

THE PORTAL



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FRONT COVER: Brown's Bridge (the swingbridge at High Peak Junction) being lifted off its mounting to be taken away by lorry. A fine new bridge was constructed and subsequently fitted on the existing ball race. The temporary fixed bridge, to carry the public footpath, is already in place. See also pages 12 to 16. Photo Editor

BACK COVER: Continuing the theme of large lifting operations, probably the largest boat ever to float in the Cromford Canal is seen being lifted on to a lorry at Langley Mill en route to Kegworth. See page 11. Photo Editor

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



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by Patrick Morriss



I have just returned from two weeks in Greece. Apart from making my contribution to this Portal very late and incurring the editor's wrath - sorry Mike - it reminds me of two things. Firstly how hard one has to work either side of holidays just to catch up with where one would have been had there been no holiday in the first place. Secondly, it was also very apparent what happens when an economy hits the buffers, building projects abandoned, high taxes and all sorts of economic woe. All the more reason for any canal restoration scheme to make economic sense and be well funded.

The W S Atkins scoping study should have been reaching a conclusion by now and the FCC hoped it would have given some interim costing concerning restoration and some idea of the economic impact a restored canal would have had. However, the presentation and feedback from the draft report has highlighted some concerns and inaccuracies. It is a shame that these could not have been flagged sooner and in many ways the concerns of the FCC could have been avoided if a member of the FCC had been present when the 'walkover' survey was conducted. A similar delay has been incurred by English Heritage regarding any protection, either Listed Building Status or Scheduled Ancient Monument status, because English Heritage experts were denied access to the Butterley tunnel on Health and Safety grounds by British Waterways. The FCC have of course provided EH with as much information from the FCC archives as they wanted. The Butterley tunnel has long been viewed as the 'bogeyman' of our canal's restoration and the sooner reliable and informed information and comment is available about the entire tunnel the better. I enjoy being Chair of the Friends of Cromford Canal. I would want no part of a Friends of Cromford Canal not including the Butterley tunnel though. Yes it will be an expensive restoration but it is a unique and vital part of the Cromford Canal and the sooner accurate information relating to its condition is available the better, anything else is just opinion, informed or otherwise.

However there are two items of good news concerning local canals. The Chesterfield Canal Trust has just won a cheque for £60,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to build and equip an electric trip boat.

The project was chosen by TV viewers as winners in the Jubilee People's Millions. This is a competition in which short films are shown each night about two projects. The public then vote for the one they support. The Trust's film was shown in the ITV Yorkshire and Humberside Region and a film crew came to give the good news the following day.

The boat will be based at Kiveton Park. It will be fully accessible for the disabled, with an electro-hydraulic system to enable any user to steer the boat from anywhere within it, regardless of disability. The project is supported by Wales High School and Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice. Sometimes the Chesterfield Canal people can feel a bit left out



of the East Midlands canal scene, perhaps just this once they were fortunate to be in the Yorkshire and Humberside TV region! This of course is just the sort of operation that the FCC would like to provide at Cromford to benefit as wide a range of users as possible.

In addition there is good news from the Ashby Canal. At a recent meeting of the Development Control and Regulatory Board at County Hall, Leicestershire County Council approved the planning application by UK Coal for the Minorca Open Cast extraction of Coal and Fireclay. Included within the application is a provision for a winter water storage lake which will save Leicester County Council £1m from the project costs. A raised crossing on Gallows Lane will enable the Ashby canal to pass beneath the road. In addition to all this, any suitable clay for the construction of the canal will be made available and £1.28 million in cash. A further £50,000 has been earmarked from the Ashby Canal Association to further extend the present extension with £5000 from Ashby Canal Trust and £30,000 from Leicester County Council. This work will start as soon as contractors can be on site. Although there was and is much local concern regarding this opencast project the general message is that UK Coal are able to think 'canal' and much can be gained by UK Coal, local authorities and canal restoration groups all working together. At one time the Ashby and Cromford Canals had much in common as they were the only two canals owned by the Midland Railway pre 1923. Perhaps the two canals can have something in common once again by demonstrating how a different type of gain can come from opencast mining.

The Trustees and committee of the Friends of Cromford Canal will be doing their utmost to use these two examples for the benefit of the Cromford Canal. It is of course not lost on the Friends that both these canals have a full time project manager.

For the first time ever the FCC have summer working parties with DCC on the Derwent Valley section of the canal. We also have a Waterway Recovery Group week long summer camp working on the gauging narrows at Sawmills this month. See page 26.

Work has been completed on the swing bridge at High Peak Junction and work on the Leawood rail aqueduct is about to start. How fitting it would be if the canal could be used for revenue earning canoeing over a longer section after completion of these works as a precursor to a trip boat at Cromford and also that canal maintenance could take place from a water based work boat thus avoiding the invasive and disruptive effects of towpath based dredging and maintenance.



Hugh Potter came across this contented couple busy homebuilding in the old tyre used as a fender on the boat tied at the Wharf Shed near High Peak Junction.

Who says that boats and wildlife are incompatible?



Ever since the Friends of the Cromford Canal was formed, we have been stressing the point that the main aim was the restoration of the whole length of the canal to navigation. This has led many people to ask the obvious question, "OK, but what are you going to do about Butterley Tunnel?"

At this year's AGM, Steve Mulholland was elected as one of the new FCC trustees. Since then, Tina Cordon, who has been into the tunnel, gave a presentation of fascinating slides at the June social meeting. This turned out to be the best attended meeting ever and a great deal of interest was created. Steve has now taken on the idea of tunnel restoration and has sent in the following initial report.

BUTTERLEY TUNNEL - THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

This was an early, almost experimental piece of engineering, as no construction companies of the day had the knowledge base and expertise to attempt a work like this. This was pioneering stuff! It is testimony to the men of their time that, despite these drawbacks, they constructed a tunnel that has stood the test of time and is still largely in remarkably good condition, despite the ravages of the coal extraction industry causing settlement in parts many years ago.

Its links with the Butterley Ironworks Company add immense value to the tunnel. Uniquely, the Company had shafts down to wharves in the tunnel whereby the iron girders that they produced could be dropped down onto the wharves and loaded into boats for distribution to the construction site for which they were intended.

The Butterley Company produced the ironwork for the original St Pancras Station roof, now enjoying a new lease of life as the iconic terminus to the high-speed rail link across the channel. These girders were probably sent to the construction site in the above fashion. A fitting tribute to British Engineering.

Our thanks are due to Tina Cordon for her excellent presentation at the recent social evening on the tunnel.

Moving on from this, further articles will follow in this magazine to flesh out its history and report progress on opening up the tunnel for survey to assess its condition in detail, develop a strategy for its restoration, assess consequential re-development opportunities and obtain funding for the work.

**The tunnel can be,
and will be,
re-opened for navigation.**

S Mulholland C Eng MICE

One end of the 'Wide Hole' or underground wharf, showing the point where the normal bore of the tunnel is more than doubled. This provided a section wide enough for boats to tie up to load via the vertical shafts from the Butterley Works above the tunnel without obstructing the passage of other craft. This arrangement was unique on the British canal system.



FCC Archives



FCC NEWS UPDATE - so what *is* happening

from Mike Kelley



- **Smotherfly** - On **Wednesday 25th May** John Boucher, Rev. Steve Parish and myself had a one hour meeting in Rotherham with Eddie Peat, Director of Harworth Estates, a branch of UK-Coal (UKC) and the owner of the Smotherfly site. This is an area we have been struggling with for around five years now, to try and get the canal restored across this site; it has been a long hard battle and still continues to be so.

At this meeting we felt we made progress. Mr Peat said the delay had been due to the upheaval within UKC and the lack of profits they have to contend with. He responded well to our discussions, but since then he has failed to follow up. We somehow need to reach an agreement with UKC before we can progress the planning permission we have obtained for that site. The land has little value, other than being used as a canal. We pointed out all the expensive studies the FCC have had carried out and he agreed UKC would have had to have found some of those costs anyway. We all left just a little more hopeful than when we went in.

- **Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd April** - Our hard working Sales Team had a stall at the 'Ironville Heritage Days' event. Beryl and Eric Singleton give their time freely to be seen at such events.

- **Monday 11th April** - Our monthly committee meeting held at the Poet and Castle pub at Codnor.

- **Monday 18th April** - Our Annual General Meeting conducted by our Chairman Pat Morriss, was held at Ironville Church Hall.

- **Sunday 10th April** - John Barker organised a walk to raise funds for us; he called it, 'The Springtime Woodland Wander'. A beautiful day with all the fresh leaves out on the trees as the walk went along the canal from Whatstandwell then up into the Crich Carr woods, returning to Whatstandwell. A really stunning walk and we pointed out all the work recently carried out on the canal by us (FCC) and Derbyshire County Council. It was a pity more did not come along, as all who did had a lovely day out. See page 10.

- **Monday 9th May** - Our monthly committee meeting held at the Poet and Castle pub at Codnor.

- **Saturday 14th May** - I gave a talk about the canal at Ripley Leisure Centre. The audience was a club dedicated to the sufferers of Parkinsons Disease. Thank you all for the warm reception I received.

- **Monday 16th May**: Our monthly social evening at Ironville Church Hall saw Clive Tougher give an excellent illustrated talk about Florence Nightingale.

- **Friday 20 May** - I was privileged to give a talk about the canal to the Holymoresside History Society, near Chesterfield.



- **Tuesday 24 May** - Pat Morriss, Mike Harrison and myself met with several Rolls-Royce graduates at the Langley Mill Boat Yard. You will remember they are looking at 'Designs for a canal boat which meets and exceeds all of the environmental standards for a boat operating in a World Heritage Site and an SSSI (Site of Special and Scientific Interest)' See page 23.

- **Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th June** - Our sales team were at Ironville Flower Festival for the weekend.

- **Monday 13th June** - Our monthly committee meeting held at the Poet and Castle pub at Codnor.

- **Monday 20th June** - Our final social evening, before the two month summer break, saw 120 people fill the Ironville hall to hear Tina Cordon give a fascinating and informative talk about the Cromford Canal's Butterley Tunnel. She revealed to us how this is not just a tunnel, but a 'tunnel network'. She had more knowledge on this structure than anyone I have met before. We really value her contribution to the FCC. Thank you Tina.

- **Wednesday 22nd June** - A local solicitors, Ellis-Fermor & Negus, have chosen the FCC as their 'Charity of the Year', for which we truly thank them. They invited Yvonne Shattower, Val Kelley and myself to represent the FCC at their garden party. Yvonne and myself were in Victorian boating dress and a collection of £84 was taken. We also had a full evening meal. (Well someone has to attend these events!)

- **Sunday 26th June** - Our sales team were at the 'Jacksdale Soldier Day'.

- **Saturday 9th July** - Our sales team were at Ambergate Carnival. They are certainly flying our flag well this summer.

- **Monday 11th July** - Our monthly committee meeting held at the Poet and Castle pub at Codnor.

MEMBERS' SOCIAL MEETINGS 2011

The Friends of the Cromford Canal welcome everyone to their Social Meetings, held on the **Third Monday of the Month at Ironville Church Hall at 7.30pm**. There are no meetings in July or August, but the programme will then be restarting.

The following are scheduled for the remainder of the year.

There is a bar and raffle available at all meetings. Admission is £1.50.

- **September 19th** - ENGINEERING ON THE BRITISH CANAL SYSTEM - by George Rogers

- **October 17th** - CANAL BOAT PEOPLE - by Wendy Freer

- **November 21st** - THE HIGH PEAK TRAIL - by Andy Pollock

- **December 19th** - OUR CHRISTMAS SOCIAL - In addition to the Red Lion Folk Band, this year there will be a Pie and Pea Supper. Full details in the next issue.

LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING WEEKENDS 2011

The engine will be in motion from noon to 5.00pm on each of the following days.

MONTH	SAT	SUN	MON	PERIOD
AUGUST	6th	7th		First Weekend
		28th	29th	Bank Holiday
OCTOBER	1st	2nd		First Weekend
	29th	30th		Discovery Weekend



NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate

Summer 2011 Update

from Rick Jillings - Assistant Area Manager
Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service

Brown's Bridge - The canal swing bridge at High Peak Junction Workshops has been replaced. Whitehouse Construction lifted off the old bridge in early April. A new wooden structure to the same external appearance was produced by the firm CTS. The old cast iron ball race and bearings were reused. The new bridge was delivered and installed on 19th May before a gathered audience. See pages 12 to 16.

Tree work - Western Power have carried out some tree felling around the power lines to Leawood Pump, High Peak Junction. Some follow up work has also been carried out on behalf of DCC. The work has helped to protect this important building and has made it much more visible. The reduced tree canopy shade will also help improve the plants and wildlife of the canal.

High Peak Junction Car Park Improvements - With so much to see at High Peak Junction and with an increase in visitors throughout the year, the County Council's Highways team "Allroads" have been working at the Lea Bridge car park to extend the all weather, all year car parking. Until now parking on the grassed area has only been practical during dry summer conditions and with the car park lying on damp ground in the valley bottom this has often resulted in a shortage of parking. Grass-crete blocks have been laid, landscaped and grass seeded to double the car park capacity while retaining landscaped picnic areas. The picture below shows work in progress.



Hugh Potter



Repairs to the Railway Aqueduct, Cromford Canal

from Chris Coombs - Area Manager
Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service

Railway Aqueduct is a cast iron trough that carries the canal over the Matlock railway line approximately a quarter of a mile south of the Derwent Aqueduct / Leawood Arm junction. It was inserted in the canal around 1848 when the railway was being built and is thought to be the only surviving example of a bridge built on the suspension girder principle left in the country. Due to this rarity the aqueduct is a scheduled monument

In recent years there was concern by county council engineers about the carrying capacity of the structure and the towpath in particular which is an integral part of the aqueduct. As a result a

detailed assessment was carried out over the winter of 2008/9 which raised serious concerns about the structure, primarily because of corrosion of one of the tie bars. As a temporary measure the water has been drained from the trough and a freestanding temporary towpath installed to reduce the load on the structure whilst it was considered how to effect a repair, as shown on the right.



As a cast iron structure that crosses a live railway line, whose mode of failure could be sudden and unpredictable, repair was essential. The fact that it is also a scheduled monument and the canal is an SSSI reinforced this position.

Although the initial problem was one of dealing with the corrosion on the tie bars, to carry out this repair involves scaffolding the whole structure and closures on the railway. The cost of this meant it made sense to undertake a general refurbishment of the whole structure and replace the towpath at the same time. The latter both removes load from the rest of the structure and will also allow the passage of maintenance vehicles to the south.

The work is further complicated by the poor access to the aqueduct which is along the towpath from High Peak Junction, which itself has a poor access off the A6.

The engineering firm Dew Construction of Oldham have won the contract and intend to start on site on the 11th July with a planned completion date at the end of October 2011. Dew has a track record of working on canals including the refurbishment of the well known Pontcysyllte Aqueduct on the Llangollen Canal. The towpath will be closed during the contract period during which time a diversion will be in place. This will take pedestrians from the Lea Arm of the canal via Lea Bridge, Holloway and the footpath through the fields near Lea Hurst to Gregory Tunnel. Please note unfortunately this route is not suitable for bikes, pushchairs or wheel chairs.

**For further information please feel free to contact me at
Middleton Top Visitor Centre on 01629 823204.**



SPRINGTIME WOODLAND WANDER

by Mike Kelley

I would like to thank John Barker, for all the hard work he put into organising the Woodland Wander, assisted by Dave Ratner. This was the FCC Walk from Whatstandwell, down to Ambergate via the towpath and back via the woods around Crich Chase. It was a beautiful day, but a disappointing turnout, of just 28. Maybe they were all gardening or the credit crunch is hurting too much? We collected £127.86, but out of that we have to take the price of the leaflets. All who came along said how much they had enjoyed it.

Peter Stone



Peter Stone

ABOVE: Mike Kelley leading off the party down the towpath from Whatstandwell, passing the recently dredged section of canal.

TOP RIGHT: Some of the happy band of walkers taking a breather at Hays Wharf.

BOTTOM LEFT: After reaching Ambergate, they turned off at Gratton's Bridge and started to climb up into the woods at Crich Chase.

BOTTOM RIGHT: After enjoying the views over the Derwent Valley, a steep decent is made to eventually leave the woods and return to Whatstandwell and the Derwent Hotel.



Peter Stone



Mike Kelley



AN UNUSUAL VESSEL ON THE CROMFORD

by the Editor

We seem to be going through a phase of having large cranes operating on the banks of the Cromford Canal over the last year. Firstly, a crane was used to launch the mud hoppers and tug on two occasions for the dredging operations at Whatstandwell. See Portals 33, 34 and 36.

We then had the lifting and removal of Brown's Bridge and the subsequent fitting of the new replacement. This was a job made considerably easier with the crane. See pages 12 to 16.

Whilst all this was going on, a large houseboat was under construction at Langley Mill Boatyard. This was destined for a mooring at Kegworth on the River Soar, and since the boat was over double the available airdraft of the canal bridges, road transport was required. When all was ready, the largest yet Cromford Crane, a 120 tonne machine, was required to lift the boat from the canal, over the fence and on to the lorry. This was because of the long reach required, rather than weight of the boat, which was about 25 tonnes. The lift and road journey were achieved without any problems.



Photos: Editor



We have lift off.....



REPLACING BROWNS BRIDGE

by the Editor

Many members will be familiar with Swingbridge No.2 adjacent to High Peak Junction Workshops. This has been deteriorating for some years and was becoming in an unsatisfactory condition to carry a public footpath, not to mention getting difficult to swing when the horse boat needed to pass. It was therefore decided by Derbyshire County Council that the time had come for it to be replaced. Whitehouse contractors were engaged and came to the site on April 6th.

The plan was to lift the bridge from its mounting and take it away to their workshops where a new bridge would be constructed. This entailed the use of a large crane, which was skillfully manoeuvred into place adjacent to the bridge. One wonders what the old canal maintenance gangs would have made of all this. The first job, however, was to install a temporary footbridge to maintain the right of way. This alone was a very impressive affair, with substantial hardwood main beams, handrails and decking. The crane made light work of lifting the beams into place and the footbridge was assembled on site.



Editor

The temporary footbridge, which would put many permanent structures to shame, is seen being assembled in position alongside the old swingbridge. The hand rails were already bolted to the main side members, which were trimmed to length on site to fit nicely into the bridge recess. Decking boards were then screwed into place to join the three main members together and form a substantial and good looking structure, which was only in place for a few weeks. Hopefully it can be re-used on another site.



Editor

Before the swingbridge was lifted, some of the deckboards were raised to give access to the concrete block and limestone ballast which was removed to facilitate the lifting operation.

Pat Morriss

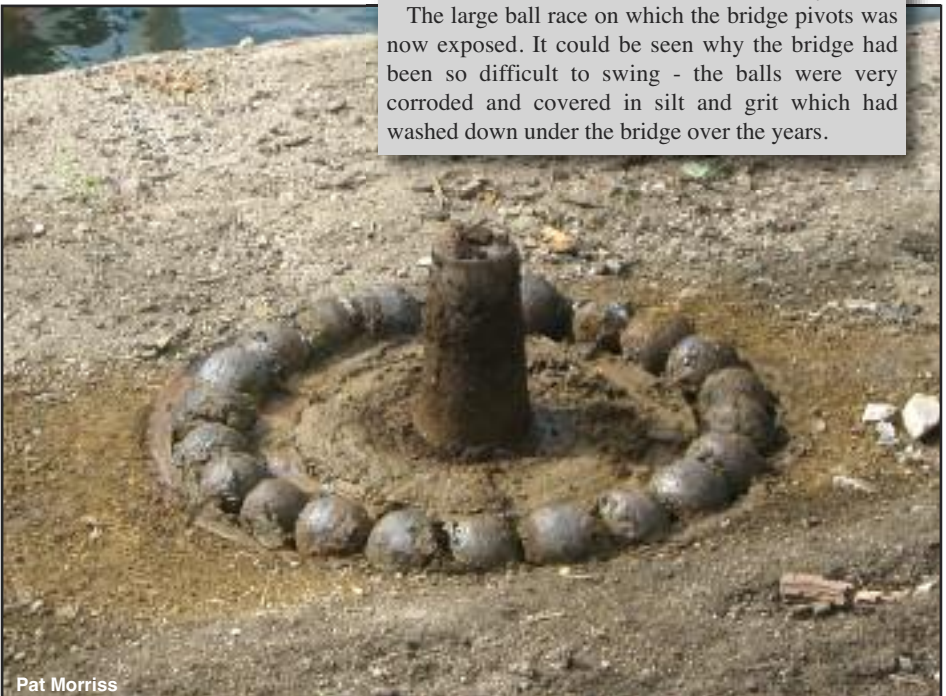


The actual lift was then no problem, as seen below.



The bridge was then loaded on to the lorry (no, not the roof rack of the Transit!) to be taken away.

The large ball race on which the bridge pivots was now exposed. It could be seen why the bridge had been so difficult to swing - the balls were very corroded and covered in silt and grit which had washed down under the bridge over the years.



Pat Morriss



The contractors returned to site on May 19th, complete with another impressive crane and an even more impressive new bridge. The ball race had been cleaned out and was in good condition. One wonders if it is the original, dating from the 18th century, or if, like some I have seen on the Nottingham Canal, it had been replaced during the canal's railway ownership. Another question for our Archivist perhaps? The cast iron balls, although very corroded and mis-shaped, were re-used. They were given a generous coating of grease and spaced out around the lower race, as shown below.

Editor



The upper race had been fixed under the main crossmember of the new bridge which was first lifted on to the ball race separately from the main part of the bridge . This was to ensure that it fitted correctly and swung round satisfactorily on the pivot.



Editor



It was then attached to the bridge deck and the whole assembly was lifted into place. Concrete kerbstones were used as ballast and these were finally fitted to give the correct balance before all the deck boards were fastened down.

Dave Tinkler



The (almost) completed job is shown below looking very smart. The contractors have since returned and fitted the operating handle and pulley wheel to the new handrails.



Editor



CODNOR PARK WORKSHOPS

This interesting group of stone buildings, which comprised the Canal Company's house, workshops and maintenance yard adjacent to the towpath below Lock 5, have been in rather a sorry state for some time. Recently, however, Shaun Fields has been restoring this potentially very attractive site and the improvement is dramatic. Hugh Potter's pictures below give some idea of the excellent progress to date.





AN ENGINEERING MARVEL

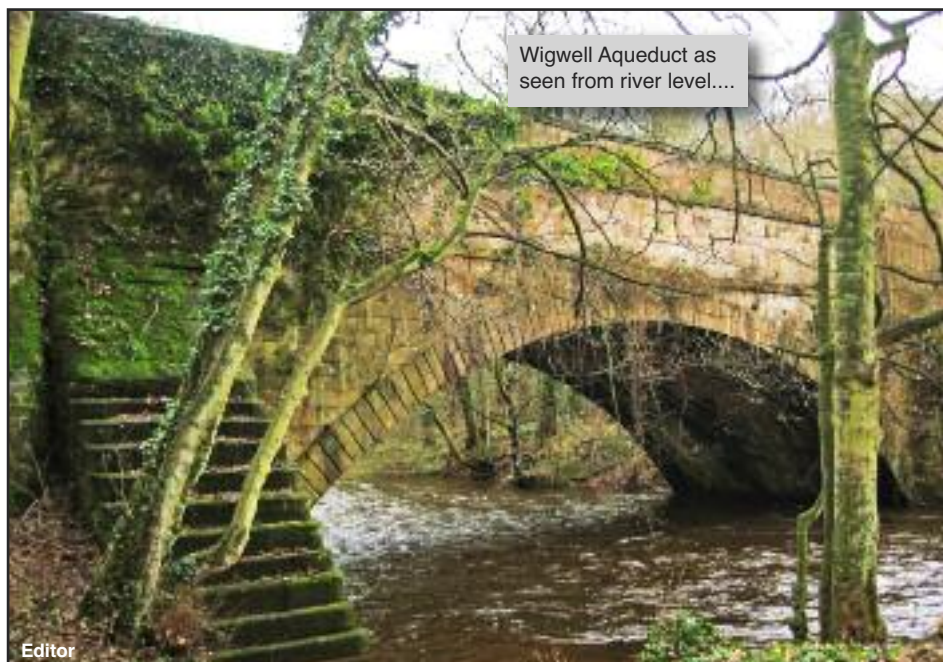
by Mike Kelley

When the Cromford Canal was built in the 1790's it was at the cutting edge of technology for its day and age; in fact it was an engineering marvel. Those of you who know the beautiful Derbyshire hills and dales will understand the difficulty of building a canal in this terrain. The rolling hills, deep valleys and fast flowing rivers bring thousands of tourists each year, to walk along, ride along or just to gaze at this natural beauty.

So, imagine those early navigators, who had no more tools to work with than a pick-axe, wheelbarrow and shovel, standing at Cromford and being told by engineers William Jessop and Benjamin Outram, 'We are going to build a canal through these hills, but for 14 miles this canal will have no locks!' Jaws must have dropped, and a few of the navvies must have said, or thought, 'they are nuts'. Over that distance the line of the canal would only have to be a few inches out and the water could run off.

Yet this canal was built from Cromford Wharf through to Pinxton Wharf, for 14 miles, without one lock. How on earth did they do it? Even today, with all our heavy plant machinery, it would be a difficult enough challenge, but back in the 1790's it was unheard of. Not only this but Jessop's Superintendent, Benjamin Outram, was only 24 years old when they submitted a report on the proposed canal in 1788. There must have been a few eyebrows raised, especially concerning the high costs involved in the hands of someone so young. Yet they did it. They engineered this canal through terrain others may have considered far too difficult to take on. Where they could, they followed the 300 foot contour, but by doing this certain obstructions were in the way of the canal's line.

To overcome these obstructions, two aqueducts were built; one, known as Wigwell Aqueduct, crosses the River Derwent in a single span near High Peak Junction.





...and from the towpath above.



Editor

As can be seen in the pictures, this fine structure is still in good order today, unlike the brilliant Bullbridge Aqueduct (shown below in better times) which swept over the River Amber, the main road and later the main railway line. This was one of England's greatest engineering works of its day and age but, despite objections, was sadly destroyed by the local council in 1968 in order to widen the road there. See Portal 33 pages 11-13.

FCC Archives





Buckland Hollow Tunnel, the shortest of the four on the Cromford, is cut through solid rock and can be easily accessed from the car park of the Excavator public house.



Editor

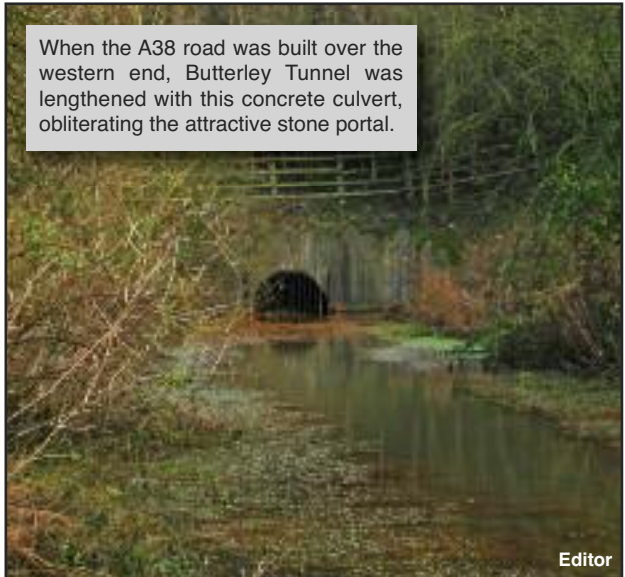
The canal company built four tunnels, all of which are still in place, albeit in various stages of decay. Starting from the north, these tunnels are the Gregory, the Hag, Buckland Hollow and then the big one Butterley. This latter is one and three quarter miles long, beneath and near Ripley.

Where the land dipped downwards at Sawmills, they did not build locks, but instead constructed a man-made embankment. This embankment was so high the canal is above the rooftops of the houses there.

By the use of these engineering structures they managed to take the canal on a level pound (or pond if you prefer) for 14 miles through these hills and dales. Yes, this is why the Cromford Canal is an engineering marvel. A canal at the forefront of technology for the 1790's, and yet was so very nearly lost to future generations.

Had it not been for the work of our society, much more of the canal would have been lost. The FCC have now got the line of the canal protected from future 'developers' who may have sought to build on, or excavate coal away, along the line as others have done before them. This is our heritage and was a key part of the Industrial Revolution, and as such needs protecting and restoring to its former glory.

When the A38 road was built over the western end, Butterley Tunnel was lengthened with this concrete culvert, obliterating the attractive stone portal.



Editor



WORK PARTY REPORT

from Dave Tinkler

work@cromfordcanal.org.uk



I bet you all thought that summer is here and it's time to put your feet up. Well I have got you a couple of summer work parties to keep you all in trim. I have now arranged to have two work parties with Derbyshire County Council rangers at the northern end of the Cromford Canal as follows:

Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th July

Meet at Cromford Wharf for a 10.00am start.

The task will be to repair the towpath filling in potholes.

Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st August

Meet at the wharf shed at High Peak Junction for a 10.00am start.

The task will be reed removal from the drained section of canal near the aqueduct.

Bring wellies as there is some retained water. Also bring a packed lunch and a drink. If you need further information about these or any future work parties, please let me know (contact details on the inside front cover)

All tools will be provided by DCC. Let's have a good turn out as there will be a lot of visitors over the two weekends and we need to have a high profile. Some of you can be handing out FCC leaflets and try to get new members. You can even bring your well behaved dog with you, so no excuses for not attending.

If you can attend could you please let me know so that we know the quantity of tools we will need. If you aren't sure then don't worry, just turn up and we will find a job for you. This is a rare opportunity to work on the canal during the (hopefully) better summer weather. We need some new faces on our work parties, so please try to come along.

I look forward to seeing you all soon.

PRIZES WANTED

As those of you who attend the annual Discovery Days weekend at Cromford in October will remember, the attractions provided by your Sales Team at this event include a tombola. This means that prizes are required. Eric and Beryl would very much appreciate any donations of suitable items which can be offered as prizes on the tombola stall. This is a simple thing which is always popular and makes a worthwhile contribution to the overall takings at what is one of the main fundraising events on the FCC calendar.

Prizes can be donated to the sales stall wherever it appears at the various events throughout the year, or contact Eric and Beryl, details on the inside front cover.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

from Yvonne Shattower



I was very pleased to hear from one Member who had read my remarks in last time's 'Membership Matters' regarding our 'Armchair Members', and how we value them as highly as those who are able to give practical help. He said he was about to let his membership lapse, but thought better of it after reading my article. Thank you very much!

What a splendid turn-out we had for Tina Cordon's June talk on the Butterley Tunnel! We were really struggling to find seats for all of you. Tina's photographs were remarkable and have certainly given us something to think about. We will be having our usual summer break for July and August, but will start again on 19th September with what promises to be an interesting talk from our Web Master wearing one of his 'other hats' and telling us about the Engineering on the British Canal System. On 17th October we have a real treat for you - Dr Wendy Freer will be telling us about Canal Boat People. Wendy is an excellent speaker - I have heard her speak several times on different subjects - and really engrosses her audience with her passion for her subject. Then on 21st November we will welcome back Andy Pollock, who delighted us all last year. This time he will be talking about the High Peak Trail. All these talks will as usual be at Ironville Church Hall, starting at 7.30pm.

Later this month (July 29th - 31st) we will be off to Burton-on-Trent for the annual Inland Waterways Festival. Our Sales Team will have our successful stand, and there will be photographic displays and people to chat to. If you are there for the weekend, (or even the day) do come along and say 'hello', and if you feel you could give us an hour or so of your time on the stand, you would be more than welcome. We are just hoping for good Festival weather – just the right amount of sun and no rain, thank you very much!

Dave Tinkler, our Work Party Organiser, has managed to secure a couple of dates for summer Work Parties on the Cromford Canal, so if you would like to have a day out in the fresh air and help us into the bargain, do get in touch with him. Most of our Work Parties have to be held in the winter so that wildlife and plants are not disturbed, so this is a rare chance to help whilst the sun is shining (hopefully!). See page 21.

It is good to see another long list of new members, shown opposite. We get many of these members from talks given by Pat Morriss, Mike Kelley and Hugh Potter to groups such as WI's, Historical Societies etc. and our thanks have to go to them and other members who work hard to increase our numbers.

This is one way in which every one of you could greatly help the FCC -

ENROL A NEW MEMBER!



ROLLS ROYCE AND THE CROMFORD TRIP BOAT

As reported in the last Portal, a team of university graduates from Rolls Royce have taken on the project of designing a trip boat to operate from Cromford Wharf. The idea is that the boat could be horse drawn at week ends or on special trips but also mechanically propelled as required. There will be a need to keep the traditional horse boat appearance and yet incorporate some alternative means of propulsion. The emphasis will also be on the need for the boat to be environmentally friendly. This raises the possibility of either an electric motor or fuel cell or whatever else modern technology can come up with, possibly driving a propeller via some hydraulic arrangements.

Some of the Rolls Royce lads recently visited Langley Mill to get a better idea of what was required. Left to right: Bilal Hussain, Simon Crowther, Quentin Behaghel and Ben Littley.



We give a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined us since the last edition of *The Portal*

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mr M Lake, Wirksworth | Mrs D Hartley, Nottingham |
| Mr & Mrs J Mee, Jacksdale | Mr M Taylor-Cockayne, Jacksdale |
| Mr & Mrs J H Lloyd, Belper | Mrs E D Taylor, Nottingham |
| Mr P Hamshaw & Ms C Pope, Belper | Mr W Hopkins, Belper |
| Mr T W Mason, Bolton | Mr R Brice, Wilmslow |
| Mr H Watson, Heanor | Mr S G Dawes, Welland |
| Mr & Mrs K Hinton, Derby | Mr & Mrs P A Martin, Belper |
| Mr K Vassmusson, Hook | Mr & Mrs C Amor, Belper |
| Mrs P A Brewster, Matlock | Mrs B White, Matlock |
| Rev J Leverton, Langley Mill | Mr E Barber, Ripley |
| Mr G Barratt, Alfreton | Mr & Mrs S Hall, Derby |
| Mr D Cordon, Nottingham | Mr & Mrs P Murfitt, Codnor |



MORE INFO ON PROBLEMS IN BUTTERLEY TUNNEL

by Dave Ratner

Further to the Ed querying the level to which the water was raised in the tunnel, (Portal No. 36, article Page 20). It was definitely 6 foot, because it was repeated 3 times within the letter. The fact that it was necessary to raise it this much plus another 1ft 7ins, just to raise water in the east end by 4ins, shows just how 'blocked' the tunnel was! The relevant letter is as follows:-

Midland Railway Engineer's Office, Derby. 27th September 1906.

Dear Sir,

Cromford Canal.

Referring to your letter of the 20th. instant.

The Butterley Canal Tunnel is over 3,000 yards in length. Between 1888 and 1900 the tunnel had to be closed several times for repairing purposes, and on two occasions during that period, for over two years. In July 1900, a portion of the tunnel, about midway in its length, fell in, and since that date has been closed for traffic. The fall of the tunnel on the occasion referred to was due to the working out from underneath it of the "Furnace Coal" by the Butterley Company.

The water supply for the canal is obtained partly by pumping at High Peak Jc., near Cromford, and also from three reservoirs, two of which, the Butterley Reservoir and the Butterley Park Reservoir, are at a higher level than the water in the tunnel and the pond at the same level at each end of the tunnel, the remaining reservoir (Codnor Park) being too low a level to feed this high level pond, although it is used for feeding the ponds below the third lock at Ironville.

We have on several occasions since the tunnel collapsed experienced difficulty in obtaining a supply of water for the high level pond at the East end of the tunnel. This has been caused by the Butterley Park Reservoir at the East end of the tunnel being emptied, and owing to drought not again filling. Butterley Reservoir, which is at the West end of the tunnel, has not been available, owing to the collapse of the tunnel, and consequently a shortage of water has been occasioned in the canal for its full length on the high level pond at the East end of the tunnel, and, to a certain extent, the ponds between the locks at that end of the tunnel.

Complaints have been made from time to time, by Traders, of the shortage of water, and, so long as the reservoirs held out, we have been able, to some extent, by carefully manipulating the water through the locks, and by assisting to lighten loads in the barges passing through the locks, to partly meet the complaints.

During the present summer, which has been the worst for drought which we have experienced, two of the reservoirs above referred to out of three, viz:- Butterley Park and Codnor Park, have been totally dry for some months, and we have been unable to find a supply of water for the high level pond at the East end of the Tunnel.

Mr. Morton, who made the complaint to the Board of Trade on the 12th September, visited the canal on the 2nd ultimo, and inspected the tunnel at each end, and also the Pinxton Branch high level pond at the East end of the tunnel, which was closed for traffic and practically empty.

On the 23rd August the matter was further looked into with a view to seeing whether any further means could be adopted for supplying the canal at the East end of the tunnel with water, and, as an experiment, it was decided to utilise what water was left in the Butterley reservoir at the west end of the tunnel, by raising the level of the water inside the tunnel at the West end, and so endeavouring to force some of the water through the portion of the tunnel which has collapsed, between that point and the East end of the tunnel. The arrangements for the experiment were



completed on the 25th August, and the first water from the Butterley Reservoir let into the tunnel on that date, the water at the West end of the tunnel being raised 6ft. above its ordinary level for this purpose before the 27th ultimo. As a result the water in the high level pond at the East end of the tunnel was raised about 4 inches before the 28th. ultimo.

The experiment continued until the 15th instant when the water was still further raised in the high level pond at the East end of the tunnel to the extent of 1ft. 7in. or within 7in. of its full height, which enabled traffic to be resumed on the high level pond at the East end of the tunnel. This result was obtained notwithstanding the fact that in the meantime the Erewash Canal Company had insisted on taking two full locks of water from the canal on the 8th., 10th., 11th., and the 12th., instant, which, under the circumstances, prevented our retaining the water at the above level.

Unfortunately the water in the Butterley reservoir owing to the continued drought, has failed, and no water has been taken from it since the 18th, instant, since which time the water level in the East end has again been reduced to 17in. below its normal level, rendering it unfit for traffic, which is the state of affairs today.

When it was seen that we were not likely to have any augmentation of the supply of water in the Butterley reservoir, arrangements were made to commence pumping the water from the pond at the West end of the tunnel into the tunnel, to keep the 6ft head of water before mentioned, which by this time had been reduced to its normal level.

The pumping tackle was got into work at midday on the 25th. instant, and I am hoping before the end of this week that we shall have again the 6ft. head of water in the West end of the Tunnel to force the water past the obstruction in the Tunnel to the pond at the East end.

So long as this water will find its way through the tunnel owing to the 6ft head of water at the West end being maintained, I see no reason why this state of affairs should not be kept up, as we can supply the pond at the West end of the Tunnel from our pumping station at Cromford. If however we fail to force the water through the tunnel the keeping of the East end of the canal open for traffic during dry weather will involve a further system of pumping arrangements being adopted by which water can be conveyed from the pond at the West end of the Tunnel over the surface of the ground to the Butterley Park at the East end of the Tunnel, which would have to then form the only source of supply for the Canal High Level pond at the East end. I am now going into details of such a scheme in view of the possibility of its being required.

I attach for your information (but of course not to be forwarded to the Board of Trade) a plan showing the Tunnel for its full length, the position of the workings in the "Furnace" coal up to September 1906, and the positions of the Butterley Reservoir and the Butterley Park Reservoir.

You will see from the above recital that the steps recently taken (before the date of Mr. Morton's complaint to the Board of Trade) produced satisfactory results so long as the supply of water in the Butterley reservoir held out, and I have no doubt that the pumping now in operation will meet the requirements of traffic so long as we can force water through the tunnel. Should the Tunnel become absolutely blocked (which is quite possible) the further steps above named will have to be taken if the canal is to be kept open for navigation during very dry weather by making the best possible use of the available sources of water supply.

Ref Archivist asking who Albert White was. He is referred to a few times in correspondence concerning the tunnel collapse, as a boatman taking the various parties into the tunnel. He also appears in an obit in a local (Jacksdale) paper (name unknown) for 19-3-1926. as one of the mourners at the funeral of John White of Canal Cottages, Pye Bridge, though at that time living in Derby.

See article 'Death of a Pye Bridge bargee' in Portal No.29

Dave Ratner



WEBSITE MATTERS

from George Rogers

This is a very brief report - the editor has prompted me towards the end of the committee meeting that the press date is today, so I am writing in the meeting.....

There have been some major problems, as many of you have noticed and informed me. Unfortunately, when the website was transferred over to the new host, the details required to access the domain name were found to be missing, with neither of the previous webmasters possessing account details to change it.

Hopefully, I've eventually managed to sort the problem and you should be able to see the website by the time this comes out. In the interim, a new domain has been active but not all of you could be informed. If there are still problems, try the temporary address:

www.cromfordcanal.info

More on other issues next time, I'll do some more investigating now that I've solved one problem!

[One footnote, I cannot guarantee that the email contact addresses will work quite yet - please be patient and email me if you need to contact someone on the committee].

And now, with George wearing a different hat:

Waterway Recovery Group Report

By the time you read this, the WRG Camp at the site of the gauging narrows at Sawmills should be underway. The intention is to dismantle the stone work and remove tree roots etc, before laying a concrete foundation and starting to rebuild the walls. If you want to join us, you are welcome, but please contact me beforehand using the details on the inside front cover. I need to know if you are coming in order to bring the required PPE and health & safety documentation.

Work on site will be from Sunday 17th to Friday 22nd July

Elsewhere, the site of Derwentside is being developed for next year, with joint involvement between WRG, FCC and Derbyshire County Council. More on all of that in the next issue, including the possibilities of additional work parties at both the Derwentside weir and continuation work at the Sawmills gauging narrows.

I'd like to here record my thanks to Mike Kelley for all the work he has put in arranging the site facilities, accommodation and showers.

A full report on the camp next time...



HERITAGE ANTIQUES & COLLECTABLES

Why not combine a visit to the canal at Cromford Wharf
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The Old School was built in 1884 on previous Chatsworth land bought by Ripley Board to house the increased population.

My aim is to create access for family research connected with the village and the history of the canal, road and rail in the immediate area. The line of the Cromford Canal serves as one of the routeways through the village.

I have accommodation for people wishing to stay near Ripley, Heage etc. There are various arts facilities including Music, Pottery, Painting and Print Making.

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