

Chairman's Update

July 2025

Here we are in the second half of the year already and we are very much into holiday season. I'm pleased to say Anne and I managed a week in our new share boat. It's been a few years since our last trip on a narrowboat (excepting our Riverboat) so it was very welcome. As we expected we suffered the impact of the dry spring, but we didn't expect a downpour of immense intensity with no bridge holes in sight. I guess we can blame climate change for the extremes.

However, with lock closures and restrictions in place we couldn't head for Stratford and so we decided to explore the Birmingham Canal Network a little and headed to Walsall. It was a lesson in the challenges for CRT, who had recently completed the toxic spill at Walsall, which took 18 months. We also struggled with the floating litter and weed in the canals. Perhaps this was due to lack of recent boating activity, but it brings into context the challenges CRT have to sort out. The other lesson from the trip was my first experience of the basin in Walsall. We were delighted to see how the town had welcomed the canal and used it as a centre for development. A lesson for us perhaps.



Working Parties

We may have drought conditions, but the grass is still growing quickly, so the tractor and our working parties continue to be busy. Much work has been undertaken at Borrowwash at the Station Road end. Now the public can see the wall again. Further down the



track we have more work around the lock chamber

At **Draycott** our teams have been busy again trimming the bund and as you can see the growth in the ditch has accelerated. The team have



therefore done some Balsam Bashing to keep the invasive weed under control. I'm sure we'll need to manage the remaining growth before the rainy season starts.



At the cottages Don and Tony have progressed the works on the water supply. There's still work to do in the car park when the contractor is available, but we've been pleased to receive notification that the water tests undertaken have come up clear. We are also looking to instal a better bike rack there as apparently the current one doesn't provide

enough support for the wheels on some bikes. This should reduce the number of customers resting bikes against the walls, etc in future.

At Draycott we've also completed the second water vole survey. They put out polystyrene "floats" with apple pieces to attract the voles and fortunately we still had a supply from last time, although water levels meant they weren't floating!! The initial result is that we no longer have voles in residence, although we still await the formal report, so we can consider how this affects the engineering works. At least it will clear the way for effective dredging of the ditch.

We are still pursuing options at Spondon Bourne, although we've seen no progress during the month towards the land transfer. However in expectation



mains of the old culvert that took the Spondon Bourne under the canal. The team report



that we'll finally be able

to move on we have been exploring the water course to discover what re-



that they have found the invert under a fair bit of mud and it seem to be in good condition.

While working there David and the team displayed our information boards (they normally appear at shows) alongside the works. We are hopeful that this may encourage more interest and a few more volunteers. As always any one who fancies a morning in the open please contact david.savidge@derbycanal.org.uk. You'll be welcomed with open arms.

Of course behind the scenes, maintenance continues on our pieces of vital equipment. It seems a long time ago when we provided our own, very basic, tools. As an example the jolly wheel has been replaced on the trailer. It's not the first time as the trailer gets a fair bit of use these days.

Riverboat

The Riverboat has been really busy over the last month. Again our volunteers have been tremendous. The better weather and better promotion means we have been virtually full throughout the month. We've also had a few charters with a lot of interest expressed at the events we attend, particularly from groups. The picture shows a friendly group on a charter trip from the Derby City and South Derbyshire Mental Health Carers Forum. The forum is a self-help group of people who care for, or who have cared for, a relative, friend or neighbour suffering from any form of mental illness. I'm pleased we were able to provide a little quiet respite on the river.



We're even contemplating a few extra trips to make the most of the season, now that we are confident we can operate into October. However for all the boat owning members you'll be familiar with a BSS test and ours is now due. The inspection is timed for next week, but as it's a commercial operation we have a few extra provisions to deal with, so we've read the 224 page guidance notes, have checked everything we can and now await the test engineer with bated breath!

Derby Progress

Progress continues with the pontoon and a planning application is being prepared as the next step. We're now looking at works to move the electric cable in the autumn and installation of the pontoon in early 2026 ready for the new season.

Discussions continue around development of the riverside in Derby. We have presented ideas to the Council and are working to prepare designs, feasibility assessments and funding proposals to present ultimately to EMCCA (the East Midlands Combined Counties Authority). Due to our involvement with this project we have been brought into a wider discussion around creating a riverside path. This is being spearheaded by local MP Catherine Atkinson, who believes she has access to national funding. This may link with the section of riverside that we are looking at, although current thoughts are looking at heading north of Derby. Either way it puts us in the company of those deciding on infrastructure developments in the region, which helps the main project.

One of the large developments in the pipeline will be the next phase of flood defences—OCOR 3. This will follow on from the one about to start and will extend the works downstream from the city centre weir towards Spondon. We really want to be in the discussion for ideas on this development. Flood management continues to be a key potential source of funding and support.

Events

We have attended the last event of the year, which took place at Chellaston. We still struggle to make a significant impact with the public, hence the additional onsite display mentioned above. We did however get a lot of interest in the Riverboat operation and supposedly interest from a number of volunteers. However, experience suggests promises at events seem to rarely convert to volunteers on site, but at least it still shows interest.



Members' Meetings

Our last talk was a walk around Derby locating the original route of the historic canal and detailing the plans for future development around the city centre and particularly the riverside. My thanks to my co hosts Maxwell Craven and David Jennings and to all those who attended. We had a good tour and a pleasant time afterwards in the pub. I was delighted to meet the person responsible for the Robbie Cummings programme and a past speaker and canal social historian, Wendy Freer.

Our Next Meeting will be held on 22nd July at the Cottages from 7.30pm when we will welcome back Robert Mee, who will talk to us about the Derwent Valley Heritage Way, a path that ties together a lot of history, heritage and locations all leading to the start of the Derby Canal.

There will be no meeting in August due to our summer break. Future Meetings will be held at the Cottages as usual starting at 7.30pm.

September 23rd	Sean McGinley	CRT Head of Restoration
October 28th	AGM	
November 25th	Brian Dale	

Hope to see you soon.