

The Packet

*The magazine of the Derby and
Sandiacre Canal Trust*

Issue 97 Autumn 2024



Suggested Donation £1

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Cottages

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

Front Cover

Wooded part of the newly acquired stretch of land on the canal line to the east of Hopwell Road - lots of work to be done here!

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From the Editor



Welcome to Issue 97! There has again been much activity both on the canal line and off, but sadly the long standing saga of the elusive floating pontoon continues unabated.

I need to explain about the Chairman's Report that appears in each issue of this magazine. It is an edited compilation of extracts from the last six month's worth of updates as emailed to the majority of members. However, we have 70 or so members who aren't email users, or prefer to receive a printed copy anyway, so the Chairman's Report is really included for their benefit.

Unfortunately, it means that if you receive both the monthly update and *The Packet*, you are likely to notice the duplication of news. To counteract that, I aim to always include some items that have not come from the monthly updates.

In this issue, we have to thank our contributors Cliff Lea, Anita Hayes, Derek Hathaway (posthumously) and Rod Auton. Cliff Lea has provided a synopsis of the excellent talk about James Brindley that he delivered to our members' meeting in January this year. Rod Auton has sent in an update on progress with the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal.

We also have an article based on information provided by Anita Hayes, the first Secretary of the Spondon Community Association (SCA) and the author of books about the history of

Spondon, and Derek Hathaway, a former Chairman of the SCA, about their involvement with the big turret clock from the Spondon Water Treatment works. Smiths of Derby removed it for storage on 15th January, 2001 and it eventually ended up in the Trust's care. It would be great to restore it and erect it somewhere. I can't help noticing that a building with a clock tower on it appears in our youtube concept video about the Derwent Wharf and Lock:

<https://derbycanal.org.uk/derwent-wharf-lock/>

Could that be where the clock might end up one day? Well, it's anybody's guess so we'll have to wait and see.

We have been working to increase the range of Derby Canal related books on offer when we attend events. So far we have been able to obtain copies of *The Little Eaton Gangway and Derby Canal* by David Ripley, and I have updated *The Derby Canal, A Detailed History* by Michael E Smith (54 pages), now on sale at £9.50. Both will be on sale at members' meetings from now on, along with other merchandise.

Canal themed Christmas cards will be on sale at the AGM, and are on sale at the Cafe, but stocks are limited...

Finally, if you have feedback about this magazine, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Contributions from members would be welcomed too. If you've been on an interesting canal boating holiday, for example, why not share your experiences with the rest of us?

My email address can be found in the 'contacts' section on page 30.

Chairman's Report

The Derby River Boat



In March the boat was prepared for the new season, due to start at Easter, by Simon and Mike, who completed the boat's maintenance, and teams of volunteer crew, who cleaned and polished it. However, better weather was needed to entice people on board.

The Chesterfield Canal Trust came over to Draycott to provide first aid training to eleven of our volunteer crew members. It was an interesting day with a serious message dealt with humorously. Thanks to the Chesterfield Canal Trust and our volunteers for a very entertaining day.



The popularity of the riverboat improved with the weather in May. I completed a Sunday with three full trips even though thunderstorms were expected! Fortunately the forecast wasn't fulfilled.

We started a few charter trips and I was delighted to be on one with a special needs school. The kids really enjoyed the challenge of sounding the air horn to get waves from passers by.

East Midlands Today visited us to film a report in which we were able to point out the continued delay in the Council's pontoon funding decision. We met with Nadine Peatfield, then deputy leader, hoping to move things on - also to discuss how the Derby Arm fits in with her regeneration brief and to get the council to think through how the flood defences will be built around, and interact with, the riverside improvements we and other Derby stakeholders want.

By June, the weather was further improved and there was a lot more interest - people like to cool down on the water when the sun is shining. Mike, Liz and I reviewed our marketing and this, together with improvements to the *Visit Derby* website, made it easier to find out about us. Mike created an A board advert but people still struggle to find us under the bridge! Our charters were also increasing in popularity and we were asked if we could host a children's party?!

It wasn't all plain sailing on the riverboat. We suffered another act of vandalism where three youngsters climbed around

the gates - we have CCTV evidence. The only damage was some loose electrical plugs being thrown into the river - they didn't approach the boat. We're looking to see if we can get higher resolution on the cameras for future use - once bitten...

In July the weather was better still and this, together with our efforts at promotion, further boosted bookings on the riverboat. Mike and I entertained BBC East Midlands Today and there's a copy on youtube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@derbyriverboat>

It gave us a platform to push the position on the pontoon and afterwards some prospective volunteers contacted us, which is always welcome. Also, the local tourist office organised a national journalist from The Independent to do a feature on Derby, including the riverboat.

August provided good weather and, as hoped, most riverboat trips were pretty much full. There were many sightings of kingfishers - also an egret, cormorant and a heron. They don't seem to mind our boat at all.

Driver Licensing

Derby City Council completed their licensing review in March. We believed they would require licence renewal every three years. It wasn't all we asked for, but while drivers would still be required to pass annual health and DBS checks, at least we'd save on the licence fees of around £400 p.a.

Three renewals were held pending the

Water levels were low and we saw a fair bit of other activity on the river. We were somewhat worried when notified that a recent storm had brought a tree down into the river, but fortunately there was plenty of room to pass. However I suspected our drivers were getting a little blasé as one tried to rescue a child's spade and got stuck on a sand bank. Lesson learned - I hope!



The free trips extended to journalists seemed to be bearing fruit with a brief, but favourable, mention in The Guardian. Others are hopefully in the pipeline.

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/article/2024/aug/28/derby-uk-short-break-destination-buses>

details which didn't come through until April.

Also, a couple of new drivers were waiting the training certificates needed for their licence applications.

Lapsed drivers were now able to re-register - although slowed by DBS registration challenges. Three new

volunteers were aiming to be licenced by end May. Only Andy and I were doing the driving, but we were not into a full schedule.

In May licensing continued as expected with new applications in process and

training going on apace.

By June our licensing applications were progressing well - five drivers licenced and another in process - so we were set for the season and ready for increasing popularity.

Pontoon

By March there was still little progress with the pontoon. The engineers and DCC trustees made promises, but the funding for the base was still awaited. They said it wasn't that they couldn't fund the gap, but they'd been "too busy to get around to it".

By the end of May, the Council had yet again failed to respond. We were preparing to raise extra funding, but everything was waiting for the Council's confirmation. We'd asked our DCC Trustees to push matters on, but progress which, remained painfully

slow, was held in abeyance in June due to the imminent election.

They finally responded late August. It seems we have general approval on the basis that DCC provide a grant for the base and we take control of, and fund, the rest. To have it in our control will be a blessing but we'll have to look for funding and assemble an engineering team. However, we are fortunately attracting more civil engineering expertise as the overall project and it's progress become better known.

Fireboat

Mike talked to an underwater archaeology group who wanted to help us find the old fireboat, believed to have sunk at the river's edge after heavy use during WW2. We did a recce followed by an underwater drone survey, hoping to get some videos to add to our tourist appeal, beat our competitors, provide extra PR and be another feature to highlight on the boat trip.

We thank David and Pauline Jennings who trawled the Derby Telegraph archives for details. Apparently the fireboat was converted from a lifeboat by a local engineer who then donated it to the war effort.

A survey was carried out by MSDS, an



international marine archaeology company based in Holbrook, who checked the suggested location with an underwater camera. It seems we've succeeded in locating the sunken boat - although the water was a bit murky, their photos show what may have been the hose turntable.

We look forward to a more extensive search by divers.

The Cottages

In March we motored on with the flood recovery works. Cottages 2 and 3 were completed, and since the end of February we were well into Cottage No 1. Having done it all before we'd been able to bring back the right trades at exactly the right time! We'd also been helped by a big turn out from the working party team to move the old screed and extend the overflow car park.

The previous weeks of rain had tested our water management work. As the water levels had not risen too much, it was looking good for finding a new tenant.

I was pleased that the mostly hawthorn hedge planted by Brian had taken well and there were buds everywhere - he must have green fingers! Perhaps his success shouldn't surprise us as he had taken on the maintenance of the grounds, turning up up regularly to mow and tidy the area when he wasn't hijacked to help with the flood damage.



In April, the work on the cottages having continued as planned we were able to move the tenants in No 2 back into No 1 and advertise No 2. We'd had a few viewings and were hopeful of a new

tenant.

We were able to clear the rooms above the café where the kitchens, radiators, etc. had been stored. It was great to have our meeting room back. We'd entertained a local land owner and planned to have meetings with Network Rail and others - it was good to have a café downstairs!

After over three months we'd finally finished but Don and Tony were determined to resume refining the museum room. First task was the lamp shade, then the visitor information display.



It had been a long grind, but it looked as if it would generate a very healthy surplus from the insurance settlement. And it wasn't all hard grind as there were regular snack breaks of tea, bacon butties and latterly ice cream - when the café is open. Any comparison to Last of the Summer Wine is purely coincidental!



In May we found ourselves looking for a second tenant after No 3 tendered his notice. Whilst it was a pity to lose such a good tenant, at least we could increase the monthly rent for the new one and there was still significant interest in the Cottage.



In August we discovered a leak in the flashing around a roof valley and it was repaired very quickly. We were also expecting to welcome a new tenant for the last vacant cottage following the floods. A couple was expected to be moving in early September.

Draycott

In March, as part of the discussions with the County Council's Flood officer, David surveyed key points along the canal line. He found that a silt bank had built up close to the land bridge, where a fast running ditch empties into the canal. The build up was hampering the flow



Our thanks to the team who updated the display screen in the museum room at the café. We now had a television screen with an ability to play a selection of videos providing information on the restoration.

[There is still a lot of work to do actually producing the videos! Ed]

and drainage away from Hopwell Road. As you can see volunteers (Gary is pictured) were dispersing the silt to improve the flow.



There were moves for a coordinated response to flooding in Draycott and

Breaston and we expected meetings with the key bodies. Network Rail, our local MP and Erewash Borough had already agreed and we hoped the Environment Agency, Severn Trent and the County Flood officers would also attend.

As we had a promise of pro bono support from consultants who could assist with proposals that would attract funding, we continued our strategic engineering appraisal. Further engineering studies at Draycott were timed to coordinate with these talks so that neither effort nor money would be wasted.

The purchase of two parcels of land to the east of Hopwell Road was progressing quickly and we aimed to complete within a month.

By April we were confident the flood risk had reduced for the summer and that we were more resilient. Our aim of coordinating the approach to water/flood management was paying off. We'd met with the key stakeholders in a meeting promoted by Network Rail. We were happy to let them lead as they seemed to be looking to fund some works - and even promised to clear the amount they still owed us!

After that we were set to meet monthly, in the Cottages meeting room, to push for a solution. There was a long way to go, but it looked promising. Together with the possibility of water transfer, designing the canal for flood protection gives us two funding options, but we may need to lower the canal. Although we would need to deal with the extra spoil, and possibly relining if we go through the original clay, it may be

worth it to ease the issues with road and other crossings.

As part of the progress on the Draycott/Breaston area we'd been in touch with Peveril Homes, who seemed happy to work with us. We'd already made contact to mark out boundaries east of Hopwell Road. We were also discussing the use of one of their fields as a water meadow which may ease water vole management and avoid the need for pumps along the Draycott stretch. The developer may be able to claim Biodiversity Net Gain exemptions, so making it financially viable for them, and we have volunteers to landscape the water meadow.

We'd not seen evidence of voles for some months but mink trails had been seen in our monitoring stations. We were therefore required to set traps to ensure they didn't decimate other wildlife.



We completed the purchase of a stretch of land between Hopwell Road and Breaston. This was sold to us at a very fair price by Marcus Sail, a long term supporter, who has provided storage on his farm for years. The sale of land was part of his retirement plan, but we knew that allowing us to buy it caused him

considerable disruption as others wanted to buy it as a ransom strip.

We are very grateful to Marcus for his substantial help with this. Paul and I attended his solicitors to sign the paperwork early April.



We had a completion date of 25th April for purchasing the Sustrans section immediately east of Hopwell Road, which includes the winding hole. We plan to open the winding hole up as an attenuation pound and will also lay hedges and erect fencing, so there'll be plenty to distract our working parties from the Borrowash wall!

In May we had a further meeting with Network Rail and others to discuss the canal as a means of flood prevention. The second meeting was a success and we expected to share the results of hydrology work to be done by Network Rail in June. This will inform the potential use of the canal as an attenuation tank - also what the desirable water and canal bed levels would be. I was pleased to note the urgency shown by all to find a solution.

Independently of this we looked at using the newly acquired winding hole alongside Hopwell Road to provide some

flood water attenuation. Design work was progressing and we aimed to apply for planning permission ASAP.

We were talking to Sustrans about acquiring the final stretch of land between Draycott and Breaston. They were happy to pass on the land at a reasonable price if we provided leasehold guarantees for the ongoing use of the cycle track.

We were encouraged to submit a bid to Erewash Borough Council for around a million pounds of Levelling Up Funding for a project in the Borrowash area. We planned to spend this on creating a cycle (tow) path from Spondon to Draycott. This would have provided the land ownership that is currently missing between Borrowash and Draycott. After a lot of work, drawing on our civil engineering expertise, we produced a bid but we were near second in obtaining the funds. We don't yet know why we didn't win, but we'll make the most of all the thought that went into it.

Another significant discussion was ongoing under a Non Disclosure Agreement, so watch this space. There are a few significant opportunities around that could have a massive impact on the restoration.

In June, progress on flood management ground to a halt - Network Rail are a government body so they couldn't engage with us during the election purdah!

Working Parties

In March more work was done on the wall at Borrowwash and, with the tree management season coming to an end, the forestry team tidied up a few trees.



In April the teams dodged the variable weather to start the mowing season. Borrowwash lock had its first cut and this promoted an amazing show of wild flowers.



We took a few days off at Easter. Unfortunately, some people, bored with the holiday, resorted to damaging the 'Great Wall' of Borrowwash. They knocked over blocks and levered them out of position. It didn't do much for morale, but the volunteers soon got them back in place. With schools resuming we hoped there wouldn't be a repeat.



The team also added to the wall, gradually using the blocks currently stored at Breaston. It looked really impressive.



Blackwood

c l a r i n e t s

Innovative Clarinet Ensemble in the East Midlands



Blackwood is an ensemble of clarinetists drawn from bands and orchestras of the East Midlands. The players join together to showcase this most versatile of wind instruments.

Since its formation in 2010 Blackwood has developed from a small group of friends to become a true choir, from the piccolo clarinet to the booming contra bass.

Blackwood enjoys sponsorship from Windblowers, Beeston's specialist retailer

The group perform in a variety of concerts and events and regularly play in support of good causes.

For the year 2024 to 2025 we are supporting Cancer Research UK.



 @blackwoodclarinetsnotts

 blackwoodclarinets.co.uk

With these works progressing, David's team tidied up the storage space we rent from Marcus Sail at Breaston in case we need to find alternative storage.

The pile of rusting scaffold pipes from at least a decade ago had been hiding a simple crane, so we may have another restoration project.



In May, the mix of spring temperatures and substantial rain caused the grass to grow very fast. As always, our teams were busy managing the canal path. The tractor worked hard trimming the path at Borrowwash, Breaston and Sandiacre. We try to compromise between people and wildlife by leaving areas for wildflowers to be cut later whilst



ensuring that the paths are clear.

The area at Borrowwash lock was well maintained by our working parties. Thanks to David for the photo, but I can't help feeling there's a reference to Snow White there somewhere. Hope they don't start singing!



Our volunteers finished tidying up the old scaffolding pipes, taking a lot of them to the scrap yard so adding a few hundred pounds to our funds.

We tidied up alongside the Dial estate at Spondon and set up a new information panel.



We also tidied the stretch between Lock Lane and Longmoor Road at Sandiacre. We expected further surveys by Severn Trent Water's contractors so they could cost the sewer relocation. They'd be digging trial pits in the road and

alongside the lock chamber. We'd been waiting a while, but there would be some progress at last.



Finally, at Draycott we tidied rubbish that had accumulated over the winter and disposed of much of it. There remained the floats we planned to set to look for water voles. We had seen no further evidence of mink, nor had our mink traps. No sign of water voles had been seen either, so it was important to set the floats to check if they were still present and active or not as this has a major impact on construction plans and timings.

In June the working parties continued their battle with the grass. As you can see it was growing so quickly we were in danger of losing sight of the vehicles!



The key work areas in June were Borrowash lock (not only to rescue the

car) and Draycott.



The team also attended Sandiacre where the canal line by the new Longmoor Road estate needed a real trim. If we don't keep on top of it, the neighbours complain!



We saw increasing interest from corporates committed to help. There was a potential return visit from Rolls-Royce, but in June we entertained a group from the Department of Work and Pensions. They were very productive putting up the boundary fence at the Draycott winding hole which was being prepared for dig out.



In July we were thankful to have a tractor to cut the grass as the combination of rain and warmer weather continued to encourage strong growth. The team did some work at Sandiacre following a resident's complaint about vegetation encroachment. They also worked at Borrowash, the path to Breaston (including our newly acquired bits of land), where they dealt with some tree management issues, and Borrowash Bottom Lock, where they dealt with invasive weeds.



The team had a couple of unusual challenges in July. Firstly they trimmed the area around Ullikers Bridge. While the grass was low and spades available they decided to look for the edge stones under the bridge, but without luck. Strange!



Secondly we were informed by the County Highways department that they will be implementing a clearway for 500 metres on Hopwell Road outside the café. We objected but, as is often the way, achieved no change of heart.

There was concern that dog walkers and others who have parked on Hopwell road will now use the café car park instead. We have prohibition signs but policing it will be difficult. We therefore opted to provide some temporary "overflow" parking at the end of the canal line. The team spread a few tons of tarmac scrapings recycled from nearby road repairs to provide a safer and cleaner surface.



During the summer we focused on mowing the extending length of canal path we now own.



Substantial work was done at Borrowash over August, mowing and tidying both the lock and the canal line. The 'haircut' at Station Road was particularly spectacular.

Not everyone appreciates our efforts and we always get one or two who think we should do nothing so we don't disturb the wildlife. Hopefully we balance the needs of human and wildlife habitat.

Thanks to Peter Ball, our resident expert, for keeping us up to date on some of the unusual biodiversity along the line. The one shown is a cinnabar moth on ragwort. Of course, our farmer contacts say that ragwort is a weed that needs controlling. There are so many differing opinions to balance!



The teams also cleared out and explored Spondon Bourne, getting a much clearer understanding of the culvert in anticipation of any restoration plans.



At Draycott the teams worked to reduce the growth in the Golden Mile. The area, particularly inside the fence, had grown rapidly. It's an ongoing challenge, but a good start was made and attention was paid to keeping the drainage clear.



During these works, a check on the mink trap again confirmed no recent presence of mink. We were about to survey for water voles again, before winter, as there still had been no evidence of them for some time.

During August we were helped by two organisations who will play a major part in our restoration. The first group was from the local Environment Agency (EA) who seemed to enjoy their experience at Draycott. In future we will be working closely with, and needing approval from, the EA, so any contacts are very valuable.



Later in August we hosted a group from Network Rail. We were joined by the key members of a group discussing big

solutions for flooding at Draycott and Breaston. With a prospect of them providing very significant funding any chance to work closely with them - especially outside of a formal meeting - is potentially very valuable.

We discussed opening up the winding hole by Hopwell Road for attenuation of flood water. We judged that any related planning application should include the recently purchased Sustrans land and a long stretch heading towards Breaston.

The land we purchased includes a stretch of woodland almost 800 metres long, where around 50 years ago the infilled canal line was planted with trees. We therefore needed to do a survey so we could work out how to route the restored canal.

We already had a working party with tape measures, spray paint and tree identifiers to record what we have where and condition. The trees are mostly ash and oak with some sycamore and hawthorn. The Network Rail team helped complete the survey. Now it is down to plotting a map and working out how and when we can take out trees and plant replacements. Normally the requirement is four new for each one lost, so we need to find a section of land to accommodate these new trees.

Working closer with Network Rail has

Sandiacre

In March we had more meetings with Severn Trent and progress continued, albeit slowly, to get works quoted and under way. The latest concern was with works in or around the garage at the end of 'The Waterway', the road by the lock.

been a good exercise, which included reviewing the watercourses (as shown), which need to be managed within proposed schemes.



So we continue to put the pieces in place to enable us to move forward at Draycott. The establishment of a clearway outside the cottages was a blow, but we tried to turn it to advantage by applying to reduce the speed of the road, arguing that the road is more dangerous for walkers and cyclists now there is no reason for traffic to slow down. If successful this will help the later introduction of a lift bridge on Hopwell Road.

Progress on flood alleviation at Draycott is held pending a comprehensive model of water flows commissioned from Atkins by Network Rail. It's taking longer than expected, but once completed we can move the project forward knowing what we might need to do to minimise flooding across a large area.

We now know that we need to get a more formal agreement to the works before proceeding.

In April we awaited an update from Severn Trent Water and contractors on

the quotation and design. Unfortunately we hadn't seen any progress.

In June the expected surveys at Sandiacre took place and we awaited the numbers and detailed plans. The contractors needed some help from David with his detailed plans and to clarify whether the buttresses for the lock wall could be broken to put in the sewer.

In August we waited for the repair of a cracked manhole cover and received apologies and promises to resolve the delay. A supporter in the area told us

Derby Property Summit

We visited the Derby Property Summit in July. This is an event run by Marketing Derby to promote the city's improvement and future development.

There is great excitement at the speed of progress and the imminent delivery of a new events arena expected to seat 3,500 people with 250,000 visitors per year.

There are also developments of the theatres, the Guildhall including the market, and all are expected to be delivered in 2025.



that our weight limit sign at Lock Lane bridge had been vandalised. The suspicion is that the bridge was used by overweight trucks and the damage to the sign was to avoid them being found liable for bridge collapse, should the worst happen. Thanks to David for restoring it so quickly.



The most important aspect as far as we are concerned is the approach to the river. There are a number of discussions taking place around the design of the area outside the Council House and Exeter Bridge. University architecture students presented their varying ideas of how the area should be developed. While the ideas proposed may not be totally practical it is good to see that the area is attracting interest and the offerings include both boats and green spaces.

The acid test will be the accommodation of these ideas around the flood defence project - Our City, Our River - and there's certainly more work to do on this. Mike Wingfield has been pushing to establish a group of interested parties, including riverside activities such as the Museum of Making, so that coordinated plans can be drawn up. Whilst we receive positive support from politicians, we also need to

ensure the officers agree.

On this theme the city has taken over a shop in the Derbion shopping mall to present ideas of what will be coming through. It's worth a visit to see the large scale plan of the city and videos that happily include images of boats on the river.

Members' Meetings

Our February meeting was cancelled at short notice because our speaker, Keith Blood, due to talk about the Friargate Line, was seriously ill on the day. It hasn't happened before so we weren't prepared. In future we plan to have a back up speaker lined up rather than cancel the meeting.

At our March meeting, Gerald Price gave us a very professional talk about the Woodland Trust, with plenty of pointers as to how they might support our own tree planting activities. 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 for planting along the canal line.

The speaker for our April meeting, Stephen Flinders, gave a well researched talk about the Ilkeston Tramway from inception to demise which was very well received.

In May, David Ramshaw gave a talk, via a Teams link, about the Carlisle Ship Canal. It was not one I've come across before and it was therefore very interesting and drew quite a few questions. The Teams link seemed to work well, so we may try the same

approach again in the future.

For our June meeting we had a walk between Draycott and Breaston in brilliant sunshine, talking through development plans for the area, particularly the recently acquired land. We also saw the latest challenges in the paddock east of Breaston where we are dealing with encroachment, fly tipping and mischievous horses grazing in the paddock. Afterwards there was the option of a pint at the Navigation.

There was no meeting in August, but at the September meeting, Keith Blood by popular demand, gave the talk, re-booked from February, about the Friargate Line.

Our AGM will be held on October 22nd and on November 26th, I and Mike Wingfield will talk about Plans for Derby. There will be no meeting on December 24th - enjoy Christmas!

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

Anne is working on next year's programme so if you've any suggestions please drop her a line.

Flood Defences

We'd been concerned about what would happen while the flood defence walls near to the boat station were being built. The Council had presented their design ideas to key business and other stakeholders at a meeting in the city. It was met with many complaints and denounced as unimaginative and not what the city wants. This had been our line for some considerable time, so it was good to know we had allies. We

were looking at getting a group together to provide input to the design and see if we can get the council to improve the city centre as well as build a wall right through it. It was also good news that we were recognised as influential and with good ideas on riverside developments. The Museum of Making looked to be a particular friend who sees the riverboat as an asset that also attracts attention to the Museum.

National Grid

We responded to the consultation about a massive new power pylon route that will connect Chesterfield to Willington. It will allow the transfer of "green" energy between power stations. It seems only to affect us where it crosses

the route between Borrowash and Draycott and again where we join the Trent and Mersey at Swarkestone. We will try to use this development to our advantage and ensure we don't have a pylon in the way of the restoration.

Other Projects

The large project to gather stakeholder support for a complete east-west leg restoration is now well underway and we are hopeful we can convince the region

of the many benefits that would come from its restoration. Watch this space, although it won't be quick.

Events

We were well supported at the Breaston gala on 6th May. As usual we had a lot of interest from people who hadn't previously come across us, but of course this time the conversation was different as we have acquired land near Breaston and are possibly going to help mitigate the future flooding of the village.

It was the summer season and we attended two other outside events. We tried an appearance at Elvaston Village Fete on 27th May. Thanks to David, Charlie, Peter and Simon for promoting the cause. Good weather, but a modest public attendance. The intention was to



promote the works at nearby Borrowash and we got a fair bit of interest.



In June we attended Long Eaton Carnival. This is a totally different event, with thousands attending and an old fashioned parade of floats to bring in the crowds. Last time we went we towed the half sized canal boat in the parade and it took hours to get back to the field. This time we avoided it - we wanted to be talking to people and the boat is showing its age.

Our thanks go to past Chair Judy Flack, who has donated more canal themed knotted earrings and bracelets, which have proved popular. David and Peter have been looking at updating the items offered for sale. They've assessed that many people are interested in the project and whilst key rings and pens are useful, there's a need for books of the canals and particularly about our canal. Peter is therefore looking to update a

publication on the Derby Canal and we hope this will both publicise our works and generate some profit.

[The booklet, The Derby Canal - A Detailed History, by Michael Smith, has been reprinted and is available for sale at £9.50 - Ed]

As well as attend public events we've also entertained a visit by the local Rotarian group from Church Wilne. Paul Turner acted as planner and host and I went along to add a bit of commentary about the cottages. As you can see we avoided the rain and there was a lot of interest in the project locally, especially if we can help to manage flooding.

The picture was taken outside the Navigation, the destination, which added to the appeal.



Spondon Waterworks Clock

The following is the recent history of the Spondon Waterworks clock as related by Anita Hayes and Derek Hathaway.

In September 2001 Councillor John Ahern asked Severn Trent if, when they demolished their building in

Megaloughton Lane, they would donate the turret clock to our newly formed Spondon Village Improvement Committee (VIC). This came as a shock as we had not been asked if we wanted it. The clock appeared on our first agenda and every agenda for the next thirteen years.



Some people on the VIC had come from the disbanded Millennium committee which had raised £4,000 towards a new clock for the village, so we now had two clocks. With some hard work by our committee members the Millennium clock was erected on Chapel Street in October 2002.

The Severn Trent clock was sent to Smith's of Derby for some refurbishment quotes. However, it was too expensive to renovate its three faces into separate usable clocks; two with electric movements and the other with the original mechanism. The main problem was that they were so big. Different firms were approached to see if they were interested in having them on their buildings.

The clock had been placed in the turret above the entrance to the sewage works on Megalaughton Lane in 1906. It kept the time for the workers and passers by until it was removed prior to demolition

of the building in 2000 to make way for a modern sewage processing plant.

The clock, known as a "flat bed time piece", was manufactured and installed by Smith's of Derby and incorporates a pin wheel dead beat escapement for accurate time keeping.

The pendulum beats at a rate of $1\frac{1}{7}$ seconds and uses a standard 100 lbs weight cast iron bob. The time was indicated through three cast iron glazed skeleton dials measuring approximately 4ft diameter sited in three faces of the turret. An additional cast iron dial measuring about 2ft diameter could be viewed from inside.

Our first hope was to site the clock somewhere where it would be restored to its former glory and go on serving the people of Spondon, albeit with some modernisation. However, we were not able to find anywhere suitable.

Our one proposal was to renovate the clock in sections. One face, with a modern movement, to be mounted on the Cooperative Funeral Services Building at "Sandringham House" on Sitwell Street. A second face, similarly renovated, to be mounted on the front of a suitable building in the lower part of Spondon. The remainder of the clock would be renovated and mounted as a working display in the new sewage works, at Megalaughton Lane, Spondon.

In 2002, Smith's gave us six weeks to find somewhere else to keep the clock. Eventually Accordis (Celanese) agreed to house it for one year (they ended up storing it for the next twelve years). It seemed hopeful that the Co-op Funeral

Directors would agree to have a clock face on the building in Sitwell Street. Spondon Engineering on Nottingham Road also seemed quite agreeable to the suggestion.

By 2004 both companies had decided they weren't interested. Barry asked Accordis if they wanted to use the clock mechanism in their Visitor Centre. Meanwhile Derek looked for different grants and Barry asked Severn Trent if they could store it. Eventually they asked for the clock to be returned to put in their visitor centre.

In April 2005 the clock was still with Accordis and Barry was hoping that Severn Trent would agree to the clock going to a new housing development near the canal as a centrepiece. Derek contacted West Park School and got them to do a project on information boards to go round the base of the clock.

There was good news in October 2005 - Severn Trent had looked at the proposals for the housing development, and the information boards, and were very impressed. That year we received a letter from Severn Trent officially handing the clock over to us - we didn't realise they hadn't already done that!

In April 2006 a presentation of the information boards was given at West Park School with representatives from Severn Trent, Acetate Products, the Canal Society, Smith Clock Makers, the architect of the Marina project, and members of the VIC. It was very well received and Severn Trent promised a

donation.

All this looked quite promising until March 2007 when we heard that the Marina Development would not take place. So after six years of hard work, particularly by Barry and Derek, we were back at square one and heartily fed-up of the whole project. We decided to ask Severn Trent if they wanted the clock back, with its associated information panels. With the imminent closure of the Celanese we needed to move the clock before it was shipped to America; although they might have liked it.

In April 2007 there was a possibility of using the clock in one of the housing developments near the Canal. In January 2008, Derek was speaking to Mike Kelsey about the canal and took the opportunity to talk to him about the clock. In April 2008 Derek sent the contact details for Strata Homes to Barry.

In March 2009, Derek had a meeting with the architect of one of the canal side developments and suggested he may be able to use the clock. Barry needed to check it was still there (presumably at Celanese). In May 2009 Derek reported that Severn Trent wanted to have an education centre and may be interested in taking it back.

In June 2009 the clock was off the VIC agenda after nine years of fruitless work, but it was back again in November 2011. Barry had arranged in June 2010 for the clock to be moved from Acetate Ltd (Celanese) by Severn Trent, but an email from Acetate said that it had not been moved. Nothing more until February 2013 when there had been discussions between Derek, David Hayes, Chris Madge and

other people from the Canal Society, when it was agreed that they could store the Clock and use it as they wish. To this end they needed to know the weight of the Clock.

In March 2013 the clock was packed up and ready to be moved to Gowercroft Joinery at Alfreton, and that is the last mention in our minutes.

In July 2024 Anita Hayes found some good A3 photographs of the clock and the demolition of the Sewage works

tower which she spoke to Chris Madge about. They have now been passed on to the Canal Society.



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 expertise to cover most of our civil engineering needs, but we would still welcome anybody with engineering skills who would like to join our new, enlarged, engineering team.

Ecology: We require a volunteer to take the lead on ecology. We would also welcome anyone who would like to work with the lead, 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.

IT: We have a volunteer who has been heavily involved in developing our river boat volunteer allocations on line, but would welcome anyone who would like to work with her.

Fundraising: We have access to a

fundraiser on a paid basis, but if you have fundraising expertise, please join our team.

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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James Brindley - Cliff Lea



Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Considering the tremendous impact that Brindley had on the development of England's transportation network for heavy goods which enabled the development of the industrial revolution, there have been few good biographies. That is until Christine Richardson, the historian and archivist of the Chesterfield Canal Trust wrote her sterling biography of this man in time to celebrate the tercentenary of his birth.

James Brindley was born in 1716 into a reasonably comfortable family of farmers and smallholders in the tiny hamlet of Tunstead and parish of Wormhill in northwest Derbyshire. Although his father was not a Quaker like many in the wider family, it's clear that the young Brindley was very much guided by their principles and his life was dedicated to hard work governed by

honesty, moderation and ethics. At age ten James' father moved when he inherited a farm to the south of Leek, and at age 17 James himself was apprenticed to a millwright, Abraham Bennett near Macclesfield.

That area was a hilly region that had many rivers and streams where wind blew and water wheels could generate the power needed for grinding corn or stone, operating pumps, blowers and bellows for furnaces. Much of the work for millwrights, apart from initial construction, involved a never ending round of repair, replacement of parts and modifications. Brindley might just have ended his days as an obscure but very busy millwright, but for two turning points during his apprenticeship that made him really stand out for his ingenuity and determination.

The first happened a few years into his apprenticeship, when he was sent by his boss to strip down the parts of a silk mill in Macclesfield after a disastrous fire. He did this very carefully, looking particularly to see how, why and where the fire had been started, and to see if there was any way they could redesign to avoid fire happening again. The mill owner was very impressed with his diligence and attention to detail, and made sure that Brindley was one of the team that were involved in the re-build. This was the start to a growing reputation.

The second turning point was when he was asked to assist in erection of equipment for a brand new type of paper mill in Wildboarclough, new technology brought in from the Netherlands. Bennett's team seemed at a loss to

assemble the equipment correctly, and it was only because of Brindley's ingenuity that the job was to be completed. Unbeknown to the rest of the team, when they knocked off for the weekend, he walked overnight Saturday to Manchester from Wildboarclough (25 miles?) to find a mill in Manchester where one of these new machines had already been installed, to view and memorise the workings and way in which it had been installed. After a return walk back, he was able to advise and lead the rest of the team on how it should be constructed.

A couple of years later at age 25 in 1741 he completed his apprenticeship and acquired a wheelwright's workshop in Leek, and with growing business a few years later he established a millwright's shop in the Potteries. Brindley's reputation had spread, and his expertise was sought to solve a long-standing flooding problem at Clifton Colliery by the River Irwell. He developed a complex method to de-water this mine, needing a weir across the River Irwell, a kilometre of tunnelling to channel the water from above the weir and then underground, an inverted siphon under the river. And a further kilometre of waterway to bring the channel to operate an underground water wheel at the mine. This underground wheel was to operate pumps to bring water up from a great depth, leading it back to the Irwell along another waterway he needed to construct. Complex to write about, and certainly regarded as the incredible work of a very ingenious man at the time! A man who understood how to use water.

In the Potteries area a long friendship with neighbour Josiah Wedgwood

developed, and he learned of the great transport issues which Wedgwood had - needing to ship clay to the potteries from Devon and Cornwall as well as flint from the South Downs. At that time, the only economical way for these heavy raw materials was to ship around the coast to the Mersey or Dee, then by packhorse down to Staffordshire. Before canals, the cost of transporting heavy goods was prohibitive if overland and particularly to towns that were more than 15 miles away from a navigable river or the coast.

Wedgwood had been discussing with many the benefits of a canal to link the Mersey to the Potteries and Midlands and to link major rivers, and one can read elsewhere how our canal network came into being. But clearly Brindley's increasing reputation brought his name to the fore as a surveyor and engineer. Particularly he was now sought out by the Duke of Bridgewater and his agent John Gilbert, brought in as a consultant to advise on some of the difficult issues of constructing a canal from Bridgewater's coal mines at Worsley to central Manchester, to enable Bridgewater to more than halve costs for transportation of coal. The biggest issue was how to cross the River Irwell, and there's no doubt that Brindley's work enabled the building at the time of a massive aqueduct across the river at Barton.

Opened in 1761, this major feat of engineering measured 200 yards long, was 12 yards wide, had 3 arches of 63 ft wide - we regard this now as the very first of the seven wonders of that early canal world. The Barton Aqueduct stood for another 120 years before it was replaced by a swing bridge. The press certainly regarded it as a miracle of

engineering at the time. Now in his late forties, Brindley's name is made.

In 1765 he married Anne the 18 year old sister of one of his close friends and assistants Hugh Henshall, buying Turnhurst Hall at Wolstanton, close to one of the tunnel portals of the great Harecastle Tunnel.

For the final ten years of his life, Brindley was involved in an absolute frenzy of canal work. Surveyor and Engineer for many canals - the ones we know now as:

- The Trent and Mersey which required 5 km of tunnelling, 5 major aqueducts (one with 23 arches), 160 minor aqueducts, 110 bridges and was 141 km/91 miles long. Probably Britain's most complex canal operation.
- The Staffs and Worcester
- The Droitwich Canal
- The Birmingham Canal
- The Coventry Canal
- The Oxford Canal
- The Chesterfield Canal

■ setting off the development of "The Grand Cross" of canals linking the rivers Mersey, the Trent, the Thames and the Severn

■ And being consulted on many other schemes of other engineers whose canal works were now to follow such as Telford, Smeaton, Longbotham, Jessop, Rennie ...

This last ten years of his life would have involved almost constant travelling, riding by horseback in all weathers, crossing rough country surveying lines and levels for his waterways, attending meetings - usually in pubs and hotels - in towns and cities across the country. Over-nighting in small taverns as well as larger coaching inns. Probably hot-bedding in damp rooms - and it's said this is how he finally caught a chill whilst surveying for the Caldon Canal.

He was brought home to Turnhurst Hall, and his great friend Wedgwood visited every day, Brindley passing away in 1772 at age 56.

It was a life of incredible achievement.

Update from Chesterfield Canal Trust - Rod Auton

These are exciting times for the Trust. As I write this in August, we are in the very busy holiday season for our tripboats with all four in operation several days a week, on either public trips or charters, and our shop at Hollingwood Hub has also been doing well. It's very noticeable that grandparents are much more willing to



spend money on their grandchildren than parents are on their own offspring! However, what has been really capturing our imagination is the restoration work that is finally taking place at Staveley. This is part of the Staveley Town Deal which is a government levelling-up scheme.



After years of preparation, with little happening on the ground except some test drilling, we have finally seen some big yellow machines in action.

We held a ground-breaking event with all the usual people including MPs, and issued our press release on the morning of the day that the election was announced, so we beat the pre-election purdah by about three hours. The contractors are doing the preparatory works to install the new Trans Pennine Trail bridge. The expected date for this is 1st October. It should be an amazing sight because it is 38m long. Although it has been manufactured in one piece, it will be cut in half to be transported to the site, where it will be welded back together before being hoisted into position by what will presumably be a pretty substantial crane.

There will then be a couple of weeks of finishing works before we hold an

official opening ceremony.

The next phase of the project will be to transport well over 100,000 cubic metres of donated clay which will be used to rebuild Staveley Puddlebank. After that, another bridge, a new lock, a pumping system, lots of landscaping and a few hundred metres of new canal will all be constructed.

This is much reduced from the original plan, but 2024 prices are crazily higher than 2020 prices when we put in the bid. We will though still be building over 2km of a new multi-user towpath all the way to Renishaw as well as the above works.



At the same time, Derbyshire County Council is using its share of the Staveley Town Deal money to put up a new building at Staveley Town Basin, now called Staveley Waterside. This is the first stage of the development of the basin that was officially opened in 2012.

Obituary for Derek Troughton - Chris Madge



On 20th July our Treasurer, Derek Troughton, finally lost his long battle with cancer. Our thoughts are with his wife Christine and his family. I first met Derek on the Cottages

restoration where I remember asking him to slow down a bit as he was apt to act like a mountain goat on the piles of bricks. He took over as Don's right hand man on the bricklaying and applied himself to the seemingly endless task of rebuilding walls, amongst other duties.

When our previous Treasurer stood down I found out he'd worked in finance before retirement and approached him to take over. He jumped at the opportunity and made it his own. We hadn't appreciated how complicated it would become when we were advised to create a trading

subsidiary, which then meant we had to install software to report VAT to HM Government. Undaunted he worked out how to use it with a bit of help from our accountants. I hadn't realised what an asset he was until I found out that he had previously worked creating user manuals, so of course he simply created manuals for all the things he had to do.

During his illness he underwent treatment including chemotherapy, radiotherapy and T cell treatment with many visits to hospitals, but he was a real inspiration as it never seemed to affect his ability to do the books. When options for treatment started to run out we were lucky to have Chris Richardson who, over the last year, was able to work alongside Derek to learn the accounting tasks using the pre-prepared manuals. Only in the last few weeks did Derek hand over control. He was a real supporter of the canal restoration and full of advice in difficult discussions at Board level. Derek will be missed for all the above, but also for his humour and care for others.

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