

THE PORTAL

Issue 92 - Spring 2025

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Friends of the Cromford Canal

Registered Charity No. 1164608

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Front Cover: Taken on Sunday 5th January this dramatic image was captured by regular Aqueduct Cottage photographer Alastair Newton. Let's hope that is the last we see of snow until next winter!.

Back Cover:

Top:The FCC work party have been busy clearing Leawood Embankment of vegetation so that stability surveys can be carried out.

Bottom: In 2008, Mike Harrison contemplates the River Erewash from the original footbridge that was put in to replace the canal towpath. Compare this with the new replacement (page 14).

The copy date for the next issue is 23rd May 2025

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

Peak Paddling

Great news: as we went to press, planning permission was granted for Pete Astles' proposals for the derelict former Cromford Garden Centre site between the A6 and the canal just south of Cromford. Most people will know this currently overgrown site for the presence of Stella the Stegosaurus, which is pointed out to children (of all ages!) on *Birdswood's* regular cruises.

Although the rest of the site looks leafy and wooded, it contains large derelict and dangerous buildings. The development will replace these with a purpose-built environmentally friendly home for Peak UK's Olympic sportswear manufacture thus bringing textile production back to the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site.

Alongside will be a building for Pete's charity Peak Paddle, which encourages younger people to get out on the water. The proximity of the canal will enable the launch of canoes directly into the water. Hopefully some of those who are introduced to the canal this way will appreciate its benefits – both to them and to nature – and become supporters of FCC in the future.

Volunteers

Reading John Guyler's report of the last 3 months' work by our wonderful Wednesday volunteers (page 6) left me breathless. With the amount and variety of work they do, it seems they can turn their hand to anything and everything. For a group that meets just one day a week, they achieve a huge and varied amount of work in a large number of locations.

Weed barrowing, embankment clearance, painting, gardening, brash clearance, pipe laying, coir roll replacement, memorial seat installation, removing fallen trees, you name it, they do it. What a team!

Then there are the *Birdswood* and Weighbridge Shop volunteers who concentrate on the Cromford

end of the canal, ensuring that our historic 85-year-old boat is up to scratch for another season. There is far more to it than meets the eye, on top of the obvious need to crew the boat on her regular trips: getting *Birdswood* through her Maritime & Coastguard examinations; designing and printing brochures and posters; running the booking website; keeping the channel clear; answering queries about charters (an increasingly valuable source of income for our charity); maintaining and cleaning the boat; stocking the boat with food and drink; opening the shop on cruising days (and increasingly on other days too); and stocking the shop.

And then there is the FCC website to manage, *Portal* to produce, meetings to organise. This month we are being honoured with a visit from the Northern Canals Association, a national umbrella group for canal restoration. On Saturday 22nd March we will be hosting NCA at the New Horizon Church, Langley Mill, conveniently close to our Beggarlee Extension work site which we will visit during the day.

The list of jobs our volunteers do seems endless. But we could do even more if we had more volunteers. If you do not already participate in any of the above activities, please do consider joining if you are able. We could do so much more with more help. Just as a thought, we could do with a regular photographer who could take photographs (and even drone photography) of work parties, *Birdswood* trips and the canal in general for us to use in publications and publicity; may be someone could offer guided walks; or help guiding on our Premium Heritage trips. Or you could simply join one of our regular teams and enjoy the camaraderie in the knowledge that you are supporting the charity.

Whatever you do, even if it is only read *Portal*, we do appreciate your support I hope to see many of you out and about on the canal this year. ■

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

By David Martin

How time flies! And here we are racing towards the next bird-nesting season beginning! Our work parties have certainly had a lot on their plate this winter with the clearing of the brash and self-set plant life down by the end of the current canal at Langley Mill. This is for us to be able to do a more detailed survey of the area, affectionately known as the 'MG section' after Mick Golds who mainly constructed it.

The endless rain has frustratingly prevented us doing much more to the flood mitigation zone. However we are still on track to receive yet another visit from the Waterway Recovery Group in May when hopefully we shall be able to complete the job. As a condition set by the Local Planning Authority at Amber Valley, we aren't permitted to start any work on the rest of the project until this phase has been completed and signed off by them, so we will just keep plugging away until it is.

At the other end of the canal between Aqueduct Cottage and Gregory Tunnel the work parties have been almost like mountain goats beavering away removing the vegetation and undergrowth from the embankment area around what is known as Derwent Side. The reason for this is that after having had this section surveyed by GEA, the reports gave us a more informed and planned remediation strategy for the historically known weaker points along this section of the canal; repairing the stone walls along this section is part of that strategy to add stability back to the embankment.

This section of the canal has historically overtopped, and the embankment has slipped. The real underlying issue was twofold. When the canal was built originally, Outram and Jessop used contractors to build this section because of the sheer volume of manual labour required. It was at the time considered to be not as good a job as it should have been. In fairness technically

they were very tight on the actual geographical space to build an embankment of this height. In layman's terms it should have been broader at the base than there is the physical room for and so they braced it with stone support walls which have over time deteriorated and consequently need maintaining and repairing. Once the area has been cleared, we shall do another survey so that we are fully informed on our plan of action going forwards.

So do have a bit of sympathy for our workers if you are passing up and down this way and come across them on the towpath because it's no easy task and they are all volunteers!

The boat crew I'm reliably informed have had a busy winter repairing and cleaning *Birdswood*, getting her ready for the next cruising season which will start mid-April. With the recent weed cutting works on the canal and the more consistent water levels we should be having a less troublesome season. You can book your trips or charter our world-famous trip boat online at www.birdswood.org.

Our social in January saw a packed hall for the talk from members of the Grantham Canal Society sharing their recent build experiences and plans for the canal. It was great to talk to them about their recent reconstruction of locks 14 and 15 and listen to their aspirations regarding the new Trent link.

By the time you receive this *Portal* our February socials will have passed, just like the Zeppelins did 109 years ago. On 17th March we have a talk on Bess of Hardwick and then on 14th April after the AGM we will be focusing on the *Titanic*, 113 years after the event! So, if you are at a loose end why not book yourself in, or pop over and see us all in the Church Hall at Ironville. The FCC shop is always in attendance too so if you need anything for anyone and we don't have it, I'm sure we can get it! ■

WORK PARTY REPORT

By John Guyler

In 2024 the FCC work parties gave 3,371 volunteer hours with 532 travel hours making a total of 3,903 volunteer hours.

Beggarlee

At the beginning of November two volunteers, using our new digger, installed a drainage pipe at one end of the flood plain extension. This had an immediate effect on clearing water that had built up. A second pipe is to be installed, when the weather allows, at the other end of the extension. The pipes used for this job were recovered when the flood plain extension was dug out. They are spun concrete, in a good enough condition for this purpose and would only go to infill if not used. When both pipes are in, it will allow a path to be created all the way around the flood plain extension.

They have also cleared some trees to allow the start of moving top soil to the landscaped bank of the extension. The following week, they levelled the path along the top edge and started moving the top soil to the landscaped edge. The weather has not been kind and this exercise will have to be continued in the spring.

In January, three volunteers with the FCC digger and the dumper placed stone ('rip-rap') in the outfall of the new headwalls. Erosion around the 900mm outfall had been noticed and there had been concern expressed about the depth of water. Some reduction on the level of this stone will be done when they next have the digger out to work on profiling the steep banks around the headwalls.

Work has continued on clearing the area at the end of the in-water section from the boat moorings in Langley Mill Boatyard. In total, twelve work parties of various sizes have been clearing this area.



FCC's new digger fitting a pipe at the end of the flood plain extension



Clearance work for the Beggarlee Extension.

This is an area of rough vegetation and self-set saplings and will be leading up to the locks when they are built from the in-water section. It involved clearing some very heavy and old brambles along the edge of the bund and on the fencing around ►

the compound on the opposite side to the footpath and was very hard, slow work. Some trees on the lower edge of the bund were cut ready for the stumps to be pulled out.

Three volunteers cleared some of the remaining self-set trees in the water around the end of the bund. They have been leaving the tree roots with about a metre of trunk, to enable the root ball to be pulled out at a later stage. On one work party they managed to gain access to the compound area by unbolting the fencing to avoid crossing an unsafe bridge. They managed to cut a large area of brambles ready for disposal by a controlled burn at a later stage.

Planned work by the main work party in the compound was not done because access was considered too dangerous due to the poor condition of the bridge. But on the following Friday a mixed group of FCC and ECPDA work party volunteers repaired the 3m-long bridge over the canal channel. New boarding was used to replace the original rotting boards which had made the bridge unsafe to walk on. Later in the day they also cleared an area within the compound of thick brambles.

At mid-morning on the first week of January, the small work party were informed that surveyors were to be on site the following day to conduct topographical investigations, so the emphasis changed from cutting small trees to clearing the site for good access for the surveyors.

John Barker and Malc Chisnall were at Beggarlee at 8am to give the surveyors access through Wernick's yard on to the site. Malc Chisnall stayed with the surveyors and assisted all day where necessary.

The area surveyed was from the end of the canal boat moorings up to the end of the in-water section and 23m from the water's edge towards the River Erewash.

On the second week of January, twelve volunteers finished the clearance of the

section, disposing of a large amount of brush by a controlled burn. The site is now completely clear and ready for the next stage: pulling the tree roots out. Hopefully by about the end of April everything should be ready for WRG to begin work in July 2025, subject to CRT approval.

The 17 work parties gave 2,022 volunteer hours, including travel, on the clearance of the vegetation on the end of in-water section. In the 4 years we have been working to clear vegetation and self-sown trees at Beggarlee on the three sections (the gully section now piped in, the flood plain extension and the end of in-water section), FCC volunteers have given 3,903 hours including travel hours and this doesn't include all the construction hours put in by the FCC and WRG.

High Peak Junction

In November, three volunteers finished painting the old weighbridge office. The window shutters, door, guttering and barge boards are all painted. The gable ends were not painted because we did not have a safe method of reaching the apex.

Three coir rolls near the swing bridge were retrieved from the channel and fixed into place on the bank. These had been dislodged during vegetation cutting by the small tractor and flail.▶



Finishing the painting on the former weighbridge office at High Peak Junction.

Leewood Embankment

In January, we started work at the mid-point between Aqueduct Cottage and Gregory's Tunnel on clearing the stone retaining wall of vegetation ready for surveying. The wall is at the bottom of a steep slope and was part of the original canal build to keep the embankment stable. There is a requirement to survey this retaining wall for rebuilding and repair as part of the ongoing work to gather information as to the general stability of the canal.

It was initially a very difficult section to work in because of the steep access to the site, which had to be cleared first. Then on the site there were lots of previously cut trees causing trip hazards; several volunteers finished up in very undignified positions. A length of about 30m was cleared and previously cut trees were cleared to provide a good access to the wall. Several other work parties will be needed to complete the task. The weather was glorious and a very hard day was had, but a very enjoyable one.

One of the pleasant parts of a work party is the impromptu discussions that spring up. We marvelled at the way the navies must have worked, considering the way the canal embankment was built, how steep it is and the size of some of the stone blocks, all with manual labour. Not only is there the lower deep supporting wall but a secondary wall part way up the banking, with some very large stone blocks which were showing signs they had been dislodged with some force.

Lower Hartshay

At Lower Hartshay five work parties planted 450 whips in the boundary hedge, some to replace previously planted whips which hadn't survived. The vegetation in the hedge bottom had to be cleared first so that planting could take place.

A gang worked in the canal channel to clear fallen trees, mainly willow which had established and were growing very well. The problem was that when one trunk was moved, movement was detected several metres away in other wood and when this was removed other movement was seen further away; it was all interconnected.



Clearance of previously felled timber on the embankment at Leewood.



The FCC team swarming like ants to clear the embankment on the site of previous breaches at Leewood.



Clearing the wall at the toe of the embankment at Leewood.

Winches were used as well as chainsaws on this slow work, made all the worse by the very deep mud. Careful planning of each stage had to be done because of the access problem. At the final week of the willow clearance, most of the work was to clear the area of pulled tree trunks by chopping with a chainsaw into manageable ►

sizes. The wood was then placed into piles to form habitat refuges.

Lock Keeper's Garden

At Lock 4, Ironville, Shirley and her sister Carol have worked very hard to get the Lock Keeper's garden ready for this year. All the beds have been turned over, the grass verges have been trimmed, there are some vegetables planted to over-winter and seedlings are on their way for early planting. A great deal of effort has been put into this area – and they have their own allotment to work on as well!

Ambergate

In December at Ambergate, two volunteers over two work parties removed over 130 barrow-loads of pulled reeds to disposal, thus clearing the entire length.

Pinxton

At Pinxton weir, sixteen volunteers cleared a large amount of wood from fallen trees which Malc had cut up with the chain saw. There were a number of trees that had come down in the wind over the previous couple of months. The area was looking much more open when we left but there are a number of dead trees that will either fall in high winds or will need taking down in the near future. Blanket weed, which seems to be thriving, was also cleared from the channel. John Dyson filled two large bags of litter, picked from the whole length of the in-water section.

Sawmills

At Sawmills John Barker and Malc Chisnall placed a memorial seat in position to David Hirst, a very good friend and supporter of the Cromford Canal. The seat was placed near the Gauging Narrows. David, and his wife Gill, formed a community group that looked after the Sawmills and Bullbridge area. We worked alongside them both at the narrows and on the canal line. We always had some very nice cakes, baked by Gill, whenever we worked that area; good memories. **T**



Clearance of fallen trees in thick mud at Hartshay.



Tree clearance near Pinxton Wharf.



Gill Hirst on the bench installed at Sawmills Gauging Narrows in memory of her late husband David.

CHANNEL CLEARANCE

Al Wallhead reports on a winter work party – with bacon butties!

Each winter, the crew of *Birdswood* undertakes vital canal maintenance to ensure the waterway is ready and safe for the upcoming cruising season. This year's efforts focused on removing hazards that could affect both the safety and enjoyment of passengers.

Key tasks involved clearing a large, submerged branch from the winding area at Cromford Wharf and removing a small tree that had collapsed into the canal during the winter months. With the canal now free of these obstacles, *Birdswood* is primed for a smooth and scenic cruising season.

As always, the crew kept spirits high, firing up the back cabin stove on *Birdswood* to enjoy some well-earned warmth alongside bacon butties and jacket potatoes—a cherished tradition that adds a cosy touch to the hard work of maintaining this cherished waterway.▶



Skipper Al raring to go with the stove warming up nicely.



Bacon sizzling nicely in the pan.



Shifting the fallen tree.



Extracting the sunken log . . .



. . . and moving it onto the bank

BIRDWOOD'S BRETHREN

The fame of *Birdswood* is spreading around the canal system. Kerry Green was contacted by Kilsby Theatre Boat, a boat restoration project based in Oxford. They plan to restore the derelict motorised boat *Kilsby* back to its original butty stern (like *Birdswood*) and turn it into a theatre boat. They want to power it with a similar electric-hydraulic system to ours, so three members of their team visited in February when Kerry explained our set-up and took them for a trip down the canal.

They were most impressed and wrote: "Thank you for a lovely trip and insight into your extraordinary project. It was not only wonderful to ride on *Birdswood*, but also to learn about the care and community surrounding the boat project and the canal. Just brilliant. We very much hope to inject some inspiration into our project from everything we absorbed."

We look forward to following their progress - which you can also do at www.kilsbytheatreboat.com. **T**



Jim Hutchinson of Kilsby Theatre Boat sampling the delights of steering Birdswood.

LEAWOOD JOTTINGS

By Ian Yates

The new year has arrived and work at the pump house is progressing steadily. There is little work required on the engine itself except for a bit of cleaning and the odd patch of rust to remove. The main work is in the boiler house. Boiler 43 has not had its full set of cladding sheets on for some time, so the missing ones have now been replaced.

A new arrangement enables the sheets to be fitted over a stud on the crinoline on top of the boiler rather than trying to hold them in place whilst a screw was inserted in a small connection piece. The sheets are very heavy and, being curved, are difficult to hold for any length of time. All the sheets are now back on with only the brass bezel to be cleaned and refitted.

At the last inspection one of the pressure gauges was reading slightly high. The inspector passed it for use but told us to get it repaired for the next inspection. Both gauges have been taken off and are going to a repair company in Coalville to be repaired and recalibrated.

The major work in the boiler house is the repair and refurbishment of the boiler feed pump. It has worked for many years without any problems but it was becoming obvious that it needed attention. It required quite a high steam pressure before it would start and when running it would speed up and slow down without any particular reason. One dark December Monday night with the assistance of John Thompson, the crankshaft and flywheel were removed and the main engine was removed from the wall. It was then manhandled out of the boiler house and up the steps.

Placed on two sack trucks laid flat to form a trolley the engine was taken down the towpath to High Peak Junction and loaded onto a pallet in his pick-up. The remaining parts were taken down in a trolley and some placed into my car.



A kit of parts: the feed pump dismantled at Clay Mills Victorian Pumping Station.

This was completed at 10.30 at night. Luckily the weather was fine, and the volunteers retired to the pump house for a well-earned cup of tea and a biscuit.

The next morning the engine was taken to Clay Mills Victorian Pumping Station in Burton upon Trent to be repaired. There is a fork lift on site so unloading was considerably easier, the whole being placed in the small workshop. The engine has now been dismantled completely and inspected. The piston does not appear to have come from a steam engine; thoughts are that it is from a diesel engine but this cannot be confirmed.

The piston rings are not much larger in diameter than the piston itself with little spring so here was the problem in starting. The cylinder itself is slightly oval. The bronze cap on top of the pump side which retains the packing was found to have several cracks in it, probably the cause of the excessive leakage around the top. The ►



The cylinder bore generally in good condition but a bit oval.



The slide valve face needs a bit of TLC.



The crank and flywheel – a very heavy lump.

crank itself is generally good but the big end is slightly oval, something which was known about and probably the cause of the knock. The face of the slide valve is worn with a lip on one side.

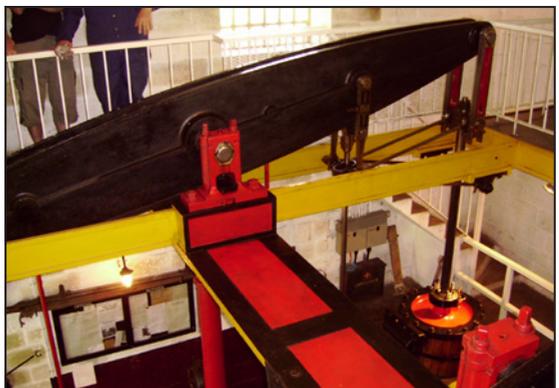
With this in mind it has been decided to make a new piston and rings, a new bronze retaining cap, to rebores the cylinder and skim the face of the slide valve. Patterns were made by a colleague at Clay Mills and 3D printed. These were taken to a foundry in Willenhall, have been cast and are back at the pumping station for machining. The main casting is being taken to another site to have the cylinder rebored slightly. The refacing of the slide valve will be carried out on a milling machine at Clay Mills. The engine will be thoroughly cleaned and reassembled ready to be returned to Leawood for the Easter steaming. It has been agreed it will be returned in daytime rather than at night!

After the Easter steaming, the boilers at Leawood are up for their yearly inspection. Boiler 43 was hardly used last year and is in good condition so will be used this year. Boiler 44 needs NDT testing to see if it has deteriorated over the last year. We are assuming it will require the same repair to the boiler at the smoke box end as 43 had, but we can keep our fingers crossed.

As usual there are plenty of things left to do to keep the volunteers busy.

Middleton Top

We also had to sort out a few issues we have with the engine at Middleton Top. This is going to be steamed on 3rd, 4th and 5th of May to celebrate 200 years of the Act to build the Cromford & High Peak Railway. At the trial steaming in October part of the control on the condenser feed on one side was jamming – probably due to wear over time. A couple of weeks will be spent on site and the issues hopefully sorted out. Everything is coming together steadily for the steaming to go ahead. With most of the volunteers being at Middleton that weekend, Leawood will not be in steam but – subject to availability of staff – may be open static. ■



The engine at Middleton Top is usually powered by compressed air but will be specially steamed at the beginning of May.

NEW EREWASH FOOTBRIDGE

By Ken Brockway

In September I discovered a path closure at Aldercar Flash Nature Reserve to replace the footpath bridge over the River Erewash on the line of the Cromford Canal former towpath. In late November I was walking in the area and found the new bridge in place and available for use. Inspecting Ordnance Survey maps old and new I spotted a maze of paths in the area. The river is the boundary between Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. I walked from Stoney Lane in Notts.

From Stoney Lane, Brinsley FP23 follows the old line of the towpath on the west side of the canal, handing over to Aldercar and Langley Mill FP 37 in Derbyshire. Further north the towpath would have crossed over Bentley Bridge, below Stoneyford Shallow Lock (11), and footpath 37 continues along what was the towpath on the east side of the channel.

Also from Stoney Lane, Brinsley FP24 closely followed the east bank of the canal passing Vicker's Lock (12). It then curves away from the canal and today appears to make a strange square in the field. Old maps explain that the path passed around the east side of cottages at Brinsley Wharf Row before returning canalside. Heading north, Brinsley 24 curves east to Brinsley Hall. On the



The new footbridge on the site of the aqueduct over the Erewash.

way it crosses Brinsley 25 which sweeps around to meet the east bank of the canal and crosses the River Erewash after which it continues as Aldercar and Langley Mill FP47.▶



The footpaths between Stoney Lane and the new footbridge.

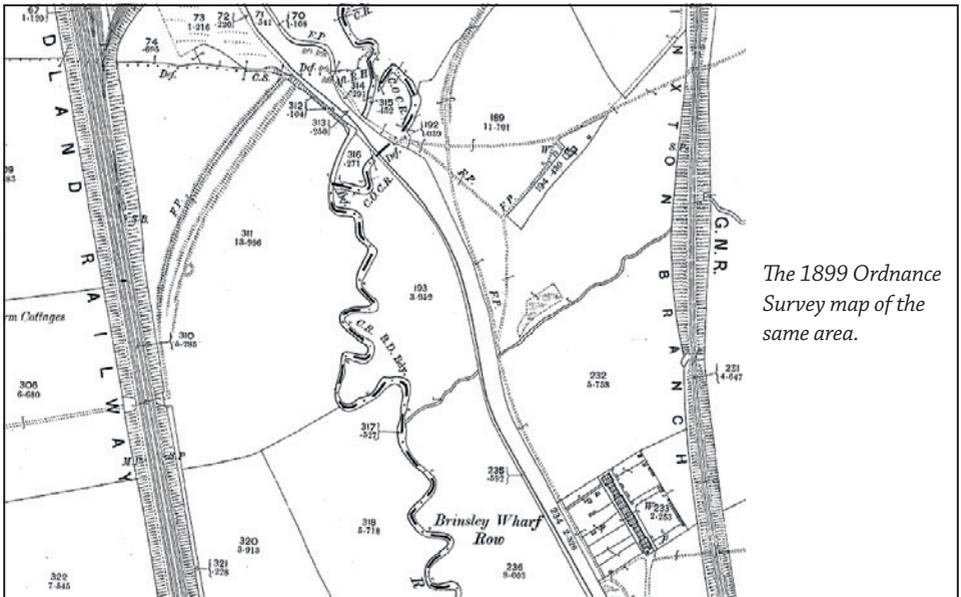


This 1965 photograph of the Cromford Canal aqueduct across the River Erewash looking towards Stoneyford shows clearly the towpath on the left and the footpath on the right of the canal.

The point of that detailed explanation is to demonstrate that there should be two bridges across the Erewash, one that carries the former towpath and another on the opposite side of the canal for the footpath marked on old maps and still recorded as public paths in both counties. Clearly they couldn't be

combined because they were on opposite sides of the canal.

After contacting our Editor/Archivist about this, I receive by return a picture of the old canal aqueduct over the river and sure enough it clearly shows a path along both sides of the canal. **T**



The 1899 Ordnance Survey map of the same area.

LETTERS

Who was Gregory?

Can you help me please? My mother's maiden name was Gregory and we are aware of family connections in the area. Can you throw some light on the reason for the names of Gregory Tunnel and Gregory Dam?

John Hollis-Davies

FCC Archivist Hugh Potter replies: It is a question that has been asked before and all I can suggest is that they take their names from the small hamlet (2 houses!) named Gregory just up from the tunnel as marked on the 25in OS map.

Of course, that begs the question of how the hamlet got its name. Can anyone throw any more light on the Gregory mystery?

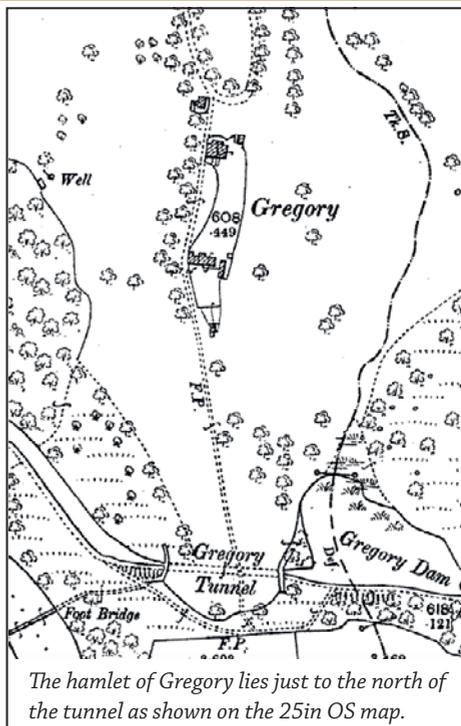
Importance of Defibrillators

In November, Richard Handley organised a teaching session on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the use of a defibrillator, at the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford, which I have to say was excellent.

We were shown how to locate and use the defibrillator correctly and what was required to bring the unit back to a serviceable state after use. We were able to practice correct manual CPR on 'Annie' the dummy at the end of the session.

But what really brought it home to me, how important it is to provide a defibrillator for local use, was an incident near my home in December. I had to deliver some things to my daughter's house, just after 8am. Outside her house was a police car across the road preventing through traffic; as I prepared to turn right up a side road three more emergency vehicles arrived. There had been a serious multi vehicle crash at the junction near the local school.

My granddaughter on her way to senior school was witness to CPR being delivered



to one of the persons involved in this accident and later in the day she was told that a defibrillator from the local junior school had been used. When she was in her last year at the same school, all the children of that year raised through raffles, used book stalls, and various silly events, enough money to buy a defibrillator, this was the one used. On talking to her after school, whilst she had concern for the person given CPR, she had immense pride in the fact that their actions had provided the defibrillator, that hopefully saved someone's life.

This is just my reflection on the importance of both training and the provision of essential pieces of equipment; long may it continue.

John Guyler ►



FCC Executive Secretary Richard Handley replies: *The awareness training was organised as a result of two medical emergencies that we had at Cromford in 2024, and was aimed at boosting the confidence of FCC volunteers when responding to such emergencies. Birdswood masters are mandated to be first-aid trained as part of their MCA certification, but we wanted a wider capability amongst our volunteer cohort. There are defibrillators at the Cromford wharf toilets and on the brake van at High Peak Junction. We are looking to source one for the boat.*

Piecing it Together

May I say how much I enjoyed spending Christmas with *Birdswood* and Hugh Potter! My husband kindly bought me the *Birdswood* Jigsaw Puzzle from FCC and I would like to say how much I have enjoyed the puzzle and I am impressed with the quality of the jigsaw. I started Christmas Day and finished New Year's Eve. Thank You to Keith Bailey for his photography, and skipper Hugh Potter.

Linda Handley

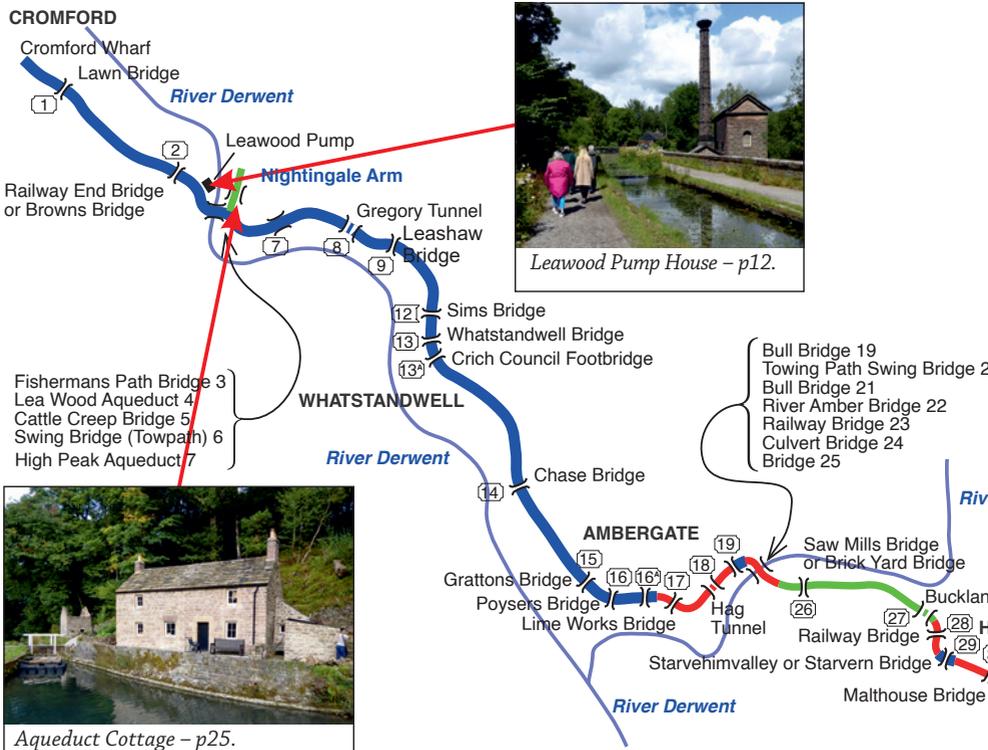
Harry Bonsall

I read the FCC booklet on the Leawood Arm of the canal and noted the piece on Harry Bonsall, who lived on a boat at Lea Wharf after retirement. I have a framed original photograph of Harry, complete with horse and cart, which my father (who worked at Lea Mills) rescued from a skip many years ago.

He also carried goods for Lea Mills and the picture shows him with baskets of textiles bound for the station at Cromford on the Midland Railway dray.

George Lynam

*Harry Bonsall was a boatman on the canal who later delivered coal by horse and cart from High Peak Junction to Lea Mills and the lead smelting works. In his retirement he lived on a boat at Lea Bridge wharf. His full story and that of the Leawood Arm of the canal are told in *The Cromford Canal's Leawood Arm*, available from the FCC shop. - Ed. **T***



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.

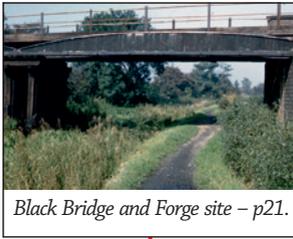
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THE CROMFORD CANAL

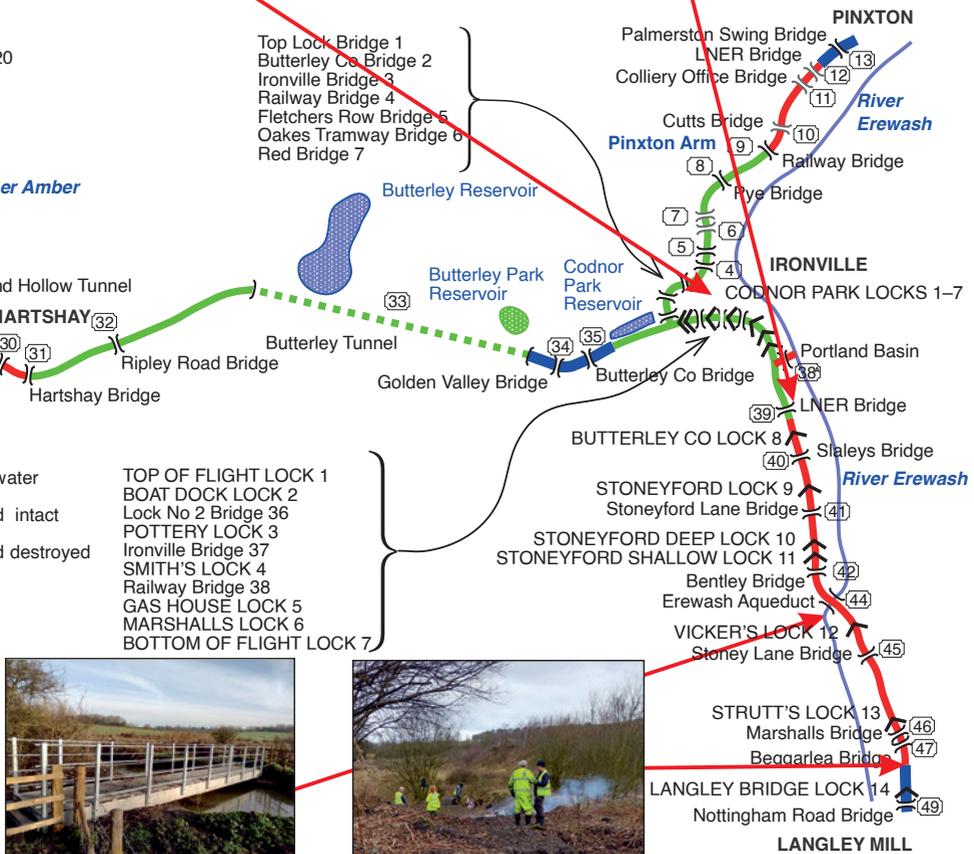




Ironville Church Hall – p34.



Black Bridge and Forge site – p21.



Erewash footbridge – p14.



Beggarlee clearance – p6.

SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST

A random selection of newspaper cuttings relating to the canal

Embankment destroyed by rats

10th September 1890, *Derby Mercury*,

“An extraordinary incident, demonstrating the destructive habits of the water rat, has just occurred on the Midland Railway Company’s Cromford and Langley Mill Canal. During the night it was discovered that a portion of the embankment near the High Peak Junction had collapsed, and that the water was rushing onto the lower lands and into the river Derwent. The leakage was discovered at the southern extremity of the aqueduct crossing the Derwent and the circumstance was reported to Mr Slack, of Holloway, the local inspector. The canal is the main waterway for the transit of coal to Cromford, Matlock, and the intermediate places and the accident suspended the whole traffic. Moreover, at the time a party of excursionists were journeying to Matlock by the canal, but in returning the boat was stranded. A gang of men was sent to repair the damage and an examination showed the puddle and masonry had been burrowed through by rats. The damage was more extensive than was up first anticipated, and it is not expected that traffic will be resumed before Wednesday or Thursday.”

Second Embankment Collapse

In the *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* of 13th October 1890, *Derby Mercury* of 15th October and also in the *Long Eaton Advertiser* a week later, the following somewhat dramatic report was published:

“Only a few weeks ago the embankment of the old Cromford and Langley Mill Canal, which is the property of the Midland Railway Company, collapsed near High Peak Junction, and during the past week a second catastrophe occurred in the same vicinity. The leakage was discovered on Monday morning on the aqueduct, the point where the canal crosses the River Derwent.

Water was escaping through the puddle and masonry into a dry archway below, but traffic was maintained until night. The following day a gang of 20 men from the relaying permanent way department of the Midland Manchester and Derby main line started to repair the damage, under the direction of Deputy Allen. The work however was not completed until Thursday night, and the pump for refilling the watercourse from the river was in operation 24 hours before traffic could be resumed on Saturday, after four days’ delay.”

It appears that the restrictions on pumping water up from the River Derwent had been lifted at this time. – Ed

Skating on the Canal

16th January 1891, *Ripley & Heanor News*

“For the first time during many years the Cromford and Langley Mill canal is frozen over. The distance from Ambergate to within half a mile of Cromford can be covered. It is at least thirty years since nearly 6 miles of skating could be obtained as at present. Weeks ago the ice boat could not break through.”

The reason the last half mile to Cromford could not be skated was probably due to the small but relatively warm feed of water that still entered the canal from the Cromford Sough – Ed. ♣



Skating on the canal at Gregory Wide.

STEPS FOR THE FORGE SITE

By John Guyler

At Black Bridge, the site of the former railway bridge near Jacksdale, FCC, working for the Friends of the Forge (FoF), designed, built and fitted a second flight of steps to complete a circular route around the Forge site.

A mixed group from FCC and FoF worked to establish a good sound footpath at the location where the steps were to be sited. This involved shifting some very large stone slabs, which were used to make a durable and flat footpath.

A small group of volunteers built the wooden steps in John Boucher's workshop, to his design, and then a week later took them on site and securely fitted them into the bank. Handrails were then fitted by FoF. Back in February 2020, the first flight of steps that John Boucher designed, and FCC volunteers built, were a two-stage flight with a flat area between the flights and went up a very steep slope. The FCC work party fitted those in one day. The very necessary hand rails were the result of donations from walking groups who regularly use the Forge and were fitted to the steps by FoF volunteers, when Covid restrictions were eased.

Visitors can now walk from the quaintly named 'Humpty Bridge' at what was the entrance to Portland Basin at Jacksdale, crossing the canal on a boardwalk and up the long double flight of steps. FoF then started work on the footpath from the iron gates to Canyons Wood. This involved a lot of hard work in acquiring materials and raising the level of the path with bricks and finishing off the whole with donated limestone. The made-up path goes up towards the ➤



Moving the large flat stones to create a level path.



The combined crew from the FCC and FoF fitting the new steps at Black Bridge.

Station Road, Codnor Park entrance and then turns left where there is now a 'dry path' constructed by FoF. It is called the dry path because it's raised up so that the path remains dry through some very muddy areas in the winter.

The FCC work parties a couple of years ago put some drain pipes underneath the path in several places which divert water away towards the trees from the path area very successfully. They also cleared small trees and bushes and laid about 50m of base material. The path then works around westward down to the steps at Black Bridge, which is at the end of this in-water section of the canal. Turning left along the towpath returns you to 'Humpy Bridge'.

The Forge site, Ironville, was purchased at auction by the Friends of Belper Parks Ltd, a small conservation group. It was bought because it was an old industrial site recommended by the Butterfly Conservation Group as an area worth conserving for the protection of butterflies, whose work they wanted to support.

Firstly, FoF was set up and they asked people what would be of benefit to them. The leader of a local walking group wanted to safely access the Forge for her groups. This entailed grant funding, which was applied for in 2019.

They subsequently received a grant from Amber Valley Walking for Health, which covered the cost of the steps on to the Forge from the boardwalk, two kissing gates which include disabled access, benches and information boards. The idea was, eventually, to create a circular route which linked up with the Cromford Canal towpath at Black Bridge from the iron gates on Station Road, Codnor Park, which is relatively dry all year, in order to keep people walking. That is what has now been achieved. See map on p23. ■



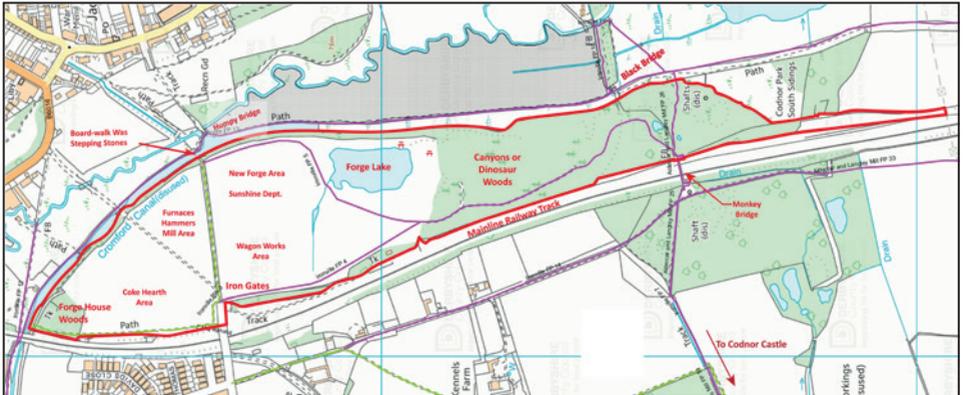
Installing the steps.



Handrails fitted. The end of the watered section of the canal and the site of Black Bridge, with the footbridge crossing the water, are to the right in the background.

HISTORY OF CODNOR PARK FORGE

By John Boucher



The area of the Forge site is outlined in red, with public footpaths in magenta.

The Codnor Park Forge site was established by what became the Butterley Company about 1797, in order to exploit the coal and iron ore mined in Codnor Park. Initially lime kilns were set up to produce lime with limestone brought in by canal from their quarries at Crich. (There was a private branch canal into the works on the level from above the top lock in Ironville, opposite the start of the Pinxton Arm.)

A few years later blast furnaces were built, and then the pig iron produced was forged into wrought iron using large hammers, hence the popular name 'Forge Site'. The production of wrought iron continued until 1965, almost the last works making it in the country. Attempts were made to produce steel at various times but these did not work very well, so later steel billets were brought in for re-rolling.

Railway wagons were also made on the site right up until 1975, after which the site lay derelict for several years until it was opencast for the coal which occurred at shallow depths, and almost all of the remains of the original

works disappeared. On completion of the open casting the whole of the original works site, together with an area of former bell pits at the southern end, was purchased by the Friends of the Forge and retained as a very desirable nature reserve.

In its heyday the Forge Site was very prosperous, and transport was a serious issue. Initially relying on the canal, the railway companies were keen to make connections and the Butterley Company encouraged them. The Midland Railway came first, with their Erewash Valley line connected to the works in 1846, and stopping there for a number of years until it was later extended northwards.

The Great Northern Railway pushed up past Langley Mill in 1873, again heading for the Forge site, with the extension to Jacksdale and Pinxton following two years later. The GNR line curved round on a high embankment with a single track crossing the River Erewash on a timber trestle viaduct, and then over a girder bridge across the canal and into Butterley Company sidings. ►

Black Bridge from the south, in the 1960s shortly before demolition, showing the long span.



Black Bridge being demolished in the late 1960s.



Strangely, the GNR did not connect to the Midland Railway until much later, when the single track across the canal was doubled and connected directly to the Midland line and became a useful through route. The GNR then used it as its through freight route, via Ambergate and the Midland Railway, to its large warehouse in central Manchester.

The girder bridge across the canal became known locally as 'Black Bridge'. People often comment on its considerable span, which must have made it quite expensive to build and to widen later to double track. It was (and remains) normal practice for a canal company to require anyone wishing to build a bridge over to make a clear span across their waterway and towpath, and as the canal was by then owned by the Midland Railway, and

the GNR line across was in fierce competition and liable to steal much of their trade from the Butterley Company, it must have been difficult for them to get an exception to place a pier in the offside edge of the canal (no trace of which now remains).

Perhaps this exception was permitted because of the considerable length of the Black Bridge, due to having on the east side to cross a track joining the farmer's two fields which would otherwise have been cut off by the large embankment, and on the west side a track (possibly a plateway) alongside the canal heading for the Butterley Company coal pits to the south. This explains the wide gap between the brick abutment and the canal, which has most fortunately provided sufficient space for the construction of the new stairway. ■

RESIDENTS OF AQUEDUCT COTTAGE

By Ian Hooker

Like most outdoor projects, the work at Aqueduct Cottage has slowed over the winter. We have cleaned up a great deal in our storage area and made a start on coppicing some of the hazel that grows in parts of the wood to develop our knowledge and learn new woodland skills. Our cottage 'hosts' have welcomed visitors when the cottage has been open (Saturdays, Sundays and Tuesdays). In December alone there were over a thousand visitors, most of whom came between Christmas and New Year when we were open all week.

Meanwhile, and in between our workdays, we have been giving some thought to compiling information about the people who have lived in the cottage. Most of the information that we have comes from two interviews that are recorded with past residents (Ivy Turberville interviewed by Hugh Potter and Fay Bark interviewed by Ron Common) and from the Census records that are public documents.

But the 10 yearly Census record only began in 1841 so for the first part of that century we have no records. We can surmise that the first cottage (the left-hand side) was occupied by the lockkeeper for whom it was built, but we have no names, and the second cottage, probably built soon afterwards, was probably occupied by a second lockkeeper or by a lengthsman. When the lock gate was no longer required after 1820 it is possible that one, or both, of the cottages were vacant. The first Census in 1841 has no entry for Aqueduct Cottage, but the second in 1851 shows "2 houses at Aqueduct uninhabited".



The classic photograph of Ann Eaton with her daughter Mrs Farnsworth along with Henrietta and Arthur. They are sitting on the step beside the canal outside the cottage.

In 1861 the head of the household at the cottage was a William Hollins living there with his wife and daughter Charlotte. William was a blacksmith probably employed on the forge in the workshop at the Cromford end of the Cromford & High Peak Railway. As there is only one house recorded it seems likely that ►



This 'Measham' teapot, inscribed "Ann Eaton Lea Bridge A Present from Sarah Elizabeth With Love", is still in the Eaton family.

In 1901 Ann, now a widow (Josiah died in 1897) has become head of the household. Living with her are her two youngest daughters, Violet and Henrietta, both employed at John Smedley's Mill nearby, and one son working as a gardener. But there is a second household recorded living at the cottage. This is the family of James Sellors with his wife Elizabeth and 2 children. So two households living in one house and still 9 occupants! Presumably Ann found it necessary to sublet in order to help pay the rent.

In 1911 things are very different. Ann (now aged 66) is still the head of the household and there are 4 others with her. One is her eldest daughter, Mary who has with her two children, but they are recorded as only visiting. The only other resident is a grandson aged 14, John Bunting, who is employed as an assistant machinist in a joinery workshop. At that age John cannot have been paid much. Times must have been very hard for Ann. The old age pension had been introduced on 1st January 1909, but the qualifying age was 70 so Ann would have to wait almost 4 years before she had any assistance. ➤

this was when Aqueduct Cottage had become a single two-bedroomed dwelling. The Hollins family was still in residence in 1871, but in 1881 it seems that William has died and Charlotte had left home because Sarah, his widow, is living there alone.

About 1883 the Eaton family arrived. At that time the family probably consisted of Josiah, his wife Ann, and 7 children (5 daughters and 2 sons). A sixth daughter was born there in 1885. So possibly a family of 10 though Mary, the eldest daughter was by then aged 18 and might have left home. In 1891 the census records 8 members of the Eaton family (Josiah is employed as a platelayer, probably on the C&HPR or possibly on the Midland Railway), but living with them is Selina, their second eldest daughter and her husband, Jos Fletcher, a cabman. So, still 10 in the cottage.



*Members of the Eaton family pose for the photographer around 1894.
Photo: Caron Mellor Collection*



Another Eaton family photograph taken in the 1890s, with Ann Eaton third from the right.

Photo: Caron Mellor Collection

In 1921 Ann was head of the household and now aged 78 years, but living with her again was Selina and her husband Jos, together with 4 members of their family. Selina was employed as a cleaner at Smedley's, but Jos was unemployed. One daughter had work in a laundry in Cromford and two sons were working at Dawbarn's joinery workshop in Whatstandwell. The last child was Ivy, then aged 9, who we meet again later as Ivy Turberville when, with her husband and both in their nineties, they gave a long interview to Hugh Potter describing life in the cottage then and on earlier family visits to her grandmother.

The Census of 1921 is the last publicly available. Ann died the following year. We believe that one or other of Ann's daughters and their families continued as tenants at the cottage until about 1950. When the details were prepared for the sale by auction of the Nightingale Estate in 1946, Mrs Farnsworth (Ann's daughter Violet) was described as the tenant. The second auction sale in 1951 shows the cottage to be for sale with vacant possession.

It seems likely that the Bark family were the next residents. They lived in the cottage as a family of 6 for 3 or four 4 years until they

moved across the canal having bought the High Peak Cottages. Fay Bark returned in 2016 just as we began the restoration and, as well as an interview, drew for us four sketches of the cottage and gardens on which she added notes of everything she could remember.

The Bark family were probably followed by Mr Bowler about whom we have reported earlier (*Portal* 87) who left in 1968. He was the last resident.

In the early 1970s the Wayfarers walking group from Derby got agreement from the owner to use the cottage as a bunk house at weekends in return for doing some maintenance. However, after 2 or 3 years they found that the rate of decay, and possibly some vandalism, was too much, and they departed. The rest of the story is that of 40 years' decay, though it may have been hastened by a squatter who, it is said, lived in the cottage for a few weeks during which he burnt much of the internal timber on the floor of the parlour destroying some of the paving slabs.

What remains for us to do now is to search for more details to fill all the gaps. If *Portal* readers have any information I should be grateful to hear from them via the editor. ■

PLATEWAYS AND TRAMROADS

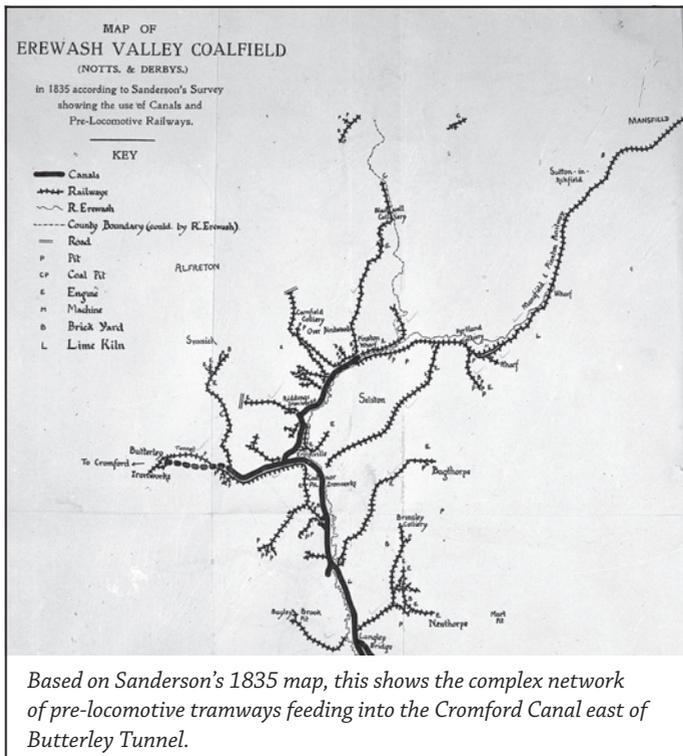
Ian G. Handley takes a new approach

I want to take a fresh look at the relationship between canals and early plateways. These early pioneers of railways are often seen today as a poor relation of the canals, but many developed alongside the canals and were an important feeder to them. The plateways were essential suppliers to canals and their development should be considered as part of an integrated supply chain alongside canals.

The first of these plateways, which predates the canal age by well over a century, was built by Huntingdon Beaumont to carry coal from Sir Percival Willoughby's pit at Strelley to the River Trent for onward transport by coastal shipping for sale in London. This line was built in 1603–4 using wooden trams with oak wheels sawn from a log and ran on wooden rails. This was known as the Wollaton Wagonway; the term 'tram' refers to the trucks in which coal was carried. Later on, iron plates were laid over the wooden rails to prolong their life, hence the term 'plateway'. There is no physical trace of this plateway today; the only evidence is in written documents.

There are two distinct types of these early railways: plateways (where the flange is on

the rail) and tramroads (where the flange is on the wheel). The advantage of both over road transport is that a horse can pull a greater tonnage due to the lower resistance of the smooth surface of the wheel on the rails. The advantage of a plateway, with the flange on the rail, is that wagons could be manoeuvred off the rails to assist unloading at a point nearer to where the goods were required. In the early days these provided a trunk route between a mine or quarry and a canal, with the wagons being moved on and off at the ends of such roads. Many of these plateways were relatively short and fairly straight. ►



Platways were ideal when horses worked at walking pace. When routes became longer and speeds increased there was a need to allow the wheels to traverse curves. On curves the inner rail is shorter than the outer and to allow wheels on fixed axles to traverse safely a convex curve on the rail meets a concave curve on the wheel to allow one to travel against the other and effectively increase the diameter of the outer wheel to allow it to travel a greater distance but still doing the same number of revolutions, flanged wheels became the dominant type. As tramroads generally progressed, with flanges on wheels, they developed into the railways we all know today.

Later we had cast iron rails secured to stone blocks; going back to the early 17th century there were only blacksmiths available to work iron parts. The rate of progress forced the improvement in quality and this had a big influence on early railway companies setting up their own workshops so as to control and improve quality.

When the building of a canal was authorised, there was usually a clause giving authority to build tramways/plateways within a given distance as a line to the canal. The Cromford Canal has for example approaching one hundred of these. Some of these were on canal or pit property whereas others needed a way lease agreement to enable them to cross someone else's land. Longer ones required Acts of Parliament in order to build them.



This modern replica, demonstrating both edge and plate rails, can be seen in Fritchley, close to the route of the Butterley Gangroad.

Some of the longer ones, such as the Mansfield & Pinxton or the Cromford & High Peak, were built on terrain where a canal was unsuitable due to the water table being lower than the canal or other water supply considerations. Today we are familiar with some of these longer railways whereas many of the shorter supply roads have been lost in the mists of time. One point which brought home to me the volume/tonnage involved was a series of articles in *Portal* a few years ago, on the transport of stone blocks over the Cromford Canal which was quite impressive by the size and quantities carried.

So as to bring things together, plateways predate canals as the first were built to link pits to rivers. When the first canals were built, plateways were there from the beginnings as essential supply routes. Without these early plateways the canals would not have been as successful as they became. It is therefore important to see these two forms of transport as working together supporting each other. With the later development of steam power, railways developed as successors to canals as they became cheaper to build and faster, but that is a move too far into the future. ►

The Mansfield and Pinxton Railway was the first railway to be built as double track and now parts of this route are the longest continuously worked railway in this country. Horse-worked tramways needed to be curved on hills to ease the gradient and the work burden on the horse. When steam took over the curves were straightened over time.

What we need to remember is that canals and early railways provided an integrated transport system and worked closely together. They were far more integrated than we generally understand today. With the coming of steam power and steel, as opposed to iron, railways developed and over time replaced canals as the prime mover in transport. This did not happen overnight; it was spread over many decades.

The Gauge

It is often said that the gauge of tramways was governed by the space needed for a horse to walk. Early rails were secured to stone blocks as opposed to the sleepers we are familiar with today. This provided a more suitable and safer surface for the horses' hooves to walk on. Sleepers came into being with steam power as locomotives would tend to spread the track, something horse drawn wagons were unlikely to do.

While there is truth in this, there were regional variations such as the Black Country 3ft 2in, Mansfield & Pinxton 4ft 4½in, Cornwall & South Wales 4ft 2in or 4ft 4in, Newcastle 4ft 8in. There were of course others. George Stephenson started with the Newcastle gauge but added an extra ½in when building the Stockton to Darlington Railway thus creating our standard gauge of today.



A replica cauldron wagon, at the end of Causey Arch, Tanfield, 2014.

I hope that these notes on these early railways show transport during the 17th to 19th centuries in a more balanced light, as complementary systems working together.

Summary

To summarise, we should see canals and plateways/tramroads as complimentary to one other as integrated forms of transport. We should move away from seeing them as separate forms and accept how well they became integrated from the beginning. Plateways were very successful feeders to canals and when combined with the pace of travel for animal or man power as the means of haulage they were very efficient. We should see these early plateways in a better light than they often have been.

By the later 1700s these tramroads were an established and reliable transport system and with the ending of James Watt's patents in 1800, combined with the shortage of horses and the high cost of horse feed caused by the Napoleonic Wars, the stage was set for them to be developed into our railways of today.

It is not often realised that when we accept the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway in 1825 as the start of the Railway ►

Age as we know it, the length of time passed between 1603 and 1830 is not far removed from the length of time which has passed since 1830, thus giving these pioneers a long and useful life span.

These plateways/tramways did not disappear overnight but while many were converted to conventional railways others lingered on through the 19th century. The Little Eaton Gangway was photographed in 1908 just before horse working finished. In fact, the last horse to be used by British Railways was in 1965 at Newmarket, shunting



Stone blocks from the tramroad at Pontygwaith, 2006.

horse boxes. It was feared that the noise of locomotives shunting would disturb nearby race horses so horses were used to shunt wagons as they were quiet! **T**

FUNDING CO-ORDINATOR WANTED

The next stage in the Friends of the Cromford Canal's Beggarlee Extension from the Great Northern Basin at Langley Mill will be the construction of a double lock which will be a major step forward in the development in the first phase up to Stoney Lane. The canal approach and the pre-design of the lock construction are in the planning stage. This is just one of several stages of the canal extension that will require major funding and will be ultimately linked to achieve the completion of this stage of the Beggarlee Extension.

We need a volunteer with expertise in obtaining significant grant funding from donor organisations but excluding from the National Lottery; FCC is working on a much wider project for a multi-organisational approach

to the National Lottery for initial funding for a 'southern heritage corridor' project which is centred on the southern part of the Cromford Canal.

The Strategic Restoration Group is a sub-committee of the FCC and would like to receive expressions of interest from individuals who have a proven track record in obtaining major funding from donors.

This will be a voluntary position, and the successful person would be working alongside and have the support of a large number of equally enthusiastic and committed volunteers to achieve the aim of restoring the Cromford Canal.

If you are interested in this role please contact the chair of the FCC David Martin at chair@cromfordcanal.org.uk. **T**

CIRCULAR WALK – RANCH CORNER

By Ken Brockway

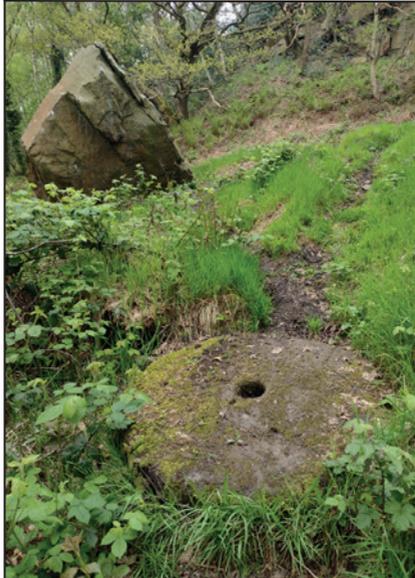
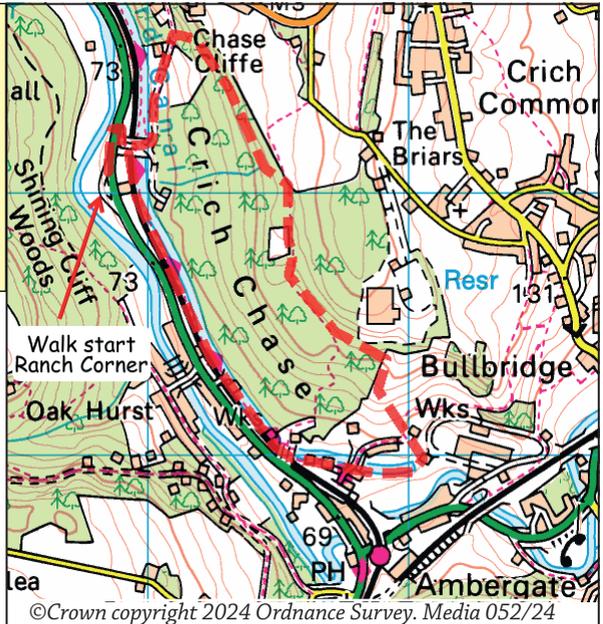
Distance: 3 miles; 5km.
Start point: 'Ranch Corner' on A6 between Ambergate and Cromford.
How to get there: Transpeak bus or car, parking in Ranch Corner lay-by.
Refreshments: Mobile café in lay-by.

This walk uses two well-walked footpaths that are currently not adopted but applications are with Derbyshire County Council for consideration.

The Transpeak bus will drop you at the walk's start, or from the lay-by head north along the pavement then cross the road at the bus stop where a track leads over the railway. Next we cross the canal then turn left along a track, that gently climbs towards and past a house.

At a drive on the left to a second house turn right; the path is well defined and easy to follow, but you will have to negotiate a partly cleared fallen tree at the start. When you reach a large lump of rock on your right, bear right downhill immediately after the rock to pass over a mill stone which looks complete but never used. I pity the workman who made it and most likely was never paid for his work.

We soon re-join the lower path which you may have found but would have missed the mill stone. Ignore any side path and stay ►



The abandoned millstone with the large rock behind.

All photos: Ken Brockway



Crossing the canal at the start of the walk at Chase Bridge.

generally on the level until you meet another path from the right which was used on the walk in the last *Portal*. The path now starts to climb and soon meets a recorded footpath by a large stone gatepost.

Turn right here and follow straight along this well-walked path with occasional waymark posts. About 250 yards after a wall appears on your right, at a small clearing, take a path branching left, then bear right after crossing a broken-down wall. If you miss it and arrive at a gateway turn right here over a broken down wall and follow this which meets a stream. Don't cross the stream but climb to the wide path that was missed.

After crossing a stream, this path arrives at a kissing gate which gives access to Crich Chase Meadows, managed by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. Immediately beyond the canopy of the trees turn right on a faint path which goes down with woodland on the right. As the wide clearing comes to an end bear left then right to continue downwards. At the boundary fence of the gas compound you meet a recorded footpath which soon takes you to another gate. Follow the footpath alongside the fence to the end of the in water section of the canal.

Now it's easy walking along the towpath back to Chase Bridge and a bus or return to your car. The mobile café may still be open in the lay-by but this is the only refreshment opportunity. **T**



The route after entering Crich Chase Meadows.



The canal is re-joined at the weir alongside the gas works.

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

What's On this Spring

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.

17th March

Bess of Hardwick A woman of many parts - Maureen Taylor

14th April

AGM followed by *The Titanic* - John Siggins

19th May

The History of the Cromford & High Peak Railway - Keith Bailey

16th June

American Air Power in World War 2 - Anthony Laven



FCC Web Site
Events Page

FCC - Cromford Meeting

Monday 12th May

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

Strutts and the Belper Mills - Keith Bailey

Derbyshire County Council Events

Make a Poker

15th & 29th March; 9th, 12th & 16th April; 10th & 28th May; 11th, 14th & 21st June

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: £20 per poker. *Booking Essential: 01629 533298.*

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.

Wednesday 9th April *Static*

Sunday 20th April *In Steam*

Monday 21st April *In Steam*

Sunday 4th May *Static subject to staff*

Monday 5th May *Static subject to staff*

Wednesday 28th May *Static*

Saturday 14th June *Static*

Sunday 15th June *In Steam*

Middleton Top: Bicentennial Steaming

Middleton Top winding engine opens regularly, powered by compressed air, but on 3rd-5th May it will host a special steaming powered by two traction engines. The winding house was once one of nine that hauled wagons up the inclines on the Cromford & High Peak Railway. Look out locally for more details.



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



