

The Packet

Issue 96 Spring 2024



Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust

Suggested Donation £1

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Paul Turner:	Breaston
Chris Madge:	Draycott
	Sandiacre
David Savidge:	Borrowash
	Spondon
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Cottages:

Don Olivant
Tony Dawson

Membership:

Gary Harding

For company law purposes all directors listed above are also deemed to be trustees and also sit on the advisory committee.

Front Cover

May Blossom over the Canal at Draycott in February

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From the Editor



Welcome to Issue 96! There has been quite a lot going on in the last six months but the floods at the cottage, and the ensuing recovery efforts, have been much to the fore.

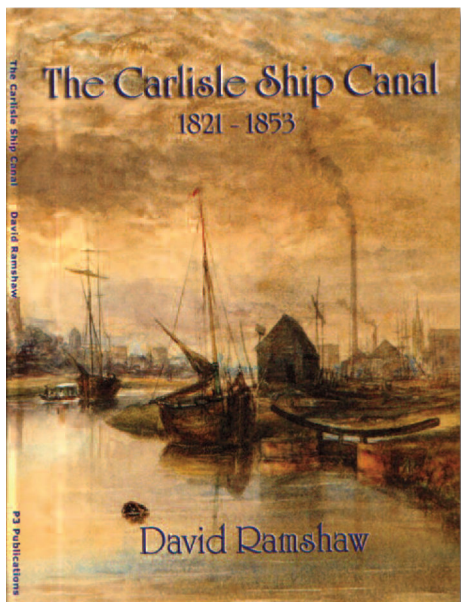
At the AGM my efforts with this magazine and other projects I have been involved with have been recognised with the award of the Kate Birtles shield. Knowing of the significant contributions made by other volunteers all the time, it was quite humbling, and a great honour, to be singled out for the award this year. My thanks to those who kindly nominated me!

This issue features the second and last part of Keith Johnson's article about his years organising work parties for which I thank him.

There is no contribution from our neighbours at Chesterfield this time as Rod Auton, editor of the Cuckoo, has stood down after producing 36 issues, as has graphics designer Alan James who worked with him. I'm sure they will both be greatly missed, but the good news is that David Dawson, one of the very first Cuckoo editors in the 1970s, has offered to be Cuckoo editor again.

The speaker for the May meeting is David Ramshaw who will be giving a talk about the short lived Carlisle Ship Canal. I grew up in the Carlisle area but only realised there had been such a canal last year when I saw it on the 'Villages by the Sea' Programme about Port Carlisle,

presented by Ben Robinson. Those who would like to learn more about it may like to read David's book..



I have been to a number of members' meetings now and I have always found them enjoyable and interesting - and there are usually spare seats available. More support would be most welcome!

Finally - a reminder that the Canal Trust postcard (as below) is on sale at the Cafe - also at our stalls when we attend events!



Chairman/Communications Report

The Derby River Boat

When I wrote this in September we had only a week more of sailings and expected to finish on 1st October. Passenger numbers being weather dependant, we didn't expect it to be viable to run into October; certainly not with the mooring arrangement under Causey Bridge.



Our resident engineers, Simon and Mike, were planning the motor replacement with Rolls-Royce precision! Once the sailings finished the motor, controller and throttle unit were to be taken out, the motor taken to Honiton to be upgraded and then brought back ready for installation and recommissioning. We planned a reasonably thorough servicing before putting Outram back into the winter moorings.

There was some progress with the pontoon - we had a design for the concrete anchor fixings. We were also told of a saving on the original estimate and that the fixings could be in place before Christmas!! [They weren't! - Ed]

As we still needed to find around £100k, Mike and I had started approaching

possible donors and hoped to have a meeting with a major employer. Getting the pontoon in place ready for April would elevate the project because:

1. We will be visible on the river thereby easier to find and attracting passing traffic
2. We will be able to take disabled passengers
3. We won't have to move the boat when river levels rise

The 2023 Feste celebrations on Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd September included some activities around Cathedral Green and the river. We had to decline hosting an activity on the boat - when the pontoon is in place we can then be a focal point for the celebrations and benefit from some publicity.

In September I met the new leader of Derby City Council, Baggy Shanker, to



demonstrate our value to the city's tourism and economic prosperity. We had support from all political views and hoped that would last for a long time.

In October we ran the last boat trips, enjoying a late rush to enjoy the last chance in 2023. Our final trip was a free one for the winter mooring jetty owner

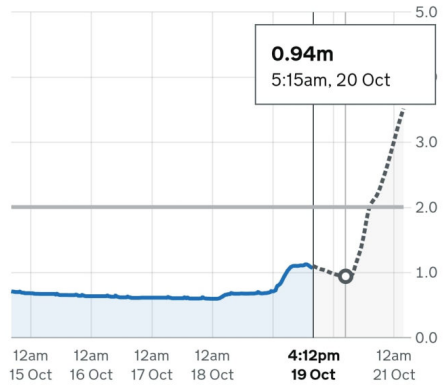
and her family. The pontoon still being delayed, we had to ask her to accommodate the boat for a third year and luckily she agreed.



Once the last trip was over, we started our maintenance and the motor upgrade was completed within 10 days. The boat builder visited and advised draining and cleaning the bilges to avoid corrosion. Apart from that things looked good.

The arrival of Storm Babet upset our plans. Over the weekend of 21st October the water in the River Derwent rose to 3.56 metres, the previous highest having been 3.23 metres in November 2019. Parts of the city were flooded and many roads closed. Whilst the flood protection system seemed to cope well, we needed to protect the boat.

The forecast indicated that the boat needed to be moved from under Causey Bridge. As the jetty protection was not in place, we temporarily moved it to an open steep bank where it could rise and fall without snagging. This was a good test for the new motor as the river flow



was ten times normal. We achieved the move, but had to wait for the river levels to fall before finishing the maintenance and the move to winter mooring.



The river was almost up to tarmac level on Exeter Bridge and the footbridge by the flooded Silk Mill.



This picture of the boat, with the City Road flood wall in the background, was taken from the Furnace pub.

Whilst progress was being made on the pontoon, we awaited the inevitable review following the water levels just experienced. We had a productive meeting with Rolls-Royce, although the job cut announcements that followed would limit any support they could offer.

The boat having survived the October flood, we moved it to more secure moorings after a week or so. There were some fairly high waters afterwards and the frame to hold the boat off the jetty performed well. The picture shows the frame in use with the bottom floor of the jetty totally submerged.



We spent a day doing winter maintenance, preparing for poor

weather and adding extra instruments to monitor the new motor. The bilges were cleaned, the ballast in the bow removed, and residue water extracted.



We considered returning the boat to the bridge but the river was too fast. Also, the power socket under Causey Bridge, had tripped during the floods. Our thanks to Simon for replacing the relevant parts, getting it working and saving an argument with the suppliers.



The plan is that the power socket will be moved onto the pontoon and rise with the water, but...

The pontoon base design was reviewed after the floods and some minor changes suggested. New quotes to see if the Council's remaining budget would cover it were promised early January and Mike sought funding to cover the rest.

We had a good meeting with the new Derby City Council leader, Baggy Shanker. We were hopeful of support for future projects but funding seemed very unlikely when other Councils were declaring themselves bankrupt.

We met with developers looking to work on the east bank of the Derwent post flood defences. They seemed keen to go with our designs for the city centre basin. It was the first time we'd seen developers involve the community BEFORE they draw up their plans and designs.

By January we had a quote for the riverboat pontoon of £65k for the base and over £75k for the pontoon itself. The Council was looking for another £20k for the base, and we probably needed to raise the balance for the pontoon, but were awaiting decisions that would allow us to move on.

We held a very constructive Trustees' meeting in January with positive contributions from City Council Labour Councillors, Martin Rawson and Hardyal Dhindsa. They offered to progress the project and seek decisions on the pontoon and the urgent review of boat licensing. They also hoped to get us more involved with the 'Our City, Our

River' (OCOR) flood defences project.

Liz worked on the 2024 boat trips; namely renewal of driver training, providing first aid training for more volunteers, and planning for the remaining maintenance and the relocation of the boat to Causey Bridge. Unfortunately, there was little hope of the pontoon being ready in time for 29th March when we hoped to be back in the water.

Councillors Hardyal Dhindsa and Martin Rawson assisted progress with the Riverboat during February. After pressure from our Trustees, proposals were made that reflected most of the improvements we had asked for in the Autumn. The most important one was the move to three year licences, so dramatically reducing the cost and inconvenience in gaining medical assessments, etc. We still awaited confirmation in March, but it allowed us to prepare for the new season.

Secondly, we had formal discussions with engineers on the pontoon and the design of the OCOR flood protection works. The Council believed it could fund the base and will provide a framework for us to fund and supply the pontoon structure. However, the OCOR construction works may restrict access to the pontoon for 12 to 24 months from 2025. We had to consider how to proceed - it is pointless having a disabled friendly pontoon if wheelchairs can't get to it. The Council were confirming funding formally in March, subject to our raising the funds for the pontoon structure. More thinking and planning was called for, but at least we now had more control over the progress.

Liz had drawn up a new volunteer timetable for April, the first aid training sessions starting early March. The boat clean up was also scheduled for March, water levels permitting, and we had a

Working Parties

In September, we moved to mowing and trimming in earnest. The nesting season being over, trimming and cutting was less disruptive to wildlife. As you can see, Peter and his fellow volunteers maintained Borrowwash lock surround beautifully.



couple of new boat drivers to train in April so they could also be licenced and provide more capacity. We hoped for lower water at Easter, when we were scheduled to start, and a sunny summer.

Of course it's not always plain sailing and we have been visited by a few vandals who have disrupted things in the bottom of the lock - particularly around the paddle openings. No lasting damage was done other than to our morale, but everything is back in place.

At Breaston the grassed area close to the Navigation was given another cut with our tractor. It looked neater and we could keep an eye out for more fly tipping in the long grass. We missed Paul and his farmer scale equipment that had kept this and other stretches mowed so well, and are thankful to him for this support over many years.



At Borrowwash west of Station Road the blackthorn was establishing itself in the grassland, so that needed to be kept in check. As someone whose grandfather lost a finger to blackthorn poisoning I knew how nasty it can be.

In October our working parties prepared the canal line for winter. They were active at Breaston, Station Road (and the lock) at Borrowwash, and Sandiacre.

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At Draycott the bund and paths were trimmed. At Derby Road, following earlier vandalism, the steps and the safety barrier by the culvert, which is always seen as a challenge, were repaired. The barrier would hopefully fulfil our duties before it is knocked down again.



Our working parties were busy as usual in November and December. Once all the mowing was done they turned to tree management. Then, after tidying the wall at Borrowwash, the team planted up mostly hawthorn (well it was called the May Canal!).



Roger's team cleared out the sycamores that were poisoning horses in the Ulliker's Bridge area before replanting and installing insect houses. We had a lot of compliments about the area - and I don't just mean those looking for logs.



After the floods at the cottages, there was much activity at Draycott. We found that the flow rate of the "canal" along the Golden Mile section was reduced because the land bridge in the middle was silting up and the reeds were growing that may have been impeding the flow.

Our trained volunteer digger driver team, and a few helpers, assembled to practise their skills under Paul Shaw's supervision. They planned to divert the main stream which joins the canal at the land bridge so it would no longer be held back by the silted up bridge hole. A late ground safety check was done, there having been so much rain, but luckily all went ahead and the new channel was formed. The next day the team dug out the worst patch of reeds. Then they lowered the bunds by Derby Road. There's less water now, but it reduces the risk of flooding until more constructive works on stop planks can be carried out.



Our working parties continued in January, despite the weather varying between rain and ice cold sunshine. Sustrans asked us to deal with some uprooted trees along the stretch we are currently acquiring from them. If they'd moved faster it would have been our problem, but they were happy to pay for our help.



Soon after this, the Environment Agency asked us to deal with a leaning tree. This may indicate that they're monitoring watercourses to prevent obstructions. It didn't look like a major issue and it was added to our list.

More work was done on the wall at



Borrowwash, and the team rebuilt the steps that lead from Borrowwash lock to the Ock Brook. At one stage there was a watercourse running down this path and it caused a lot of erosion.

The results of the high level of water were evident by the smelly and unsightly residue around the sewer by Borrowwash Lock. We've been advised to keep reporting this type of incident as Severn Trent Water might then look to deal with it - and you never know they may decide to relocate the sewer so it doesn't cross the canal line there.

It also looks as though we'll be reinstating the notice board at Spondon as someone has decided to throw it into the canal. They obviously couldn't find a shopping trolley this time!

February saw excellent progress along the canal line. At Borrowwash the wall building continued and whips were planted as well as stones! It got rave reviews on our social media.

Unfortunately presence on social media also brought a greater recognition of our work and we had another attempted break in at the Borrowwash container. There are no valuable tools stored there, but it means buying another couple of



locks. Perhaps it was also a mistake to improve the path leading up to it. Sometimes we can't win!

Down by Borrowash Lock we cut back the overgrown hedges and it looks much tidier now. The team also worked at Longmoor Road in Breaston, cutting back ivy and dangerous branches - a

Draycott

In September the engineering group, led by Martin, prepared a brief for the consultant together with an outline of the works and approach required for the dig out. We also submitted a bill to Network Rail. It was for less than we thought we were due, but we had taken a pragmatic approach so as get a reasonable contribution to the works and move on to completion. We have to have an eye on the long game.

Chris and Mike started to identify funding sources for the estimated balance. We hoped we could apply once the costs had been firmed up. It will be a relief to get the Golden Mile in place. David was working out how to keep the rushes down in Phase 1 as we will need to get it cleaned up before the Phase 2 works and water vole transfer in the spring.

We had an interactive whiteboard and projector donated which Don and Tony erected in the meeting rooms.

With the canal works stalled we monitored the flood water carefully. One morning the car park flooded, the water coming close to the cottage door thresholds. Fortunately it quickly dispersed. The outlet on the canal line below the cottages is a combination of the flows from both sides of Hopwell

particular problem when it's near to footpaths or roads.

So it has been a busy time dealing with all these items as well as undertaking surveys, clearing flood damage, etc. Thanks to all our helpers, working whatever the weather throws at us.

Road and can cause flash flooding.

We were in the process of buying the land across Hopwell Road from Sustrans and planned to reinstate the old winding hole as an attenuation pound to absorb some of the excess water. We hoped to conclude that quickly, but we were restricted by the needs and pace of the Sustrans Trustee Board.

Throughout October work continued on the canal restoration at Draycott, but it was overtaken by flooding on site.



We had a small flood - car park only - on Friday 13th, which closed the café, but it disappeared after a few hours. As it was just a mini version of the September event, we weren't prepared for the impact of Storm Babet a week later. It rained so heavily and for so long that water rushed down the hill behind the



cottages and pooled in the small depression where our development is. The flood was over a foot deep in the car park, effectively creating a canal without the need for a dig out. All three tenanted cottages were flooded with around six inches of water throughout the ground floor. Again, less than a day later the water had dropped and the car park was open again. This was going to be an expensive event for us even though we are insured.



Our tenants had to move out while we replaced damaged carpets, etc, and there was a possibility that lower kitchen units, internal doors and skirting/plasterboard might have to be replaced if they'd soaked up too much water. As soon as the water receded we had a team in place to start the drying out process. We discussed with the tenants how to handle the repairs and whether we compensate them for moving out.



It was a challenge that we didn't need and the café had to close until the waters receded. Fortunately, it's a few inches higher than the cottages and so no water came in, but it was close. Garry and Joyce, who run the café, were really helpful in so many ways. I was very grateful for both that and concentrating on just getting it sorted out.

Paul Turner tried to speed up the sale of the winding hole from Sustrans with some success.

Our engineering team focused on preventing a repeat and better protecting the cottages. This needed sorting out quickly and effectively so as not to lose our tenants, but up to then only one wanted to move out. They also

worked on the canal restoration, making steady progress towards a dig out in 2024. We wanted to thin the reeds in the channel, so water can disperse quicker. It was a challenge balancing personal safety and wildlife, but we took advice and hoped to do the work very soon.

Throughout November and December we focused on restoring the properties. As a large area had been flooded, contractors were busy and it took time to get surveys and work organised.

However, we did make progress. The tenant in the smallest property had vacated. Another was still in residence but had no ground floor carpets. The third had moved out but wanted to return if the cottage they rented was restored quickly. So while this continued it was likely that we would lose rental income.

The surveys concluded that on the ground floor we needed to strip out the kitchens, also the plasterboard to one metre above the floor. This would allow pressure drying, where hot air is injected through holes drilled in the concrete base, to be carried out. The plasterboard then needed replacing together with internal doors, skirting, architrave, etc.

This would only work if there was no more flooding. About three weeks after the first major flood we had a rerun, albeit to a lower level, but as some water came in we made an urgent preventative plan. We bought flood barriers for the external doors of Nos 2 and 3 - we had already purchased one for No 1 and tested it out during the later

high water. We also looked at coating the floors and walls (tanking) and were receiving professional advice. This being an improvement, it would be at our cost, but if we could do the work ourselves, we'd save time and money.

The heavy rainfall had disturbed the aquifer from which we get water, causing it to pick up silt, so we upgraded the filtration system to make sure the water is always clear. We went for bigger, more effective units just to be sure.



The longer term search to divert and hold back the water continued. We had to work with our neighbours and consensus wasn't easy to achieve. We had special meetings to look at all options including a review of the canal design to add alleviation measures around Hopwell Road. One idea was the earlier introduction of stop planks at Derby Road, allowing us to lower the canal level when bad weather is forecast, but it would be spring 2024 or later before it was in place. As already reported, we were making plans to make an attenuation pound to the east of Hopwell Road on the "Sustrans" land. We intended to apply for planning permission in the hope that Sustrans would move quicker and allow works in the summer.

This became more relevant when we submitted an expression of interest to OFWAT on a bid of over £2m. It was the brainchild of Martin, our volunteer Civil Engineer, who has spent a number of years in the water industry. He is looking to involve Network Rail on Flood relief and Severn Trent Water on water transfer. This is really cutting edge and has the potential to get large levels of funding in an otherwise sparse supply of grants. This plan, which involves works between Derby and Church Wilne, is on an altogether larger scale.

Canals are increasingly seen as a means of moving water across the country; for example, transferring water via the Thames and Severn Canal to meet London's growing demands. With that in mind, we started some land ownership research which uncovered the chance to buy further land on the canal line. We were able to get a stay of execution of the sale of a section of the line to an "unsupportive" party.

The café continued to sail through the challenges and were still as busy as usual. It looked like they'd taken a leaf from Matlock Bath in attracting the bikers - or are the Mods back in fashion?



In January we made steady progress with longer term flood management. The diversion of flows along the line seemed to be working and preventing flows backing up to Hopwell Road. We had also reduced the bunds along the canal line, which should all contribute to managing the increased water flows. This is prior to any plans in the summer to install stop planks.



We had a talk with the County Council's Flood officer, who visited after Christmas, hoping this would be a way to make progress. However, it seemed that as always they are looking at short term alleviation - clearing ditches and maintaining existing arrangements - rather than looking at improvements.

We asked our County Council Trustee to promote the use of the canal as a flood protection measure and hope this leads to a more enlightened approach to flood

protection for Breaston and Draycott. With this in mind our Engineering Group is reassessing levels to see the benefits and costs of a change to canal levels. To help the discussion we've been resurveying levels with David and Chris RFP doing the Gandalf impression with the hi tech Theodolite.



We also pursued the option to use the canal for water transfer and received a lot of interest as it may make considerable cost savings for water provision, and it could be done so much better with an open canal than a buried pipe. It's a long term conversation, but so far...

The acquisition of land from Sustrans continued slowly and the possibility of other purchases were still under review - as long as we can afford them. It's at times like this when the Cottage's revenue stream is missed.

In February we did initial ground surveys for the Draycott canal works to provide data for contract tendering later in the year. We focused on securing the winding hole east of Hopwell Road and there seemed to be some progress with Sustrans. As part of this the working party team agreed the land boundaries with the neighbours and Sustrans in readiness.

We were surprised to be told by our ecologists that they now don't feel they have the water vole expertise to continue for us, so we were looking for replacements, which hopefully will help us in the long run - assuming we still have water voles of course.

We had experienced more rainfall on already high water tables so there had been floods around us, but mercifully the works we had undertaken seemed to have kept the water levels at bay for us. This was helped by the work that David and his working parties had done to keep outflows clear of debris.

Further talks were taking place with the County Council's Flood officer, although this remained a difficult process even with assistance from our County Councillor. We will continue to press for more constructive developments that use the canal as a means of flood relief for Draycott and Breaston. We are concerned that changes are discouraged for fear of upsetting the status quo.

Our application for significant funding for works in this area was rejected, so we will continue to look at other alternatives.

Sandiacre

In September I reported that we had at last been making good progress at Sandiacre. The formalisation of designs seemed to be moving on apace. The new contact at Severn Trent Water seemed really keen to get the project moving. They were convinced that they could provide a solution that avoids a pumping station (and the £500k price tag) and we would be looking to get trial pits to assess whether we can work safely alongside the trees currently in place. We reopened discussions with our neighbour, Dave, who again offered for us to knock down his garage (which admittedly has already lost its roof) to allow space for the relocated sewer. It is apparent that STW contractors are not cheap, but we need to get the quote in place so we can see if we have sufficient funds already in place. Again it would be excellent to get this done so we could

focus our volunteer teams on reconstructing the lock - just as they have achieved at Borrowash - but this time with the prospect of it being fully functional.

In February progress was underway to get the Severn Trent Water quote. We were surprised by a sudden request for a footpath closure to undertake trial pits, which David was able to turn around in double quick time and notify residents. We were even more surprised - and disappointed - to be told that the contractors hadn't properly understood the requirements and had requested a further delay. Sometimes it seems that volunteers are much more effective than the "professionals". We've complained and hope to get some compensation for the delays.

The Cottages

In February I reported that it had been three months since the floods on 20th October. We still had one tenant in place, one who moved out and the other waiting to move back in when we've repaired the flood damage. We'd made good progress in February and had a core team at work on it with Brian Allen and myself joining Don and Tony, who never stop finding jobs to do there!

We now had door barriers for all three cottages, which should prevent the worst of any future flash flooding and the much improved filtration was in and working well. We were working on Cottages 2 and 3 to avoid further disturbing the resident tenants, the plan



being that they'll swap with No 2 when it is finished so that we can then do Cottage 3. The insurers commissioned contractors to strip out the damaged plasterboard and take out the kitchens and radiators as you can see.



We decided to take the advice of the flood restoration professional who is helping us and avoid the drilling and drying out of the concrete slab. Instead we progressed with tanking, injecting a new, higher damp proof course and waterproofing the external walls. This involved removing the screed floors, which were the wettest parts of the floor, so the concrete slab below is already drier than before. The screed will be replaced once the tanking is completed.

We 'relaid' the screed on the temporary car park by the cafe, which had been too muddy to use. Always good to recycle! Thanks to David's team for the "chain gang" activities in breaking it up and levelling it out.



Given that we wanted to focus on preventing recurrence rather than simply restoring the property, it made sense for us to pursue a cash settlement and take control. So we now looked to

planning the sequence of works ourselves. I was convinced that, given our experience with the original build, this would be the most effective and quickest way to get back to being fully operational again. Whilst a final settlement was still being progressed, we were already organising our contractors. The major step forward since the original rebuild is that we have access to the Café manager's contacts (he is/was a joiner).



We had a visit from a prospective plasterer and screeder and I reckoned the quality of the cakes seemed to have swung the deal. With these two and a plumber and electrician lined up, and support from the volunteer team, we were hoping to have the first cottage back in operation by March [We did! - Ed]

By the end of February work on flood recovery had moved on apace. All the trades had delivered on time, so not only had the volunteer team of Don, Tony, Brian, Anne and myself continued with the basics such as rendering, tanking, plaster boarding and flooring, we had also had timely visits from screeders, electricians, plumbers and plasterers. As I wrote this we had only some final fit joinery (kitchens and doors) and painting to go. With carpets planned for 28th February we expected to be ready



with two of the three cottages and therefore to welcome back one tenant and relocate those in No 1 so we can start

the remedials of the final cottage.

After the last few months we'd finally managed to negotiate a settlement with our insurers and were confident that thanks to volunteer effort we can cover the cost of repair and improvement and the lost rent in the interim. It was going to be a relief to finish and have paying tenants back in again.

Shardlow

We attended the Inland Port Festival again last September. Our thanks to David for organising it and the volunteers who manned it. We attracted a lot of attention and even sold a few things.

We also had some people interested in volunteering. The pitch was in a much better place this year and the weather was beautiful. There were lots of visitors and most of them wanted to know what we are doing. Overall it was a successful two days of spreading the word.



Other Projects

In October, Sandiacre was waiting on Severn Trent Water action following the illness of a key officer there. I suspected that the floods might also slow matters down, but communication was good so we expected progress to continue.

We had produced amended drawings for the Arm development. They were being reviewed by an external body and were expected to help alleviate concerns from St Modwens, etc.

We had heard the announcement that the HS2 project will not be proceeding to

Manchester and that smaller rail/transport projects would take place instead. We thought that electrification of the railway line may be brought forward as a result and we were already noticing a freeing up of contractors. Works at Draycott may now be more attractive to contractors.

By the end of 2023 Sandiacre had moved on and we expected revised costings in 2024. It was still a very positive approach and we had high hopes of work taking place in 2024 (assuming the quote isn't too great). However we'd

been delighted with positive talks to route the sewer more cost effectively under a nearby garage and the agreement of the owner that we can demolish it to allow access. He will also gain by Severn Trent Water providing flexibility for his future extension. It looked like a win for everyone.

We were grateful for the offer of some pro bono work from a large planning consultancy in Derby, Rogers Leask, who are looking at the practical planning around the Derby Arm development and especially the challenges raised around the capped off contaminated land that

we would look to use.

We had also established contact with Network Rail around the electrification project. Whilst it had been a positive contact and in good time to discuss influence planning/design we understand that current improved technology will not require the substantial raising of bridges as before. This would have an impact at Borrowash, where we were hoping to share costs for raising the railway bridge with our own bridge over the canal. This should also give a better understanding of works required at Raynesway.

IWA

I am a member of a panel at the IWA dealing with restoration issues and how the IWA supports restoration. Most of you will have followed the recent hiatus at the organisation with several CEO and Chairmen resigning in quick succession. It appears that new Trustees have been appointed and they recognise the need for a basic rethink. I am also part of a small team trying to define the needs of the local restoration Trusts going forward. I believe that we need a national body to help us, particularly with technical advice, but it is in the interests of us all to get the organisation functioning strongly again. I urge all IWA members to respond to the questionnaire that has been circulated and plug the restoration cause.

Jenny Hodson, IWA Volunteer Manager, asked me to include an advert for volunteers, which I haven't room for but here's the text from it - Ed

BECOME A MEMBER - *Join IWA your support can make a difference*

Join our community of like-minded people from all walks of life and show your support for the waterways. The Inland Waterways Association is the only national charity that works to preserve and restore all Britain's 7,000 miles of canals and river navigations. Only IWA does all this, and more...

We campaign for the waterways and champion regeneration

We lobby Parliament and fight to improve the waterway

We offer practical support and advice on waterways restoration

We run Waterway Recovery Group which supports restoration projects

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Members' Meetings

On September 26th Geoff Pursglove gave us a talk about progress on the Ashby Canal and Moira Furnace.

Following his well received talk on railway safety, Brian Dale gave us a talk on October 24th about how aircraft safety has improved over the years. His talk was both entertaining and worrying in equal measure!

We held our AGM in November. Derek gave us a full picture of the accounting issues that he's dealt with this year, but otherwise it was largely uneventful. It did provide an opportunity for me to thank, on behalf of the Trustees, all our many volunteers for their support across our many activities. It's when you look back over a year that you realise the extent of the effort that we've seen and the continued impact of all that effort. Slowly, but surely people and organisations are supporting the cause.

We were also able to recognise our Editor, Peter Warmingham, with the award of the Kate Birtles Trophy. This award recognises one of our volunteers who has had a major impact in progressing our work over the past year. It is named after keen volunteer Kate Birtles, sadly no longer with us, and presented by Paul.

Peter has recently taken over the Packet production and a growing list of other Comms tasks. It is very important that we keep up to date with our own members, and also to show a positive face to outside bodies and Peter has been very effective in reaching that wider audience by articles written in other publications.



On January 23rd, we were treated to a brilliant talk on James Brindley by Cliff Lea from Cromford. I hadn't realised how many projects Brindley had been involved with until Cliff provided his entertaining explanation of Brindley's rise to national prominence.

I apologise for the late cancellation of our February 2024 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 have a back up speaker rather than cancel the meeting. Keith has offered to come to give his talk about the Friargate Line later in the year.

April 23rd, Stephen Flander will give a talk about The Ilkeston Tramway.

On May 28th local Carlisle historian David Ramshaw will give a talk, by video link, about the Carlisle Ship Canal.

On June 25th we will be organising a short walk, location yet to be decided.

All meetings (*except the walk -Ed*) will be at the Cottages in Hopwell Road, Draycott, DE72 3PE starting at 7.30pm.

And Finally

David and Pauline Jennings and I were asked to present to the Freemen of Derby at the Council Chamber in September. It was a mix of restoration news from me and the history of Derby from David and Pauline. They provided lots of old photos of Derby and we all

received compliments from the audience. I thought you might like to see a photo taken before the demolition of the power station that used to dwarf the Silk Mill and which also shows the canal line approaching the Silk Mill wharf pre Causey Bridge days.



A Brief History of Time Spent on the Derby Canal

Part 2: Eastern Arm Work 2018 to 2022 - Keith Johnson

This is the second and final part of Keith's article, the first part of which was included in Packet 94, Spring 2022 - Ed

Kit Maintenance (2018)

Late March 2018 I tested our cement mixer which was found to be faulty. As it was too big to go in my car I got a tow bar fitted so I could trailer it home for repair in early April. It was used in anger at Borrowwash Bottom Lock mid-April 2018.

2019

This was another busy year during which I was involved in almost 100 WPs, about half of which I led. The double WP arrangement started in August 2018 was discontinued in early January due to other commitments. The Canal Cottages roof was done by the end of January and the Sandiacre Bottom Lock dig-out in February. Tree clearance work was carried out at the Spondon East section, along the canal line at the rear of the new Wheeldon housing development by Clock Garage, between mid-February and mid-March, plus a little more work there late in the year. Tractor operations started in May and Cockayne Bridge was vandalised in June. The WRG paid their second visit to Borrowwash Bottom Lock late July.

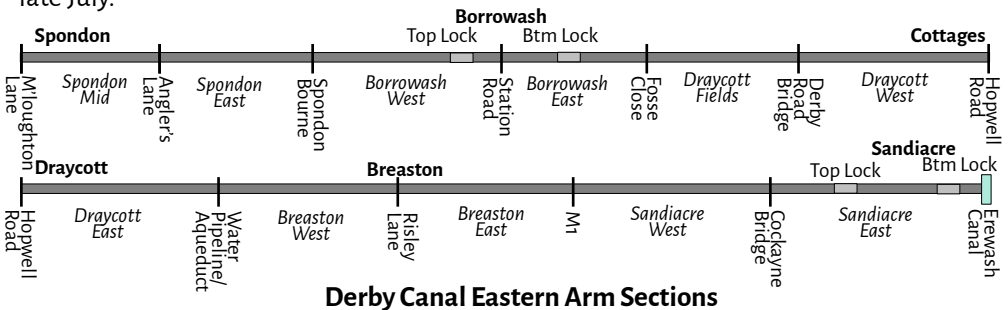
Site Activities: Borrowwash West

Not much was done in 2019 except mowing once the tractor and flail was operational.

Borrowwash East

By the end of January the bed near to Station Road was mostly clear of debris from the tow path trees felled the previous August. Search trenches for the offside wall stonework were dug in that same area without overwhelming success from which it was concluded, (wrongly), that the first say 40 to 50 metres of offside canal wall downstream from Station Road had been destroyed when the adjacent Station Road bridge over the canal was demolished. In fact, as we later found in 2022, the search trenches in early 2019 were neither deep nor wide enough.

In late May with the tractor kit already delivered, rubble and earth ramps were created into the upper and lower cuts for tractor access to each bed in anticipation of using the flail on them. The lower bed has been mowed like that ever since but the upper cut is a little more involved and still waiting for the bed to be sufficiently cleared.



Borrowash Bottom Lock

My handful of WPs here were mainly for land maintenance work. The restoration work had got to the “serious” stage when it should be left to the WRG team visits - our bricklayers were fully occupied at the Canal Cottages anyway.

Draycott West and East

My activity here amounted to the tractor kit operations of mowing and chipping plus some stump extraction.

Breaston West

In January we were approached by the Breaston-in-Bloom group for some assistance with their latest proposed creation; a narrow-boat themed display to be sited on the Derby Canal line by the Navigation pub in Breaston. Our input was to clear the ground for them leaving the ivy on the fences as a backdrop for the display.

Sandiacre West and East

Having acquired these sections the previous year we started tidying them. However, this was barely begun as other areas took the lion's share of the available manpower, so most of the activity at Sandiacre was scrub clearance, tree and bush pruning and mowing, plus some tree planting in hedgerows.

Support Activities: Storage

Over 2018 and early 2019 I had been slowly clearing out our main storage area of items that were broken, unserviceable or no use for our operations, to make space for, and access to, useful kit. March 2019 was the time for the mother of all sort-outs of the main container to accommodate the tractor kit due for delivery later that month.

Operational

The tractor, flail and chipper were obtained late March and mowing operations commenced mid-May after the legal paperwork was sorted. I continued compiling and distributing the work plans. Records in text form started in late summer 2018 and adopted the issue/year method of labelling them, issue 01/2019 being sent out on 4th April 2019. In addition, I started compiling a spreadsheet version of that text file which showed great promise as it was more succinct, easier to compile, edit and read than the “War and Peace” of the text version. On 11th Nov 2019 the first issue of the spreadsheet plans and records was circulated along with the text version.

Kit Maintenance

A couple of years before in July 2017, I had found an unserviceable three ton Jet hoist in the canal stores. I had started to repair it only it wasn't a high priority compared with other work and not urgently needed. However, during 2019, I had spent some time extracting stumps, that were too big for hand tools, by using the tractor. This was OK but, regardless of its power, the limits are its wheel traction, size and the accessibility to the target area. So as the Jet hoist was going to be very useful for the imminent extraction of bed tree stumps late in 2019, some time was spent getting it working again. It was tested by successfully extracting stumps in early November 2019 at Borrowash East.

2020s

Late 2019 and most of 2020 was not the most productive time we've had - delays were incurred for reasons largely beyond our control. Weather was the first major

culprit with the deluge that started in August 2019, virtually as soon as the WRG team had packed up at Borrowash bottom lock, and seemed to continue almost until Easter 2020. From January I introduced an additional WP on Thursdays in an attempt to make up some time lost due to weather, as an alternative to double WPs on the same day, which operated from August 2018 to January 2019.

In February storm Ciara brought trees down here and there, one across Station Road, Borrowash. Storm Dennis then added to the damage. As soon as the weather perked up in late March the mother of all lock-downs for the Covid-19 outbreak began - only urgent or emergency work was being done and precious little of that until midsummer when the restrictions began to ease.



Reining-in an escaped tree at Station Road Borrowash

The Covid lock-down produced more foot and bicycle traffic on the canal line path than I've ever seen, at times resembling the M25, albeit with traffic moving faster, as people got their quota of daily exercise to top up that obtained by arguing, shouting, slamming doors and otherwise getting on each other's nerves cooped-up at home. This increased use of the canal path led to

work to prune trees made unsafe by the earlier stormy weather with small WPs operating under special restrictions. For once it wasn't about shortage of manpower, there was plenty offered but we couldn't use it. We just had to sit on our hands, after washing them thoroughly for 30 seconds of course, while nature took back some of the areas we'd cleared.

Later in the year when the lock-down restrictions began to ease a little, we started to make some progress on more specialised tasks for which a smaller groups were an advantage, operating under restrictions. With the success of the Thursday WPs, Tuesdays were also introduced from mid-summer, plus restricted 2-man WPs on occasional Mondays to cope with troublesome trees.

Site Activities: Spondon East.

Mid-July saw the first attempt in many years to clear darkest Spondon, that is from Angler's Lane to the end of the allotments. This work to clear space for a new path was extended to give more space for path traffic to stop users having to rub shoulders during their Covid exercise.

Borrowash West

Most of the work, as ever, was clearing scrub, cuttings, masonry and general rubbish and obstructions to our flail mower, plus trimming vegetation and filling holes so that path users weren't forced to cross the plentiful quagmires scattered along this section.

Borrowash East

Much of the planned work here in 2020 involved tree stumps one way or



Triffid infested tow path, Borrowwash East summer 2020



Borrowwash East Tow path stump reduction 2020

another, either clearing around them for access, reducing their size or loosening and extracting them. We started with removing all the stumps in the Station Road end bank in January (before its bulbs sprouted) with the first proper use “in anger” of the Jet hoist since its repair; much quicker and easier than digging them out with hand tools!

Most of the large stumps along the tow path near Station Road, the remains of the trees which were felled in Aug 2018, were still very much alive. They were starting to re-grow and still encroached

onto the tow path to an extent that path users were getting too close to each other in those Covid times. A program of work was therefore carried out from late June to late October to reduce their volume, initially by chainsaw work, and then finishing off with hand tools.

Sandiacre Bottom Lock

I supported six WPs here from late August until late September where most of my involvement was concerned with removing water from the lock, it having been dug out early in 2019, well, trying to, as the lock “water” had the consistency of watery brown porridge. I tried a couple of times with the standard pump kit but once the wateriness had been removed from the brown porridge it became more like brown wet concrete which was blocking the pipework and, in addition, the pumps were not so much pumping it as chewing it. Before the next pumping attempt I had a re-think and made a super-sized and finer-meshed input filter for the pumps which worked well and for longer and stopped the pumps “chewing the mud” but eventually got bunged up anyway when the lock contents got well into the “brown wet concrete” stage. An alternative solution was required, (Archimedean screw say?).

Support Activities:

Storage

At the end of June the stores compound area was extended by our landlord at the request of the Trust to cope with more kit.

Kit Maintenance

During work at Draycott West, we carried out a trial of a “Tree Popper” (this is for removing saplings without having

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to dig them out) which was on loan to us for our approval. We approved of it and bought it. Also I made a new XXL size input filter, for water pump operations.



XXL pump filter. The local Steel Band were not best pleased

2021

Sadly we lost Karl early in the year. If I remember correctly, he'd first joined us with the Geocache group when they visited us on Sunday 13th September 2016 at Borrowash East. That group cleared the section of the canal line between the bottom lock and the Ock Brook. After that he seemed almost omnipresent on the Derby Canal with such huge energy and enthusiasm that we had to find ways to slow him down. I'm sure that the progress of this project has noticeably slowed since we lost him. I dare say that St Peter has had his gates refurbished a few times already!

Although we were still under Covid-19 restrictions - lockdown three had started in January and was not properly lifted until mid-April - I still led over 100 WPs. Most of these were on Tuesdays and

Thursdays. During the spring we were bit by bit coming out of lockdown three so that we could start to reinstate non-urgent WPs. There was much activity early in the year at Spondon East sorting trees, from March onward at Borrowash West and Borrowash East.

Site Activities:

Spondon East

There was some intense activity here from early February to mid April to make safe some trees (mainly willow) and clear away their resulting debris. This activity was triggered by an earlier incident when a large high branch had failed and landed close to someone. Despite the Covid-19 lock-down, and partly because of it, due to the increased path traffic, these trees urgently needed attention. After that, the whole site was cleared of broken glass, scrap metal, mostly corrugated iron sheets, more broken glass, asbestos (by licensed contractors), wire in its many forms, general rubbish, plus even more broken glass, which had accumulated over how ever many decades since the ground was last visible.

Spondon Bourne

The usual balsam bashing in the autumn and water course clearance in November.

Borrowash West

There was much activity here from the lockdown easing in March, mainly clearing the section of rubbish and obstructions to the mower. More than 122 stumps and saplings were removed, mostly from the top lock area and what I'd always thought were a forest of shrubs which turned out to be nothing of

the sort; just a large pile of cuttings dumped there years ago with various types of soft vegetation growing through it.

A break-in to the site on Wednesday 2nd June at 2 a.m. required us to improve our security and work was done to that end on Friday 4th June.

Late in the year I finally succumbed to pressure from the other WP attendees to build bug hotels with the site cuttings rather than moving them off-site. This saved much time and vehicle fuel (mostly mine). December was for clearing the bramble patch by 75 to 65 Manor Road, **not** so much for the brambles themselves but to remove the scrap metal, garden waste, general rubbish and litter that they contained.

Borrowash East

Much work was done here from early March; loosening and extracting stumps, trees and saplings from the bed of the upper half of the cut and around the stonework of the walls, especially the offside, plus cutting and uprooting brambles to find those items in the first place. The lower cut was mowed as is the norm these days.

The Canal Cottages

Work was coming to a close here and it was time to clear the site. My only involvement there was to clear two and a half thousand surplus bricks from the site; it took 3 days and 13 trailer loads.

Draycott West and East, Breaston West, Sandiacre West and East

Mainly mowing from March to October and removing obstructions to that operation.

Support Activities:

Kit Maintenance

Mainly routine maintenance of the tractor and its kit.

2022

The unusually dry weather in the middle of the year was both a help and a hindrance. The dry land produced more ground dust and vegetation particles than normal which blocked cooling air through the tractor radiator more quickly. Some areas dried to the consistency of concrete making it awkward to work with hand tools. On the other hand, some usually flooded areas were accessible that had not been so for years.

Site Activities:

Spondon Bourne

As most years the work here required some balsam-bashing and clearance of blockages to keep the watercourse flowing freely but this year, due to the recent very dry weather, there was also some work trimming the banks. The overhanging banks of Spondon Bourne dried and cracked and showed some tendency to collapse into the Bourne. Since children often play in that area, this could be a safety issue and so had to be dealt with. The bank sections were trimmed to remove the overhangs and make them safe. Also, whilst there we did some work south of the footbridge removing a stump and straightening the watercourse to avoid continued bank erosion. All this work was far easier with the Bourne as dry as it was.

Borrowash West

Most of my WPs here were to tidy the

section and remove obstructions to the mower. We moved some four trailer loads of scrap metal, broken glass and general rubbish, mostly from the area about three quarters of the way along Manor Road where the brambles used to be. We felled one rotten tree that woodpeckers had weakened, one partly collapsed tree, and extracted some 65 stumps, mostly in the top lock area. We minimised the area being mowed to try to encourage wild plants. This led to an exciting development in human evolution when some kids discovered how to make fire (box of matches and long dry grass). However, path users and neighbouring residents there at the time did not appreciate this great advancement in human technology and recommended that those involved take themselves to Russia (well, somewhere ending in “-ov”). So, leaving this section being “natural and undisturbed” by mowing resulted in it getting “unnatural and disturbed” by pyromania. Two days later we mowed it like a bowling green.

Borrowwash East

Upper Cut: Most of my 2022 WPs were here from January until mid November. Mid April onward we traced the first 40 to 50 metres of offside wall stonework downstream of Station Road and exposed and extracted about two dozen stumps in that same area.

Lower Cut: The dry weather this summer dried-out the pool just upstream of the bottom lock; not even a damp patch, something I've not seen in eight years on this project. This enabled us to mow that pool area for the first time, after first clearing that area of stone blocks, bricks, tree trunks, pallets and so on. There were all subsequently thrown

back in as soon as there was enough water there for thrown objects to make a splash or to crack ice, perhaps by kids deprived of pyromania.

Sandiacre West

My Thursday WPs were here from early January until early May when we finally finished the clear-up, started in 2019, that had made little headway for three years due to manpower shortages, Covid lock-downs, etc. A couple of chainsaw sessions were also added to dice-up obstructive logs too big for one person to move.



Borrowwash East from Station Road; note offside bed stumps

Draycott West and East, Breaston West and Sandiacre East

Mainly mowing from March to October and removing obstructions to that operation.

Support Activities

Kit Maintenance

Mostly clearing the tractor radiator and this more often than usual after mowing sessions during that dry summer.

Would you like to help the Derby Canal Restoration?

We would like to thank those who have already come forward to offer their help with the restoration.

Engineering: We now have a tunnel expert (Steve), a company providing CE consultancy, and a Civil Engineer (Martin) with specific expertise on roads and canals. This covers most of the gap, but we would still welcome anybody with engineering skills who would like to join our new, enlarged, engineering team.

Ecology: We now have a volunteer (Denise) who is taking the lead on ecology and will be undergoing training in key areas, such as water voles. She has been involved in the latest ecological survey of the canal path, but we welcome anyone who wants to work with her, whatever their past experience. So if you can get involved with surveys and monitoring, or want to help rejuvenate the biodiversity of the canal route, please join the team.

Fundraising: We now have access to a fundraiser on a paid basis, but a

volunteer is still needed to work with her.

Marketing: We have a good team dealing with our existing website, social media and the Packet, but we need to keep up with new trends and to stimulate interest in new groups of the public. If you have up to date social media nous or want to write articles about our activities please join our team.

In all the above cases experience and knowledge is very helpful, but the key criteria is a desire to change our communities for the better. The amount of time spent will be set by your availability, but the salary is non-existent! The reward comes from achieving progress and working with other passionate people.

If you are interested, then please contact Chris Madge on 07827 946444 or by email at

chris.madge@derbycanal.org.uk to discuss further.

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