

## Chairman's Update

March 2024

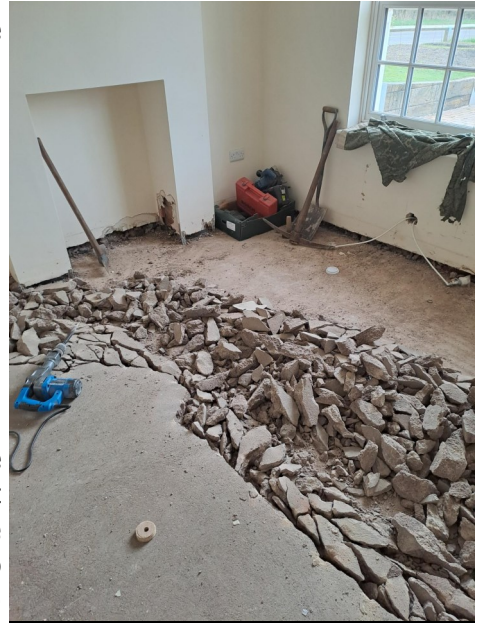
It's now officially spring and I'm typing this with sun pouring through the window. What a difference a month makes. There's still rain, but now it is light rain, not storms. It's amazing how a spot of sunshine improves our wellbeing. And with it we have movement on a number of fronts with our projects as you'll see below. Some faster than others, but I guess that's inevitable.

### Cottages



Cottage 3—Ready to go

On the very positive front we are motoring on with the flood recovery works. As anticipated we completed Cottages 2 and 3 at the end of February and are now well into Cottage No 1. It's much faster when you've done it all before and we've been able to bring back the trades we need at exactly the right time so far! We've also



Screed floor being removed

been helped by a big turn out by the working party team to move the old screen and extend the overflow car park.

If we can stick to our plan we'll be



Tanking in place



Removal of damp plasterboard

finished in a few weeks. As before, if anyone wants to paint then we'll be starting in the week after Easter. The happy band of volunteers were reduced by one with Tony taking a holiday and having a knee operation, but the op went so well he's back on the job already. That's dedication for you.



New screed laid

All the rain in the last month or so has tested out the works we undertook to manage water levels and we've not had a serious rise in water levels so far this year. So it's looking good and shouldn't hamper finding a new tenant.



I'm pleased to see that around the site the mostly hawthorn hedge that Brian planted has really taken and there are buds everywhere. I can't see a single failure. Brian must have green fingers, but perhaps we shouldn't be surprised at his success as he has taken on the maintenance of the grounds and turns up regularly to mow and tidy the area—when he doesn't get hijacked to help with the flood damage.

### Draycott

As part of the discussions with the County Council's Flood officer, David has undertaken surveys on the canal line at key points along it and as part of that has discovered that over the last year or so of high water a silt bank has built up close to the land bridge, where a

fast running ditch empties into the canal. The build up has hampered the flow



and drainage away from Hopwell Road. As you can see volunteers (Gary is pictured) have been dispersing the silt and improving the flow.

There have been moves forward to get a coordinated response to flooding in Draycott and Breaston and we now expect to have meetings with the key bodies. Network Rail, our local MP and Erewash Borough have already agreed and we are looking to get attendances from the Environment Agency and Severn Trent as well as the County Flood officers. We also have a promise of pro bono support from consultants who can assist us in pulling together proposals with a view to attracting funding. With this in mind our strategic engineering appraisal has been continuing and further engineering studies at Draycott are being timed to coordinate with these discussions so that we don't waste effort or money.

The purchase of two parcels of land to the east of Hopwell Road are progressing quickly now and we are hopeful to complete within a month, which will allow us to move on with the recreation of the winding hole attenuation pond.



### Working Parties

Along the canal line we've seen more works undertaken at the Borrowash Wall and with the tree management season coming to an end the forestry team have been tidying up a few trees at Borrowash

This is in addition to works at Draycott already covered above.





## Sandiacre

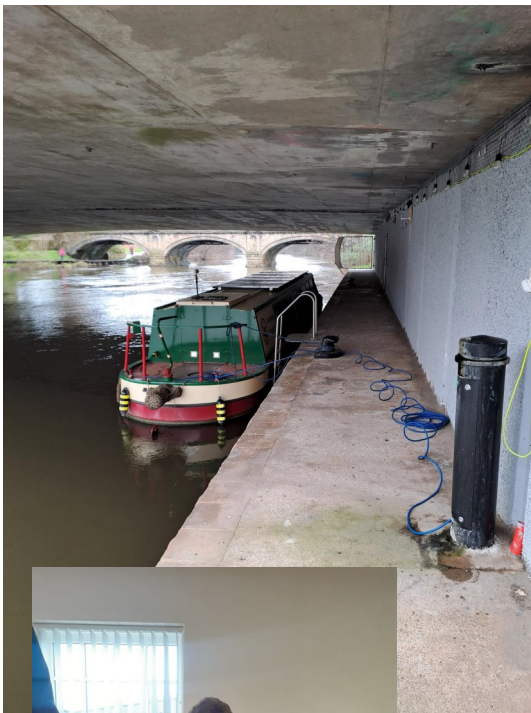
Further meetings have taken place with Severn Trent and progress continues, albeit slowly, to get works quoted and then under way. The latest concern is with works in or around the garage at the end of The Waterway by the lock. We now have advice that we need to get more formal agreement to the works before proceeding.

## Derby Riverboat

The Council at Derby have now completed their licensing review. We believe they will now require us to renew our licences each three years, but they haven't yet published the detail, so we await clarification. Hopefully we have three renewals held awaiting the better conditions and we'll see them registered very soon. We also have a couple of new drivers, who are waiting for training certificates to be ready to apply. It's not all we asked for, but whilst drivers will still be required to prove health and DBS annually at least we'll save on the licence fees currently at around £400 each p.a.

There's been no real progress on the pontoon. We had a meeting with the engineers and DCC trustees, which provided promises, but the long awaited confirmation of funding for the base is still awaited. We are told it isn't that they cannot fund the gap, but they've been "too busy to get around to it". We'll keep pushing.

In readiness for the new season Simon and Mike have been completing maintenance on the boat. They've checked the bilges, which were bone dry, and fitted new meters and switches to work with the larger motor. Simon has also checked and repaired the power pillar following flood damage.



Teams of volunteer crew have been on board cleaning and polishing to get Outram ready for the first trip, currently expected at Easter. The weather needs to improve to entice people on board.

We've also undertaken the First Aid training with eleven attendees. This was provided by Chesterfield Canal Trust and held at Draycott. It was an interesting day with a serious message dealt with in a humorous way. To see someone stagger into the room and drop a severed thumb in front of you certainly gets the adrenaline flowing!



Thanks to CCT and our volunteers for a very entertaining day.

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## Northern Canals

Four members attended the latest meeting held in Lichfield where we saw their latest achievement - the construction of a 500m length of canal and lift bridge. This has been part funded by HS2.

It is a good opportunity to meet other restorations and



compare notes and ideas. It was attended by around 50 people and it was good to meet the new Chairman of the Trustees for IWA and discuss the changes to IWA management. I'll have an opportunity to talk to the High Level Restoration Panel about improving support by IWA for Restoration Trusts and I'm hopeful that we could see access to key skills being made more accessible in the near future.



## **Members' Meetings**

Firstly I must apologise for the late cancellation of our last meeting. Unfortunately Keith Blood was seriously ill on the day and we had little notice. It hasn't happened before so we weren't prepared. In future we plan to resort to a back up speaker rather than cancel the meeting. Keith has also offered to come later in the year as a number of you have requested.

On 26th of this month we have a talk from The Woodland Trust by Gerald Price. As a national charity they have made progress in protecting trees and encouraging more to be planted. We have ourselves been the beneficiary of free whips to be planted along the canal line.

Future speakers are as follows:

April 23rd      The Ilkeston Tramway      by Stephen Flanders

May 28th      The Carlisle Ship Canal      by David Ramshaw

We also hope to get Lichfield and Hatherton Canal Trust to visit us and provide more information on the restored canal length referred to above.

Meetings will be at the Cottages in Hopwell Road, Draycott, DE72 3PE starting at 7.30pm.

Thanks for your support.

Chris Madge