

THE PORTAL

**TENTH
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE**

**THE JOURNAL OF THE
FRIENDS OF THE
CROMFORD CANAL**

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FRONT COVER: David Hirst - one of the local unsung heroes who helped at the Sawmills work party on the Sunday afternoon when the WRG volunteers were flagging. See report on pages 14-16

Photo: George Rogers

BACK COVER (TOP): Some you win - the lock keepers cottage, maintenance yard and stables being restored from a complete ruin at Ironville.

BACK COVER (BOTTOM): and some you lose - The Newlands Inn at Golden Valley, a listed building with historic links to the canal, is standing derelict after being gutted by fire.

Photos: Hugh Potter

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

from Mike Harrison



Welcome to *The Portal* No.41

Although it is difficult to believe, it is now ten years since the Friends of the Cromford Canal was formed. Some may think that little appears to have been achieved in that time, but as our vice chairman points out on page 4, a great deal has in fact happened, but mostly behind the scenes. However, within the next year, our activities will start to become much more apparent.

Derbyshire County Council have recently given the canal a very welcome and significant boost in a number of ways as described by our chairman on the following page. It is very encouraging to have such strong support.

The press release issued by Simon Spencer, deputy leader of DCC, gives details of their financing of a dredging operation from Cromford to Leewood. This will be done over next winter, and it means that the FCC will be able to introduce a trip boat along this length in Spring 2013. This is something that we have all been talking about for ten years and has always been seen as a vital part of the aims of the FCC. In order to bring this project to reality, we must start working towards it now. This length of canal is an important part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. The boat, therefore, needs to add to the whole 'heritage experience' of the Cromford Wharf area. By that I mean an appropriate historic narrow boat, which will enhance the appearance of the wharf and attract more tourists to this already attractive setting. Financing, operating and maintaining a suitable boat will be a substantial commitment. We are therefore asking now for any members who are interested in helping to carry this project forward to make themselves known to the committee. There is no doubt that, if properly run, the boat will be a very popular attraction and will transform the whole of the FCC campaign.

You are urged to attend the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held at

Ironville Church Hall on April 16th at 7.30pm

After the formal business, our chairman Pat Morriss will be bringing us up to date with the progress of the FCC. There will also be a presentation of recently acquired archive material and photographs by Hugh Potter.

The press date for the Summer 2012 issue will be July 2nd.



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by Patrick Morriss



Be careful what you wish for, it may come true!

This is just about as hot off the press as it is possible to get. Once again I have to crave the indulgence of the editor to be late with this copy.

Friday 16th March 2012 was the latest meeting of the Cromford Canal Partnership at County Hall Matlock Derbyshire. Several things of importance were confirmed or announced that afternoon and reinforced by a press release which you can read elsewhere in this issue, handed to me at the meeting by Councillor Simon Spencer, Deputy Leader of the County Council.

Firstly, the long awaited Scoping Study undertaken by W S Atkins was received by the Partnership. For the first time we have a definitive document produced by one of the major UK Consulting Engineers looking at the canal as a whole and examining complete restoration to navigation of the Cromford Canal as one of its options. As part of this we have an estimate of costs, issues, advantages, problems etc. We can quote it in applications for funding and it will be an excellent base from which to take forward additional work looking at how the canal may be developed. Please note the use of the word 'developed' does not mean covering the route in reinforced concrete; I spent long enough in the pre-cast concrete industry and have seen enough to last me a lifetime.

Secondly, it was confirmed that Derbyshire is to get a county-wide Canals Officer. For the first time, full time professional help will be available to the Friends of the Cromford Canal to assist our efforts concerning the whole canal, not just the stretches owned by the county. This post should also lead to better co-ordination throughout the county and canal issues and funding applications.

Thirdly, and probably most importantly, it was announced that dredging between Cromford Wharf and Leawood Pumphouse would take place during the winter of 2012/2013. This will leave a clear channel 4 metres wide by 900mm deep. The plan is that the FCC will provide and operate an ecologically friendly trip boat from the spring of 2013. All the above is splendid news and the County Council are to be congratulated on their far reaching and forward thinking commitment to Derbyshire canals and the Cromford Canal in particular. You will remember that it was only in the last *Portal* that we covered the reopening of the Leawood rail aqueduct after substantial and indeed welcome investment from the County Council.

Elsewhere on the canal we are edging towards an agreement with British Waterways/Canal and River Trust concerning the start of survey work on the Butterley Tunnel. There are indications that the moribund former Stevenson's site at Bullbridge may well be heading for a planning application in the near future as well. Nearer Langley Mill we are seeking to influence the development of the former ProLogis site adjacent to the A610 to include some sort of canal work.



The usual winter working parties plus the recent Waterway Recovery Group involvement at Sawmills have produced splendid results often in appalling conditions. I urge any of you in those areas to take time out to have a look at what can be achieved by muscle power alone.

All this takes a tremendous toll on both our volunteers and our finances. To build on all the above will require more people and a considerable amount of money. In order to have a boat operational in spring 2013, the FCC will have to build from scratch or convert an existing hull during the rest of this year and next winter. It is too early to say how much this will cost and the timescale of that spending. Of course bearing in mind the boat will operate on the longest length of canal in an English World Heritage Site, a heritage hull would be the way to go if possible.

In the very near future the FCC will be launching a fund raising campaign to fund the boat and other activities. In the current financial climate this will not be easy, but every penny will count as the ability to offer matched funding is essential.

We are going to have a very busy year ahead of us. Any of you or your friends who can offer any assistance with either skills or funding please do not hesitate to contact me, preferably by email as I work in an area of limited mobile connectivity.

We live in interesting times!

TEN YEARS ON

by Mike Kelley

'From little acorns mighty trees do grow', or so the saying goes. It was just ten years ago this month, in March 2002 that this particular acorn was planted. Several months before this, Howard Smith (Chairman of Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association) and myself, had met and had several discussions as to what to do about the derelict Cromford Canal. We had meetings with like-minded friends, most of whom were from the Erewash group. We decided to have a public meeting at Ironville Church Hall, unsure of how many would turn up. So on Wednesday, 13th March 2002, imagine our surprise and delight when over 200 turned up for this inaugural meeting.

Support for our project has been strong from the beginning and fortunately remains so. As I said at that first meeting, 'This is a long distance race and not a sprint', but little could I realise just what great progress we would make since then. True there have been some disappointments, but in the main our progress has been positive. In the early days many people laughed and said, 'It will never happen', others vehemently opposed us and the concept of a restored canal; all that has now been turned around.

There was simply so much to do; it was difficult to know just where to begin. So much work flooded onto us in those early days, but we did not let it drown us. To start with we had some very good, hard working people on our committee, many of whom are still with us. Without them we would have got nowhere. We started by forming a strong charity with a clear constitution. From there we sought to get the line of the canal protected, and stop further developers from damaging or destroying the canal any further. This we did.

By far the greatest stride forward we made was when Pat Morriss took over from me as Chairman. He had something I did not, a good political mind, and the wherewithal to get things done; so much so that we are now beginning to see the fruits of all our hard work. We are now a nationally known organisation, with a large membership, and support from councils, members of Parliament and local businesses. The sleeping beauty is beginning to wake up.



The following press release was issued by Derbyshire County Council on March 16th

FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR CANAL RESTORATION

Cromford Canal's future looks bright – and Derbyshire County Council is proud to be at the centre of its development.

The County Council has just agreed to provide a much-needed financial boost with £90,000 to pay for a dedicated waterways officer. The officer will work on developing waterways across the county over the next two years, including Cromford Canal.

In fact, work on the canal is due to enter an exciting stage later this year. Boats haven't used the Derbyshire stretch of the 14.5 mile canal since 1944. But the County Council has earmarked a further £300,000 to dredge a 1.3 mile stretch so that boats can sail between Cromford Wharf and Leawood Pump House again. Councillor Simon Spencer, deputy leader of Derbyshire County Council, pictured on the right, said: "Cromford Canal has a rich history and is part of the World Heritage site. This investment will bring long term benefits to the area. Tourism is an integral part of the Derbyshire Dales economy and the work will enable boats to be run on the canal for the first time in many years. Increasing visitor numbers to the area will create jobs and opportunities for local businesses. The work will have an ecological value too, clearing silt and reed from the central channel of the canal and improving the area round the water for wildlife which many visitors come to see. It is hoped the cash set aside for this project may help us to access external funding in the future. Dredging is due to take place over nine weeks in the winter when it will cause the least disturbance to the canal wildlife."



It follows a £450,000 project funded by the County Council to carry out essential repairs to the canal's railway aqueduct. County Council engineers discovered the 163 year-old structure over the Derby to Matlock railway line was corroding and in danger of collapse. The scheduled monument is thought to be the only surviving example of a suspension girder bridge left in the country. Repairs to the aqueduct were completed in November last year along with a new permanent steel towpath built as part of the project.

Councillor Spencer added: "We're pleased to be able to contribute to the success of the canal. Our commitment to improving waterways across the county is highlighted by the fact we're funding a dedicated officer to work on developing opportunities provided by our canals."



FCC NEWS UPDATE - so what *is* happening

from Mike Kelley



You will see elsewhere in this magazine, that we are very hopeful good progress is being made at the northern (Cromford) end of the canal. This is looking like becoming an exciting time for our members and supporters of this great project of ours.

- **Monday 16th January** - Our monthly social meeting at Ironville Church Hall. Philip Riden gave a talk about goods on the Cromford Canal before the railway age. It was a cold night, but there was a good turnout.

- **Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd January** - A work-party (WP) weekend. Another successful arrangement where the FCC carried out this operation in conjunction with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) workers.

- **January - March** - During this period I was pleased to deliver several talks to various groups on the restoration of the Cromford canal; a talk which I call 'The Sleeping Beauty'. These talks were held at:- Belper, Quarndon, Hilton, Nottingham, Chesterfield, Melbourne and Mansfield.

- **Monday 30th January** - An article appeared in the Derby Telegraph concerning the plan for DCC to dredge the northern section from Cromford Wharf.

- **Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th February** - Warren Searle, our work party organiser had another WP, this time at Jacksdale. Warren said, 'It was a very cold but very rewarding work party weekend, despite the -8° C. Dave (the chainsaw) Wright worked wonders again with a mass of tree felling to free up a rather impressive winding point'.

- **Monday 13th February** - Full committee meeting held at the Poet & Castle, Codnor.

- **Monday 20th February** - For our monthly social evening, Ken Thompson, a retired vet. gave us a very entertaining talk called 'Pets as Patients'.

- **Saturday 3rd & Sunday 4th March** - The Waterway Recovery Group, (WRG) had a weekend carrying on with their work on the historic 'narrows' at Sawmills. Sunday rained hard all day! However, the leader of this group George Rogers, said, 'This was a very successful weekend and I recorded approximately 170 hours of volunteer labour supplied by WRG NW. Approximately another 10m of wall is now up to below coping stone level, and we also managed to cast the concrete base for the next 5-7m.

- **Monday 12th March** - Full committee meeting held at the Poet & Castle, Codnor.

- **Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th March** - An extra work party weekend to finish our work party season. Worked again with DCC staff, at the Cromford end of the canal.

- **Friday 16th March - The day we have longed to see. We were informed that DCC intend to dredge the northern part of the canal this coming winter, which will allow us to bring back the traditional horse-drawn boat. This is something we at the FCC, and the public in general, have long awaited.** (see elsewhere in this magazine)

- **Monday 19th March** - For our monthly social evening, Barrie Lings gave us a fascinating talk on 'Derbyshire Oddities'.



TALKS TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

by Mike Kelley

During the autumn I was invited to visit two primary schools in order to present an illustrated address to each of them on the subject of canals. Needless to say I was delighted to do so, especially as I used to be a teacher before I retired. The first school was at Jacksdale, followed later by Langley Mill; both schools situated close to the Cromford Canal. To add effect, I went dressed as a Victorian boatman which all felt added to the atmosphere. The children were great and bombarded me with questions throughout; which was good to hear.

My talk was well illustrated and showed why canals were built in the first place and the problems in building them. We saw how boats can go uphill using locks and the type of boats used on the canals. The children were enthralled when they saw how entire families would live in very small confined spaces, and especially how the children not only lived on, but were required to work hard on these narrow boats. They also saw slides to show how those boat children went to school on a boat, or more likely, did not go to school. They saw the marked contrast to the well equipped, spacious school they were in, to the cramped small classroom boat children only 'occasionally' attended.

It was while I was at Langley Mill school that I was presented, on behalf of the FCC, with a permit book from 1824 showing the hundreds of boat movements for just one month. The school had found it, locked away in storage and decided to present it to the FCC; for which we thank them. This book is already being transcribed for us by Bert Crump and will join a number of others which Hugh Potter has acquired as part of his growing collection in the FCC archives. This collection gives a fascinating insight into the cargoes carried on the Cromford Canal and the considerable income which the tolls produced for the canal company before the coming of the railways. See also page 12.

If you know of any other schools who would like me to address them, do please contact me and I will be happy to continue spreading the word.





NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate Update - January to March 2012

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

Cromford Canal – Dredging, Cromford to High Peak Junction

You may have heard the news that Derbyshire County Council has allocated £300,000 to a canal dredging scheme. Silt accumulation, deposition from inflowing streams, reed growth in the water channel and a build up of leaf litter have all meant that it has not been possible to operate a boat on the northern section of Cromford Canal in recent years. Crucial maintenance is now being planned and preparation is underway to let a contract to dredge this 1.3 mile section of canal. It is hoped that this will enable a boat service to operate in the not too distant future. Work may be able to start in autumn 2012 onwards, however this relies on getting approval and permissions for the scheme covering tree felling licences, conservation area consent and agreements on the removal and disposal of silt. With the canal being a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the contract will also require consent from Natural England, who will require that the work will maintain the canal's ecological interest and that protected species such as water voles are not threatened. For example it is likely that the dredging may have to take place from the central canal channel to avoid damage to the wildlife-rich canal banks, similar to the scheme that was carried out at Whatstandwell.

Canal Towpath Surfacing

Work has now been completed by the County Council's highways team to resurface and improve an 800m section of towpath from Crich Chase (near Ranch Corner and the Severn Trent pumping works) northwards towards Whatstandwell station. Countryside staff have widened and strengthened a weak section of towpath to the north of Gregory Tunnel. This is the site of a previous canal breach.

Working With Partners

During January the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers cleared trees, branches and reed from the canal channel at Crich Chase, near the Severn Trent pumping station. There were 38 volunteer days. The pictures below taken by Steve Wright of the BTCV show this section before and after their efforts.



Before ...



....and After



Friends of Cromford Canal working parties

We are grateful for FCC assistance in the ongoing management of the canal. Work parties took place on Sat 21st & Sun 22nd January and Sat 17th & Sun 18th March. Work included reed and channel clearance from Cromford Wharf to Cromford Garden Centre, along with vegetation clearance (small scrub removal and tree pruning). Despite signs asking dog owners to keep dogs under close control and out of the water there is a problem of canal bank erosion caused by dogs climbing in and out. We are addressing this by installing sand bags and landscaping and replanting vegetation.

Work parties are planned to offer a variety and rotation of tasks, some strenuous and mucky, others less so - to suit all. So if you are not already a volunteer please do give it a try.

We are currently recruiting for a part time Sales and Information Assistant for High Peak Junction Workshops. The Visitor Centre is open every weekend of the year but will be back open on a daily basis from April. If anyone is interested have a look on the vacancies listing on the Derbyshire County Council website.

<http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/events/default.asp>

The Countryside Service Events programme for 2012 is now available. This includes the operating dates for Leawood Pump and Middleton Top Engine Houses (page 25) along with a number of heritage walks.

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

DISCOVERY DAYS - WE NEED YOUR HELP

Every year FCC puts on a big display in the Gothic Warehouse at Cromford Wharf for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days. This generates not only a good income for FCC but brings us new members and an increased awareness of what a restored Cromford Canal could offer. This year the event is on 3rd and 4th November, and it is more important than ever that we put on a 'good show' in view of the dredging that has been promised to enable a trip boat to run again between Cromford and Leawood, and our need to raise funds for the boat.

We are expanding the activities to offer more for children and are using some of the "Wild Over Waterways" activities that are supplied by the Inland Waterways Association. If you are 'child friendly' and could lend a hand for a few hours over the weekend, then we need your help! Full instructions for the activities are provided and there is no need for any CRB checks or the like as the parents are always with, and in charge of, the children.

The Discovery Days weekend is also one of the important events of the year for our ever expanding sales department and extra help on the stall would be much appreciated. In addition, we are looking for 'stewards' to welcome visitors, to direct them to the displays in the warehouse, and to let them know what other activities are taking place.

If you might be interested in helping out in these or other ways, please get in touch with our archivist Hugh Potter (contact details inside the front cover).



TWENTY TWENTY VISION

To start the second ten years of the Friends of the Cromford Canal, the editor looks at a scene which we can expect to see within that period. The picture below, by our own Visionary Val, is set in the summer of 2020.



We see here a working narrow boat crossing Wigwell Aqueduct over the River Derwent just before tying up at Leawood Pumping Station. The boat is carrying 20 tonnes of steam coal which will shortly be unloaded across the towpath adjacent to the pump house and tipped over the wall into the storage bunker. The boilers are steamed and the pump operated every other weekend these days to keep up with the ever increasing demand for water in the summit pound of the now restored and fully operational canal. The pump is a major attraction for the many visitors who arrive on board the trip boats which now operate along this length, both horse-drawn and powered by electricity.

The coal has been loaded on the boat in Warwickshire and brought via the Coventry and Trent & Mersey Canals and River Trent, then up the Erewash Canal to join the Cromford at Langley Mill. Following the completion of the length of new canal up the Erewash Valley, it is then a pleasant journey up the locks to the summit at Codnor Park.

The rebuilt Butterley Tunnel is another major tourist attraction in conjunction with the steam railway. Since the re-opening of the underground wharf at the Wide Hole, passenger boats call there on their way through the tunnel, then after their underground experience, the passengers return by train. The large extractor fans, similar to those at Harecastle, ensure that the tunnel is kept clear of fumes to enable motor boats to use it.

The boats then continue through Lower Hartshay and Sawmills, over the spectacular new aqueduct at Bullbrige and complete their journey up the Derwent Valley through some of the best canal scenery in the country.

A fantasy? - Don't be too sure!



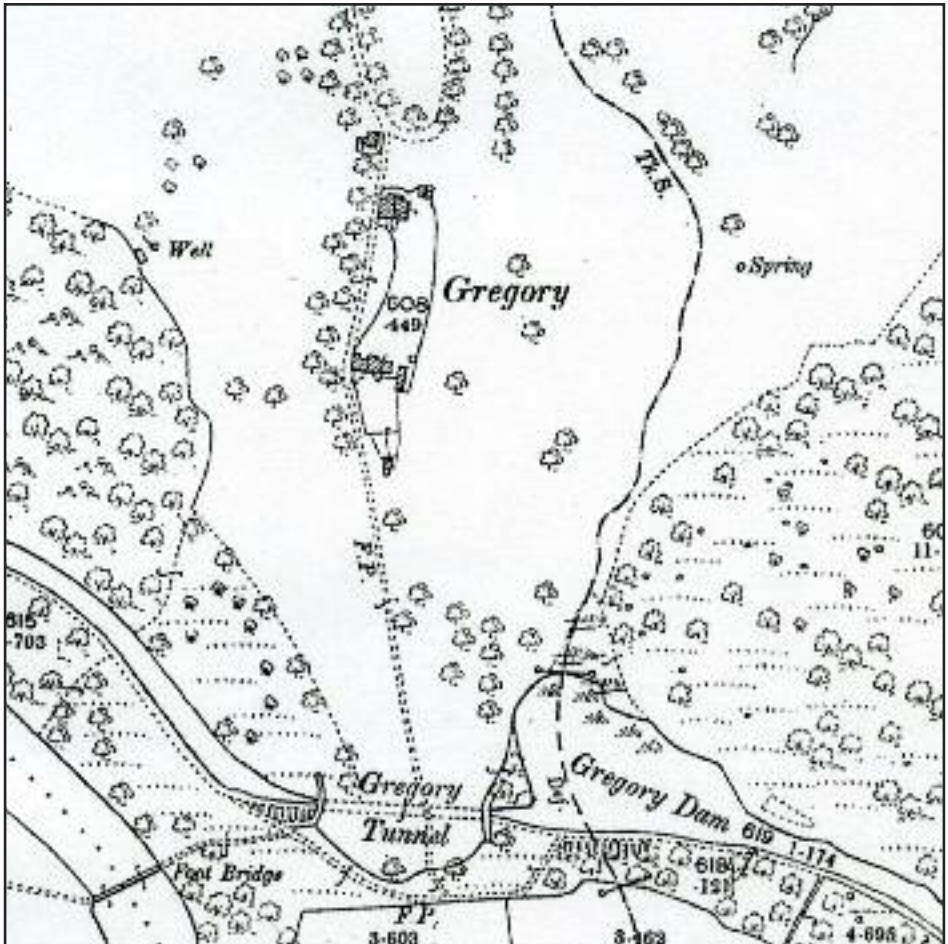
WHO WAS GREGORY?

Our archivist Hugh Potter has received the following enquiry from Malcolm Wood

Having spent the early part of my life around the Cromford Canal, I have always wondered who was the Gregory in Gregory Widehole and Tunnel. Can you help please?

I was checking on the relevant section of the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1899 reproduced below. This area is quite remote even today, but must have been really isolated then. The tunnel and wide hole (referred to as Gregory Dam on the map) are shown, together with the footpath which skirts around the high ground to connect to the towpath at either end of the tunnel. Another footpath is shown leading to the north from here and passing a hamlet or perhaps just a small group of buildings named Gregory and then continuing towards Holloway. Do these buildings still exist? Was Gregory the name of the land owner rather than the place? Any information on this or the origin of the name will be gratefully received.

Editor





PERMIT BOOKS DONATED

Sue Gilbey of Golden Valley has recently donated to the FCC Archives a permit book that belonged to Eric Webb. Below she writes about how this came about. FCC is most grateful for her efforts and to Margaret Webb for donating the book. As outlined in Portal 37, the information from these volumes, which record all boats passing Langley Mill onto or off the canal, is enabling us to gain a picture of traffic using our once very busy canal.

I first knew Eric and Margaret Webb when we moved to Bubwith in the East Riding of Yorkshire in 1974. Margaret and I worked together at Thorpe Willoughby Junior School and then when my daughter was born I gave up work for a while, so would collect Gillian, their daughter, from school and every day at the end of work a chat would ensue.

It turned out that Eric was born in Selston, grew up to become a teacher and taught at Eastwood Secondary School. One day some of the lads from school went exploring in the abandoned lock keeper's cottage at Langley Mill and found many permit books. The lads wanted to burn the books on their Guy Fawkes bonfire, but Eric and his colleague John Pass persuaded the lads to swap their books for real firewood and so the books were saved. The majority of the books were given to the county archives [and can now be viewed at the Derbyshire Record Office at Matlock – Ed] and so pleased were they at the archives that one of their staff came into an assembly at Eric's school to thank the boys who had found them.

The image shows two pages from a permit book for the Cromford Canal. Each page has a header section and a table. The first page is for permit 5051, dated 15th 1832, on board the boat 'Mt. Vernon'. The second page is for permit 5052, dated 18th 1832, on board the boat 'Mt. Vernon'. Both pages list goods transported, including 'Goods from P. Holt' and 'Castings, Butterley', with columns for weight, duty, tonnage, and amount.

5051		CROMFORD CANAL		15th 1832			
PERMIT		on board		Mt. Vernon Boat, No.			
to navigate the under-mentioned GOODS:							
SPECIES.	Where loaded	Where landed	Weight by 28 lb of Loading.	Duty Tons.	Tonnage Weight.	Rate per Ton.	AMOUNT.
Goods from P. Holt		Buckland Hollow	2	8 1/2			2-6
Castings			5	8 1/2			5-0
							7-6

5052		CROMFORD CANAL		18th 1832			
PERMIT		on board		Mt. Vernon Boat, No.			
to navigate the under-mentioned GOODS:							
SPECIES.	Where loaded	Where landed	Weight by 28 lb of Loading.	Duty Tons.	Tonnage Weight.	Rate per Ton.	AMOUNT.
Goods from P. Holt		London	1500	6 1/2	8 1/2		5-12
Castings		Butterley	4	8 1/2	14	9	9-9
							1-10

A typical page from the permit book recording two boats belonging to German Wheatcroft & Sons, the first coming from Birmingham to Buckland Hollow (Wheatcroft's base for a long time as it was at the junction of important turnpike roads), the second going out from there to London – a regular service. Notice, bearing in mind the recent debate over castings for St Pancras station, that part of the London-bound cargo is 4 tons of castings from Butterley.



Eric kept one volume safe for years (a page from which is shown opposite) and, following his death, Margaret did too. Later, when FCC was formed, knowing how important this document was, I mentioned it to Margaret and she very generously said it should be given to FCC. At last I have been able to visit her, unearthed it and was pleased to be able to place it in the hands of Hugh Potter.

I have spent some time leafing through it and was amazed to find so much traffic passing on the canal. Each book is at least 2 inches thick. Each page logs two journeys, and the book covers less than

a month – from 23rd October to 18th November 1834. There are some fascinating calculations (right) in brown ink on the reverse of some pages and in a moment of boredom someone has used the blank reverse sheets to do some sketching – of a cat, a bridge and a cottage. Also on two occasions a George Wharton is mentioned, a likely forbear of my neighbour Cathrin who is also an FCC member. It's a small world!



Incidentally, Eric and Margaret are also responsible

for the weeping willow tree growing at the bottom of my garden on Stone Row (that you may have noticed when walking the towpath). When we moved here they delivered it as a 4-year-old sapling from his mother's house in Selston and brought it through the house to the garden! Now it is a giant, happy in its canalside situation, and has been lopped three times to keep it in order.

Sue Gilbey

Further Donation to Archives

FCC member Cliff Beard of Pinxton has very generously donated several items of great interest to the FCC Archives. Two 'permit' books record the traffic passing Langley Bridge Lock in 1822 and 1828 and some loose pages reveal information from the 1840s. Of special interest is a set of second edition Ordnance Survey maps (1900–01) annotated with information about wayleaves (concerning cables, pipes, water abstraction etc), employees, bridge numbers etc etc. Thus we can confirm that Miss Howitt was gauge house keeper at Sawmills. J. Bradley was tunnel keeper at the west end of Butterley Tunnel ("paid by Engineers Department, partly refunded by Traffic Dept") and Mr Lord was gauge house or lock keeper at Lock No 14 (Langley Mill).

Cromford Wharf was sold to G.H. Key in 1946; Footbridge No 11 at Robin Hood was pulled down in August 1921; Bridge 32 (Hartshay Hill) was reconstructed in 1935; Butterley Co. Footbridge No. 35 at Golden Valley was built in 1898; Portland Wharf Bridge (Standard Bridge, demolished 1998) was authorised to be built by Butterley Co. in 1942.

We are grateful to Cliff Beard for his generous donation and would appeal for any other readers who may have documents or photographs relating to the canal to consider either passing them on to FCC or loaning them for copying.

Hugh Potter



SAWMILLS GAUGING NARROWS – THE WORK CONTINUES

Another weekend visit by Waterway Recovery Group North West

Report and pictures by George Rogers

'Muck', 'slop' and 'mud' are all words I've heard used to describe mortar, but on the first weekend of March they would have probably best described the ground conditions. It was this that our local regional branch of the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG North West) was faced with when they visited us to continue rebuilding work at Sawmills.

Arriving at Waingroves Community Centre on the Friday night, I found several of the volunteers had already arrived and made themselves comfortable – thankfully the caretaker had seen them arrive and kindly let them in early. Over the course of the evening, more and more navigated their way south (or north, NW does have some that live nearer the SE...) and into our cosy abode for the weekend. By the end of the evening we had a total of 11 people, with 5 more due the following morning.

I trundled off to site early on the Saturday morning (so a big thanks to the cook, Barbara, for getting my breakfast ready early!) in order to meet the delivery truck and the local people who were helping out with various things before the crew arrived to start work. Having ordered the materials a week before, sitting at my desk in Cambridge (where it seems to hardly ever rain), I had been very optimistic about the amount of work that would be achieved over the weekend, and therefore a rather daunting pile of sand and ballast arrived. With the weather forecast looking increasingly gloomy, I was a little worried about what my volunteers would think when they got to site.

My fears were unfounded – they arrived and before you could say 'build a wall', they were on it. Water was being kindly supplied by one of the local houses, although I must confess I plugged into the wrong one (David Hirst having spoken to the correct one the day before) but as I waded to the occupants whilst plugging in my hosepipe they waded back, so I guess no harm was done!!! Before long, the first bag of sand was decreasing and the wall growing.





Some of the volunteers were also working back towards Brickyard Bridge burning a lot of the stuff that has been chopped down previously by us and BASA.

A couple of later arrivals on the Saturday decided that wall building probably wasn't for them – but they were very enthusiastic when I asked them if they would like to demolish the next section of wall instead. It was never part of my plan for the weekend to get onto this task, but they thoroughly enjoyed it and by mid-afternoon it was clear that if I could get hold of some wood to make shuttering for the next section of concrete base, we'd be able to add that job to the list as well. Thankfully my Dad dropped by site around this time, and having already supplied the wood for the previous section remembered another stack lurking at home somewhere – so this was dropped at site ready for the morning.

Throughout this time, the wall was steadily growing. John Hawkins, who was with us for the summer camp last year, was topping out the wall with a nice level top ready for the coping stones, whilst a small army was trying to ensure he had something to make a level on top of! Thanks to them, by the end of the day the section of wall started in the summer was nearly finished.

At the end of the day, it was back to the hall for a hearty supper. At this point I think it appropriate to thank our cookery team: Barbara Bridge, assisted by Liz Lamén and Liz Wright. They were made complete by Maureen Barton and her dog, Radar, who managed to find the time between burning scrub to make all our tea on site – without this team, nothing would ever get done! [*Never seen a dog burning scrub or making tea! - Ed.*]



The concrete footing for the next length of wall



The Great Wall of Sawmills is now growing

On Sunday, the promised rain arrived. It had drizzled occasionally on Saturday, but this was the proper stuff. I wasn't sure how much work we would get done, but we made our way to site anyway. Thankfully, the weather didn't put off the hardy WRGies, and by morning brew we were all set to cast the next section of concrete base. Thanks to a rather broken gazebo sheltering the remaining section of wall, the gang was rapidly finishing off the last few bits of stonework.

Shortly after brew, we therefore started on concrete runs. It was freezing, horrible and a mudbath underfoot – definitely one of those days that you wonder why on earth you do these things, but in the end we finished the base and backfilled behind most of the wall. The small fire kept burning by Sue and Lynda



was a mercy – without that to warm my hands I think I'd have thrown in the towel a lot earlier!!

After a cup of hot soup under the arches of the bridge, the NW team headed back to the hall to pack up and start their trek back home. Meanwhile, Dad and I started to think about packing the site stuff up – there was still some stuff to do but we knew that none of the local people who were planning to turn up would do so in that weather. Well, we thought we knew, but just as we were about to start packing the mixer up, they arrived!! Thanks to them, two hours later the last of the cement had been mixed into concrete and the last section of wall was backfilled.

All in all then, a very good weekend's work. Another 7 metres of wall was brought to final height, and the next 7-10 metres of base was cast. This will allow our work parties to continue rebuilding later in the year (more on this shortly).

A huge thankyou to all of the NW volunteers: Mike (who coordinated the NW side of things), Malcolm, Paul, Lynda, Sue, John H, John F, Jim, Liz L, Liz W, Barbara, Maureen, Nick, Lynne, Cameron, Ulrich & Viv; to the locals Steve Johnson (Saturday) and those who turned up on the Sunday (apologies that I didn't get your names); to Pat for the loan of his concrete mixer and hosepipe; to Dad for the wood, the second concrete mixer, generator, gazebo and the soup(!); to Rob Lockwood for allowing us to work on the site and to the local people of Sawmills for being so accommodating and friendly. A special thanks to David Hirst, who before the weekend went around all the local people to let them know what was happening, sorted out the water supply, a second generator, fuel, the local volunteers, toilet and even came to lend us a hand pushing barrows!

So what happens next? I am organising three weekends for May and June, to which all are welcome. It would be helpful if you could let me know at least a week beforehand, so I have some idea of numbers for ordering materials. It doesn't matter if you have never mixed mortar or concrete, or never built a wall – I will try to ensure there is plenty of experience there each weekend, and if not, I'll train you up myself! The proposed dates are as follows:

1: 26th / 27th May 2: 9th / 10th June 3: 23rd / 24th June

More information on these details will be available from me nearer the time, and if you want to be kept up to date then please join the Work-Party-Sawmills mailing list on the website. Hope to see many of you there.



WEBSITE MATTERS

from George Rogers

It is amazing how fast time flies, it seems only yesterday that I was writing for the last edition of Portal! There hasn't been much change to the website since then, although I will draw your attention to two points that have happened:

Firstly, I have been updating the links page, primarily the links to the other canal restoration societies in the country. I'd advise everyone to go and have a look at it. I found it incredible quite how many there are (and still canals lie dormant with no-one championing their restoration...). Perhaps there is some solace in knowing that we are not the only ones fighting the same political and financial hurdles? For the list of canal societies I am indebted to Martin Ludgate (WRG Navvies Editor) for his directory which is published every few issues – without it I would certainly have missed some of them out.

Secondly, you will read in the previous pages my report of the work done by WRG NW at Sawmills. There is also a photo gallery online – go to the restoration section and click on photo galleries.

Otherwise, all that remains is a standard reminder that the mailing lists are out there to keep you up to date with what is happening between Portals – membership is picking up but there are a lot more of you out there yet!!

FCC TREASURE HUNT

Come and join our 10th anniversary treasure hunt this Father's Day and the opportunity of winning a Kindle. On **17th June at 10.30am** the FCC will be holding a treasure hunt as part of a six mile walk based around Whatstandwell, Fritchley, Crich and of course the canal. Suitable for all the family we will be starting from the car park adjacent to the canal at Whatstandwell (GR 332 543). Free parking is available at the Derwent Foundry (follow the track adjacent to the Derwent Hotel) or at the railway station – charges apply. (If you wish to park on Main Road please respect the locals and do not block accesses).

The route will head south along the canal towards Ambergate. It then turns NE through Fritchley and then on to Crich Stand before returning to Whatstandwell via Wakebridge. The route is mainly on footpaths with a few minor road sections. There are a couple of short climbs near Ambergate and Crich Stand.

A donation of £5 each or £10 for a family is requested with a question sheet for each group. There will be two prizes kindly sponsored by North Midland Construction Plc – a Kindle or a small day rucksack. Full route description supplied on registration.

Should you have any queries please give Matthew a call on 07968 766620.



THREE CANALS AT LANGLEY MILL

by the Editor

Our Archivist Hugh Potter has recently sent in some aerial shots of Langley Mill taken by R H Bird. I thought one of these, shown opposite, would be a good way to explain the first section of the Cromford Canal for those members who are unfamiliar with the rather complex canalscape in this area.

Langley Mill is often described as the junction of three canals, the Erewash, Cromford and Nottingham, as indicated on the recently renewed British Waterways notice adjacent to Langley Bridge Lock as shown below. Whilst this is basically correct, strictly speaking there are two junctions, each of two canals.

The Erewash Canal follows the valley of the River Erewash from the River Trent near Long Eaton northwards to Langley Mill. Referring to the aerial view shown opposite, the junction of the Erewash and Cromford Canals is at point A. From here the Erewash Canal turned to the left, the only trace of this junction is shown by the wider bit of canal and the kink in the towpath. It then carried on for a short distance past what is now Kentucky Fried Chicken (B) to its terminal basins a little beyond point C on the south side of the main A608 road.



Meanwhile, the Cromford Canal starts its course northwards up the valley, passing under the A608 to the first lock (D) - Langley Bridge Lock No. 14. Just beyond here is the second junction - between the Cromford and Nottingham Canals at Point E. The Nottingham Canal ended in a stop lock crossed by a swing bridge (F), giving access to the Great Northern Basin(G). Originally the Nottingham Canal passed through the A608 from here en route to Nottingham, but this top section is now filled in. The basin is now used as moorings by the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association.

This was the extent of the water area after the lock and basin had been restored by the ECP&DA in 1973. Soon afterwards, Langley Mill Boat Company was formed by a group of the original ECP&DA volunteers and another length of the Cromford Canal was restored and the dry dock (H) was built. Since then, more of the infilled canal has been reopened to extend the Boat Company moorings, including the wider section (J).

In more recent times, the ECP&DA volunteers have returned to the top end of the restored section. A length of waterway wall has been rebuilt and considerable work undertaken to prepare for the building of a swingbridge at point K.

In the meantime, a company called Shires Developments has been seeking planning permission to extract coal from the area indicated by the dotted line between the canal and the River Erewash (L). Obtaining planning permission for this project has taken a very long time to achieve, but is now in place, rewarding the company's persistence. Hopefully by this time next year work will be under way. Part of this scheme will involve the building of a marina, approximately at point M and a length of restored canal up to the site of the new lock 13. **Watch this space - but don't hold your breath!**



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

from Yvonne Shattower



Hopefully the winter is well on it's way out by now and we can look forward to Spring, although it's too early to think of 'casting a clout'!

There are lots of exciting things happening on the Cromford Canal. You will have read of the money earmarked by Derbyshire County Council for dredging work to be carried out at Cromford, as well as the proposed appointment of a Waterways Officer for two years. This is just the kind of news we wanted, and gives us renewed enthusiasm to re-open this lovely canal. However, we cannot do this without the support of you, our Members. Hopefully this news will encourage more people to sign up for Membership, but we need our existing Members to spread the word, and get friends and neighbours to support us when we have fund raising events. To carry out the plans that we have will take support from more than a handful of people. We really do need you to fly the flag for us. I appreciate that there are many who are unable to support us 'in the flesh' but if you are able to come on walks, help with the sales stand, and even more importantly help with Work Parties, even if it is handing out leaflets to passers by, please do get in touch. For those of you who indicated on your Membership form that you are prepared to help, well, now is the time to come forward. We are very grateful to, and have to thank, those of you who do support Work Parties and other events.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Reluctantly, after much discussion, we have had to take the decision to increase the membership fees. This has probably come at the worst time possible, but we can no longer keep them at the level they have been since 2003, and we must be one of the lowest rates for an active restoration group. At the time of writing, the new postage rates have not been announced, but we have been promised substantial increases. This would mean that membership fees would only just cover the cost of producing and posting the magazine. We are very proud of the quality and content of the *Portal* and would not consider reducing that, indeed it is a vital means of communication with you, the Members, and other interested bodies.

Way back in 2002, the Committee set the annual membership fees for the fledgling Friends at £5 for a single member and £8 for a couple. This we thought would be ample for the limited amount of work we anticipated doing in the first few years.

The following year, 2003, we decided that the present fees, £6 and £9, were more appropriate, and they have remained at this level since that date. Sadly we have been overtaken by massive increases in postage over the last few years, and your Committee have reluctantly decided that we have no option but to increase the fees, otherwise we run the risk of not covering our costs when it comes to distributing the *Portal* and other contacts with our members.



From 1st June 2012, fees will be:

Single	£7	Life single	£110
Couple	£10	Life couple	£165

For members paying by Standing Order, a new form is included with this copy of *Portal* even if your renewal is not due for some time. It will greatly help if you would return this to me as soon as possible so that I can get it in place before your Membership renewal is due. If a form is not enclosed, and you would like to pay by Standing Order, please let me know and I will get a form to you.

We are hopeful that this year will bring some real progress in our efforts to re-open the Canal. Work Parties are making a real difference to several areas along the route of the Canal. There are several exciting projects in hand, which you can read about in this magazine, and we will need to maintain our level of membership to convince funding bodies that we are worth supporting.

Your Committee very much regrets having to make this increase. We realise that everyone is 'feeling the pinch' at the moment, but we do hope that you will continue with your Membership and help us to awaken this 'Sleeping Beauty'. Even with the increase, our fees must be one of the lowest in the country.

On a happier note, it is good to see so many of you at our regular monthly meetings at Ironville. The talk by retired vet, Ken Thompson, made a pleasant change and we thank him for giving his time at no cost to us. Our next meeting will be the AGM on April 16th and this is your chance to come along and hear about all our plans for the future.

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

Mr & Mrs P W Parkin, Alfreton
 Ms P Bridge, Belper
 Mrs P Dilley, Langley Mill
 Mr & Mrs R Auton, Sheffield
 Mr & Mrs B H Doar, Matlock
 Mr & Mrs D I Stone, Nottingham

Mrs I Tilley, Belper
 Mrs B A Coppen, Derby
 Mr & Mrs G W Brecknell, Derby
 Mrs P Ward, Matlock
 Mr A J Chilton, Sheffield

MEMBERS' SOCIAL MEETINGS 2012

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.**

The following are scheduled between now and the autumn.

There are no meetings in July or August, but the programme will then be restarting.

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

- **April 16th - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** (free admission). See page 2.
- **May 21st - NOTABLE & NOTORIOUS WOMEN OF DERBYSHIRE** -Joan Ward
- **June 18th - DERBYSHIRE GHOSTS AND LEGENDS** - David Bell
- **September 17th - SAINT PANCRAS** - Nigel Lowey
- **October 15th - 1811 AND ALL THAT: 200 YEARS ON THE CROMFORD CANAL** - Hugh Potter
- **November 19th - SIR ARTHUR HEYWOOD'S DUFFIELD BANK RAILWAY** - Pat Morriss



WATERWAY RESTORATION, RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE

by Michael Handford

We are in a new canal age. The last fifty years have seen an astonishing change in both public and political perceptions of inland waterways. Restoration is no longer some lunatic ideal but one accepted as obvious and desirable by the man or woman in the street. If you need any proof of this go to the centre of Birmingham or Leeds where the new developments of pubs, nightclubs and restaurants **face** the canal not back on to it. Properties facing the canal fetch a premium of around 20% compared with identical properties that do not.

Money has not really been a problem. The costs of restoration escalate with health and safety requirements and the greater difficulty of later canal schemes. At the same time we have had Manpower Services, Heritage Lottery, Regional Development Agencies, European Union money and others. The ease of accessing money has waxed and waned. Nevertheless I remain to hear of any well managed, well planned scheme held up for lack of money. Of course schemes need to fight for money and progress here can be maddeningly slow. But it is progress even so.

So what has been achieved?

First generation restorations like the Kennet and Avon Canal have been completed. Here the entire track remained in the same ownership and each obstacle was manageable with engineering solutions. Even the formidable Caen Hill flight of locks at Devizes is only one lock to restore twenty nine times. Given that, and given money from the Heritage Lottery, the restoration was simple and straightforward when compared to later schemes.

The second generation of restorations was more difficult. Schemes like the Forth and Clyde, Union, Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow Canals had the benefit of essentially

The Rochdale Canal culverted under the A627M and a large roundabout on the outskirts of Rochdale. This canal is now fully navigable, involving the removal of many culverts like this one, not to mention the restoration of 92 derelict wide locks.



Val Roberts



single ownership (apart from the Falkirk flight of locks) and the disadvantage of major obstacles. In the case of the Rochdale canal this involved moving a supermarket, repositioning a motorway and nearly two miles of concrete infill. The Huddersfield Narrow Canal had Standedge Tunnel and the Bates factory. Nevertheless, given access to funding and engineering expertise, solutions were found and restorations completed. The Montgomery Canal is also in this category and restoration proceeds - slowly but the important fact is that it **does** proceed.

The third generation of schemes [**to which I would suggest the Cromford belongs - Ed**] is with us now. Restorations like the Cotswold Canals have part of the track intact and part of it lost. Part is held in one ownership (The Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation) and part (mostly the Thames and Severn eastern side) is in multiple ownership. So the issues to be resolved include repurchasing and rebuilding lost sections of the canal. Here again £25 million sourced from Heritage Lottery Funds, Regional Development Agency and others is now restoring the canals from Stonehouse on the Stroudwater Canal to Brimscombe on the Thames and Severn. The next objective will be to restore the Stroudwater Canal from Saul to Stonehouse, so linking the canals to the national network.

The fourth generation of restorations is also with us. Examples include the Wey and Arun and the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canals. Here there are issues of both tracks which are not intact and multiple ownership. This is not entirely true for the Ledbury to Hereford length of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire but the essential problems of reassembling land ownership remain. Despite these substantial issues restoration in both cases proceeds with impressive expertise and achievement. Big money has not arrived yet, though the Wey and Arun Canal Trust in particular are skilled at raising eye watering sums of money from volunteers and other sources.

What could happen as these schemes approach completion? I suspect the fifth generation of restorations will follow. This could include restoration and completion (for some were not completed) of the Kington, Leominster and Stourport, the Chard, the Dorset and Somerset, the Bude and other canals. Here there are formidable obstacles - virtually no intact track, multiple ownership. Yet even here each obstacle could be solvable with expertise and money. The Bude Canal has a restoration trust and an active members society. The others, including the Salisbury and Southampton Canal and the Itchen Navigation, do not.

Is there a sixth generation to come? I suspect there is. These are most likely to be new canals linking existing destination waterways that are connected with the national system at only one end. So we may see new canals linking the Oakham and Stamford, the Grantham and Sleaford, the Cambridge to Lee and Stamford, the Broads and the eastern waterways, Gloucester and Berkeley Canal to Bristol, Cromford to Chesterfield and (via the Peak Forest Tramroad) to Whaley Bridge in the Peak Forest, Ashby to the Trent and Mersey and/or to the Charnwood Forest, Keilder Water to Ripon, Newtown on the Montgomery to the Kington, Leominster and Stourport, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal at Hereford to Brecon on the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal and others.

Is this impractical? Go back I ask you and remember the totally impractical, enormously difficult and expensive, pointless proposals to restore the Kennet and Avon Canal in the 1950s. We have made the future in the form we wanted. The fact that there are first and second generations of schemes completed and third and fourth generations taking place speaks for itself. If you do not believe this is possible, you need to explain why we can put men on the moon but not restore the fifth and build the sixth generation.



COMMENTS ON PORTAL 39 AND 40 THE ST. PANCRAS STATION ROOF STRUCTURE

by Bevan Parr

I think from the photographs in Portal 40, the method by which the roof members were transported from Butterley to St. Pancras Station has been well established as being by rail. However, I would like to add a few points of interest and reasoned comments which, I feel, will confirm this view.

Although it seems a romantic notion to try to link our canal to this venture, I do not think we can ascribe 21st century sentimentality to the cut and thrust of 19th century commerce or the competitive attitudes prevalent throughout the 'Industrial revolution' generally. Transportation by canal would be unthinkable to a progressive, self-aggrandizing Railway company and (more succinctly) it would not present a viable or supportable alternative.

Firstly and most obviously 'Iron Girders' of sections and lengths applicable to this roof structure could not be 'dropped down' onto the Butterley subterranean wharves as originally suggested in Portal 38. The Eastern shafts discharged directly on to boats with very little clearance. The Western berth had only a tiny working space (not oriented for girders) and no storage facility. The loading of any items except those that could be reasonably manhandled, would be impractical.

The St. Pancras roof structure was fabricated in sections, but all were substantial in size and weight. The longest fabrication of large cross-section that could be lowered vertically down the 7ft. dia. shaft then turned horizontal to load onto a boat would probably not be more than 8 or 9 ft.

The straight (shortest) section seen in the photograph in Portal 39, appears to be about 12ft by 6ft by 1ft 6ins. It is conceivable that this one could be lowered (to touch or just enter the water), turned horizontal and then have the boat floated under it. But these beams generally, especially ones of pronounced radial curvature, are too large to have risked being damaged or causing damage to the shaft, wide-hole, boat or canal by loading in this unlikely and painstaking way.

Although the 9ft shaft 'sounds' more feasible, there is in fact less room for manoeuvre at this shaft base. Also there is insufficient room for boat movement and no means of manoeuvring heavy items on the boat. No large section of roof structure could have been loaded via the subterranean wharf.

There is of course the alternative that these sections were loaded onto boats at surface wharves, several of which may have been available to the Butterley Company between Jacksdale in the east and Pentrich to the west, but this would only add to the logistics nightmare and is unlikely.

The material used for the St. Pancras roof structure was "Wrought Iron". In the 1860's wrought iron (which was a crudely forged material) was produced in "Puddling Furnaces" or forges and I believe the Puddling Furnaces of The Butterley Company were located only at the Codnor Park Forge site.

The early Butterley site (Ripley) housed mainly "Blast Furnaces" and produced mainly Pig Iron for general sale and distribution to the industry and to supplement Butterley's other sites. The loading of Iron Pigs etc. is in fact suggestive and appropriate to the layout of the wide-hole 9ft. shaft. However, we are told from several authoritative sources that Benjamin Outram and Co. did not continue the loading and transportation of goods via the wide-hole for any great length of time as they developed their own tramway systems. It is unlikely that a heavy lift capability would have been maintained just in case such a contract was won.

The later Butterley Company had railway systems which could deliver directly to Butterley sites and nearby clients, or transport to more convenient loading points for wider distribution. If these roof sections needed to go from Codnor Park to Butterley for final machining or packing etc. then



the company would have used their own railway system as loading to flat-beds would be simple.

Having contracted with Butterley to provide transport cradles (if any) for Butterley's own internal rail movements, the Midland Railway Company would not then purchase a completely different, unique, elaborate and much more extensive set, so that they could transport by canal. They would have ensured a built-in agreement with the manufacturer to use any cradles they had needed, to transfer with the equipment, for onward transmission to site and unloaded return.

One major objection to canal transportation is that the narrow boats eventually standardised for use on this stretch of the canal (due to restrictions in the Butterley tunnel) were nominally only 6ft 6ins wide (external measure) with 30ins draught. The St. Pancras roof sections would have needed to be stowed vertically or (if horizontal) supported above the gunwales. In either case these consignments (even only one short section) would have constituted a top heavy load, rendering the boat unstable and certainly so in a high crosswind. It is inconceivable they would risk even a short journey by canal. It would have been possible to counter this by hiring boats of a more appropriate size, if allowing that loading was at wharves other than the wide-hole, but this would only introduce more unnecessary costs and uncertainties for delivery, which I think, would not be countenanced. But the real arguments against canal boat transportation are ones pertaining to the 'image', 'importance' and 'prestige' of the Midland Railway and to the 'reliability' they needed to emplace to ensure that equipment be delivered safely, in construction sequence and on time.

The new St. Pancras terminal was to be the flagship for the Midland Railway Company; no expense was spared in its design and construction. The company went to great lengths to outdo (even sneer at and shame) its competitors, building the 'Barlow shed' higher, larger and much more ornately than all others and adding the immense 'Midland Grand Hotel' to boot.

In fact the St. Pancras station needed to be raised about six metres higher than (nearby) Kings Cross station due to the Regents Canal, but the 'under space' this created was useful and pre-planned for the storage of beer barrels from Burton on Trent. The iron supporting columns for the entire shed were in fact deliberately spaced to suit standard barrel sizes so as to maximise the available area.

Given this remit of superior grandeur are we to believe that The Midland Railway Co. would risk becoming the laughing stocks of Victorian Commerce by not using their primary assets but instead utilising and risking the very transport system that they had helped cause to become outmoded? Would they risk subversive interference, irretrievable loss or damaging delay in some canal backwater? Would they risk consignments being stranded in droughts due to shortages of water or the system grinding to a halt in thick ice during cold snaps? I think not! The trip by boat would be perhaps 200 miles, take several weeks and pass along routes marshalled by a number of different Canal Companies. One has to recognise that most of these companies would be very hostile to the railway company. The St. Pancras venture would present only a temporary respite but represent a potentially severe additional threat to their already suffering trade – a veritable powder keg? They would all want their cut, maximise passage tolls and charge the earth for recovery of mishaps. Some might deliberately delay or scupper consignments or accept bribes to do so from unscrupulous competitor Railway company executives, who themselves had no desire to see the Midland Railway succeed in a venture which was so evidently designed to 'put them in their place'.

All in all then I think that transportation by rail is the only possible conclusion and much as we regret the situation, canal transportation was never on the cards. But either way, there ought to be definitive records, journals, diaries, bills of fare etc. After all the MBM and MJR had leased the canal to The Midland Railway Co at this time and the MR came to own it a few years later. They should have kept or else inherited all records of these movements. No doubt some of these will surface at some stage.

Any further information or records on this matter will be welcomed - Ed.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

St. Pancras Roof Sections - So - the debate rumbles on...!

The photographs on page 27 of the latest *Portal* (together with the letter on page 26) are interesting, but I don't think they are necessarily relevant to the discussion we were having about the delivery of the roof castings.

They certainly provide evidence that castings were being delivered from Butterley to St Pancras by rail, but the lower view shows the roof to be complete and the station in use, with trains at the platforms and passengers waiting for them.

The station opened for business on 1st October 1868, but work continued on the associated buildings for many years afterwards, the hotel not opening for business until 5th May 1873. I would guess that the girders shown were probably being delivered in connection with the work on the hotel, and given that the MR's London Extension and the station were open by this time, it would be very unusual for the consignment pictured to have been delivered in any other way.

However, I'm intrigued as to why the load has been delivered into the station. The same engraving is reproduced in Jack Simmons's book on the station, but with no comment about the presence of the wagons. The only observation made about the picture is that the distance between the departure platform (later No 2) on the left and the main arrival platform (later No 5) on the right is "much exaggerated".

I think, therefore, we can say the the method by which the roof girders were delivered is still open to debate.

Howard Sprenger

Also on this subject, I have received this correction to a letter in the last issue - Ed.

I have just received my copy of *Portal* and on reading my submitted letter on page 26, the number of bricks used in the building of St Pancras Station was 60 million not the 60,000 as quoted. Regards, John W Chambers (Life Member)

Dear Mike

We are very fortunate to have the officers of the Friends of the Cromford Canal working for us. It is a delight to read the literary contributions under your editorial control.

Mike Kelley's visionary view of the future financial health of the canal prompted me to suggest an approach could be made to the Dudley Canal Trust to find out how they funded their tunnel's repair, I believe an amount of £1 million and done in two stages. Perhaps if lottery money is in short supply and also the paperwork is daunting, would it be the sort of thing someone like Sir Richard Branson would fund, i.e. the repair of Butterley Tunnel. He would see a return on his investment with passengers/tourists visiting/travelling on the immediate canal tunnel and steam railway and other nearby attractions.

I know his firm is open to such suggestions. Maybe our esteemed patron or president with the appropriate officers and figures could entertain Sir Richard to lunch and discuss it if it was thought there might be some interest in such a business venture. Mention could be made of the Derby Arm for another project for the tourists.

At a recent Derby and Sandiacre Canal meeting, a member of the Inland Waterways Association when asked about use of the now Canal & River Trust's land for possible wind turbine sites, to raise funds to keep the system open due to the £4 million annual shortfall in funding, said it was all under consideration as far as he knew by the Trust. Obviously appropriate machines in appropriate places in the country would be the norm. The positive, about planning permission, I hope, is that despite five out of six approaches by a wind farm company I know being thrown out at great expense, the



government's wish to give a positive outcome to sustainable building development permissions may help to change this for the Trust if they see fit.

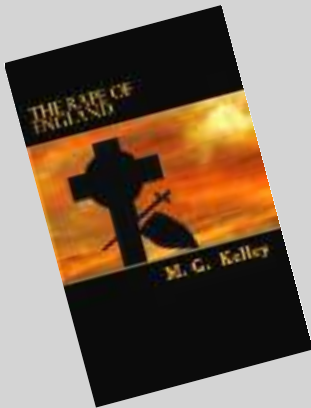
Yours sincerely David Bartrop

This produced the following response - Ed.

I like the idea of an appropriate approach to Richard Branson. Nothing ventured, nothing gained....! Also I like the idea of sustainable energy generating income as a general principle. However, I am not sure that wind farms are the right idea. Even if we had suitable locations, land take may be involved, and from reviewing planning applications adverts for local wind turbine schemes, the wind farm people have almost invariably set up a joint company with the appropriate farmers who own the land. I have a sneaking suspicion that the main beneficiaries of these wind farms are the wily farmers, charging for the rent on their land!

However, taking the idea on board, at my visit to the Stroud canal last year, they were installing a water powered turbine on one of their locks being re-constructed currently to generate income for the Stroud Canal Trust. The flight of fourteen locks down from Codnor Park Reservoir to Langley Mill comes to mind. Could this idea be a catalyst for the regeneration of this section of the canal?

Steve Mulholland



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or Email mgkelley@hotmail.com

The price will include a donation to FCC funds

LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING WEEKENDS 2012

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

MONTH	SAT	SUN	MON	PERIOD
APRIL		8th	9th	Easter
MAY		6th	7th	May Bank Holiday
JUNE	2nd	3rd		Spring Bank Holiday
JULY		1st		First Sunday
AUGUST	4th	5th		First Weekend
		26th	27th	August Bank Holiday
OCTOBER	6th	7th		First Weekend
NOVEMBER	3rd	4th		Discovery Weekend



WORK PARTY REPORT

from Dave Tinkler



Work parties have been continuing both at Jacksdale, ably led by Warren Searle, and on the northern end of the canal near Cromford. Good progress has been made, but the trouble is we are having to depend on the same few members who turn up at these events.

It is very disappointing that, out of such a large membership, we cannot raise more people who are prepared to help. Come on, why not make the effort and turn out to support us. The more people who attend, the better it is for all and more progress can be made. All are welcome to come along for as long or short a time as they wish. The next work party will be at Jacksdale on:

Saturday March 31st and Sunday April 1st.

Warren will welcome you at Jacksdale Community car park at 10.00am. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear, bring your packed lunch, a hot drink and bowsaws or loppers if you have them.

I can be contacted at dtink@supanet.com or phone 01159635113

PHOTO COMPETITION

Steam and the Canal

On Sunday 27th May, the Peak Forester rail tour is scheduled to run steam hauled from Kings Cross to Rowsley, via of course the section from Ambergate to Cromford, close to our canal. It is to be hauled by the fine Britannia Class 4.6.2 Pacific 70013 'Oliver Cromwell' (pictured) which was the last steam loco to haul a train under BR over this route, in June 1968, before it closed.

Although the foliage will have grown by then there should be the opportunity to get some photographs of the train and the canal in the same shot. It is due to arrive in Matlock at 1315 and depart at 1650, so we ask any FCC members out and about with cameras that day to send the best shots of the train and the canal to put on our website and in *Portal*.

Please send your pictures to the Archivist (address inside front cover).



Eric Singleton



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

The FCC monthly committee meetings are now held at Poet & Castle at Codnor.
We are allowed free use of their function room and the advertisement below is published as an acknowledgement of this kind gesture.

The Poet & Castle
-Codnor, Derbyshire-

Traditional Country Pub
with old style ales, Hops & Longhops
Open all day
Extra Real Ales & True Ciders
Great Food every day
Pudding Cartons
Sun, Mon & Tuesdays are
Tales & Music nights

Ashover Brewery

Open All Day
Every Day
Country Music, Country
Ballroom, Folk
Pudding Cartons, Cider
Whisky, Gin & Tonic
Dinner, Music, Own
Accout. Fair
Beer Garden, Live Band
Beer Festival in October, April,
June & October
Duck Weir

Find us in the Good Beer Guide 2012

8 Real Ales and 4 Trad. Ciders Continental
Draught Beers, Country Wines & Single Malts

Tel: 01773 744150 www.poetandcastle.co.uk

Through our publicity officer John Barker, the FCC sales department has again been given 12 months free hire of a 9 litre certified fire extinguisher by Mr Wesley Heap to use in compliance with the required risk assessments at outdoor events. We gratefully acknowledge this generous gesture and urge any members who need to hire or purchase fire fighting equipment to contact Mr Heap's company:

O. Heap and Son (Derby) Ltd.
Chandos Pole Street
Derby DE22 3BA
Tel. 01332 366721
www.oheap.co.uk

The solicitors Ellis Fermor & Negus kindly nominated the FCC as their charity of the year in 2011. As a result of this, they donated the takings of collection boxes in their offices, which together with a contribution from the company amounted to £500. We thank them for their generosity

Unless specifically stated, any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the formal policy of the Friends of the Cromford Canal. The FCC accepts no liability for any matter printed in this newsletter nor any advertising that may be included. Reproduction of extracts from this newsletter welcomed provided that a full acknowledgement is given.

Some you win.....



.....and some you lose

