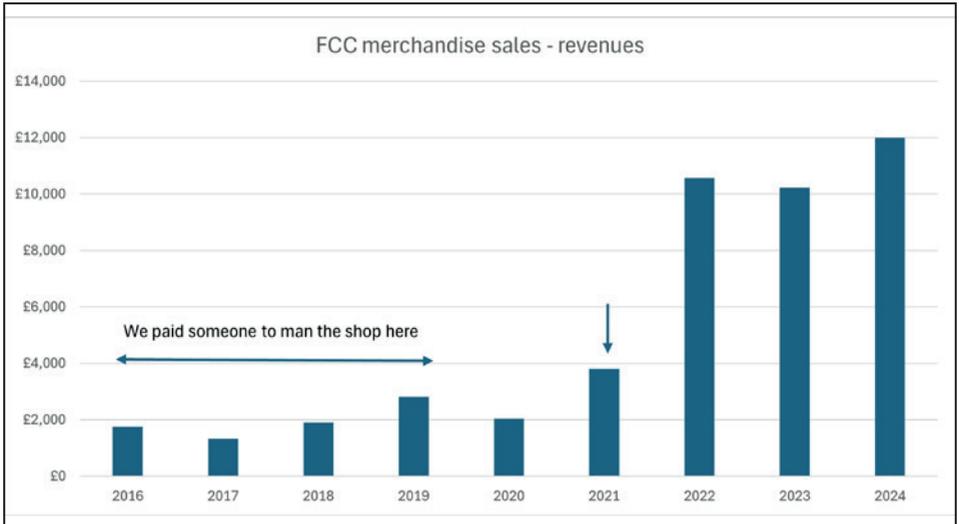


Tea Towel £9

These FCC branded goods are available from the FCC Weighbridge Shop, Cromford Wharf, DE4 3RQ.

TRADING OPERATIONS UPDATE

Richard Handley on the importance of merchandise sales to FCC



The FCC's primary charitable aim is "The restoration, reconstruction, preservation & maintenance of the Cromford Canal". It goes without saying that needs money!

The most significant recurrent source of that money are the surpluses that are generated from the charity's Trading Operations which comprise boat operations and merchandise sales.

Pre-Covid lockdown, merchandise sales were separate from the boat operations, and we actually paid someone to sit in the Gothic warehouse (Weighbridge) shop and sell the stock we had at the time - which frankly was very little. And as we rent the shop from the Arkwright Society, we made a significant loss on that activity for several years.

Post-Covid we have changed things around, combining the shop and boat operations and management and recruiting new volunteers, focusing on higher margin items, disposing of old and obsolete stock and, for the online sales, introducing realistic postal charges.

We now have three couples - Jan & Paul, Ken & Linda and Trina & Ray - who share the running of the physical shop, whilst Jan & Paul also manage the distribution of the online sales.

The graph shows the revenue that we now derive from this new means of operation.

Obviously, these sales aren't all profit; in addition to donated items such as carved mushrooms, jigsaws etc, we have to buy stock in at wholesale rates and sell out at our retail rates. But nevertheless, merchandise sales now account for nearly 25% of our Trading Operations revenues.

Another significant benefit of this modus operandi is the high level of publicity this gives to FCC, enabling other sales such as boat tickets.

One amusing anecdote to sign off on: in 2019 I remember posting out the sale of a £6 painted bucket - which cost us £4 to buy and £5 to post out! How things change - all thanks to our wonderful volunteer team! ■



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