

# **THE PORTAL**

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



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**NEW YEAR 2016**

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**FRONT COVER:** All Our Yesterdays. The editor is the young man in the red shirt and bowler hat bringing a boatload of musicians through Langley Bridge Lock at the re-opening ceremony in 1973. This was the first part of the restoration of the Cromford Canal. See page 13.

Photo: Michael Golds Collection

**BACK COVER:** Chelsea the boat horse being pressed into service to give welcome assistance to the work party volunteers pulling a large quantity of weeds from the canal near Lawn Bridge in readiness for the forthcoming season with *Birdswood*. See also page 23.

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**



## EDITORIAL

from Mike Harrison



Welcome to The Portal No.56

Here we are at the start of another year and we are all looking forward to lighter nights and better weather. When the last Portal went to press, *Birdswood* was on the bank at Cromford waiting for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency surveyor. This all went to



Mike Kelley

plan, the surveyor was happy, the hull was cleaned off and blacked by FCC volunteers and we also fitted new hoses to the hydraulic drive system. The crane returned on November 23rd and carefully lifted the boat back into the water. See picture.

This was closely followed by the Santa trips, which were a big success. See Nic Barfield's report on pages 20 - 21.

Since then, Vix is getting into gear and the planning for the new season with *Birdswood* is well in hand. See pages 4 - 5. In particular, Dave Ratner has designed and built a new set of passenger seats, which are currently being fitted and are a big improvement on the original ones. See page 5. Thanks again Dave.

The main difficulty with the *Birdswood* operation is the state of the canal. The dredging operation carried out at great expense in 2013 was very disappointing. Many parts are still too shallow and this is being made worse by silt being washed into the water and by the prolific weed growth, further restricting the channel. We are hoping to get some spot dredging done shortly and the weeds are being tackled manually by volunteers. Chelsea the boat horse has also been helping with this. See page 23.

Some members have expressed concern that the FCC is now only concerned with *Birdswood* and the real purpose of restoring the canal is being overlooked.

Please be assured that this is not the case. The profits from *Birdswood* need to be spent on canal restoration as a condition of the original grant. The FCC Restoration Committee (formally the Engineering Team) is to concentrate in future on the first part of the canal from Langley Mill up to Ironville and eventually to Pinxton and the eastern portal of Butterley Tunnel. See more details on this in the Chairman's Notes opposite.

**Please remember the Annual General Meeting on April 18th. See page 14.**

**The press date for the Spring 2016 issue will be May 2nd**



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM



I am pleased to report that the Charity Commission has approved our application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and since January 1st we have operated under the new system. (Reasons for becoming a CIO in Portal Number 50 page 4) As far as the public is concerned we will be changing from Charity Number 1100700 to the new Charity Number of 1164608 but we stay with the name of the Friends of the Cromford Canal. With the change of Charity Commission accreditation we have taken the opportunity to change our bank to the Charity Aid Foundation which pays better interest than the HSBC. There should be little change as far as members are concerned, as we are assured that the membership Standing Orders will transfer without any problems. We shall be monitoring the change but if any of you do get problems please contact Yvonne Shattower or Bob Bullock.

The Shires Development plan to opencast a shallow coal seam at Langley Mill and then restore the first part of the canal with a small marina has come to an end as the long fought for Planning Application has expired. The Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association working party, under Mick Golds, had rebuilt the section of the canal beyond Langley Mill Boatyard; but has been waiting for three years for the open-casting to take place so that they could continue. Now that Planning Application has expired we need to progress a new application before work can continued; this is being actioned by our Engineering Team.

Pressure of work on our Engineering Team and members of the committee being tied up with Birdswood, the overall restoration plan had become neglected somewhat pending the work at Langley Mill. However, we have revised the group into the Restoration Committee and for the following reasons will concentrate on the section from Langley Mill to Ironville through to Pinxton and to the East Portal of Butterley Tunnel. They are :-

- i. It would give access from the national waterways network to the Cromford Canal.
- ii. It would provide environmental improvements to deprived urban areas of Derbyshire.
- iii. It would bring potential for economic development along its course.
- iv. It would potentially provide better drainage and reduce the flood risk for the Ironville and Pinxton areas.
- v. The cost of restoration could be in excess of £25million necessitating external funding.

To get towards that we are collating all the information we have accumulated over the years then getting professional advice on how we should go to continue the restoration above Langley Mill now that the opencast coal project has fallen by the wayside; and taking account of changes in other parts of possible routes. All this will form part of a proposed FCC plan for the next 5 years.

After organising the Sales for FCC over the past 12 years Val Roberts and Mike Harrison have decided to retire and on behalf of the Trustees and members I thank them for their efforts over the years. Matt Rogers had to step down as Chairman and has now had to finish with the Engineering Group due to pressure of work. My thanks to Matt for his past efforts but I hope his professional advice may still be available. We have a thriving committee but suffering from Anno Domini. We still need volunteers to run sales and assist with *Birdswood*, canal maintenance and the Restoration Committee; I hope some of you will come forward to help.



# BIRDSWOOD UPDATE

by Vix Wilding



Since the final Santa Special in December I have managed to see family over the Christmas period. I come from Bedfordshire and the majority of relatives still reside there, as do my husbands. We made the choice to live in the Peak District for the children and a slower pace of life. There are no regrets and we make regular trips to see everyone and they visit us too. My mum (pictured below) is a regular on *Birdswood* and always



contributes heavily to the tombola collections and raffle ticket sales. I have to say a huge thankyou to her because she continues to support Chris and I from so far away. She's even been known to drive the 100 miles just so we can both volunteer at the canal. The horse weekends are always tricky to balance as the children are still young and I have *Birdswood* and Chris is a volunteer at Leawood Pump.

Kit Stones you are the most amazing mother. I Love You Toads.

Well *Birdswood* may not be carrying passengers but that doesn't mean that I'm having a break! The events for the coming year are being finalised and you can see these on

pages 6 - 7. We have been working on recruiting new volunteers for the shop and crew members. There have been work parties that concentrate on clearing the channel for *Birdswood* to be able to pass through another season (see page 23), general boat maintenance and even an upgrade to seating. This work has been done by a dedicated team member David Ratner. I can't express my gratitude to him enough for giving so much personal time to this project. The seats are an excellent design and perfect for the needs of the customers. Can I also add thanks to his ever understanding wife Valerie who tolerates his hours in the workshop to create the frames. See also Mike Kelley's report on the new seats on the next page.

My time has been mainly taken up with a new website for *Birdswood*. The last 4 weeks have been spent gathering articles, stories, pictures, events and timetables to fill the pages of the site. We were fortunate enough to have a local company, Trailblazer360, approach us and offer a competitive rate to create this site for us. It's been a learning curve for me and developing an online booking service has been the most challenging. While it's easy to choose a single or return, adult or family, trying to programme a system to make these calculations for us was almost defeating. We believe it's there and as you read this the website will be live for you all to check out.

[www.birdswood.org](http://www.birdswood.org)



On top of all this we now have the ability to take card payments at the canal and online. This ensures bookings are paid upfront and the pleasure of the boat trip is not tainted by having to take money and issue tickets. This new contact point and booking system will be used to create an email contact list so we can send up to date information about events and breaking news. If you would like to hear first about these things please subscribe by clicking the subscription link in the right hand column of the main pages.

I have a couple more weeks before the season officially starts on Saturday 19th March with Mothers Day and a couple of charters before that. The 10th March is the official opening of The Gateway over at the Arkwright Society. This is an Information Centre for the whole of The World Heritage Site and provides visitors with everything that is happening and what's open up and down the Derwent Valley. There is an interactive map, media show and loads of information. Please find time to support this new development as we all have a vested interest in its success.

Hope to see you all soon and please make yourself known to me. I'd love to put faces to names. Vix Wilding.

## NEW SEATS FOR BIRDSWOOD

by Mike Kelley

When we purchased *Birdswood*, it is fair to say the seats had seen better days. They were made of discarded wood, were heavy and took up a lot of space. Also they frequently became dislodged from their 'loose' fixings every time passengers left the boat. Similarly the tables left a lot to be desired. The swinging leg, which supported each table, would become easily knocked out of place. Not really the best thing for us. We knew both seating and tables would have to be renewed; trouble was we were looking at figures of around £6,000 for a company to make and fit a complete new set!

Then along came an FCC stalwart David Ratner, with his own original design for both seats and tables. This design is rigid and takes up less space. He has his own workshop at home so he offered to make up a complete set of seats and tables for us. Bit by bit, he has been constructing these in his workshop over this winter and then

installing them within the boat. He has promised to have them finished before the start of the new season; and all he charged us for is the cost of the materials, a fraction of the price above. This design is quite clever and I can recommend it for similar trip boats to consider. I am sure you will join with me in thanking David for this work and for his dedication to the FCC.



The first of the new seats in place. David's design of the steel frames looks smart and gives more floor space for both passengers and crew.

Mike Kelley



# BIRDSWOOD SPECIAL EVENTS 2016

Organised by Vix Wilding

## **Mother's Day March 6th**

Mothers travel free. Refreshments included. £5 each person over 1yr.  
See poster on page 8.

## **Easter March 27th & 28th**

Horse Drawn Trips. Departing 11am & 2pm.  
Come along and help decorate our Super-sized Easter Eggs.

## **Georgian Weekend May 28th & 29th.**

Arraslea Shires attending with Horse and Wagonette for rides along the meadows.  
Maximum 4 passengers at a time £5 per person. 11am - 4pm.



## **Discovery Walks June 11th & 12th.**

Inside the gothic building with sales stand, historical displays, model boat demonstrations and guided walks. Sponsored Toddle for younger members.

## **Father's Day June 19th.**

Fathers travel free. Refreshments included. £5 each person over 1 yr.



## Scarecrow Weekend August 6h & 7th.

Scarecrow competition and displays inside gothic warehouse and on the Wharf.

**Forest Schools for all ages Thursdays in August.** 11am -1pm on the Wharf. Free activities. Bring a picnic. Vouchers for boat rides available on the day.



## Pirate Day August 27th.

All aboard the Black Pearl. Fancy dress competition, treasure hunt and family games. Cast Away at 11am and 2pm. £5 each person over 1 yr.

## Halloween October 28th

Departure at 2pm, Creepy cakes and devilish drinking on board. Prizes for best costumes and family games. £5 each person over 1 yr.

## Discovery Days October 29th&30th

Horse Drawn Trips departing at 11 am & 2pm. Wild Over Waterways family activities, Model Boat Displays, Traction Engines, Tombolas and much more.

## Santa Specials

Running each weekend in December. Adults only Carol Service, all bookings only. More details to follow.







# March 6th Mother's Day

Why not treat your special lady to a gentle cruise on Cromford Canal?

Seats sold at the usual price (adults £8, seniors £6.50, children £4) but accompanying ladies travel free

Refreshments are included

Departure times of 11am and 2pm available

Booking advisable - to reserve your seats

[Bookings@cromfordcanal.org](mailto:Bookings@cromfordcanal.org)

07552 055 455



It is a fact: BROMFORD is a world class destination.  
**The Friends of the Cromford Canal**  
Supporting Canal & Locks  
[www.cromfordcanal.org](http://www.cromfordcanal.org) Visit us on Facebook at Cromford



Derbyshire Wildlife Trust  
Local Council  
an Environment  
First & Green Trust

Recognized to support the  
Local Authority's objectives to  
improve the environment and  
to enhance the local economy  
and to support the local community.





# 2016 Horse Days and Leawood Pumphouse

March 27th & 28th

May 1st & 2nd

June 4th & 5th

July 3rd

August 6th, 7th, 28th & 29th

September 17th & 18th

October 1st, 2nd, 29th & 30th



**Departure 11.00 or 14.00 from Cromford Wharf  
(single or return)**

**12.15pm or 15.15 High Peak Junction  
(single only)**



**Prices held from 2015**

**Booking Advisable**

**07552 055 455**

**boat@cromfordcanal.org**



This boat is owned and operated by  
**The Friends of the Cromford Canal**  
a registered charity  
www.cromfordcanal.org.uk Make us an Employer or Volunteer



Department  
for Environment,  
Food & Rural Affairs

This project is supported by the  
Local Government Partnership for England,  
to which we thank the Metropolitan Council,  
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for Rural Development through the Rural Development





# NEWS FROM THE NORTH

## Cromford Canal - Cromford to Ambergate

### Update - January 2016

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

Photos by Hugh Potter

#### Volunteer work parties

Despite the winter weather regular practical work parties by the Friends are taking place, often fortnightly on Tuesdays, sometimes at weekends. If you feel you could assist and help improve the canal please contact the Countryside Service or John Barker the FCC work party organiser. Volunteers have helped to keep the navigation channel clear, cleared silt traps and vegetation. This volunteer input is much needed and appreciated.

#### Whatstandwell canal spillway, January to March 2016

Work is underway to construct a new weir north of Whatstandwell close to the ground paddle at Simms bridge; it will feed into an existing stream course. An overspill weir is being constructed that is 4m wide. This will enable flood waters to flow away, reducing the potential of the canal overflowing or the canal breaching its banks in storm and flood conditions.

The top section of the Cromford canal was built with very few overflows, to help serve the locks to the south east. Practical experience backed up by a hydrology report has shown that this weir is needed. For a few weeks there will be a temporary bridge and short diversion in place into the woodland on the east of the canal. This will enable a culvert to be constructed under the canal towpath. The work should be completed before spring. The water levels will need to be lowered between the overbridge and the nip that houses the canal stop planks. While levels are down work is also planned to extend the clay bund on the far canal bank to reduce the possibility of canal leaks.





## Towpath improvements

After schemes to resurface sections of towpath each year for the last 5 years, the project is finally finished. The full 5.5 mile length of towpath from Cromford to Ambergate is now in good condition and this should make the canal more appealing to a wide range of visitors. The section of towpath from Lawn Bridge (opposite Cromford Meadows Rugby Club) to the High Peak Junction swing bridge was resurfaced in time for Christmas.



*Top:* The surfaced towpath seen from Whatstandwell Bridge. The car park here is being used by the contractors on the overspill weir job.  
*Bottom:* Walkers enjoying the excellent towpath at Chase Bridge.





Tree clearance from the canal embankment and retaining wall has opened up the fine view across the Derwent Valley.

### **Tree work**

Over the winter we have been felling trees that were growing in and around the retaining walls that support the canal and on canal embankments. With the canal being a manmade structure, tree roots can dislodge and damage the canal walls and in some cases the tree root plate can get blown over. The main areas are between High Peak Junction and Whatstandwell. Network Rail is planning to de vegetate the canal retaining wall that is in its ownership south of Whatstandwell Station through towards Crich Chase.

### **Countryside Service Re Structure**

Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service now has a new management structure. Sites with a high visitor focus will be managed by a Destination Site team, all other sites will be managed by a wider sites team. I will continue to be responsible for the management of Cromford Canal from Cromford to High Peak Junction and the High Peak Trail up to and including Middleton Top. My colleague Paul Finn will take on the role I have had in co-ordinating the management of the canal from Aqueduct cottage through to Ambergate. However day to day works will be carried out by staff still based at Middleton Top.

**For further information, please feel free to contact:**

**Assistant Area Managers Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service**

**Rick Jillings at Middleton Top Visitor Centre on 01629 823204 or**

**Paul Finn at Hayfield Information Centre on 01663 746222**



# ALL OUR YESTERDAYS - HOW IT ALL BEGAN

by the Editor

You will have read in the chairman's notes that now the planning application for the proposed opencast coal operations at Langley Mill has expired, the FCC Restoration Committee intend to turn their attention to restoration of the Cromford Canal from Langley Mill up to Ironville and beyond. This has been a long-held ambition of mine ever since I first worked on the canal at Langley Mill.

I also recently came across the picture on the front cover which was taken on May 26th 1973. It shows the first time I ever steered my boat on the Cromford Canal. The occasion is the re-opening of Langley Bridge Lock at Langley Mill by the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association of which I have been a member for over 45 years.

The opening ceremony was an event which none of us who were involved will ever forget. My part in the proceedings was to transport the Long Lea Valley Brass Band on my boat along the canal from Bailey Grove and into Langley Bridge Lock while they played suitably rousing music, and then round into the Great Northern Basin.

When some 20 members of the band came on board with their instruments, I began to get a little apprehensive. As the picture shows, most of the band were either in the open front deck of the boat or on the front end of the roof (apart from the bass drummer who was inside and almost deafened my mother). This meant that the boat was not only rather top heavy, but also the weight was too far forward, meaning that the propellor was partly out of the water. So the boat was unstable and reverse gear was almost ineffective. I remember saying to the band "For goodness sake sit still!"

However, the whole thing was an amazing success. I couldn't believe how many people there were on the lockside as we came under the bridge with the band playing for all they were worth. I came in very slowly, hitting the sill with only a moderate impact, as I had no chance of stopping. But the band hardly missed a note and surprisingly, none of the spectators on the lockside fell in. We were all young and foolish in those days.

The picture below, taken on the same occasion, is looking up the very short length of Cromford Canal which was then navigable above the lock. Note the dodgems in the background on the still-infilled canal bed. This event led on not only to the saving of the Erewash Canal, but turned attention on to the Cromford Canal and almost 30 years later to the formation of the FCC. And the rest, as they say, is history. Happy days!



Michael Golds Collection



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the  
**Fourteenth Annual General Meeting**  
of the Friends of the Cromford Canal will be held on  
**Monday April 18th 2016**  
at the Church Hall, Ironville, commencing at 7.30pm.

## AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual General Meeting on Monday April 20th 2015.
3. Matters arising.
4. Report of the Chairman.
5. Report of the Treasurer and presentation of the accounts for 2015.
6. Adoption of the accounts.
7. Election of Trustees. See Note 1 below.
8. Change to the Constitution
9. Reports by Officers. See Note 2 below
10. Any other business.

Minutes of the Thirteenth AGM are reproduced on pages 15 - 18.

Please bring this Portal to the meeting as further copies will not be available.

The accounts for the year ending December 31st 2015 will be available at the meeting.

Note 1. The Friends of the Cromford Canal is managed by up to 12 Trustees assisted by a number of other members with about 12 meetings a year. The Trustees are responsible to the Charity Commission for the organisation of the Friends and reports are sent to the Commission each year. The Trustees are elected for a three year term of office; this year John Barker and Judy Berry retire by rotation and are willing to stand for a further term. Mike Kelley was co-opted as a Trustee during the year and now seeks election for a full term. Chris Jacklin has decided to resign for personal reasons and there is one trustee vacancy. Nominations for these persons and any further nominations for election as Trustees must be submitted in writing before March 21st to:

**John Baylis, 215 Clipstone Avenue West, Forest Town, Mansfield, Notts. NG19 0HJ**

Nomination forms are available from the Executive Secretary and must be signed by the proposer, the seconder and the nominee who must all be FCC members. The full list of nominees with a short CV will be on the Website towards the end of March; a paper copy can be requested from the Executive Secretary.

Note 2. Whether or not we need to use this item depends on a reply from the Charity Commission, but it is included so that if necessary it can be approved at this AGM.

In Clause 13 (5) sentence 2: Appointment of an additional Trustee by the Trustees "A person so appointed by the charity trustees shall retire at the conclusion of the next annual general meeting after the date of his or her appointment, and shall not be counted for the purpose of determining which of the charity trustees is to retire by rotation at that meeting." Shall be deleted and replaced with "A person so appointed by the charity trustees shall retire at the start of the next annual general meeting after the date of his or her appointment.

**John Baylis BEM, Executive Secretary**

**The Annual General meeting will be followed by a presentation by George Rogers on engineering aspects of restoration on the Cromford Canal.**



# Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Cromford Canal (FCC) held at 7.30pm on Monday, April 20th 2015, at the Church Hall, Ironville.

## Present

Committee: John Baylis (Acting Chairman), John Barker, Judy Berry, Bob Bullock, Chris Jacklin, Pat Morriss, Yvonne Shattower, (Trustees), John Boucher (Honorary Consulting Engineer), Mike Harrison, Mike Kelley, Dave Ratner, George Rogers, Hugh Potter, Val Roberts and Howard Smith.

There were 35 other Members and 0 visitors.

## 1. Apologies for absence

Mr and Mrs Harworth, Martin Longbottom, The Rev Steve Parish, Eric and Beryl Singleton, Sheila Smith and Vix Wilding.

## 2. Minutes of the previous AGM

The minutes of the Twelfth Annual General Meeting held on April 28th 2014 had been circulated. Their adoption was proposed by John Barker, seconded by Jan Colombo and carried unanimously.

## 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

## 4. Report of the Chairman

John Baylis thanked Matthew Rogers who had to retire as chairman soon after the last AGM due to pressure of work. John also thanked Mike Kelley who had retired as a Trustee after the last AGM.

The main work of the FCC during 2014 had centred on the operation of *Birdswood* at Cromford Wharf. The operation was managed by Mike Kelley for most of the year and then, in November, the FCC began employing Vix Wilding as *Birdswood* Operations Manager; this employment being part of the Defra grant agreement for the purchase of *Birdswood*. The first year of operation had been very successful and John thanked all the Masters and crew for their efforts. John hoped the FCC had also improved the safety and maintenance of the boat for the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

The agricultural work on the canal had been largely organised by John Barker. This has included the adoption of the Canal & River Trust's Ironville Locks, work for Derbyshire County Council on the Cromford Section and the adoption of the Hartshay section. In addition there had been a Waterway Recovery Group camp in the summer and John thanked Matthew and George Rogers for the organisation of this work. Then in November there was a weekend with WRG North West at Cromford.

In addition to the work areas, the Engineering Committee had been involved with the Langley Mill Extension, a new Lawn Bridge at Ironville, the Stevenson's Dyeworks site development and methods of getting *Birdswood* out of the water for a hull inspection by the MCA. Towards the end of the year the FCC was prompted by the need to find a solution for Smotherfly where UK Coal or Harworth Estates do not appear to be interested in final restoration. There had been complaints from Pinxton residents and Rambling





organisations; but the FCC does not want to lose the £35,000 it has already spent on planning. DCC have said there is no bond for final restoration so the Engineering Committee have been getting estimates from other contractors who might be able to do the work. As a charity it should be possible for the FCC to obtain a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund or similar to complete the restoration. This would not be available to UK Coal or the DCC.

At the end of his report John Baylis thanked John Barker as Vice Chair, Bob Bullock as Treasurer, Judy Berry as Minutes Secretary, Yvonne Shattower as Membership Secretary and the other Trustees for their support. In addition he thanked Beryl and Eric Singleton, Val Roberts and Mike Harrison for their Sales Team work. With Beryl and Eric Singleton stepping down John thanked them for their work over many years as Trustee, Boat Master, crew and sales personnel; they will be sorely missed. Mike Harrison was thanked for editing the Portal, John Boucher, the FCC's Consulting Engineer, Hugh Potter the FCC's Archivist, Dave Ratner the Social Meeting organiser and George Rogers, Webmaster as well as all other committee members.

John Baylis completed his report by thanking all the members for their support and others who will help to further the aims of the Friends of the Cromford Canal.

## 5. Treasurer's Report

Bob Bullock reported that the end of year balance was £51,909.12 which included a full year of operating *Birdswood*. The total income for *Birdswood* was £29,653.04 with a total expenditure of £10,941.03 but depreciation of the boat needed, and will always need, to be taken into account. With the hull depreciating at a slower rate than the fixtures and fittings, its depreciation rate was set at 5% backdated to when the FCC first took possession of the boat. Replacement costs caused by depreciation of the boat's batteries, windows and seating were set at 25%, again backdated to when the FCC first took possession. The total depreciation costs were £7,184.72 resulting in a clear profit for *Birdswood* of £11,527.29. Along with other canal and waterway groups the FCC has already agreed to provide a sum of £2,500 from these profits to support the employment of Susan White, DCC Waterways Officer.

Bob reported that the FCC was now working with the accountancy group Community Accounting Plus. This is a charity whose only role is to support other charities and has been instrumental in setting up the contract and pay roll for Vix Wilding and helping the FCC develop new accountancy systems.

It had been hoped to move the FCC's bank account to the Charity Aid Foundation but this requires we pay in money through a HSBC bank. Unfortunately the HSBC bank in Matlock is to close at the end of May 2015 so the FCC needs to look for another bank which operates on-line but also requires two authorisations. Bob expects the FCC to have two accounts; one for *Birdswood* and one for the general FCC funds.

In response to questions from the floor, Bob explained that all funds were cash based rather than in savings bonds, the apparent increase in postage costs was due to a bulk purchase of stamps ahead of a rise in their cost and that the deposits listed in the *Birdswood* accounts were those made at the time charters were pre booked. John Baylis explained that the apparent drop in the hire of the hall for social meetings was due to all meetings in 2014 having been held at Ironville Church Hall when, in 2013, one meeting had been held at the more expensive Swanwick venue. A member asked if the Portal should be sent to members electronically rather than as a magazine. Yvonne Shattower responded that not all members had email and a survey carried out by George Rogers had resulted in just 20 members taking up the offer to receive the Portal solely by electronic means.



Bob thanked all volunteers who continue to spend many hours preparing and getting *Birdswood* onto the water and to the volunteers who crew her.

He also thanked Community Accounting Plus for auditing the accounts.

## **6. Adoption of the Accounts**

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Jack Brown, seconded by Peter Brookes and carried unanimously.

## **7. Election of Trustees**

Two Trustees had retired by rotation and sought re-election, one Trustee had been co-opted during the year and sought election and one Trustee had retired for personal reasons. There were two further nominations resulting in five nominees for five vacancies. Mr Hogarth proposed the Trustees were voted for en bloc, this was seconded by John Boucher and carried unanimously. The elected Trustees were:

John Baylis, nominated by Judy Berry and seconded by Howard Smith.

Bob Bullock, nominated by Eric Singleton and seconded by Mike Harrison.

Ian Hooker, nominated by John Baylis and seconded by Howard Smith.

Jack Brown nominated by John Barker and seconded by John Baylis.

Dave Martin, nominated by John Barker and seconded by Bob Bullock.

## **8. Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

John Baylis advised members this is progressing slowly. The draft constitution has been completed but the new banking arrangements need to be formalised for the Charity Commission to accept the application. As there had been no formal approval by the membership to progress the Charitable Incorporated Organisation status, John Baylis requested approval from the floor. Approval was formally proposed by Bob Bullock, seconded by Ian Hooker and carried unanimously.

## **9. Reports by Officers**

### **a) Membership Report**

Yvonne Shattower reported another increase in the membership from 924 in 2013 to 967 in 2014. This included 162 life members (150 in 2013), 2 corporate businesses and 8 corporate charities including the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association. Sadly the FCC lost 3 life members. Seven lapsed members returned.

There remains one problem. In excess of 80 members have still to increase their standing orders to the new rate.

Yvonne thanked all those members who deliver the *Portal* on behalf of the FCC and Joan Greaves who so ably provides the tea and coffee during the FCC meetings.

### **b) Archive Report**

Hugh Potter reported that it been another busy year with various acquisitions as well as answering questions which ranged from family history through to helping local artists produce accurate historic scenes and assisting in restoration schemes. He had assisted with both the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Audio Trail which raised £1,000 for the FCC and with the DerwentWISE project regarding Leawood Aqueduct Cottage.

Hugh had also assisted with background information to the Stevenson's development. At the last AGM Hugh had asked for transcribers for some mid - 20th century archives. These are now almost completed giving a picture of what was taking place on the canal in its final years as a working waterway and after its closure.

Hugh reported that the transcription of the permits (boats through Langley Mill) continued with the list standing at over 36,000 due entirely to June Crump's work. These



give a fascinating insight into boat movements and the cargoes carried. Hugh thanked June Crump for all her work.

Hugh reported the imminent publication of the first volume of the *Minutes of the Cromford Canal Company* by Derbyshire Record Society. It is due out in May and will be available at a special price to FCC members. Details will be in the next Portal.

#### **c) Webmaster Report**

George Rogers thanked Hugh Potter, Neil Quarmby and Chris Wilding for taking on the maintenance of the website. George is now primarily concerned with the management of email systems and the hosting infrastructure.

George reported that he is in discussions with Vix Wilding and has begun work on splitting the boat pages off into a separate website. The aim is to launch it at the end of the year in readiness for the 2016 season. The new website will retain much of the style and layout of the FCC website but with separate branding and website address. It will be possible to tell the two sites belong to the same organisation but they will be distinct from each other. Developing the new site will provide opportunities for George to test some changes to the way the website responds to being viewed on different sized screens on phones or tablets. These changes could be rolled out to the FCC website in due course. In addition George is looking more closely at online bookings/sales. He would welcome any suggestions and further offers of support.

#### **d) Sales report**

Mike Harrison thanked Eric and Beryl Singleton for their work in the sales team and for the excellent job they had done over many years. Eric and Beryl's decision to resign means a huge loss to the FCC who will now be requiring a new Sales Officer and team.

#### **e) Portal Report**

Mike Harrison reported he was just completing *Portal* Number 53 with the first issue he produced being number 24. He added a request for anyone to submit material as it was always good to have articles from different people and so long as people kept sending him new material he was happy to continue in his role. Mike Kelley congratulated Mike Harrison on *Portal* being the best magazine of its kind.

#### **f) Birdswood Report**

Mike Kelley reported a very successful first year on *Birdswood* with over 5,500 passengers. Many, many hours had been spent satisfying the exacting standards required by both Defra and the MCA. Mike gave a personal thanks to Vix Wilding for taking over his role seamlessly.

#### **g) Work Party Report**

John Barker reported that the work parties had undertaken over 600 hours work at Ironville, the route from Cromford to High Peak Junction and at Lower Hartshay. This covered anything from reed pulling, to clearing footpaths and silt trap clearance. There had also been a request for work at another section of the canal.

In response to a question from the floor, John Baylis advised that the work to be undertaken at Lock 4 by the Waterway Recovery Group summer camp would be discussed with C&RT and a member of the Reservoir Inspectorate on 20th May 2015.

Jack Brown MBE thanked Peter Clarke and the working party at Ironville for all the work undertaken there which has made the whole area better for the village of Ironville.

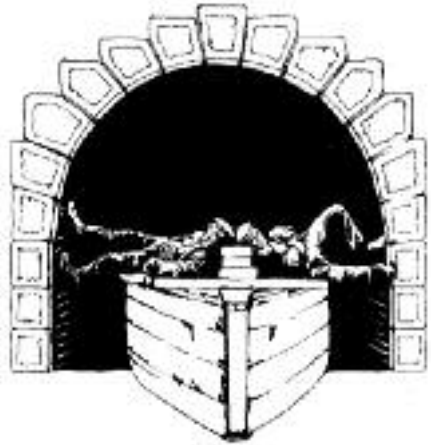
### **10. Any Other Business**

There were no other matters of business.

The meeting closed at 20.40 hours



# REPORT BY THE TRUSTEES of the FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL FOR 2015



During the year we have been progressing the new Constitution for the Friends of the Cromford Canal based on the Charity Commission draft for an Association Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This was completed at the end of November when the Commission gave us the new CIO Number 1164608. The old Charity 1100700 was used up to December 31st. and the CIO started on January 1st. 2016. The Trustees have also taken the opportunity to change the accounts to the Charity Aid Foundation which gives a better rate of interest. When the accounts for 2015 have been finalised Charity 1100700 will be closed.

The passenger trip boat *Birdswood* has had another successful year with a small increase in passengers and takings from 2014; however, the employment of a part time manager will be an additional cost. The employment of local people was a requirement of the Defra grant from the Rural Development Programme for England. In addition to the Boat Operations Manager we have employed a local towing horse and part time sales person. Following changes to the Arkwright Society café at Cromford Wharf the FCC has been able to lease part of the Gothic Warehouse as a boat office and sales outlet. Several new Boatmasters have been approved by the M&CA and crew members are being trained.

In November the boat was craned out at Cromford for its biennial inspection by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency following which new hydraulic pipes were fitted and the hull blacked. Towards the end of the year new roll-up plastic windows have been fitted and over the New Year break new seats are being fitted.

During the year the final *Birdswood* profit of about £11,500 accrued in 2014 has been spent on volunteer work on the section of the Cromford Canal used by *Birdswood* and the rest of the canal; this is a requirement of our Derbyshire County Council licence. This year work has been carried out on Brown's Swing Bridge at High Peak Junction, a Waterway Recovery Group Canal Camp at Ironville, support of the DCC Waterways Officer and some dredging is planned at High Peak Junction. .

The FCC working parties have continued agricultural and tree maintenance work on the section of the Cromford Canal in and below Ironville and this has been with the co-operation and help from the owners, the Canal & River Trust and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. In addition the Friends have been meeting with Bullbridge And Sawmills Amenity group to discuss possible plans for the old Stevenson's site. The FCC has also instituted a Strategic Restoration committee to progress restoration northwards from Langley Mill to Pinxton and Butterley Tunnel.

John Baylis, BEM  
Trustee, February 2016



# SANTA SPECIALS 2015

Report and pictures by Nic Barfield

*Birdswood's* 2015 season came to a memorable end with no fewer than 14 Santa Special cruises running on seven dates from early December to just two days before Christmas. The success of the Man in Red's onboard residency in 2014, when almost 300 people travelled with us spread over nine Santa Specials, had given us a target to beat... And beat it we did, with over 500 passengers of all ages enjoying festive fayre, spirited seasonal singing and a beautifully decorated *Birdswood*.





Santa gave away over 220 copies of Muddy Waters narrowboat story books to happy youngsters, along with a similar number of bags of chocolate coins. We also served up hundreds of portions of Christmas cake, shortbread, stollen and other seasonal sweetmeats, not to mention gallons of hot drinks, squash and spiced apple punch.

Demand for the Santa Specials was boosted by extra advertising this year, and we were so busy that Santa had to work shifts! (Since it's unlikely that any under-10s are reading this, we'll own up to the fact that it wasn't always the same red-cheeked, twinkly-eyed gent behind the bushy white beard. Thank you, Santas - one and all...) And his elves and Little Helpers were a well-drilled hospitality team by the time we disembarked the final boatload of sated customers on the afternoon of 23rd December. An added bonus for passengers on the final day was a special appearance by Lance and Corinne from Arraslea Shires with boat-horse Chelsea in reindeer disguise...



Some careful tweaking of this year's event marketing saw 'Festive Foursome' tickets offered at an all-in price of just £30. These proved very popular, and several families remarked what good value our event was compared with other Santa trips that they had been on.

With good weather on all but a couple of days, full boats on several trips, and much happiness and goodwill spread far and wide, the 2015 Santa Specials were a major success. They also gave the year's passenger loadings and revenues a major boost, so all the extra effort was definitely worth it. Our thanks go out to all the volunteers who assisted, and to all who travelled with us. See you all again later this year, when we'll be trying hard to beat 2015's excellent figures!



## ROTARY CLUB AGAIN GIVES SUPPORT TO THE FCC

by the Editor

One of the ways in which Mike Kelley has greatly helped us over the years is giving illustrated talks about the FCC to a large number of different groups and organisations throughout the local area. This is a vital part of informing people of the FCC aims and ambitions and encouraging support.

One group to which Mike gave two talks was Belper and Duffield Rotary Club, who as a result gave a generous donation of £250 to the FCC. This was used towards the purchase of a Stihl FS70 strimmer which will be put to good use in the future for canal side vegetation clearance. This machine was presented to the FCC recently at Cromford Wharf.

The picture below shows (L-R) John Barker (FCC Vice Chairman and Work Party Organiser), Mrs Eileen Murphy (President of Belper and Duffield Rotary Club) presenting the strimmer to John Dyson, (FCC work party regular and, together with Wayne Scarle, a certificated user of the machine having successfully completed a brush cutter training course run by the Canal and River Trust) and Mike Kelley, whose talks made this possible.

**See page 32 for forthcoming work party dates and locations.**





## KEEPING THE CHANNEL CLEAR

by the Editor

The length of the Cromford Canal from Cromford Wharf to Leewood Pump is among the most scenic in the country, passing as it does through the charming Derwent Valley. However the downside to this is that, because it has a supply of clean water, free from industrial pollution, the weed growth in the canal can be considerable in the summer.

This means that the weed encroaches on the navigable channel and makes the passage of *Birdswood* more difficult. Recent work parties have therefore been removing some of the reeds in readiness for this year's trips, as shown in these pictures by Hugh Potter.



*Above:* The channel width is looking better after much hard work by the volunteers.  
*Below:* Chelsea is bringing some extra horsepower to the operation.







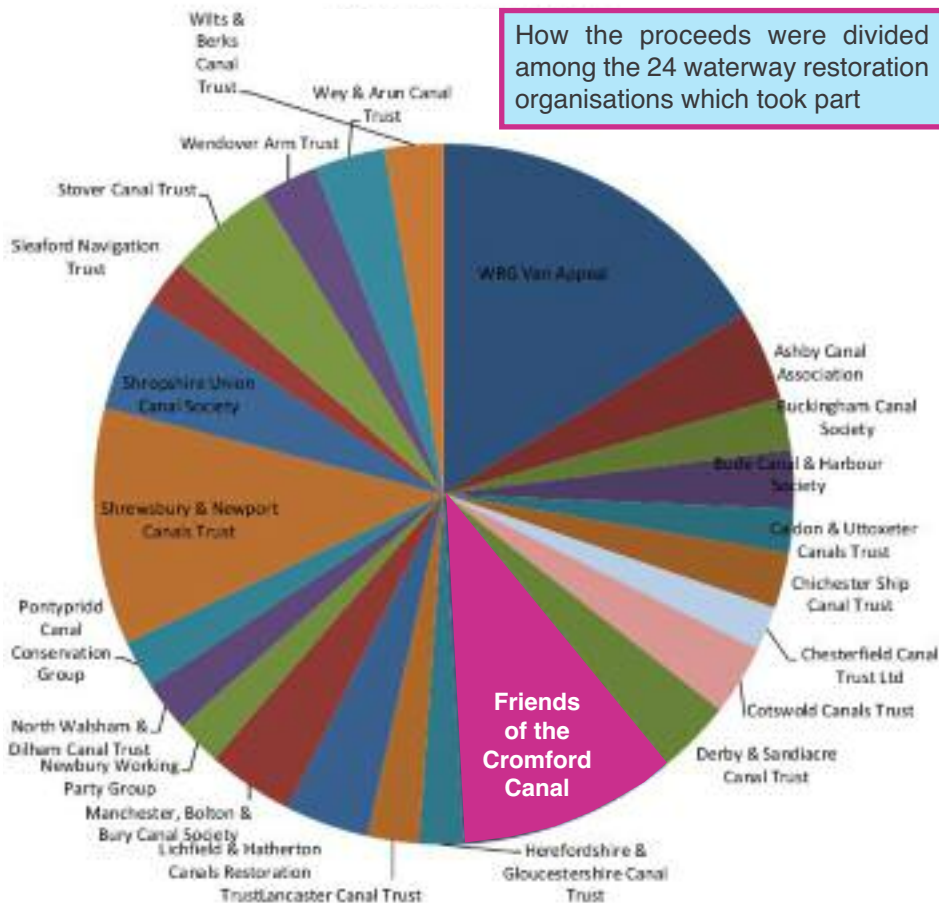
# THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION RAFFLE

by the Editor

Many members will remember that, following our success in 2014, the FCC again took part in the national raffle run by the Inland Waterways Association in support of many waterway restoration societies nationwide in 2015. This was a very successful project and raised over £14,000 in total. This figure was divided between all the organisations who supported the scheme by selling tickets, and again the number sold by the FCC was very pleasing. In January, our chairman received a letter of thanks from the IWA together with a cheque for the FCC's share of the proceeds which amounted to £1329. A very good result, and our thanks go not only to those who bought the tickets, but also to the volunteers who stamped the FCC name on them and others who made the effort to sell them. Well done all, and we look forward to this year's raffle.

The tickets sold by each participating group are shown on the pie chart below. It will be seen that the FCC finished in a very creditable third place.

How the proceeds were divided among the 24 waterway restoration organisations which took part





**The success of this IWA Restoration Raffle depends on the generous donation of prizes by waterway-related businesses. Details of the companies who donated the ten prizes and the winners in each case were as follows:**

**1st Prize - M C Ford** - A one-week boating holiday on a six-berth narrow boat with Wyvern Shipping, worth up to £1,500

**2nd Prize - M Bowen** - A three-night or four-night boating holiday on a four-berth narrow boat with Andersen Boats, worth up to £700

**3rd Prize - D Abbott** - A weekend boating holiday on a four-berth narrow boat with Canal Cruising Company, worth £590

**4th Prize - S Tart** - A two-night boating break in March 2016, on a two-berth boat with Cambrian Cruisers, worth £559

**5th Prize - K Elphick** - A one-night boating holiday on up to a four berth boat with Calcutt Boats, worth up to £300

**6th Prize - D Stevenson** - A one-day boat hire with ABC Leisure for up to 12 people in 2016

**7th Prize - H Fuller** - A pair of 2016 Crick Festival weekend tickets, with a choice of free campsite or mooring pitch, from Waterways World

**8th Prize - D Brenni** - £100 of vouchers for Midland Chandlers

**9th Prize - M Pattison** - 12 months subscription to Canal Boat and a copy of four of their books

**10th Prize - P Manley** - A small jug hand painted in the traditional narrowboat style, from Stone Boat Building Chandlery

## **FORTHCOMING MEMBERS' SOCIAL MEETINGS**

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 end of the year.

There is a bar, tea & coffee and raffle available at all meetings. Admission is £2.

- **March 21st** - THE IDLE WOMEN - WOMEN ON THE CANAL BOATS IN THE LAST WAR - Mike Constable

- **April 18th - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**including an engineering update by George Rogers (free admission)**

- **May 16th** - AMBERGATE UNDERGROUND RESERVOIR - Anthony Healey
- **June 20th** - TOP GEAR AT THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY - Bill Devit
- **July/August** - No Meetings
- **September 19th** - RESERVOIRS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL - David Brown
- **October 17th** - THE PENTRICH REVOLUTION - Michael Parkin
- **November 16th** - CANAL RESTORATION AND CRUISING - Michael Golds
- **December** - CHRISTMAS SOCIAL - To be arranged



# THE MOST VALUABLE ASSET THE FCC HAS

by John Guyler

As with all charities, run with the efforts of volunteers, the most valuable assets are the volunteers themselves.

The FCC, since its formation fourteen years ago, has been supported by individuals and a number of married couples who have given their time, mainly at their own expense. So in 2015 I have been recording the volunteer numbers and the hours of support that volunteers gave to the FCC in canal related manual activities.

I apologise to those who have given time and a great deal of effort, such as sales, boat cleaning and many other tasks, for not including them in this summary, it just started off recording work-party details. But the hours, I now realise, are so valuable in proving credibility whenever the FCC applies for project support grants, a more comprehensive record of all hours given needs to be activated. Even if it's just to prove the commitment and support is there.

- Work parties mainly on the Cromford / Leewood stretch and sometimes, at the request of DCC rangers, work is undertaken on the stretch to Whatstandwell and on to Ambergate. (474.5 hrs)
- Ironville work parties are mainly on the Codnor Park flight of locks, to clear the canal line, both banks and the towpath of litter, general rubbish and undergrowth. One FCC member is a volunteer Ranger for the Canal and River Trust (CRT); he undertakes regular tests of the water quality and together with the work parties has had a notable success in the control of dog fouling. (1223 hrs)
- At Lower Hartshay volunteers have inspected and removed the cause of over topping at one point, also on the same stretch an inspection accompanied by a CRT inspector, discovered a serious sewerage leak into the canal, which required immediate action from Severn Trent. (35.75 hrs)
- Pinxton, there was a survey visit and one work party. (42 hrs)
- The Wheatcroft Cromford office was cleared, decorated inside and out, fitted out and commissioned. (206 hrs)
- Wheatcroft Cromford office customer support. (532 hrs)
- *Birdswood* crew working throughout the season and in some really foul weather, to give the large number of visitors a good experience. (3500 hrs)
- The Heritage Weekend volunteers, to show the FCC at its best. (339 hrs)
- The *Birdswood* inspection in November, required preparation for the lift out, hull cleaning, the hull inspection, hull painting, changing the hydraulic pipes to the drive, from the gearbox to the prop, return to water. (216 hrs)
- Replacement seats - the design, prototype fit and build the new seats so far fitted in *Birdswood*. (270 hrs)
- Replacement windows - 20hrs hours for fitting. (hours for design and commission of manufacturing unknown).
- Work undertaken by the Waterways Recovery Group, July & December not included in this summary.

This summary as I have stated is for mainly manual hours. There is a large amount of work by the FCC officers, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Engineering and everyone who works behind the scenes, going to meetings and activities, making the FCC the success it is. Very often this is done at their own expense, both financially and time spent. These hours are not yet monitored, but I am willing to bet, they are considerable.



# POETRY COMPETITION

by Adrian Minshull (Volunteer on *Birdswood*)

I have two tea towels, well, actually I have more than two but only two with poems/anecdotal verse on them. Both are used for their given purpose i.e. wiping the dishes, after they have been through the process of being washed, yet these verses give me a smile every time I come to reminding myself of their content.

This gave me an idea (dangerous I know). On the Friends of the Cromford Canal's sales stand, that I may say has done us proud in raising a good deal of funds, we do sell tea towels with a picture of *Birdswood*, our beloved trip boat, on them, which if you aren't aware i.e. you have been on another planet and not had chance to view the *Portal* recently, plies the stretch of the Cromford Canal between Cromford Wharf & Leewood Pump House (Saturdays, Sundays & Wednesdays) to the delight of those who have ventured to enjoy a day out in the Derbyshire Dales.

Where were we?

Ah yes. No verse though. So, my idea was to have a competition among you, our beloved *Portal* readers. My poetry skills I consider to be poor but I am pretty sure that amongst our 900+ members, there are literary geniuses waiting to be found. Whether it be you or one of your family, the art of articulating poetic prose must surely abound. So, in wanting to keep our sales stock refreshed and attractive to buy we would like you or your family members or a team effort to conjure up and donate a witty or relevant poem to put on a tea towel. The top twenty poems may even make it into a small book of poems but we will have to see what the standard is like. I can only imagine the standard will be very high so there will be a book of poems for you to purchase that will put a smile on your face each time you come to look at it and remind yourself of their content.

The rules:

- There must somewhere in the poem be a reference to Friends of the Cromford Canal or *Birdswood* or both and any of the many places/bridges on the line of Cromford Canal.
- The poem should be no longer than 4 verses & no more than 4 lines per verse or one stanza of 16 lines or however you wish to divide 16 lines.
- The winner will be judged by our President Brian Blessed, Mike Kelley (author) and by Cromford Parish Councillor Carol Easton.
- Prize for the winner will be two free tickets or a family ticket to ride on *Birdswood* on a horse pull day and a copy of the book of poems created by you the winner and the 19 runners up and an FCC t-shirt and of course a tea towel that you have helped us create (please state size of t-shirt and whether you would like two tickets or a family ticket on your reply). The 19 runners up will receive a copy of the book of poems along with an FCC bookmark and a tea towel.
- We cannot accept any poems under copyright unless you are the owner of the copyright and state that you are donating the poem for the Friends of the Cromford Canal's use and any profits therefrom.
- Please do not forget to enclose your contact details: Address and/or E-mail Address (if you have one), a phone number and if you are happy to do so, your age. Thank you.

Please E-mail your entries to [Boat@cromfordcanal.org.uk](mailto:Boat@cromfordcanal.org.uk)  
or post to Poetry Competition, 28 Lynholmes Road, Matlock, DE4 3DW

We look forward to reading your entries as I'm sure they will be full of memories present and past and ideas/visions of the future as well.



## POTTER'S PAGES

A look at another item from the extensive collection of historical material concerning the Cromford Canal from our Archivist **Hugh Potter**.

### CANAL DIVERSION AT SAWMILLS

When the Pye Bridge Branch of the Midland Railway was proposed in 1876, its route would have involved it crossing the canal twice in a very short distance on the level [*adjacent to what is now the entrance to Lockwood's premises - Ed.*] Obviously the prospect of two opening bridges did not appeal to the MR so they proposed, and constructed, a canal diversion, according to the plan shown below. As the railway had owned the canal since 1852, this would have needed no negotiation.





As well as having to knock down part of a terrace of houses (the remainder of which are extant), it involved demolition of Hopton Stone Company's Sawmills (see the lower picture opposite) from which the local area took its name.

A four-arch stone bridge (shown below) was built to accommodate the canal through its northern arch (far right) and various railway tracks through the others (the necessity for 4 arches has not been adequately explained).

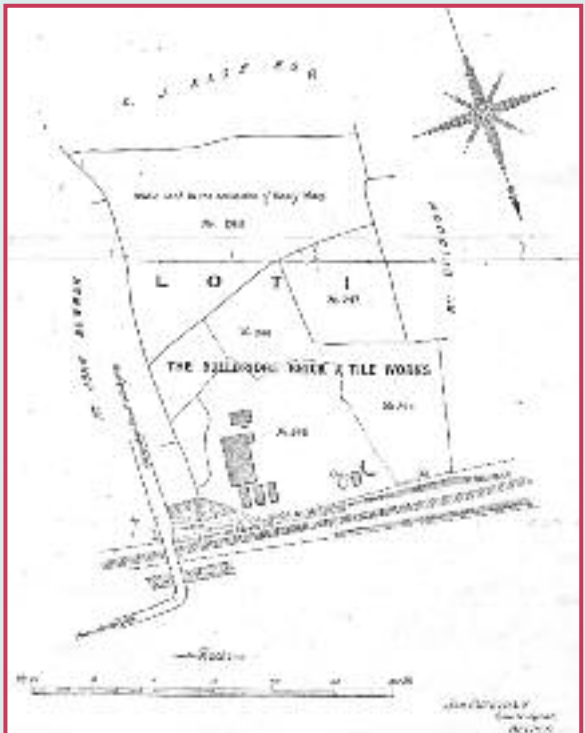


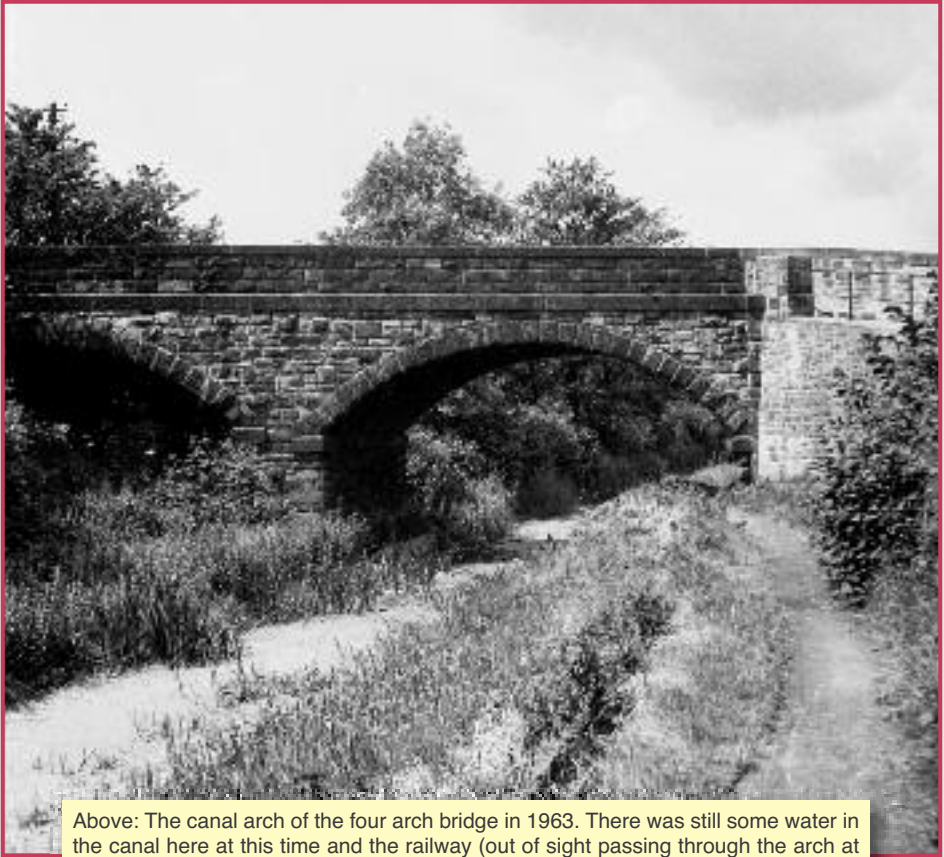
The layout of the tracks in 1895 is shown on a sale plan on the right. Sadly, although there are several photographs of the canal here, no photograph showing the railway at this location has ever been found.

In the debate on the Midland Railway Bill in 1907, Lionel Bury Wells said:

"Where the canal has been recently diverted for Railway purposes beyond Bullbridge it was of greater width than ordinarily found and the sides were protected with stone pitching. Here the sounding reached a depth of 5 feet 6 inches proving that there was no lack of accommodation or stinting of expenditure where the canal was deviated by the Railway Company."

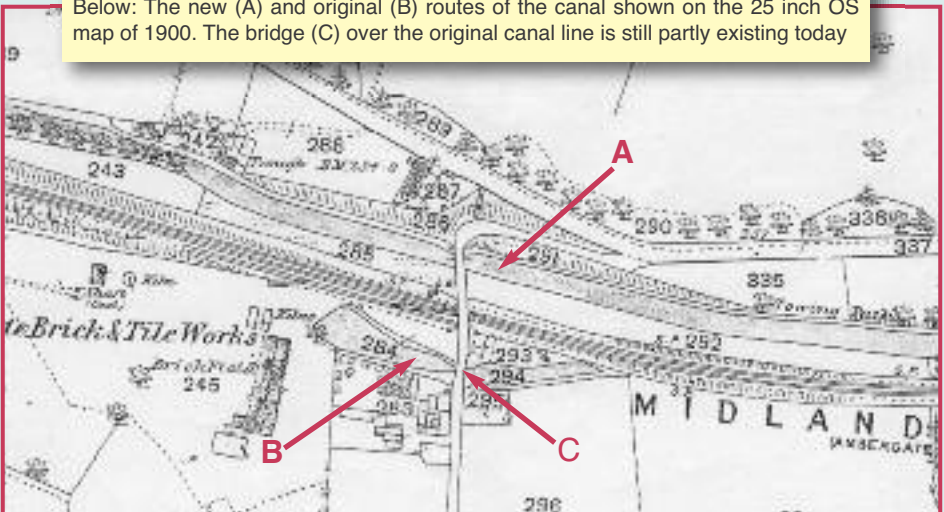
Curiously, the original bridge was retained and one parapet can still be seen today.





Above: The canal arch of the four arch bridge in 1963. There was still some water in the canal here at this time and the railway (out of sight passing through the arch at the opposite end of the bridge) was still open.

Below: The new (A) and original (B) routes of the canal shown on the 25 inch OS map of 1900. The bridge (C) over the original canal line is still partly existing today

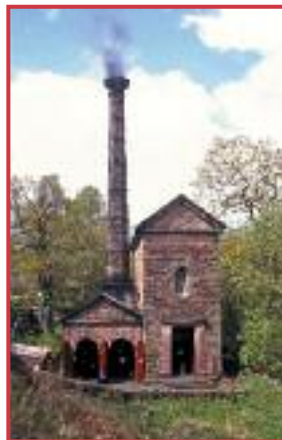




# LEAWOOD PUMP OUTLET

by Ian Yates

It's generally all quiet at the pumphouse at the moment. Boiler 44 has been stripped down to its basics, removing all the cladding, top off the steam dome and safety valves off to allow for a dry boiler inspection and NDT testing. This is scheduled for the 8th of February so hopefully no major issues will be found and we can put it back together ready for an hydraulic test. The front washout plugs require replacing but this has been held back until the other checks are made so any works can all be done at once. Also the mudhole door studs are being replaced on Boiler 43, work requested by the boiler inspector. As is usually the case six came out fine and two broke off giving us a problem to get them out. Some left hand thread bolts are being made at Clay Mills so they can be screwed in and hopefully will unscrew the broken studs. The new studs have been made by a small engineers in Cromford along with a new plate, so fixing should not be a problem.



In late December there was a problem with the *Duchess* (the boat we use to transport our coal and other items across the canal), it sank! Despite the efforts of the Rangers with a 3 inch pump they could not raise it. Ken and I went down on the Saturday morning to see what had happened. Thinking like the Rangers the water was coming in at the side steps, the opening was blocked and pumping resumed but the water stayed put. Ken noticed a movement in the water at the rear which made us think it was coming in via the propeller shaft guide but it was in the wrong place. A sledge hammer was taken to the rear platform, which is rotten and needed replacing, which duly revealed the source of the problem. The *Duchess* has had an engine at some time and over the propeller is a weed box to allow weed to be cleared. There was no top on this box, so the heavy rainfall and probably someone going on the boat to the rear had pushed the top under water and filled the boat up. No one knew this was there and is probably why the Little Grebes nested in it as it was open topped. After a coffee and biscuits at the pumphouse, a side board was put over the hole, weighted down by several sandbags and pumping recommenced. After about 10 minutes the board came out of the water and the boat started to empty. The boat was drained as far as the large pump would take it then finished off with a small submersible. It has now been covered with tarpaulins until the floor and the rear platform can be replaced. The tyre which the grebes nested on has been replaced with plastic floats. It is hoped to keep them off. It is intended to put a proper cover on the weed box to prevent this happening again. What was thought to be a small job took nearly seven hours to complete. Luckily the weather was kind and not cold, with one of us on the small boat and the other on the wharf shed window sill it could have been a lot worse. It is intended to get the boat sorted properly as soon as the weather improves ready for the new steaming season, the first static visit being on March 6th.

## LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING DATES for 2016

These are shown on the Birdwood horse days poster on page 9.

**What better way to visit the pumphouse than by horse drawn boat?**

**The engine will be in motion from noon to 5pm each day.**

**(Discovery Weekend - 11am to 4pm)**





## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mike

Thank you so much for sending me a copy of *The Portal* Autumn 2015. I read with interest the item on the proposed New Lawn Bridge at Codnor Park on P 20.

I had no idea where this location was but eventually found it, in the South West corner of Ordnance Survey Landranger Map no.120 Mansfield and Worksop. I also found the location in my British Railways pre-grouping (and pre-Beeching) Atlas. There were as you know 2 North South rail links in this valley, the more easterly link was a Great Northern Branch Line running to Pye Hill and Pinxton (now closed) and the more westerly link was the Midland Main Line running onwards to Alfreton and Chesterfield, a connection which is still open. There used to be a connection from this line through Butterley onward to Ambergate and thence to Cromford. According to the Atlas, Codnor Park used to have two stations, one on each line. There was a link between the two lines at Brinsley Junction. All this you know. The routes of these lines can be traced to some extent by close examination of the Ordnance survey map. Presumably to get there by public transport, I would have to go to Langley Mill, and make my way from there.

This location is just north of D H Lawrence's birthplace at Eastwood, and it was at one time a heavily industrialised location, (canal basins, collieries etc.) as readings of D H Lawrence, especially his short stories, will clearly show. So my query to you, is what happened? Why didn't this area become a Metropolis? (as did Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield etc.)

Andrew P Blunden

### FORTHCOMING WORK PARTY DATES

**We are urgently looking for volunteers for our work parties both at Cromford and at Ironville. We meet on Tuesdays, alternating between the two sections. The dates are as follows. Full details are on our website.**

**At Cromford - March 1st, 15th and 29th**

**At Ironville - February 23rd, March 8th and 22nd.**

**For more information ring John Barker tel no. 01773 760358  
or email [j.barker5@sky.com](mailto:j.barker5@sky.com)**

**There are also regular work parties at Ironville organised by Pete Clark.  
These are held on and around the locks every Tuesday.**

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

Mr I Holman, Derby

Mr A Lindsey, Derby

Mr A Brown, Loughborough

Mr & Mrs J Wilkins, Chesterfield

Mr M Rumsby, Alfreton

Mr J Wass, Derby (Rejoined)

Mr & Mrs Griffiths, Derby

Mr A C Ford, Derby

Mr & Mrs K White, Stanley

Mrs S Ashmead, Derby

Mr & Mrs N Downes, Ilkeston



## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

A good way to help the FCC is to recruit new members. Just to remind you, the membership rates are shown below. Also, anyone who is a UK taxpayer can use Gift Aid to increase the value of their subscription by 28 pence in the pound. Application forms are on the FCC website or contact Yvonne.

Individual: £7.00 Life: £110.00

Couples: £10.00 Life: £165.00

Corporate Business: £35.00

Corporate Charity: £17.00



from  
Yvonne Shattower

Thanks to a huge amount of help from Steve Parish in submitting our claim, we have recently received a payment of £347.56 from Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMRC) in respect of a Gift Aid claim for 2011, which will help to swell our coffers a little.

For those of you not familiar with Gift Aid, Charities such as FCC can claim from HMRC an amount equal to 25% of your membership payment or donation if you pay Income Tax. All you have to do is to sign a form to say that you pay sufficient Income Tax to cover the HMRC payment to us. It really is that simple, and we can then add your name to our claim and receive an extra £1.75 on a single Membership or £2.50 on Membership for a couple. The current membership form carries a Gift Aid declaration, but this was not the case in the early days of the FCC, and although we did follow this up some time later, many of the early Members did not sign up for this benefit, so we cannot claim on their subscriptions. I fully appreciate that not everyone is eligible to sign for Gift Aid, but we currently have less than half the members 'signed up', so if we can claim £374 for less than half of the Membership, I will leave it to you to work out how much more we would earn by getting even another quarter of the members on the list. It is possible for us to claim on payments made from 2012 so if you think you might be eligible to claim, let me know and I will forward a form to you. Whilst on the subject of Gift Aid, I would like to remind Members that if they no longer pay sufficient tax to cover our claim they must let me know.

You will have read elsewhere in this magazine that, after many trials and tribulations, we are at last a CIO. Although we have had to open a new Bank Account, this should not make any difference to those of you who pay by standing order, however, after other experiences with standing orders, Bob Bullock and I are just keeping our fingers crossed.....

We are still looking for someone to take on the role of Sales Officer, now that Val Roberts has retired. It may be that two or three people could take on the role as a team, but we will lose many opportunities to 'spread the word' about the Friends whilst we have no sales stand, so if you think you could be part of the team, please do let us know.

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