

THE PORTAL

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THE FRIENDS OF THE
CROMFORD CANAL**



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FRONT COVER: Grace sitting on her four eggs whilst Bertie stands guard over their canalside residence at Whatstandwell. Derbyshire County Council have kindly provided them with a fence to safeguard their property. Passers by please beware. Photo: Hugh Potter

BACK COVER: *Birdswood* under tow from Chelsea on one of the earlier horsedrawn trips last year. The undergrowth on the towpath edge is quite a problem in the summer. Horse operators Lance and Corinne Rose of Arraslea Shires have enthusiastically taken to horseboating and have now bought another horse to train up for the job. See their article on page 12. Photo: 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. 53

I must apologise that this issue is later than normal. This is because it was decided to delay going to press until after the AGM, which was held on April 20th. As mentioned by our chairman in his report, this was a pleasing occasion in that our treasurer Bob Bullock was able to report that the finances were in a healthy state, with a very encouraging profit arising from the operation of our trip boat *Birdswood* in its first full year of operation, meaning that after allowing for depreciation of the boat, a useful amount will be available for furthering restoration of the Cromford Canal. This, it must be remembered, is what the FCC is all about.

However, also as mentioned by the chairman, we all received a shock just before the meeting when it was revealed that Eric and Beryl Singleton have decided to resign. Eric was a trustee, a master on *Birdswood*, and a stalwart at work parties. Beryl was a very active member of the *Birdswood* crew and she and Eric have run the sales stalls at meetings and a great many events of all kinds near and far for several years. I am sure all the committee will agree with me that their leaving will be a serious loss.

This also left another vacancy among the FCC trustees, but I am pleased to say that others have come forward to act in this vital capacity and we are now back up to five trustees. See the chairman's report on the next page.

The warmer weather is now with us and we are all looking forward to another year on *Birdswood*. You will read in Vix's report that she has made a good start, with a very successful recruitment day, when a pleasing number of potential new crew members came forward. Our friends at Arraslea Shires also had a training day for both horse and crew which all went very well. Vix will always welcome extra crew to try to ensure that the full potential of the boat can be achieved. Remember that Vix, as operations manager, is the FCC's only paid employee and a good supply of volunteers for the various crew duties is vital. More help is always welcome.

The main worry for the *Birdswood* operation is the state of the canal. Lack of dredging, particularly though the swing bridge and at the Leawood winding hole needs addressing before it causes serious delay or even cancellations.

As always, I must stress that the FCC is not all about *Birdswood*. Work parties are at present coming along nicely, not only on the Cromford to Leawood section. Since the adoption of parts of the canal from the Canal & River Trust, particularly through Ironville, the canal scene is being transformed. Anyone who has not been there lately will be impressed with the improvements. Also, following the grant from Severn Trent Water mentioned on page 4, further improvements are coming to the Sawmills length.

Don't forget YOUR trip on *Birdswood* in 2015!

The press date for the Summer 2015 issue will be August 3rd.



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

by John Baylis BEM



As I finished with donations in my last notes I will start there this time. Hugh Potter and myself were invited to the Ambergate Reservoir to be presented with a cheque for £2,500 by One Severn Trent. This was part of a contribution by Severn Trent and the various contractors to local organisations in recompense for the local upset caused by the building of the new Ambergate Reservoir. The reservoir, which will cost about £35M is part of the improvements being carried out to the Derwent Valley Aqueduct which mainly supplies water to Nottingham, Derby & Leicester but also can act as an emergency supply to other parts of the Severn Trent system.

The Derwent Valley Aqueduct is a testament to the foresight of late Victorian municipal engineers as, with only a few modifications, it is still working well after 120 years. The main sources of supply are the Ladybower Reservoirs with some later additions en route, however some features such as Ambergate Reservoir couldn't be closed for maintenance as it would cause serious supply problems if emptied. The present work is the construction of a new reservoir with two separate chambers; the original reservoir will then be rebuilt, and this then gives three separate units which can be maintained in turn. See overleaf for more details from the Severn Trent press release, together with their photograph which was taken at the viewing platform where invited visitors can see the building operation from a safe distance and where Hugh Potter and I had the pleasure of receiving the cheque for £2500.

At the Annual General Meeting on April 20th, Bob Bullock and I were re-elected as trustees retiring by rotation, Ian Hooker was elected following co-option during the past year; and Jack Brown and David Martin were elected following nomination. Jack Brown is a well known local councillor with a transport business in Ironville who has been very supportive of the work of the FCC for many years and David is a boating enthusiast and also a local councillor involved with various organisations in Jacksdale. At the same time I was very sorry that Eric Singleton had decided to retire as Trustee and Boatmaster and that he and Beryl were also ending running the FCC sales operation. The whole committee was very sorry Eric and Beryl were retiring and our sincere thanks go to them both for their many years of work on behalf of the FCC.

The AGM also gave us the opportunity to show the progress of *Birdswood* over its first year of operation as a trip boat on the Cromford Canal at Cromford. In 2014 the excess of income over expenditure was £18,712, from which the auditors agreed depreciation of £7,185 towards the original outlay from the FCC capital and to go towards the expected major repairs. This gives a final income from *Birdswood* in 2014 of £11,527. My thanks go to the boatmasters and crew over the past year for their efforts; and also to Rick Jillings of Derbyshire County Council Countryside Services for the support from him and his staff in maintaining water levels.



AMBERGATE RESERVOIR GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

As part of its multi million pound investment in creating a new service reservoir at Ambergate, Severn Trent Water is giving nearly £30,000 to local good causes, as well as helping local community groups.

Leanne Town, from Severn Trent Water, explains what's happening: "Ambergate Service Reservoir at Fritchley has been an essential element of the water supply system to thousands of customers in the East Midlands. It was built over 100 years ago, and although it has provided a reliable service during this time, it is nearing the end of its life in its current condition. We need to do something to plan for the next 100 years at least, so we're building a new reservoir.

"As well as a new, modern, long lasting and reliable water supply, we want to leave a lasting legacy for the communities. The project is only happening here for five years, but we wanted to invest and give something back that would last a lot longer as a thank you for their patience with the building work. £30,000 is a huge amount of money for us, but we absolutely believe in this community - we're part of the community - and so we wanted to do what we can."

To deliver the community funding, Severn Trent Water and their contract partners who will deliver the project, Laing O'Rourke and NMC Nomenca, created a community panel, consisting of local councillors, residents and interested parties to allocate the funding across four areas affected by the work - Whatstandwell, Crich, Fritchley and Bullbridge and Sawmills. Local organisations, charities and community groups were invited to place an application for funding and nearly 20 applications were made. In total, nearly £30,000 was awarded to 12 organisations and groups.

Hugh Potter and John Baylis in the trendy red hard hats receiving the cheque from Severn Trent staff.





Bill Bullman, treasurer of Sawmills Village Hall, said: “Sixty five years ago the inhabitants of Sawmills, Bullbridge and Riversdale collaborated in order to erect a village hall. Subsequently, for six decades the hall has been the centre of civic activities in the local community. Now we are facing frequent repairs to the building and the most important being the roof, unable to afford the whole restoration. Today, we are grateful for the generous grant of £2,500 from Severn Trent to replace the roof and we will do this as soon as possible.

Karin Baker, headteacher from Fritchley School, said: “Coming to the site today to collect our funding award has been really interesting and we have learnt so much about the scale and vision of this project to provide clean, drinkable water to three counties. We are delighted to have received a grant from Severn Trent to replace our aged tables and chairs in the classrooms. It has been good to have the manpower to dig the wildflower meadow and to have our school hall redecorated. Thank you Severn Trent – we love you!”

John Baylis from the Cromford Canal, said: “The Friends of the Cromford Canal are very grateful for this grant of £2,500 which will be used to restore the canal narrows and improve the canal towpath.”

The details of the application for this award to the FCC, which has to be spent on the canal at Sawmills, were submitted by George Rogers as follows:

- 1. Accommodation, fuel, showers etc. for a week’s WRG camp to finish the restoration of the offside of the Gauging Narrows.*
- 2. Materials - concrete, stone & timber for creating a new diversion path around the offside to enable us to do the towpath side*
- 3. Plant - hire of excavator and dumper to facilitate earth moving to help create the diversion path - Ed.*

Leanne Town, funding panel member for Severn Trent Water added: “Being part of the group who are working with the local community is a real pleasure and seeing the difference the money can make to the local community is really amazing. The panel really had a tough job to decide who to allocate this money to, it wasn’t an easy decision. We hope the community are supportive of the decisions we’ve made and hopefully everyone in the community will see, somewhere, the difference we’ve made.

CROMFORD CANAL COMPANY MINUTES

by Hugh Potter

It seems a long time since I put out a request for transcribers of the minute books of the Cromford Canal Company, covering the story from its inception in 1789 to its takeover by the railway in 1852. Philip Riden of Derbyshire Record Society (DRS) arranged for copies to be made of every page, held at The National Archive at Kew, which members of FCC then transcribed and I collated.

The minutes are recorded in three volumes, each of some 200 pages, and the first of these is about to be published by DRS. With an authoritative introduction by Philip Riden, the minutes cover the important formative years of the canal company, the 4-year construction phase with the subsequent problems at Bullbridge and Leawood aqueducts, and the first years of trading, up to 1799.

The book is available at a special price of £20 post free to FCC members (normally £30 plus p&p) and other related books are also being offered at discounted prices. Details of all these are in the flyer included with this *Portal*.



IRONVILLE 'VEGETATION MANAGEMENT'

by John Guyler

As you may have read in *Portal*, work parties have been clearing the locks at Ironville since last November. The brambles and scrub have been cleared from lock four up to lock two. Along the stretch at lock four it looks very bare and I asked for advice on replanting of native species from the Canal and River Trust.

Whilst I am waiting for a detailed list from the CRT, it has been suggested that donations from members of seeds and any shrubs that can be cultivated for planting next Autumn and Winter, would be most welcome. Initial suggestions have been a Woodland Meadow Mix of wild flowers, Hawthorn and hedgerow plants, Common Gorse, Cowslips and Primroses, Red Campions and Cow Parsley.

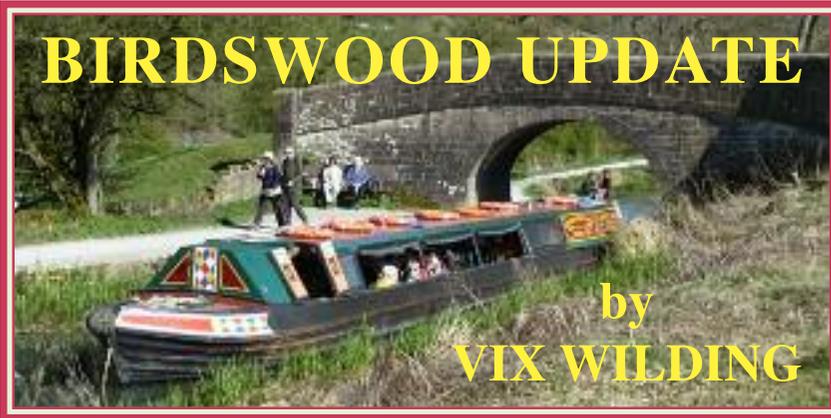
It is probably too late to get anything really established this summer, but we would really be grateful for donations for the future.

Contacts for this and all work party enquiries are:

John Barker	Work Party Leader	J.barker5@sky.com
Pete Clark	Ironville Leader	peteclark@hotmail.com
John Guyler		john_guyler@yahoo.co.uk

The picture below, sent in by Pete Clark, shows one of the Ironville Work Party Habitat Stacks which they have been building on the offside of the canal below Bridge 36 as an alternative to burning all the brash. Pete explains: These are spring-time photos and I will submit some more in the summer when everything is greened up, plus an article about why and how we build them. Suffice to say at present that the village residents appreciate the lack of bonfire smoke, and the birds love exploring for insects in them. They are also a great refuge from bird predators and look professional too. Lots of favourable comments from towpath users and residents alike.





So, the last couple of months have seen many changes and additions to the *Birdswood* Team. Some have retired and others moved on to pastures new. They have all given so much and helped the FCC have a successful first year's trading.

I would like to say a very big THANK YOU to these few.

Birdswood has received some love and tender care over the closed season and by the time this goes to print she will be trialling new seats and a new window. If all goes to plan, these will both be entirely replaced by the end of the summer. Ian Hooker and Dave Ratner have both put a lot of hours into these projects and for this I am very grateful. The differences will be stunning and easier to use for both customers and crew.

Kerry Green has made several alterations to the electrical items on board *Birdswood*. With the full support and financial backing from his employers, Curtis Instruments, he has replaced and improved the items we work with including a new master control panel and dead man's switch. See also Kerry's article on pages 10 - 11.

Looking back, the most recent event was a Recruitment Drive which was advertised and supported by BBC Radio Derby encouraging people to join the FCC and help in any way they could. Many people attended and expressed their desire to help both

on and off *Birdswood*. The weather unfortunately was against us and the displays and the marquee were blown across the wharf! The day itself was a huge success and I can now welcome 14 new crew members to the team.

In the next few months the new crew will settle in and provide the extra shifts we need covering as the summer approaches fast! Some attended to observe our first horse pulled event of the year on April 5th and 6th. The weather was fine and people gathered to take a trip and watch; even Chelsea had a smile for us (left).





The FCC has had three masters in training who will shortly be taking their tests with the MCA. This will replace the couple we have lost to get us back to the starting point. I hope to see others in training over the next few months to take tests at the end of the season to put us in a comfortable position for next year. As previously mentioned in Mike Kelley's reports, this training costs £500 per person and with the demand being high for public trips and private charters we will need these extras to be ready. If you or anyone you know, or even a company, are interested in sponsoring a person through this please get in touch.

Training has been made difficult by Coot nests in both winding holes and by scaffolding on the café....Where do I start?? The birds have all become quite at ease with the boat and barely 'flap a wing' as we sail alongside, see below. Both Coot nests are home to 4 eggs each and there are others preparing theirs.



Vix Wilding

The Dabchicks or Little Grebes have nested particularly early this season, as they usually don't start till after the Coots, but seem to be very much on par with them. There are two nests each with four eggs in along the Cromford stretch. The usual Canada Geese are visiting but no nest so far and the swans, Bertie and Grace, have returned to Whatstandwell to nest here again and they are reported to have four eggs here which are doing well. Four does seem to be a popular number this year! Bertie and Grace have nested beside the towpath and Derbyshire Countryside Services have put up a barrier to protect them from walkers and dogs. See front cover. Mallards, Pike, Frogs, Toads and Water Voles have all made appearances and are also doing well.



The Wheatcroft Café on the wharf is currently undergoing considerable changes itself. The upper floor is being converted and a staircase will lead up to an additional 17 tables. The scaffolding mentioned earlier is surrounding the building to repair the roof and guttering at the same time, see below. This has left little room for *Birdswood* and her crew to move around temporarily but we are all looking forward to the new, extended menu that will be launched early June. The café is still in full swing within the Gothic Warehouse Building so pop along and take a look yourself.

Vix Wilding



The 2nd Annual Human Boat Pull will take place on June 14th which is a part of the Village event 'Celebrating Cromford' 12-14th June. Last year this was a pub battle between The Boat Inn and The Greyhound Hotel and saw many supporters turn out to cheer them on. This year there will be more competition and hopefully a new winner. There will be so many things happening on this weekend that you will be spoilt for choice. Take a look at <http://www.celebratingcromford.org> for more details and regular updates.

There will be other events throughout the year with *Birdswood* and the FCC working with local partners to promote the Derwent Valley. The first of these will be Discovery Walks towards the end of May when nearly 50 walks will be put on up and down the valley and this year will see walks coinciding for the first time with a trip along the canal on board *Birdswood*. For this and many other events please look at:

www.dewentvalleymills.org

Watch out for more details about the Scarecrow Weekend on 1st-2nd August and Discovery Weekend at the end of October.

A PLEA FOR HELP.....I would like someone who is available on the first Thursday of the month to attend the Boat Committee meetings at Selston, to take and then distribute the minutes. Having previously done this myself I have found I have too much input to fully concentrate on the reporting during the meetings. If you feel you can help please get in touch on **07552 055455** or **boat@cromfordcanal.org.uk**

Thanks in advance.



1938 NARROWBOAT *BIRDSWOOD* USES CURTIS 1238 AC VECTOR DRIVE

by Kerry Green
European Support Manager at Curtis Instruments



Back in 2013 I received an e-mail via our head office in New York for some assistance with a charity who wished to convert a 1938 iron narrow boat to electric drive. It transpired that the group were very local to where I live in Derbyshire so we began on a road or should I say a canal that led to a very interesting application. The narrow boat, originally built as an engineless, cabinless butty was built in 1938 and worked around Birmingham towed by a horse or motor boat. It has an interesting hull made of iron that is pointed at both ends. Around 1955 the boat was modified and fitted with a cabin which allowed the boatman and his family to live on board and to make longer journeys, but still without an engine. In 1995 the cabin was extended and a diesel hydraulic propulsion unit was added and the boat was used on the Caldon Canal as a trip boat also serving food. The unusual conversion was partly due to the pointed stern which does not easily permit a direct drive shaft through the centre point. So a small hydraulic motor was fitted into the rudder to which a propeller is attached. Hydraulic hoses run over the back of the boat to the hydraulic pump which was powered by the diesel engine. Then in 2013 the boat (*Birdswood*) was purchased by the Friends of the Cromford Canal who needed zero emission propulsion for the boat to work the Cromford Canal in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site which is also an SSSI.



The electric motor and controller fitted nicely in the restricted space under the stern deck coupled to the existing hydraulic pump.



After evaluating different ideas it was decided that the hydraulic drive would remain but the diesel engine would be replaced by a CFR Induction motor controlled by a Curtis Instruments 1238 Vector Controller. 48V 820Ah batteries were supplied by Powercell and Curtis commissioned the system. Curtis also fitted an Acuity battery monitor which logs the battery data for the life of the battery and shows exactly the battery state of health, total power used and operating temperatures. As the hydraulic system is very low pressure the efficiency has proved to be very good with the boat easily managing 4 pleasure cruises before an overnight recharge is needed. It was a great team collaboration which is what Curtis likes to promote with all customers and colleagues. Needless to say I became so involved with the project I joined the FCC and became a volunteer to assist with the maintenance and running of the boat. What better than cruising the Derwent Valley on a summers day? If anyone would like more information, would like to view the boat, take a trip or volunteer for a day or more per month please contact the FCC via the web site. We still need more volunteers to assist with running this lovely boat.

LEAWOOD PUMP STEAMING DATES 2015

The engine will be in motion from noon to 5pm on each of the following days (except Discovery Weekend - 11am to 4pm).

Please note, however, that although the PumpHouse will be open on all the days shown, there will be no steaming this year in July or early August whilst the volunteers are carrying out essential maintenance work. Steaming will be back to normal for August Bank Holiday.

MONTH	SAT	SUN	MON	PERIOD
MAY		3rd	4th	May Bank Holiday
JUNE	6th	7th		First Weekend
JULY		5th		First Sunday (STATIC)
AUGUST	1st	2nd		First Weekend (STATIC)
		30th	31st	August Bank Holiday
OCTOBER	3rd	4th		First Weekend
OCT/NOV	31st	1st		Discovery Weekend

AN APPRECIATIVE LETTER

I enjoyed my first proper visit to Cromford and seeing *Birdswood* for the first time this morning. Can't believe I've lived in Macclesfield for the past 21 years (Stockport area before that from 63 to 93) and only just discovered the wonders, beauty and worldwide importance of your area. Have always been aware of Cromford but only 'subliminally' so very good to have a taster today whilst my son-in-law was attending a walling course at the National Stone Centre, oh and to have a fine breakfast in Arkwright's Cafe; so good in fact that I went back for lunch and had what has to be the biggest Ploughman's Lunch I've ever had! (lol - had to bring two large chunks of blue cheese and enough brie for four back to Macc; I was beat!). The area is certainly worthy of more time - it's not a place to rush round but one to savour; a bit like that fine Arkwright's ale I washed the Ploughman's down with! Pyramids? Hanging Gardens of Babylon? Give me Cromford any day!

Paul Truswell



Introducing Lance and Corrine Rose, with their horse Chelsea

We are a small rural business called Arraslea Shires which has been running for the last 12 years. We use our horses for all sorts of ventures e.g. weddings, logging, demonstrations, pop videos, just to name a few.

Last year we were approached by Mike Kelley and Nic Barfield to join them in pulling the FCC's narrow boat, *Birdswood*, with one of our horses and one of the questions they asked was "Have you ever pulled a canal boat before"? As there are only four other places in the country that do this we had to say no, but we had pulled most other things so decided to 'give it a go!'

We had a training session back in March last year, and didn't know if Chelsea, our horse, would pull the boat well or not, but she, as she always does, pulled it very well and with ease, if probably a bit too fast! But that was that - we were part of the Cromford team pulling *Birdswood* and as the year went on we learnt a lot about pulling a narrow boat and working the tow path. Chelsea also learnt to be a canal horse, steady, calm and like she had done it for years and she also goes into public mode when all the people crowd her and want to pat and fuss her. I think that's her favourite part; oh, and getting carrots that people bring for her.

We have now started our second season and it's great, so much so that we have now bought a new member of the team over winter called Ted. He's only three so he's got this year of training before he'll be ready to join in next year. Ted is about the same height as Chelsea, 15 hands, as we couldn't use our Shire or Clydesdale horses as they wouldn't fit under the bridge!

So please everyone come down and meet us and get up close to British Heritage at its best.



SPONSORSHIP AND GRANT UPDATE

by John Guyler

The FCC has received a very generous donation from Councillor Paul Jones, of Heanor, of one hundred and twelve pounds. Eric Singleton wrote to Mr Jones asking for support in replacing the notice boards the sales team use.

The FCC are now the proud owners of new notice boards, thanks to Mr Jones.

In the last edition of *Portal* I reported on the generous support of the Amber Valley Rotary Club, with the supply of Hi Vis over vests and waterproof over trousers. The presentation of the work wear was made by the President of the Amber Valley Rotary Club, Paul Ramsbottom (on the right in the picture below) to the FCC Vice Chairman John Barker (fourth on the right). The Hi Vis vests have justified the cost, by the high number of conversations with users of the towpaths at both Ironville and Cromford on the role of the volunteers and their work. Also shown in the picture is an example of the green vests for use by the crew of *Birdswood* which the Rotary Club also generously sponsored.



The FCC have also applied for a community grant, for use in the Derwent Valley, for tools and equipment. Unfortunately the application was declined, so we move on and take the reasons for the rejection into account in further grant applications.



L'EROICA BRITANNIA 2015

by Patrick Morriss



You have to be very careful with that title and the spellchecker, one wrongly placed 't' and the whole thing takes on a new meaning!

When I stood down as Chair of the FCC I was the wrong side of 20 stone, for our younger audience that's nearly 130 kilograms. Believe me, it was not doing me any good at all! By September 2013 I had lost 4 stone and felt a lot better. A few pounds crept on in Greece that September but I have remained the same weight since, give or take. I needed a new challenge to lose a bit more. As a younger man I used to cycle a lot, the first time I did a 'century in the saddle' - 100 miles in a day, was when some friends of mine and I cycled to RAF Scampton near Lincoln in April 1974 to watch Avro Vulcan 'V' bombers doing circuits and bumps as it looked like they were going to be retired in one of the 1970's defence cuts. As it happened it was much later, after they had bombed the Falkland Isles in 1982.

I digress; I passed my driving test and the cycling died away, and I've only done bits and bobs since. So after I heard about the first L'ErOica in the UK last year, I thought I might have a go at that event in 2015. The chance purchase of a 1983 Marlboro Sabre 10 speed road bike from the Mencap table top sale at Darley Dale last autumn for £10 gave me a restoration project over this last winter, with much help from eBay for spare parts!

So what is L'ErOica? It all started in Italy. The L'ErOica vintage cycle ride has been held for a number of years in the Chianti area of Tuscany every first Sunday of October and



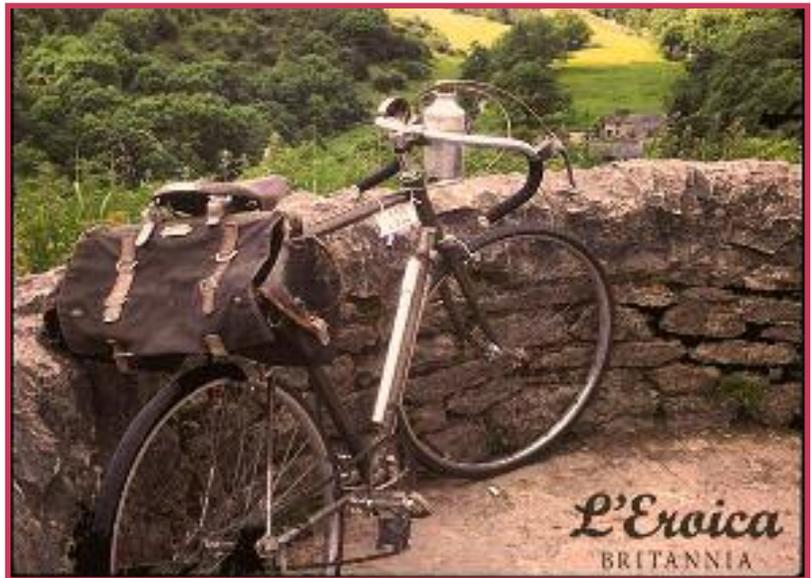
is something really traditional and unique. Every cycle that takes part in the event must be a road bike, been manufactured before 1987 and be equipped with down-tube gear change, external brake cables and pedals with toe-clips. It is not a race as such, more of a social event. Mountain bikes, alloy frames, carbon fibre and all the modern paraphernalia of current cycles are not allowed, including those strange shoes that lock onto the pedals and make it nearly impossible to walk. Imagine a classic car event for bicycles and you're not far wrong.

In 2014 it came to the UK for the first time. Starting and finishing in Bakewell Derbyshire, it offers three different route lengths and above all it is a social event. Last year's Eroica was one of the most talked about events in the cycling and festival calendars for 2014. Over 30,000 visitors travelled from around the world to make iconic British history in the historic market town of Bakewell in the Peak District National Park, 3 days of music, glorious vintage, shopping, food, drink, camping and cycling.

In 2015 the format remains the same and more visitors are expected. There is a choice of three route lengths, 30, 55 or 100 miles, the last two sharing some roads and parts of the High Peak Trail in common. All start and finish in Bakewell. The 55 and 100 mile routes cross the Cromford Canal at High Peak Junction having come down Sheep Pasture Incline before continuing up through Lea Mills. What better than classic cycles and *Birdswood* in the same photograph? The 2015 event is on the weekend of the 19 - 21 June.

See their website for more details and the latest news including GPS plots of the routes and much more - www.eroicabritannia.co.uk

Anyway, seized by the moment I have decided to enter, having registered my interest last year. Bookings should have been open last November but because of even more interest than last year it has been delayed. By the time you read this it should be online. I've got a few pounds to lose before June and a lot of training to do; having a coronary on the way round is not the sort of headline I'm looking for! As there is a classic transport interest and it crosses over the canal at the swing bridge at High Peak Junction I thought I would give the 55 mile route a go and at the same time seek sponsorship in aid of the Friends of Cromford Canal. I have run this idea past the Eroica organisers and they are all for it. So I'll be asking for sponsors for my participation in this event and of course I will get my card stamped to prove I've done it – hopefully!



Feel free to offer an amount for the total ride or so much a mile, but be warned, once registered one can upgrade to the 100 mile route and if the training goes well, you never know I might just feel inspired to do the 100 mile route.....! That might cost you a bit more if you offer an amount per mile in sponsorship.

One thing I have missed off the list of things allowed or not allowed is cycling attire. The organisers encourage traditional clothing, so there will be no MAMILs, that's Middle Aged Men In Lycra. Be thankful for small mercies.....

Just in case anyone is wondering, I turned 57 in March and it's been 40 years since I've done any serious cycling!

Please phone Pat on 07989 282291 for sponsorship enquiries - Ed.



**Celebrating
Cromford
11th Anniversary
JUNE 12th - 14th 2015**



BIG BOAT Pull

Generously co-sponsored by



**£100+
Cash Prizes**

**Cromford Wharf
Sunday 14th June (all day)**

BIRDSWOOD is a 72 feet long narrow boat built in 1938 out of heavy iron plate and weighs 21 TONNES!

**The Challenge:
Pull her as fast as you can**

Entry fee £3 per participant

For entry forms, rules and T&Cs

Email: boat@cromfordcanal.org.uk

Phone: 07552 055 455

Entries close Sunday 7th June please.

Support Good Causes

Entry fees go directly to Celebrating Cromford. Why not get sponsored to raise money for the charity of your choice? (Sponsorship forms from organiser.)

**£1.00
OFF ***

£1.00 off standard fares on Birdswood trips in June with this voucher **ONLY** (excludes Horse Days).

(* Maximum of 2 discount fares per flyer. No copies accepted.)

**ONE NARROW BOAT
TWO CHALLENGES**

**“Human Horses”
Team Pull-a-Thon**

**One Big Boat..... but
only TWO of your team
pulling in relay**

Maximum 8 people per team.

Pulling from Cromford to High Peak Junction (or in reverse direction). Four pulls (two am and two pm) and only four teams can play - so **ENTER NOW**

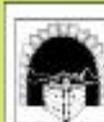
Friends and family can travel on the round trip to cheer you on! (Normal fares apply.)

**“Iron (Wo)man”
Just you and Birdswood**

Starting at Lawn Bridge, you pull the boat back to Cromford Wharf as quickly as you can!

PRIZE & TROPHY FOR FASTEST TIME
Your supporters can travel for £1 each

These epic challenges are co-sponsored by **The Friends of the Cromford Canal** who will generously donate towards **Cromford Village projects.**



Trip boat BIRDSWOOD is owned and operated by
The Friends of the Cromford Canal
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This project is supported by the Rural Development Programme for England, to which Defra is the Managing Authority, part financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Grants funding to Rural Areas.





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Sunday June 21st

Why not treat your special man to a cruise on the Cromford Canal?

**Seats sold at the regular price
(Seniors £5, Adults £6, Children £3)
and accompanying gentlemen go free**



**Gifts can be supplied on request
at the time of booking**



Departure times of 11am and 2pm available



**Please contact the booking line on
07552 055 455 to reserve your seats**

**For more information:
<http://www.cromfordcanal.info>**

**or email:
boat@cromfordcanal.org.uk**



Trip boat BIRDWOOD is owned and operated by:
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SWING BRIDGE PROBLEMS

by the Editor

When Brown's Bridge (No.2), the swing bridge across the Cromford Canal at High Peak Junction, was replaced with a new bridge in 2011, concern was expressed about the condition of the ball bearing on which the bridge pivots. Although the ball races were in reasonable condition, the balls themselves were badly corroded. However, a decision was taken at the time to clean and re-use the balls and they were refitted when the new bridge was lowered into place.

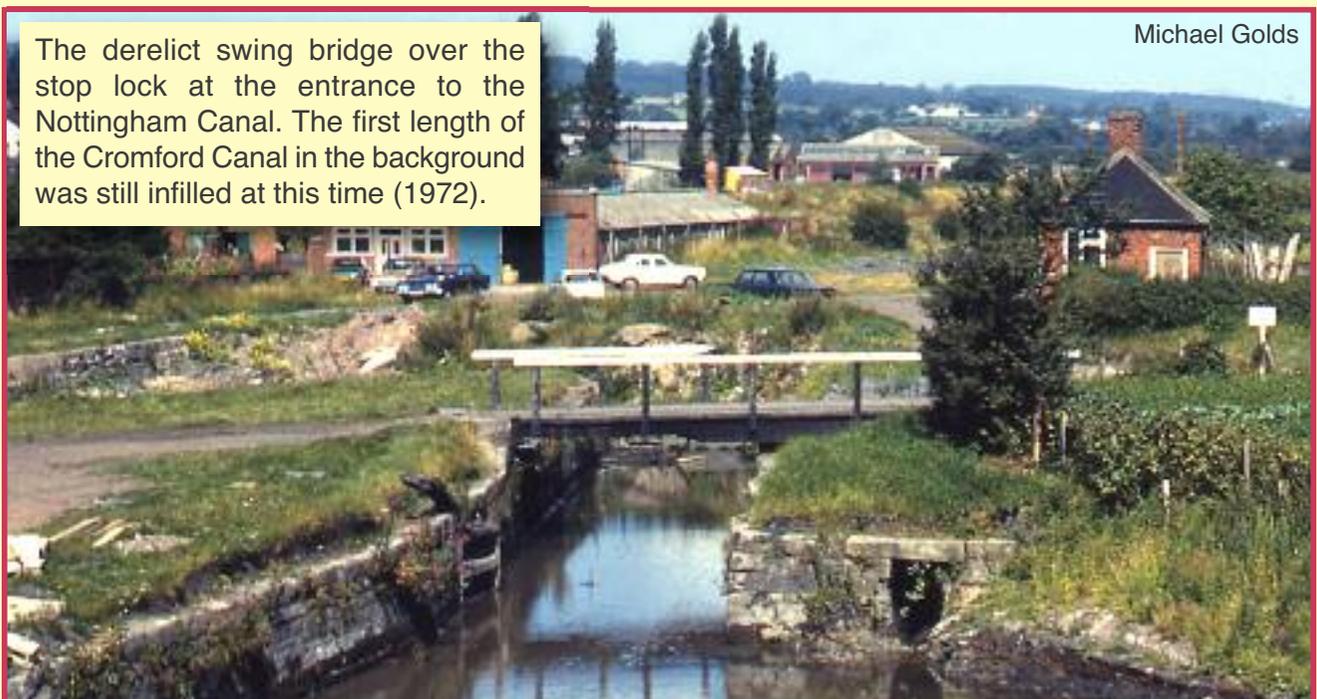
Since then, *Birdswood* has been passing through the bridge regularly, but it has been getting increasingly difficult to swing. Suggestions that FCC volunteers could undertake jacking up of the bridge and rectifying the ball race problems were met with rejection by Derbyshire County Council. Their view is that this is not a job which could be tackled by volunteers. This is a great pity, as the council are suggesting that the bridge will need lifting off by crane by contractors, involving considerable expense for which they do not have funds available. This all set me thinking about work which volunteers have achieved over the years on the much larger swing bridge at Langley Mill. The following article, written by the FCC chairman John Baylis, was first published in the *Erewash Outlook* in 2012 and gives some idea what good volunteers can achieve even given the present day constraints of Health and Safety legislation.

LANGLEY MILL SWING BRIDGE REPAIR

by John Baylis (with additions by the Editor)

Langley Mill swing bridge crosses the Nottingham Canal at its junction with the Cromford Canal and was built about 1795 to carry a tramway. The original timber bridge had probably been repaired many times previously but when the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association started work on restoration of the Great Northern Basin of the Nottingham Canal in 1972, the swing bridge had not been moved for over 30 years and the king posts and support stays and some of the handrails were missing. The picture below shows the state of the bridge just after excavation of the basin and stop lock had started.

There were several similar derelict swing bridges further along the summit pound of the Nottingham Canal and these were visited and various useful spare parts were



The derelict swing bridge over the stop lock at the entrance to the Nottingham Canal. The first length of the Cromford Canal in the background was still infilled at this time (1972).

Michael Golds



obtained. However only one suitable king post was found, so the other was made from scratch. The picture below shows the day the bridge was first swung open after this work and much excavation was completed.

Michael Golds



By 1986, the timber beams which crossed the canal were deteriorating rapidly and as timber of suitable size was not only very difficult to obtain, it would also be frightfully expensive, the ECP&DA, who at that time leased this part of the canal from British Waterways, re-built the bridge with steel channel and girders crossing the canal. Most of the existing timber deck and handrails were re-used, maintaining the original appearance.

Michael Golds



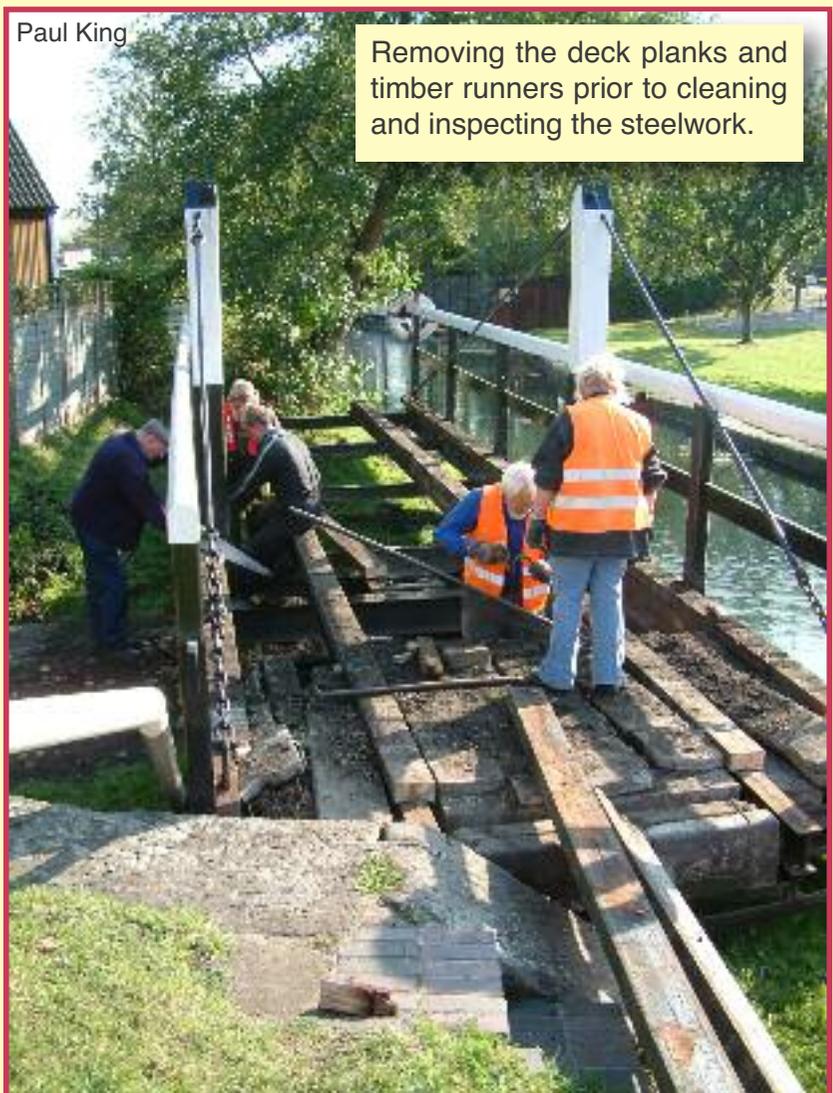


The work described below started on September 14th 2011 to remove the old deck, repaint the steelwork and then fit the new deck over a period of 8 days. However problems with the steel, found during dismantling, extended the work and completion took a total of three weeks.

The bridge and lock area were taken back by British Waterways in 2000 but volunteers from the ECP&DA continued to carry out maintenance work on this part of the canal and further restoration of the Cromford Canal, eventually becoming a BW Self Supervising Group. The timber deck of the swing bridge was showing serious deterioration and BW suggested that the ECP&DA volunteers might re-deck the bridge. This was agreed and BW offered some redundant stop planks to re-cycle for the timber decking. The 250 x 250 x 5000 stop planks were cut into planks by Charles Gregory Ltd. at Tansley. The resulting 250 x 80 mm (10 x 3¹/₄ inches) planks were sorted by the volunteers and the best 2.7 metre (9 feet) length cut off each plank. These were to be the new deck of the bridge, and after treating with preservative over the summer, they were stacked ready for use.

Once the deck planks had been removed this left a good selection of various off-cut lengths, some of which were selected to make into the longitudinal runners to bolt along the top of the steel bridge beams. Slight variations in thickness of the deck timber could be accommodated during re-fitting, but the runners were brought down to a standard thickness. This was accomplished by running the planks through a thicknesser. These planks were cut in half down the length to give 125 x 75 mm planks which were then mitred on both ends to give four lengths about 12 m long; and finally treated with preservative.

On the existing bridge, the curved planks at each end suffer most wear and movement due to traffic running on and off the bridge and the worst part of the original runners was the short section at



both ends. In order to reduce this damage, short steel sections at each end were suggested so that the new curved planks could be bolted down. Unfortunately 75 x 75 mm channel section steel is unavailable and so this was welded up from angle iron and heavy steel strip. The finished items were then well painted before final fitting. Before work started to re-deck the bridge the two new end timbers were cut and shaped to match the stone work. As these needed to be wider than the standard planks they were made up of two planks bolted together.

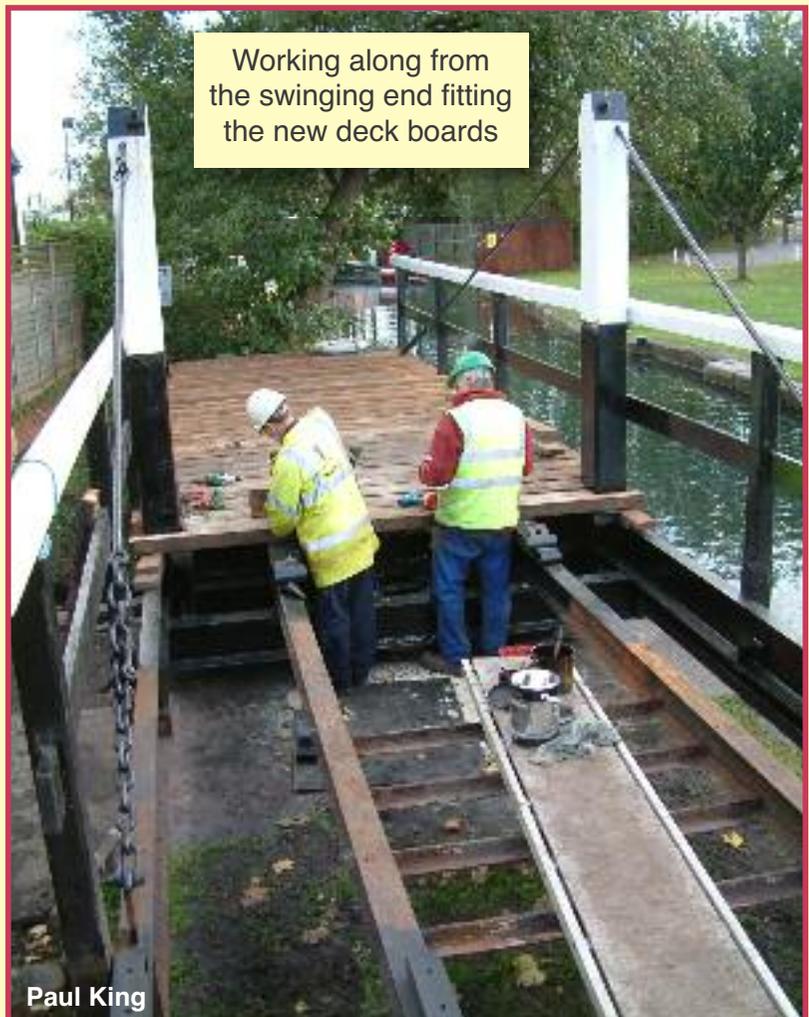


Then, on Friday, October 14th, work started with placing diversion signs so that all road traffic to the boatyard went via the rear of the Great Northern and the end of the abutments were fenced off. The end timbers were removed so that the new curved end timbers could be fitted and drilled through the steel channel to the top web of the longitudinal steels. With this completed the bridge was opened and work started to remove the old planks and timber runners. When the runners had been removed the bridge was jacked up and the steel chassis packed level on timber so that the ball race at the centre point of the bridge could be cleaned out and the concrete counter weights removed.

Scraping and cleaning the steel started off at the swinging end and the steel was in good condition with little rust but when we got to the counter weight end the only way to clean the rubbish off was to lift out all the weights. This revealed far more deterioration than we had imagined with the angle irons supporting the counter weights and two of the steel cross beams rusted through in parts. By now it was late Friday afternoon, but we decided to cut out some of the steel so that we could clean the remainder properly with a view to replacing the removed beams. On Saturday and Sunday most of the steel on the swinging end was cleaned and given two coats of bituminous paint.

However, a phone call to British Waterways on the Monday morning promptly brought their bridge engineer from Leeds. We were chastised for cutting out the rusted steel and going beyond the work specified in the Method Statement we had prepared for BW and told that we should have consulted them first. The engineer took numerous measurements, made some suggestions as to what could be done and went away to produce a design for the repair. We had planned to do the work in eight days but waiting for an answer on the steel made that an impossibility, but the joiners started laying the deck on the swinging end.

First of all the new curved plank was bolted through the previously drilled holes and the runners bolted to the longitudinal steels with 100 x 12 mm galvanised coach bolts. In order to keep the timber drier a black plastic damp proof course was laid above and below the runners. Before starting the work we had sourced and bought 300 off 150 x 8 mm stainless steel screws at a cost of £320 for fastening the planks to the runners, and the planks were screwed down with an expansion gap of 12 mm between each plank. By Friday we had received no reply from BW so we redesigned the counterweight carriers for better concrete weights and to carry them lower and away from the structural steel. The original problem had been caused by welding steel





angle between the steel beams to carry the counterweights but fitting the concrete too close to the steel so that mud and rubbish falling through the planks had filled the space between - not allowing drying winds to get through. Three new carriers were made of 75 x 75 x 8 mm steel angle welded at the corners but bolted to and underneath the cross girders. The steel was then thoroughly coated with bituminous paint.

Several of us were away the last week in October so work was called off and the bridge stayed closed, but on our return there was no reply from BW. The bridge had by now been out of action for three weeks and so we decided to repair the steelwork by fitting three cross beams instead of the two we removed and by plating the longitudinal girders as originally suggested by BW. This work was carried out by making three cross beams from 127 x 76 x 13Kg/metre universal beams, drilled in the workshop to take the counterweight carriers and then welded in position.

The longitudinal beams were plated with 100 x 6 mm steel plates about 4 metres long welded all round. This involved working the full four days until into the dark on some nights with the steelwork finally painted on the Friday afternoon and Saturday.



Building a small retaining wall and kerb to prevent silt from getting into the ball race.

Paul King

After cleaning out the ball race, Mick Golds decided to try to stop mud and grit washing down the stone paving under the bridge and flooding the ball race and so he built a stone retaining wall to retain the soil bank on one side and laid a brick kerb above the bearing to deflect the water. Then, on Tuesday, November 8th, the counterweights were lowered in by Peter Newman's crane and the last planks re-fitted. We had a meeting with Sean McGinley (BW Waterway Manager) who told us the error of our ways in going beyond the agreed Method Statement but agreed to pay for the additional work. The total cost of the estimated work was £1100 with the additional steelwork £426; a good repair at far less than what contractors would have charged.

This is a good example of what can be achieved with skilled volunteers, and is an example for the FCC to follow. Since this article was written, British Waterways have been succeeded by the Canal & River Trust, with volunteers playing a much greater part in the running of the inland waterway system. Let us hope that this concept can be considered by Derbyshire County Council - Ed.



First BASA; now CRIB ...

by Gill Hirst

Woodlands, Sawmills

Tel. 01773 856178 bullandsaw@outlook.com

In 2009, the new owners of the Stevensons Dye Works Site at Bullbridge held an open day for local residents to view their proposed redevelopment plans. We weren't too thrilled at the lack of affordable housing but when we noticed that the route of the canal was compromised by the proposed plan we decided that we could not let this happen. FCC had also noticed this of course and made representations to the Planners. Half a dozen local residents decided to form a Civic Society believing that Civic Societies have a voice that is heard by planners.

We researched what was needed and within a very short time had formed BASA Civic Society (Bullbridge and Sawmills Area). We sent flyers around our area inviting residents to our inaugural meeting. While we were running around trying to look as though we knew what we were doing (we didn't) another planning application by a local firm was submitted and our councillor suggested that we ought to consider this planning application too. Taking her advice we let it be known that we would also be considering the impact of this development on the area. We booked Sawmills Village Hall for the first meeting and it was full to overflowing. A couple more items of interest were adopted and the Bullbridge and Sawmills Area Civic Society was formally up and running.

Since that first meeting in March 2009, we have fought these and diverse other campaigns with variable success.

The Cromford Canal brought the industrial revolution to our area with many other ancillary works springing up along its route. Signs and legacies of these enterprises are still in evidence today and much of the work done by BASA is to bring this rich industrial heritage to the attention of the public and promote interest that will lead towards restoration of the canal throughout our area.

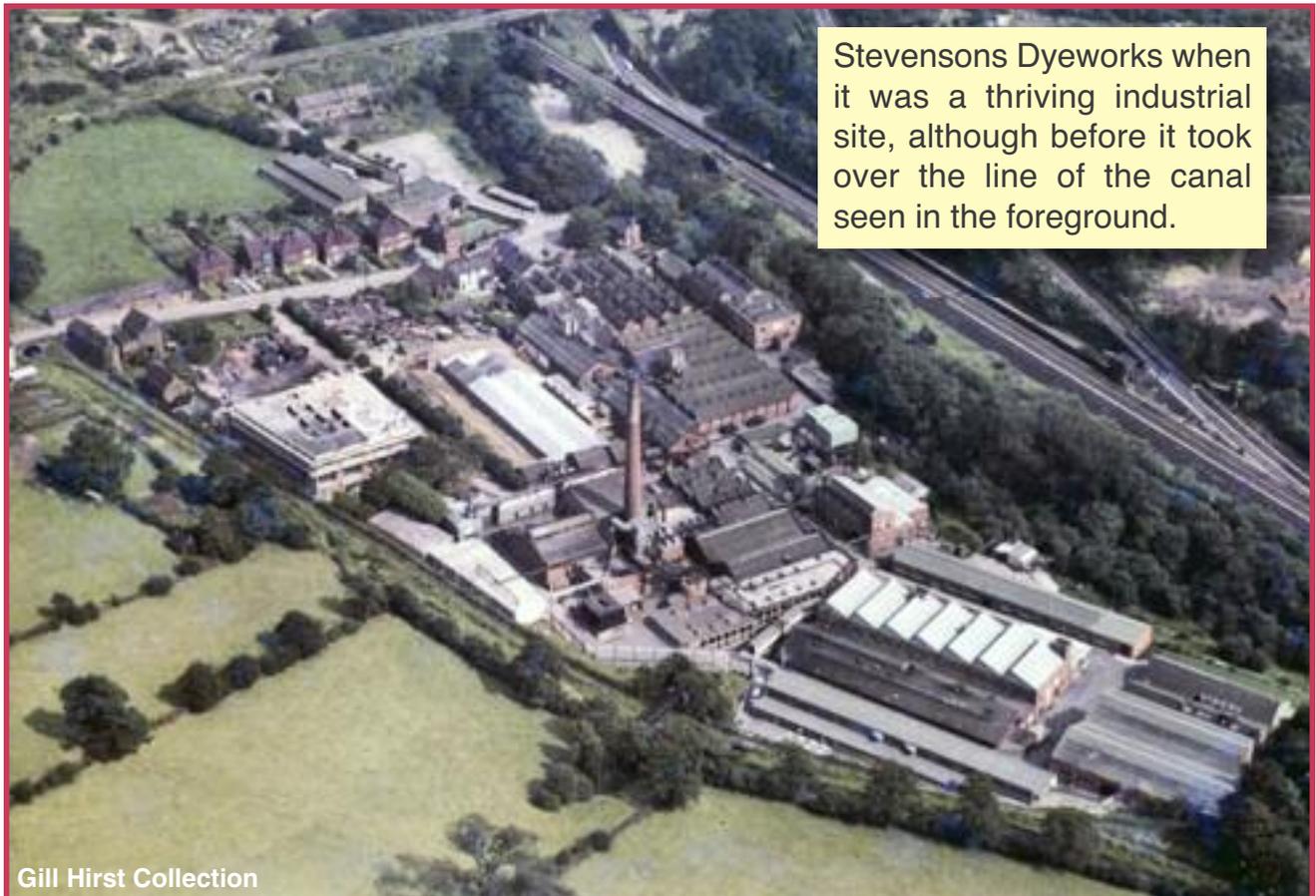
In Bullbridge and Sawmills we tend to get very protective and passionate about "our" stretch of canal. We know that it is seen as the most difficult stretch to restore and that many obstacles are in the way of restoration. However, the interesting solutions and structures that would be needed are just what inspires interest from the public (and much needed investment?). I am pretty sure that half a million people don't go to Falkirk each year just to see a stretch of canal!

Much of what we do involves the canal in one way or another, from clearing scrub and rubbish from the line of the canal to challenging planners when we believe that the line is being compromised. Each year we hold a Heritage exhibition in the village hall as part of the DVMWHS Discovery Days. We enrich this event with oral histories and memorabilia collected from our older residents.

For the last four years we have held our exhibition on the same weekend as the Cromford weekend. This has meant that we haven't been able to attend the FCC stall at Cromford, nor FCC members attend our exhibition. This year we have set our date for the previous weekend. Why didn't we think of that before?!

Alongside the exhibition and also throughout the year we offer Heritage Walks of the area, explaining how the area developed since the coming of the canal and showing places and structures of interest. These walks are well attended and received.

If you are interested, we can organise a walk especially for you or arrange for you to join with others. Please email or phone me.



Stevenson's Dyeworks when it was a thriving industrial site, although before it took over the line of the canal seen in the foreground.

Gill Hirst Collection

So what are we up to currently?

Well once again our attention has turned to the future of the Cromford Canal through the Stevenson's site. We are now approaching this with some urgency as the site is now cleared and on the market again (and what a fabulous site it is!) Initially we were pleased that the line of the canal was preserved and protected, but information and views received recently tell us that once the site is developed (for housing) it will be virtually impossible to restore the canal to water through the site. The access will be insufficient and there will be no room for the plant, drainage systems, spoil etc for any works. It is also likely that we would meet with resistance from the home owners who would undoubtedly resist such a development. So what to do?

Campaign for the canal through Stevenson's to be restored to water by the developers!

This seems a tall order (and indeed it is!) but we really have no choice but to try - or lose a significant part of the canal forever. In effect the loss of the canal through Bullbridge would leave the FCC with two canals.

With some urgency, as there is much to do, we have set up a group to:

- Research how the project could be funded.
- Produce a Planning Brief.
- Learn from other Canal Societies.
- Involve other agencies and groups who can benefit from and contribute to such a plan.
- Lobby Planners from DCC and Amber Valley BC.
- Communicate with the current owners of the site.
- Communicate our "Vision" for the site to the planners and developers.
- Publicise our intentions.



Towards these aims there is a huge list of tasks and research to be done.

Our new group is called

Canal Regeneration In Bullbridge - CRIB

We will regularly publicise information on how our campaign is progressing. Our newsletter will be called "The Crib Sheet"(couldn't resist it!).

Our democratic group welcomes any positive ideas and thoughts.

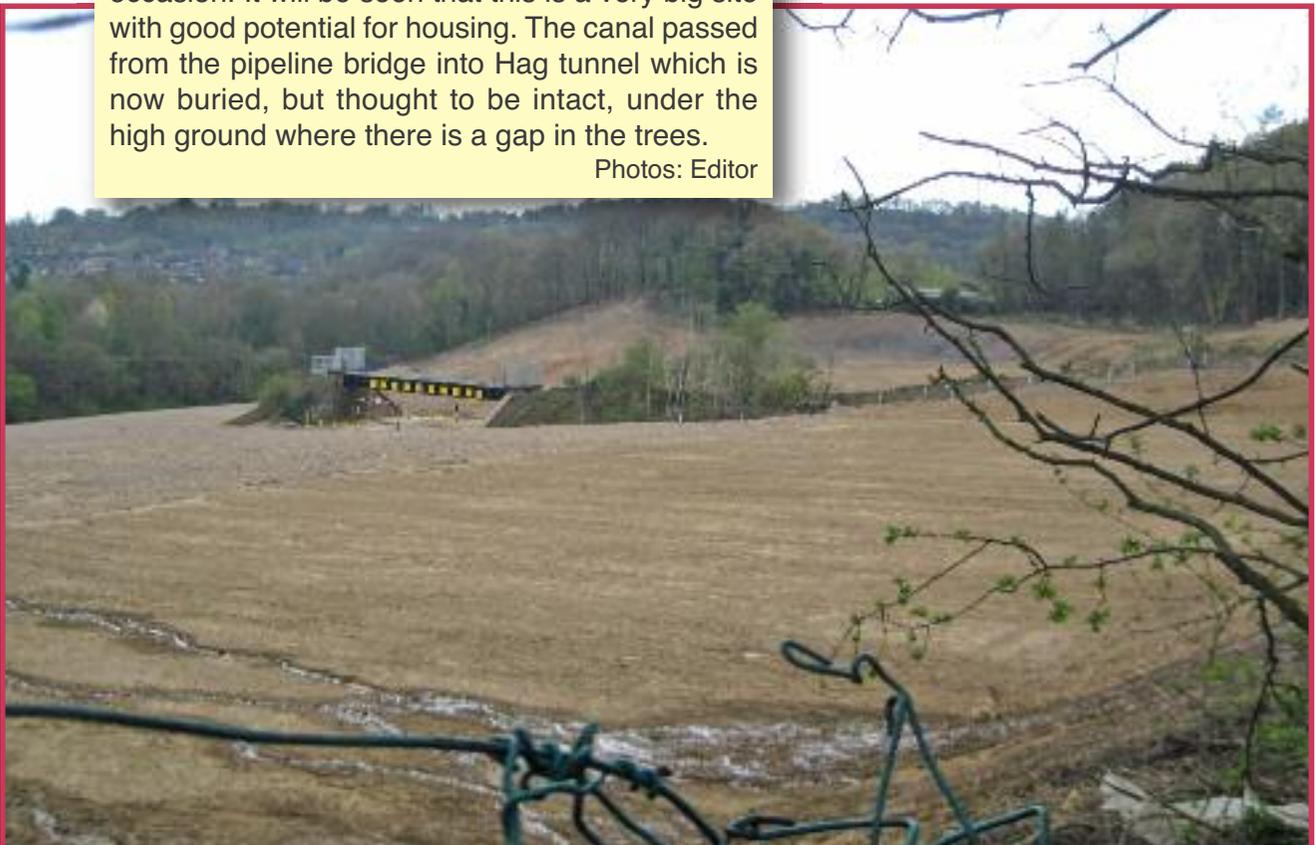
Gill Hirst



TOP: The Stevensons site in April 2015, looking east from the Hag. The canal ran across the site under the Derwent Valley Pipeline bridge which now stands in isolation.

BOTTOM: Looking the opposite way on the same occasion. It will be seen that this is a very big site with good potential for housing. The canal passed from the pipeline bridge into Hag tunnel which is now buried, but thought to be intact, under the high ground where there is a gap in the trees.

Photos: Editor

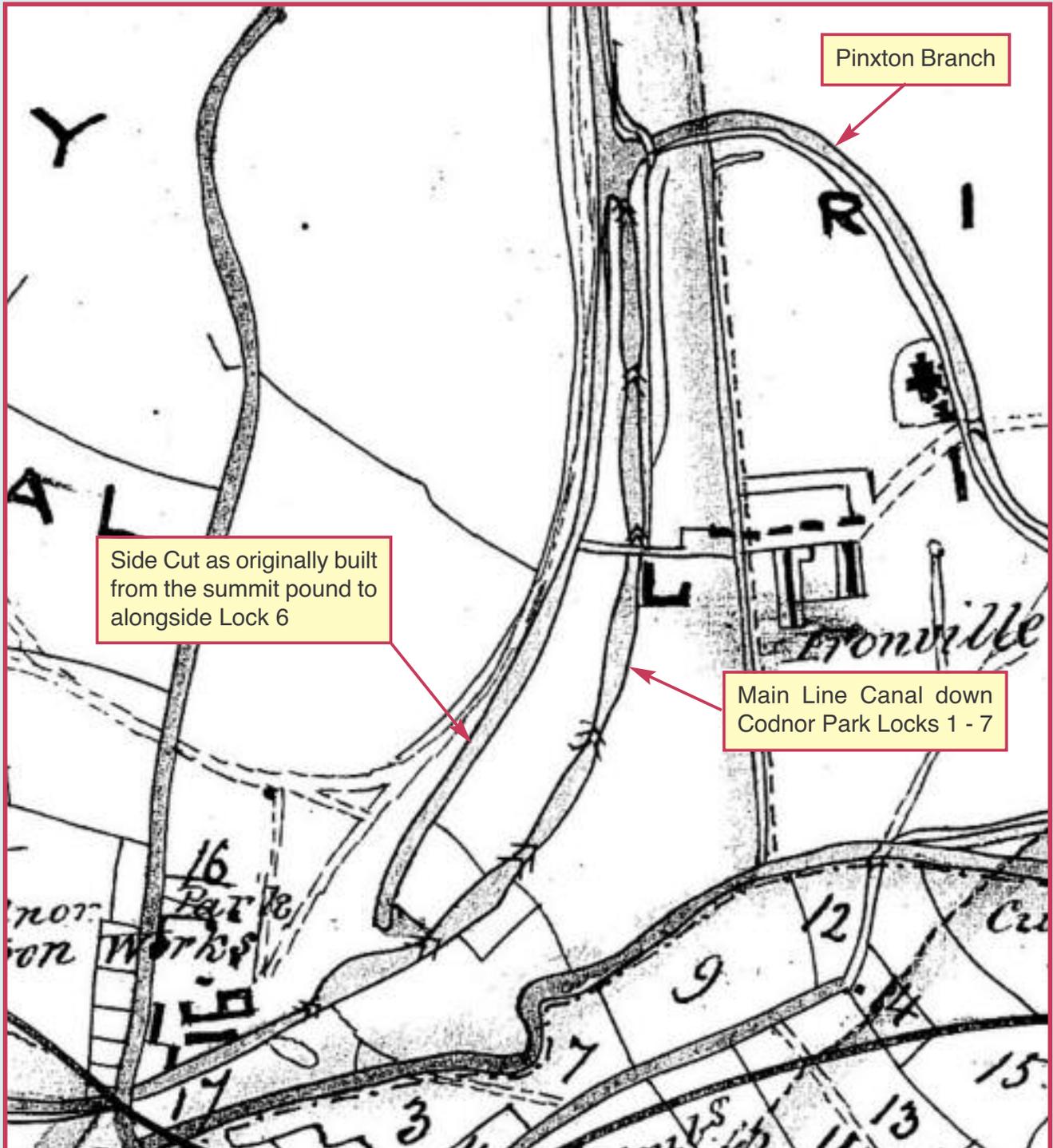




POTTER'S PAGES

In this issue, we are taking a look at some more of the extensive historical material collected over many years by our indefatigable Archivist **Hugh Potter**

(1) BUTTERLEY SIDE CUT



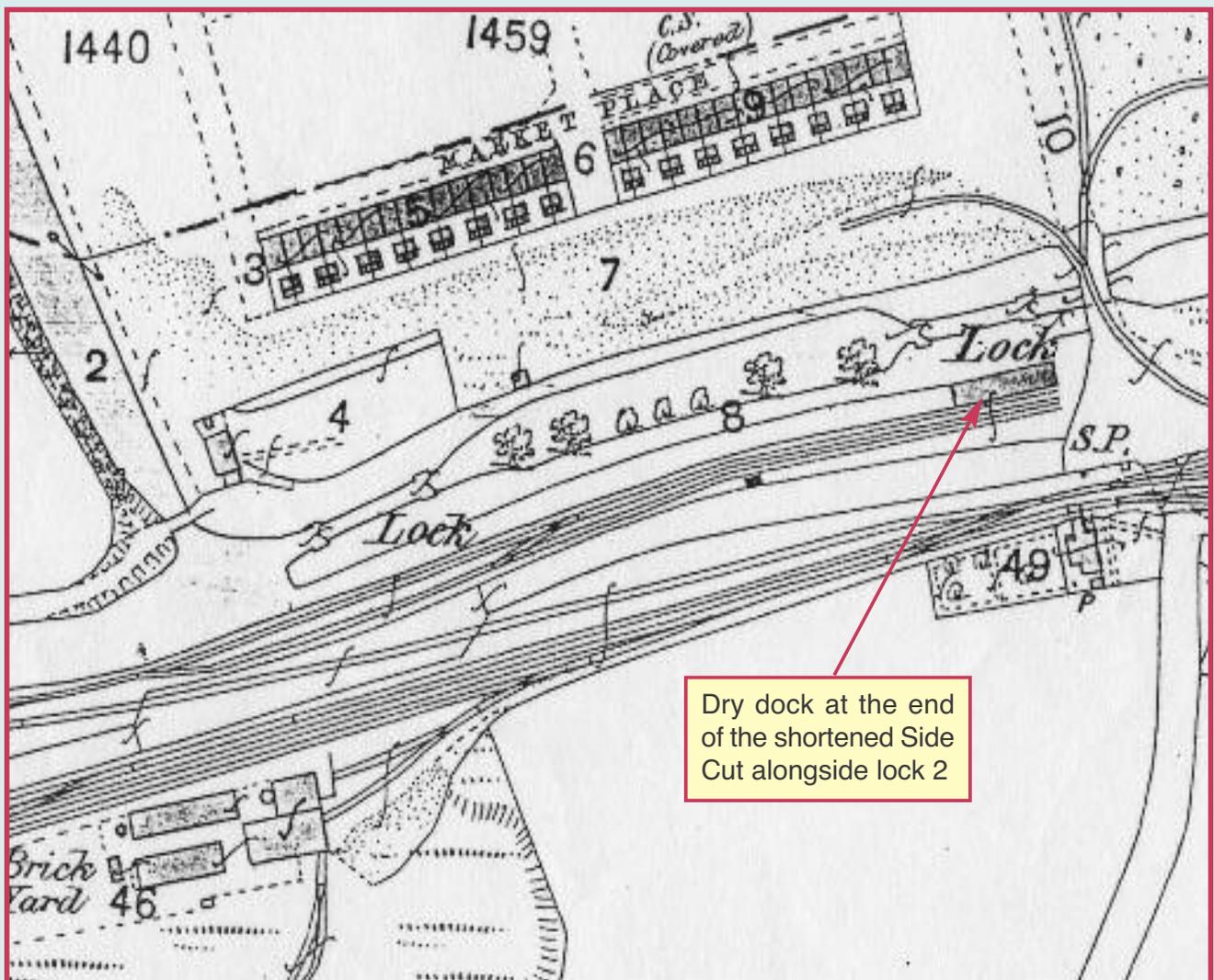
Soon after the Cromford Canal was opened in 1794, Outram & Co, which was to become the Butterley Company, sounded out the Cromford Canal Co. on their attitude to a branch canal, or side cut, from the summit level above the top lock towards their planned new colliery at Codnor Park. The idea was to be able to transport coal on the summit level without using the locks and likewise to bring in limestone from Crich. It appears from the minutes that the CCo. were not initially co-operative and, if the branch was to join

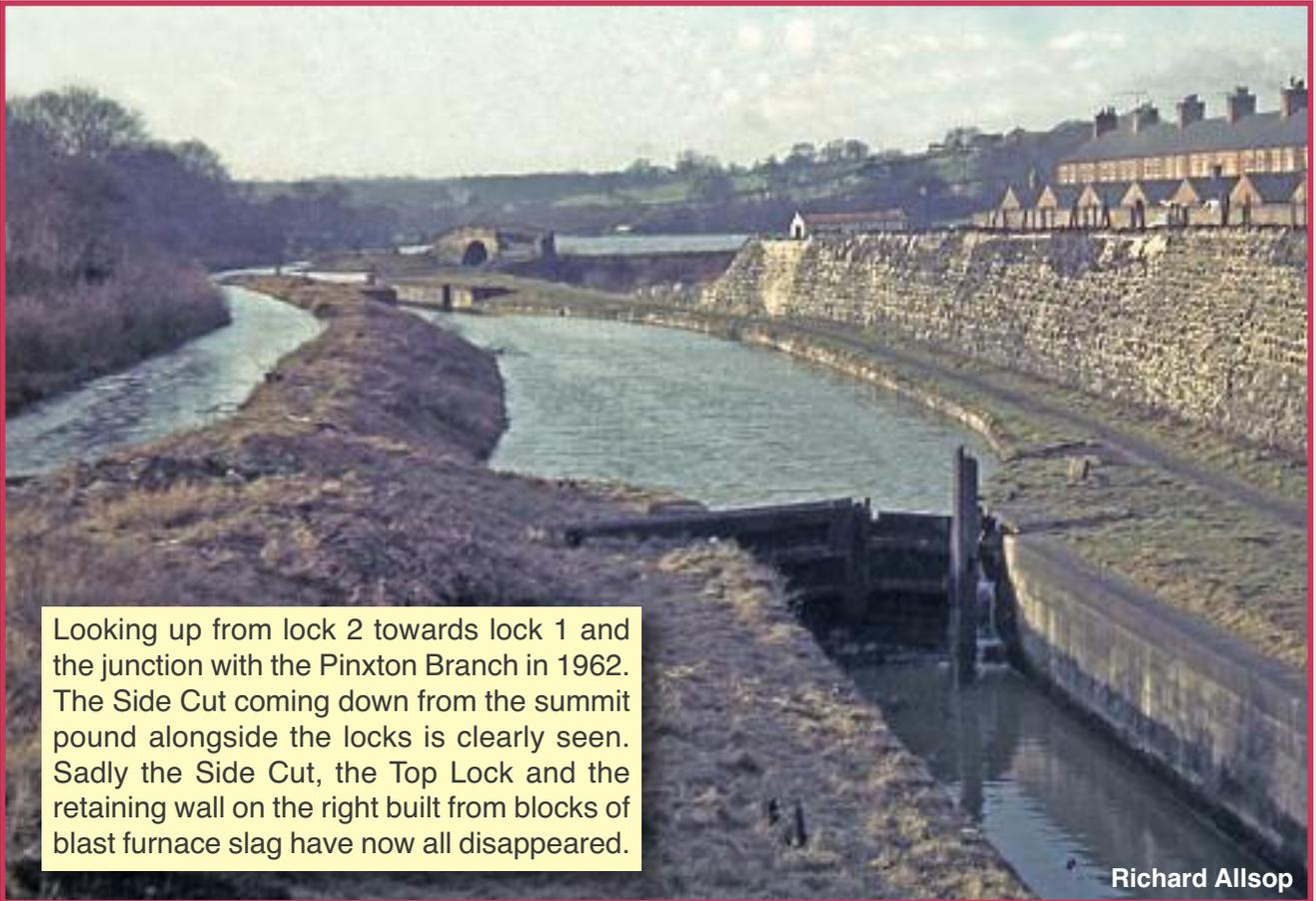


immediately above the top lock, Outram & Co. would incur extra toll charges for travelling 600 yards over a round number of miles. In retaliation, Outram & Co. proposed to build the branch alongside the main canal for 600 yards to avoid this extra cost. At this point, in 1798, the CCCo. relented and agreed to charge just the whole number of miles, provided that all the water pumped up from the new mine was put into what they called the 'Long Pound' of the canal, between the 7th and 8th locks. The map on the previous page from 1843 shows the 'side cut' as originally built from above the top lock running parallel to the main line of the canal and terminating alongside lock 6.

It is not recorded when the branch was built, but it worked well, with limestone from Crich being carried to the top of lime kilns close to the bottom of the lock flight, and the burnt lime being transferred by tramway from the kilns to boats below the 7th lock, thus saving the canal company a huge loss of water through lockage, and Outram & Co. the cost of the extra tolls. *[For more details of the workings of Codnor Park Limekilns, see the article by Martyn Taylor-Cockayne in Portal 40 - Ed.]*

The branch did not last all that long, and, ironically, it is mainly recorded on maps of the railways proposed to be built through the area, which caused its demise. It was the construction of the Erewash Valley Railway in 1847 which in the end caused the closure of the lime kilns and of most of the branch canal. The branch was 'trimmed back' to end just short of what is now Cinder Bank, above Lock 2, where a dry dock was built, utilising the remains of the arm for access, and the fall to Lock 2 to drain it. How long this was in use, and even who owned/operated it is not yet known. The map below dates from 1880 and the dry dock is shown at the end of the shortened side cut alongside lock 2.





Looking up from lock 2 towards lock 1 and the junction with the Pinxton Branch in 1962. The Side Cut coming down from the summit pound alongside the locks is clearly seen. Sadly the Side Cut, the Top Lock and the retaining wall on the right built from blocks of blast furnace slag have now all disappeared.

Richard Allsop

We do know that in the 1910s the local section inspector was looking for a site to build a dry dock for repairing boats, and he proposed a wide dry dock facility incorporated into Lock 5. This suggested that the dock above Lock 2 was by this time out of use – or at least not available to the Midland Railway that owned the canal at that time. In the end, a narrow dry dock was built alongside Lock 6 and this can still be seen today.



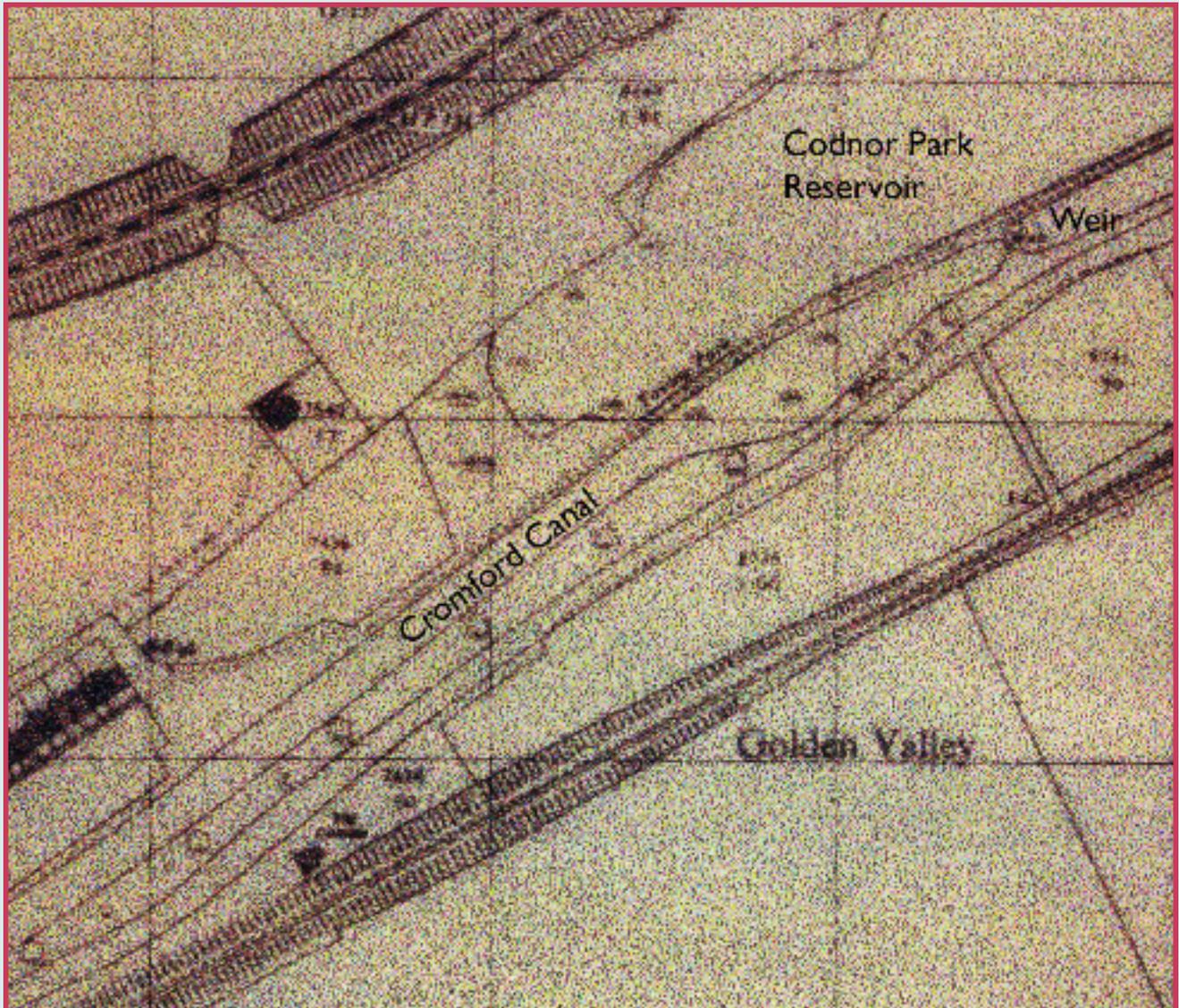
The later dry dock at Lock 6 being cleared out by FCC volunteers in 2008. See also *Portals 26 & 27*.

Dave Tinkler



(2) WEIR AT CODNOR PARK

On some maps recently donated to the FCC Archives by Pat Morriss, one of which is reproduced below, I noticed a narrowing of the canal where it ran alongside Codnor Park Reservoir and a 'weir' marked. Obviously this could not have existed when boats were using the canal, but the date on this map is 1983, so the canal was long closed. It must have been just before the major reservoir 'safety' work was carried out, which included infilling this length of canal. Do any members recall seeing a weir at this point, or better still have a photograph of it?



(3) ANOTHER TUNNEL SCHEDULED

Following on from the English Heritage award of Scheduled Ancient Monument status to part of the Butterley Tunnel and in particular the underground wharf known as the Wide Hole, in February English Heritage also scheduled Fritchley Tunnel on the Butterley Company's gangroad. This tunnel was recently recognised as "the earliest surviving railway tunnel in the world". Although not a canal tunnel as such, it was constructed entirely as a result of the opening of the Cromford Canal in 1794 so as to enable Outram & Co (which became the Butterley Company) to carry limestone from Crich to Bullbridge where it was loaded into boats for onward carriage to its iron-smelting furnaces located directly above Butterley Tunnel.



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

As I write this, the sun is shining and Spring looks as if it will, after all, be coming this year. How good it is to see the leaves and blossom on the trees.

I must apologise to one of our lady Members who phoned me a while ago and left a message asking, I think, about paying her Membership fee over the phone. Unfortunately the line was not at all clear and I could not pick up her number to return the call. However, the answer to her question is that we cannot accept payments by card at the moment. Your Committee has talked about it and it may well be possible in the future, but we do not yet have the necessary measures in place. Talking about renewing Memberships, it would help me enormously if those of you paying by post would return the form sent to you advising that your Membership is due for renewal, as I file these as a double check on your payment. If you have mislaid the form, please write your address on the back of the cheque. We have very many instances of repeated surnames, and initials on my database don't always correspond with the initials on a cheque! I know that most of you do return the form or give some other identification, but there are a few who do not.

It is encouraging to see so many new Members' names in this edition in a relatively short space of time. You are all very welcome. I hope you will enjoy reading this new edition of *Portal*, and will be able to help us in some way in our efforts to get the lovely Cromford Canal open again.

I would like to thank those Members who responded to the reminders sent out with the last *Portal* regarding subscriptions paid by Standing Order. However, there is still a worrying number who are paying at the old rates of £6 and £9 instead of £7 and £10. Please check the payment with your Bank if you have not already done so. You are losing us something in the region of £80 per year.

We are very sorry to lose Beryl and Eric Singleton, our Sales Team members, who have felt unable to carry on for personal reasons. They have done sterling work over the last few years, and have spent very many hours behind the scenes getting tombolas ready, making notepads and cards (among other things) and generally being very busy bees for us. Our thanks go to you both.

We have only two more talks this year before our summer break. On 18 May we have Stuart Smith coming to talk to us about the History and Development of the Midland Railway at Butterley, and on 15 June, Cliff Lea will tell us about the Derbyshire Oil Strike of 1919. All our talks are at Ironville Church Hall and start at 7.30, with a £2 admission charge. We have been very disappointed to see so few in the audience at our most recent talks. Hopefully we will have a new Social Secretary in place shortly to arrange the talks



for next year, so if there is anyone you would like us to book, please do let us have their details. These evenings are run to keep you informed about what we are doing, and what is happening, as well as entertaining you, and the last thing we want is to find that they are not viable due to lack of numbers. So come on, treat yourselves - where else can you get an evening out for £2.00?

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

Mr & Mrs P R Bartlett, Shardlow	Mr & Mrs P Stevenson, Matlock
Mr & Mrs G P Tomlinson, Underwood	Mr K Dyson, Nottingham
Mr & Mrs P Montgomery, Nottingham	Mr L Smith, Ilkeston
Mr & Mrs J A Balaam, Matlock	Mr J Kippax, Ashbourne
Mrs J Regan, Matlock (Life Member)	Mr J Dyson, Derby (Life Member)
Mr & Mrs C Stokes, Clay Cross	Mr & Mrs Sharp, Breadsall
Mrs G Pritchard, Breadsall	Mr G Backler, Twickenham
Professor & Mrs M Wiser, Matlock	Mr & Mrs P Kimberlin, Littleover
Mr M Amos, Matlock	Ms S H Hill, Belper
Mr D Martin, Underwood	

Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association
Also Mr & Mrs N Cornwell, Kimberley, and Mr C Wilson in Australia, who have re-joined.

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 will be no meetings in July or August, but will then be restarting

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

- **May 18th** - THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF MIDLAND RAILWAY - BUTTERLEY - Stuart Smith
- **June 15th** - THE DERBYSHIRE OIL STRIKE OF 1919 - Cliff Lea
- **September 21st** - LASER SCANNING OF BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES - PARTICULARLY IRONVILLE LOCK 4 - Andy Beardsley
- **October 19th** - MIDLANDS MURDERS (VARIOUS) AND THE FIRST USE OF DNA - David Bell
- **November 16th** - THE LOST INDUSTRIES OF RIPLEY AND DISTRICT - Brian Key
- **December - Christmas Social** - Date and venue to be announced later.

As mentioned in the last issue, there is still a vacancy for a Social Secretary to organise these meetings.
Please contact the committee if you are interested.



WORLD HERITAGE SITE DISCOVERY WALKS

by Hugh Potter

The canal between Cromford and Ambergate is the longest length of canal in England to be designated as part of a World Heritage Site. The Derwent Valley Mills WHS is holding its annual walking festival from 25th May to 7th June, and not surprisingly, several of these include sections of the Cromford Canal. The full programme can be found in leaflets distributed locally or can be downloaded from:

**www.derwentvalleymills.org/discovery-days
or via the link on the FCC website**

The following walks include the canal:

Walk 9 from Heage Windmill on 27th May;

Walks 17/44 on 30th May/6th June from Cromford;

Walk 27 on 1st June from Buckland Hollow.

Leaving the best till last, walks 46 and 47 on Sunday 7th June combine a trip on our horse-drawn narrow boat *Birdswood* with a walk. One, led by George Jones, will start at Whatstandwell and take the boat from High Peak Junction to Cromford; the other, led by Hugh Potter, is a walk themed on local author Alison Uttley and will take the boat from Cromford to Leawood, before walking past some of the other locations where she lived and played and later wrote about.

In addition, on the weekend of 6th and 7th June, when all walks start or end at Cromford, FCC will be having a major stand at Cromford Wharf, Leawood Pump will be in steam, and *Birdswood* will be offering horse-drawn boat trips between the two.

See you there?

WEBMASTER'S REPORT

by George Rogers

It's been some time since I last wrote an article for Portal - but then I've not really had much to report!

I'll start with a few thank yous. Several issues ago I asked for volunteers to help with the routine maintenance of the website - and I am indebted to Hugh Potter, Chris Wilding and Neil Quarmby for their work. Hugh concentrates on maintaining the news and events (and I'm sure you'll all agree that it's a lot better now!). Chris does the same job on the boat and Neil is helping to develop new features - including the feedback form.

As such, my role is now to maintain the email system and the hosting infrastructure. It is a surprisingly big job, but I am still finding some time to develop the website further. At the moment that means *Birdswood*. Working in conjunction with Vix and the rest of the *Birdswood* team, we are now looking at developing a new website specifically for the boat. This will maintain the style and 'feel' of the FCC website but with a unique header, different colour scheme and different branding. The aim is to ensure that the two websites obviously belong to one organisation but are distinct operations.

Developing the new website will enable me to trial a few changes to the way the website responds to different screen sizes. In this modern age of tablets, smart phones and widescreen monitors, the website is getting a bit outdated. Once these changes are implemented on the new website, they can be rolled out to the current website.

As ever, we're looking for any further suggestions or offers of help.



As reported in the last issue, the FCC has now adopted two lengths of the canal which belong to the Canal & River Trust (CRT). The first was the length at Ironville from Codnor Park Reservoir to the railway bridge, including three locks. More recently, the second length to be adopted is from Hartshay Hill (Bridge 32) to the A610 embankment. We have now received the certificate on the right and the letter of thanks below from CRT for this second section. John Barker will also now be organising work parties on this length.



**Canal &
River Trust**

Keeping people, nature & history connected

Friends of Cromford Canal

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CANAL ADOPTION

Dear Friends of Cromford Canal

On behalf of the Canal & River Trust I would like to thank you for adopting the section Hartshay Hill to the A610 of the Cromford Canal.

Adopting your section of canal means that you can really make a difference to your local area by working with CRT to maintain and enhance it, making it better for everyone in your community and local area. Canal and river adoptions are growing in popularity across the country with both a great variety of groups getting involved but also a great number of different activities going on.

Adoptions are one way that volunteers are becoming more and more active on the towpaths of this country so thank you for being part of the team.

My role is Volunteering Development and I specifically work groups such as you supporting and celebrating the great number of community groups that work with CRT. Your local volunteering team Wayne Ball & Scott Miller are your main contacts but from time to time I might be in contact to get feedback or invite you to events.

The start of your adoption is a great time to celebrate and get local press involved please work with your local volunteering team to do this. Please ensure that we work together to promote and celebrate the adoption and ensure mutual agreement of press releases. Please also follow us on the CRT Volunteers Facebook and Twitter sites, it's a good way to see what everyone else is doing and promote your project.

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