

The Packet

The magazine of the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust

Issue 98 Spring 2025



Suggested Donation £3

Who Does What?

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Chris Madge	Draycott & Sandiacre
David Savidge	B/wash & Spondon
Chris Rees-Fitzpatrick	Chellaston

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

Front Cover

Starting work on removing the land bridge at Draycott

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From the Editor



Welcome to Issue 98! As you will read it has been another busy six months for all concerned.

As an organisation we depend on volunteer effort in all departments, and as more land is

acquired, and the restoration plans mature, so more volunteers are needed to keep up with the demands of the project. As Packet editor I am myself a volunteer so it would be a big mistake to think that we only need volunteers to work on the canal line, important as they are!

My awareness of the Derby Canal started well before I retired in 2011 and grew gradually over a number of years. I recall seeing a leaflet about the Derby Arm in the Rolls-Royce offices at Raynesway where I worked. Then in September 2018, when the restoration of the cottages was getting under way, I attended a talk given by Chris Madge in the Derby Museums and Art Gallery which raised my interest and awareness further.

It was a couple of years later, during the pandemic, that I finally decided to join as an inactive member. I then started to receive more information about the trust and its activities. I saw that there was a vacancy for an editor, so as I had been a voluntary Company Report Editor before I retired from Rolls-Royce, I put myself forward and the rest is history!

Since volunteering I have enjoyed learning much more about the Derby

and other canals, and their history, and getting to know a new, friendly group of people. In fact, I enjoyed what I have been doing for the trust so much that my involvement has expanded beyond just the magazine! There so many different volunteering opportunities that I'm sure there's something for everyone.

I would very much like to hear from current volunteers: how did you find out about the project, why did you volunteer, what you do, what you most enjoy about it, etc. We propose to feature your experiences in a running article in future editions in the hope that new volunteers may be encouraged to come forward...

Also in this issue is a contribution from Judy Flack who has transcribed a handwritten two centuries old Derby Canal Company Letter Book that has been stored in her loft for several decades!

My thanks go to Ian Hooker for providing a summary of his well received talk about the history of Aqueduct Cottage on the Cromford Canal he gave at the members' meeting in January.

Thanks also to Martin Wright for allowing me to include his painting of the canal line at Draycott which he posted on our Facebook page in January.

Gary Harding has announced changes to the prize draw, the proceeds from which will fund tools and equipment for use on the canal line. He is looking forward to your support...

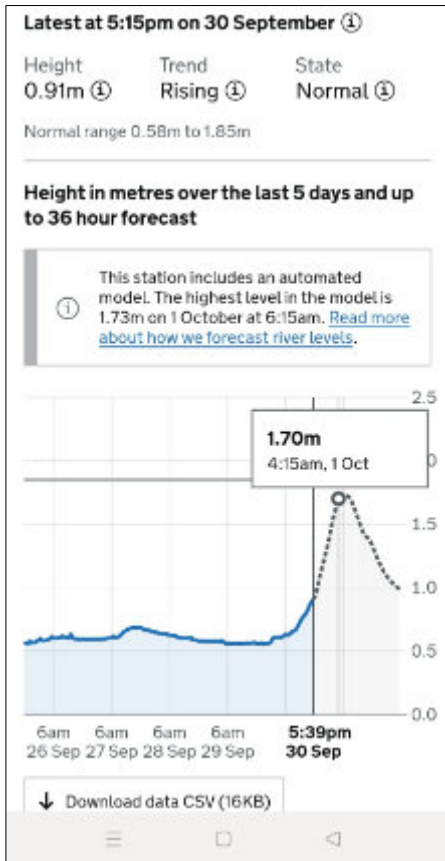
Finally, we thank Rod Auton for his update on progress at the Chesterfield Canal.

Chairman's Report - Chris Madge

The Derby River Boat

The 2024 riverboat season ended at half term in October. Overall the weather hadn't been favourable, but the trips continued to be well supported and we saw more charters. The weather through September/October was very variable and river levels rose with each storm. We kept an eye on the forecasts in case we needed to move the boat from under Causey Bridge. You can see the forecasts we get - not all turn out to be as extreme, but we have to react.

Simon and Mike re-established the winter mooring. As the river can rise over 3m in flood we build a structure to keep the boat off the jetty, so that when the water subsides the boat isn't left high and dry on a jetty that is gradually sinking. Each year we hope will be the last - if the pontoon gets built - but the resident still allows us to camp at the bottom of her garden. She and her daughter have poor mobility so at least she gets the condition of the jetty checked.



Free boat trips had been given to visiting journalists and you may be interested to read some further words here:

<https://tinyurl.com/4ctc4mxf>

Simon and I moved the boat to its winter mooring early November. Our final trip was completed on 27th October and our plan was to move her on that day but we had passengers for an extra trip. The clocks having moved back there was no light left so we completed the move the following week. It's an art to judge when there's sufficient extra water to get over the underwater bar around the mooring, but not too much to prevent control. It

was still a little shallow, but we succeeded with a bit of cajoling. Simon and Mike made a final visit before the winter just to tidy up.



Simon also inspected the electrics and protected the main terminal against floods. This should prevent any shorting, which last year caused a problem needing repairs.

We had the traditional gathering of volunteers at the end of November, in a local pub, to talk about how it went, what we could do better and any planned developments so that we were

Pontoon

Whilst there had been little extra input from the Council in October we'd been progressing the project. Don and Tony did some major tidying of the otherwise overgrown pontoon site. The boat is now a lot easier to see.

Mike had been progressing the pontoon build too. We had an agreed detailed design and a cost estimate (hopefully to be reduced). We also had an unwritten promise of a £65k grant from the council - if we could prove we'd raised the rest. We engaged a fundraising expert with

ready for the next season. We had an excellent turn out and virtually all offered to sign up again for 2025.

We also had offers from a couple of our cabin crew to upgrade to boat captains, which will hopefully be completed during the winter/early spring and allow me to step down from driving.

Liz, our stalwart organiser, retired but Chris Webster picked up the mantle. Hopefully most of the wrinkles have been ironed out so it should be straightforward. We planned significant painting and tidying up in spring when we retrieve Outram from her winter mooring.

We were looking for anyone who wished to join the cabin crew or simply help with painting, etc to let us know. We had one volunteer who will be moving out of area, so we only needed two or three extra, but as always the more people available the less we call on any particular person. Please let me or chris.webster@derbycanal.org.uk know.



Six bags of brambles cleared and ready to go

the aim of funding the gap of about £140k and we were hopeful of progress on this. We had a number of possible donors, both charitable and private sector. It would be a challenge, but the process had started!

The fundraiser advised us to “define the need” by getting feedback on who wants a pontoon so we developed a survey to gather that information. We had over a hundred replies and they indicated a good level of support to get the pontoon done. Thanks to those who answered the questionnaire; the results will be very useful in supporting our case.

Progress with the Council was still slow in November but we kept pushing and getting the right sort of encouragement, but not anything really concrete.

We worked on fundraising and I'm pleased to say we trimmed the gap

Fireboat

During September MSDS Marine visited again and with their underwater drone pretty much proved the presence of the Fireboat. The next step will be divers,

Cottage Funding

In February Paul Turner had a cost for the final piece of Sustrans land of around £50k including fees. We also had to fund the repayment of some supporter's loans for the cottages development totalling £120k in the next year. This was only 20% of the total and we were very grateful for those who were happy to continue their loans. Unfortunately no grants are available to fund land acquisition or to repay loans, so we were left with either refinancing commercially at high cost, raising new

significantly, so that it was somewhere around £100k depending on what's included. We received another verbal commitment from DCC for the £65k grant. We had a couple of very productive meetings with the fundraising expert and progress looked good.

We made further progress with our consultant in December on funding options and we hoped to apply in the new year. Timing for delivery was dependent on this and Council agreements, so a firm date had yet to be established.

Our main bid was ready to submit in January and we planned to follow on with smaller requests. We still awaited activity by the Council on legal issues, but even that seemed to be moving at last.

but that will await the spring and lower, predictable water. Mike Wingfield was interviewed about the fireboat by Radio Derby's Andy Twigg.

supporter's loans or holding off on the land purchase. The Trustees were determined not to resort to raising funds through the sale of a cottage.

We therefore appealed to members and supporters to contact us if they would consider offering short term loans as it would not only help the Trust, but also represent a reasonable rate of return for lenders, albeit not as much as the banks require.

Draycott - Flood Prevention

It was four years ago in 2021 that we suffered Storm Christoph, the event that scuppered the Draycott works. I sit here in the third week of January 2025, with the only subsequent physical progress of note being the completion of Phase 1. Around New Year's Day we saw rising waters come within a few inches of the cottages thresholds. As you can see this means that the water level in the ditch outside the cottages over-topped the bund height.



It was worse in the villages. There were flooded houses in Breaston and the closure of the railway line for a whole day was reported on national news. Whilst no-one wants to encourage a flood we hoped that this might incentivise Network Rail to progress matters more quickly. We vowed to keep pushing them.

Within the flood management group assembled by Network Rail, the previous County Flood Officer had retired and been replaced. Rather than wait for the next group meeting we decided to organise a separate meeting with the new officer. We hoped that by putting our proposals to her in detail we could gain her better understanding and therefore support. It's always a worry

that engagement with officers will result in an increase of the level of bureaucracy, but our experience to date is good, thanks particularly to Martin Pilbin.

The hope is that by all working together to safeguard everyone against flooding, and sharing information, we will have a better chance of a more effective outcome. We have already identified a culvert by the M1 and hope that by working together to keep it clear some of the flooding at Breaston will be relieved. We planned to do the same with the Environment Agency, who share responsibility for waterway maintenance with the County.

As the Network Rail quote for removing the land bridge was very expensive, David Savidge organised work parties to open up the flow of the Draycott section ourselves. The hired digger and dumper truck arrived late January and a schedule for the week clearing the ditch and demolishing the land bridge was drawn up.

Through February we continued to see high water levels both at the cafe occasionally and regularly at the concrete land bridge half way towards Derby Road. It was our belief that water flows east to the cottages if it can't get through the bridge. The quick fix channel around the bridge did help, but we were looking for more permanent solution to last until the canal is restored.

David's team attacked the land bridge in February and it took several days to demolish even with a digger together with its concrete pecker, a dumper truck



and large concrete cutting wheel. As the photos show there was a lot of reinforcement bar in the concrete and the culvert itself was actually precast and reinforced concrete box sections.

The equipment was hired for only a week, so it was a great effort that David had to organise with precision to make sure we had qualified digger drivers,



dump truck drivers and banksmen available each day. I understand that even the pub struggled to revive them after such a mammoth effort.

It's a great result though and not content with that our guys also found time to do some dredging of the worst of the weeds. We were still talking about finishing the dredging, but only if assisted by Network Rail funding or their contractors. It would be good to complete the job.



All the work with the big equipment meant that the path was churned up a bit so effort was made to back fill with Ministry of Transport (MOT) grade gravel in the worst areas and subsequent working parties have smoothed out the grooves, etc, so that when the air warms up the grass should grow back just fine. Part of the hard core may also increase the space for overflow parking which is necessary now that Hopwell Road has been designated a clearway.

Other Developments

At Sandiacre our working parties had cleared the area, and the timing was very good as we received a quote for moving the sewer. Whilst we were trying to understand the detail, it appeared that it will be more expensive at over £400k. However, it was feasible to fund and so move the project on, a great relief to all concerned. While the sewer removal will be done by contractors, it will open up the possibility for volunteer and WRG led restoration of the lock and bridge.



A few days after receiving the quote we met at the newly tidied site with Erewash Borough Council to discuss the possible grant of a S106 award for around £100k. It looked very promising and, if received, would mean we need to raise perhaps another £150k for the sewer relocation and a further £150k for restoring the lock. It was a large number, but we already had some ideas on where we might find the funds.

At the cottages matters had progressed well and all the cottages were occupied and no sign (yet) of any clearway signs [They are there now! Ed]

We continued with land purchase on the stretch towards Breaston, and bid unsuccessfully for a field at the SW corner of the Hopwell Road/canal path crossing.

We have been trying to police land encroachment along the Breaston stretch. Sometimes the encroachment is minor, but it can lead on to others following suit, so we have to protect our rights. An example of one such event is pictured. With this, and challenges with aggressive horses currently using the path for grazing under a licence, we need to be ever vigilant to protect our assets and the public.



In November we at last had the Atkins report on water flows around Breaston and Draycott for presentation and discussion. It was still being digested by Network Rail in December so there was no further progress. The first report didn't seem to be comprehensive and our engineers were "providing input".

We received the detailed plans for the sewer relocation at Sandiacre and digested them over the Christmas holiday period ready for progress in the

new year when Severn Trent personnel return to work.

We spoke to another civil engineer with international experience on water projects such as dams and water processing plants. We asked him to assess engineering questions on structural support for Sandiacre lock during the works. This will impact on potential costs and inform our fund raising. It was great to have such expertise available.

National Grid are planning additional pylons to facilitate green energy transmission. In our case this is from Chesterfield to Willington and will cross the line of our canal at Draycott and Swarkestone. We should earn some small survey accessibility fees and possibly they may offer assistance to mitigate intrusion that may benefit us. The surveys are scheduled for 2025.

Working Parties

In October, the work pattern changed as autumn approached. As the growing season finished, mowing came to an end and we turned to bramble, hedge and tree management, knowing that nesting had finished. There was a concerted effort to sort out all areas. The Spondon stretch had been a particular challenge as can be seen from the before picture, but after a concerted effort it is all



Our meeting with the solicitors at Smith Partnership went well and we now plan to focus legal services with them. They are looking at the Sandiacre situation to ensure we are protected in our dealings at Sandiacre with Severn Trent Water contractors and residents.

I was able to collect a donation from Erewash Rotary Club of £1,000 at the end of October. Following on from this we expect to undertake work at Breaston to tidy up the footpath alongside Longmoor Lane prior to any path improvement plans.



looking in fine fettle again ready for the winter.



The work to build the Borrowwash wall and maintain the canal line and lock chamber continued. It was becoming a bit of a showcase area as it is so well kept.



At Draycott, the cycle path gatepost by the café had rotted through, so we replaced it and checked out the rest. The gate gets a lot of use with all the passers by, so it's good for the public to see our upkeep efforts.

Efforts were made to keep the Draycott stretch clear, but these were added to by the insistence of a car driver to use the new canal as a car park. Heaven knows how but someone managed it! As you can see the car took out both the roadside hedge and the Vole Fence, finally ending up in the water. The car was retrieved, our work parties repaired the fences, and David pursued the driver to pay for the damage caused.



Whilst cataloguing the trees east of Hopwell Road, we identified those that were dead or dangerous and Roger's forestry team took them down. Corporate teams from Rolls-Royce helped clear out some of the undergrowth in readiness for the next stages, particularly near the old winding hole.



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



Those who have seen our Solis tractor in action will know it isn't the largest (or fastest) vehicle around. It was fully used over the summer and proved a wise investment. To speed up regular maintenance work we acquired and fitted a second hand flail arm to trim hedges and sloping banks (whilst the tractor stays on the level tow path). David traded in an underused trailer and arranged for it to be fitted. It should make life much easier in future!



We were nonplussed to receive a speeding ticket for travelling at 38 mph in a built up area near Leicester. After much scratching of heads we realised that at top speed our tractor gets overtaken by pedal cycles and it would

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take a week for it to get to Leicester. Photographic evidence revealed that a transit truck had cloned our number plates and after some correspondence the police revoked the ticket and apologised. Just one of the admin items that we have to deal with!

Much of our work in November was focused on Draycott. We made sure the drainage was as clear as possible by clearing the banks and waterways wherever possible.



As you can see there was a clear reduction in bankside grass and the ditch under the concrete bridge opened up. It was a lot of work covering the kilometre length and a lot of cuttings were generated. Luckily John was on hand to supervise its disposal on the



bonfire! It's a hard job, but someone has to do it!



As we had received the expected confirmation that there are no water voles in the Draycott section, we could do the work. If we get further confirmation in the spring we may remove the vole fence.

The team collected a donation of breeze blocks, bricks, cement and sand left over from a home building project and they were added to the pile of available materials for future use. There are plenty of smaller jobs that will use such materials. Thanks to Charlie for the use of his tow bar and the team for hefting the blocks.



In December 2023 we suffered Storm Babet and we'd been working to make sure that we don't suffer the same impact again. A lot of the work was to clear the channels and we've seen that

when rains caused water levels to rise, our work at Spondon Bourne (as shown), Ock Brook and the streams at Draycott all made a great deal of difference.



Our tractor and flail were very active attacking hedges and verges at Draycott and Sandiacre.



Our teams then spent a few days at the Borrowwash wall.

Our working parties did a few shifts at Sandiacre too. They cleared the stretch from the Erewash and as you can see the growth alongside Longmoor Road was cleared. Last year we received an urgent summons, so this year we should be ahead of the game.



Of course it's not just a matter of taking out growth, we planted hawthorn whips along the line as well. We did two stretches, one alongside the Borrowwash wall and neighbours' fences, and the second along the stretch at Spondon beside the new estate there. In the latter case this helps to mark our land boundaries.



I had a reminder from the Brailsford hedge laying experts who trained myself, Mike, Scott and Ian many years ago. Afterwards we spent about four years laying the hawthorn hedge that we'd planted around 2001. It may be a while before we need to lay these whips - it's normally 10 to 15 years - but it will have a great impact on the looks and wildlife when we do.

Sandiacre

In November progress was slow as we waited for detailed plans of the new sewer location. Once we had them we could get on with the garage removal, etc with Dave Lockley, our helpful neighbour. We checked with the Erewash Conservation, Preservation and Development Association if the work will cause any disturbance at Sandiacre Lock Cottage, and it looked as if it won't. There will be a public meeting to explain to everyone else what is happening. Then we will need to raise the missing funds and work out how to temporarily shore up the lock chamber to make it safer for contractors.

Land Purchases

Following the loss of the bid for a field at the south west corner of the Hopwell Road/canal path crossing we looked at an alternative field adjacent to the canal path and nearer to Breaston. This time we were successful and acquired just over four acres from a supportive local farmer. Given the predictions that the budget would increase tax on this type of activity the farmer was keen to sell before the budget, so we were able to

In February our first bid for funding was rejected and we needed to re-apply to different funders for the balance of around £200k or so. This figure was not finalised as were still waiting for final quotes - Severn Trent Water's contractors were thinking again following their latest, less intrusive, design, but they don't know if it will cost more. We started to gather other costs including that to temporarily fill the lock chamber so that we can dig the new trench safely. We were hopeful that this saga could soon be brought to a conclusion.

achieve a quick deal at the right price. The challenge, however, was that we couldn't get our normal solicitors to handle it quickly enough. We managed to get it through and are now tidying up the documents and looking at a new firm to file the returns.

On the subject of solicitors we have been struggling for a while to get a comprehensive service. We have looked

at different firms for different tasks. In our networking in the city we came across a firm that works well with other charities and have been talking to them about them coordinating all the issues we encounter. While land purchases were key over the last year, we will be

Riverside Developments

Mike Wingfield has been leading our new Riverside Development Group, who have been developing ideas around the river. Progress was made in conjunction with council flood defence work and we hope to work with the council's contractor to develop riverside flood plain gardens which include boating activity.

This will be enhanced by our connection to a group with a city wide approach called the Nature Collective. We are keen to ensure that this group, who will naturally focus on green spaces, build in the "blue" ideas we have. We hope that giving a consistent and coordinated message to the council will ensure success. It also gives us access to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and Down to Earth, which is very helpful and may also enable easier access to funding as green issues seem to attract more backers at present.

In Derby city it is a very positive time overall with the opening of the performance centre at Becketwell expected soon. This has a capacity of up to 3,000 and should attract more visitors and local residents into the city centre. The Guildhall is also scheduled for re-opening soon and with £20m investment in the two theatres the city centre should be much more welcoming. We then just need to

needing contract advice and possibly input to constitutional and tax matters. It would be really helpful to have access to a team who all know what we are doing and can consider the whole of our activities in any advice given.

invigorate the river to complete the job! We also hear that Rolls-Royce is buoyant, whether with new efficient aero engines or small nuclear reactors, and with increased profitability we are hopeful they will see the value in supporting the city's development for its existing and new employees.

In January Mike Wingfield progressed designs for the city centre. We met the designer of Erasmus Darwin's Gardens and had a positive discussion of how the garden can encourage boat moorings. Current ideas recognise his plant expertise within the flood plain by the river with plants and sculptures. It's good to establish cooperation before ideas harden, so we all benefit.



We are meeting with the leader of Derby City Council (and Deputy East Midlands Mayor) to discuss our Riverside proposals and hope to gain formal

acceptance of boating facilities in the city centre as a result. We understand there may be some funds available through the East Midlands Mayor that might help, so fingers crossed!

We will also discuss the latest challenge with the flood defences. We understand the works are due to start in May at Phoenix Green. This will prevent our existing access for a good few months, but may allow the build of the pontoon

base within the flood defence works.

We are considering boarding alternatives while the work continues. We favour a location downstream of Phoenix Green and perhaps by the Silk Mill.

Meanwhile we planed to re-start river boat operations in April and volunteers were already being organised.

Elsewhere

A clear out was undertaken at Anglers Lane and we looked at sorting out the stretch alongside Longmoor Lane in Breaston. It has been used as a pony paddock for many years, so we earn a small amount of rent, but we have seen weeds proliferate and the boundaries encroached by brambles. A perfect job



Café

We completed the review of the café rent in line with the lease terms. We are happy that Garry and Joyce will continue to operate it, but we are aware that with

for the flail, but only after we had laid down some hardcore to ensure we could get the tractor on the site.

At Chellaston we were surprised to find a poorly parked car in the canal. It looked as if a joy rider decided to take a car past Swarkestone Lock and up the tow path. Only when they turned around and tried to return did they topple off the towpath and roll the car. Thanks to the police for removing it. We'll now see if we can replace the rotten barrier that they'd managed to squeeze past.

As already reported we have been consulted by National Grid about new pylons to cross the line at Swarkestone and at Draycott. We are meeting with them and hope that this might present an opportunity, not just to prevent pylons being built in the canal track, but also to attract some compensatory grants.

all the increased costs for National insurance and wages it will not be easy for them. I'm sure they would continue to value your support.

Events

I'm pleased to report yet another successful event at Shardlow on 7th/8th September. It generated considerable



Website

We are looking to fully review our website. We have a comprehensive website, but over the years things have become out of date. Our website is normally the first step for any outside organisation looking to understand us. With the need to raise funding it is important that the website not only gives a good impression to potential supporters, but also provides details of our accounts, policies and approach to meet funders' expectations. Any comments and help from members will be gratefully received, but at present Peter Warmingham and I are working

New Publication

Judy Flack, a previous Chairman, has discovered a notebook prepared by the Canal Company secretaries in the 1790s and 1870s. It documents all the letters sent by the company to collect debts, call meetings, report damage, and threaten action for damages where neighbours either take water without permission or add to its supply with sewerage (nothing changes!). She spent Christmas

interest and David even entertained the new East Midlands mayor.

Following the Rotary walk in June we have strengthened ties with the local Erewash Rotary Club. I attended a "Hillbilly" event with them, organised by our resident Rotarian, Paul Turner, and they raised over £500 for us. They have also decided to nominate us as one of this year's charities and provide a further £1,000 donation. Hopefully this might then see a longer term connection, possibly with some volunteering support in the vicinity.

with our webmaster Andrew Baird to get us up to date.

Peter is also part way through writing a new publication for sale at future events. We currently have a few walks publicised around and along the canal line in our "Route Maps" section. He is pulling together sufficient options to constitute a full publication. Again ideas are very welcome - an example can be found on this link

https://derbycanal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Draycott-Walk_v2.pdf

deciphering the handwritten letters and transcribing them into a new volume. Watch out for it at our events.

[I've been helping prepare Judy's book for printing and it will be a valuable addition to the selection of Derby Canal related books we offer for sale to raise funds for the restoration - Ed]

Member's Meetings

We held our AGM on 22nd October and had a full house at Draycott. Thanks to all who came. We finished a little more promptly this year with not too many hard questions for the directors to answer. Minutes of the meeting and reports are available on the website at <https://derbycanal.org.uk/the-trust/>

One of the best parts of the evening was awarding the Kate Birtles Trophy to the volunteer who has made the most impact over the past year. We were delighted to recognise Charlie Forbes, who has been a stalwart of working parties, including tree management special parties and events throughout the year. Thank you Charlie.



At the AGM we asked for comments about Members' Meetings and Anne was thanked for the excellent programme

and encouraged to do it all again.

At our November meeting Mike Wingfield presented our proposals for the City Riverside. A big take-away was that a successful canal restoration needs both a destination and a visitor attraction. The attraction will be the Derby Arm (the Falkirk Wheel attracts 6,000 visitors per year) and the destination, the City Centre Waterside developments with its floating restaurants, amphibious houses, Eastgate Marina, Visitor Centre and a 5 star hotel! [For more details see our website - Ed].

At our January meeting, Ian Hooker gave a talk about the history and restoration of the Aqueduct Cottage on the Cromford Canal. It was a well received talk by an excellent speaker on a restoration so different to our own and it was also interesting to note the Florence Nightingale connection.

At our February meeting volunteer Andy Scott, who also drives our Riverboat, gave a presentation on the significant progress made by the Cotswold Canal Trust. They have attracted large grants to connect through to Saul Junction on the Sharpness Canal.

Meetings will normally be held at the Cottages on Hopwell Road, Draycott DE72 3PE on the fourth Tuesday of the month starting at 7.30 pm.

Prize Draw - Gary Harding

The Trust has for many years run a membership monthly draw. Unfortunately, the number of people participating has declined over the years and as such money paid out and the amount raised for the Trust has also declined.

It has been decided to promote the draw more actively and to make several changes to the way the draw is conducted. After the next draw is made in March all future draws will be held quarterly commencing in June. There will now only be one prize of £100.

Money raised from the draw will no longer go into general funds but will be paid into the working party equipment fund to be used directly for the working party volunteers.

The cost of entering the draw remains

Derby Canal Letter Copy Book - Judy Flack

We know that at a meeting at the Bell Inn, Derby, it was decided that the Derby Canal would be built. Engineer Benjamin Outram was employed to design and build it. The Derby Canal Act gave the newly formed Derby Canal Committee members immense power to build. The Committee was what we would call a Board of Directors today.

They could run the navigation wherever they wished and had 'Compulsory Powers' to do so. If the Canal was planned to run across your land, it would. The Committee had to negotiate with landowners, either a price to buy

the same at £12.00 per year for each entry, payable yearly in advance. The member is then entered into four successive draws.

The easiest way to enter the draw is to visit the membership page on the Trust website and click on the Draw button and use your debit/credit card. If you would like to set up a standing order, which will ensure you automatically renew each year, contact me at gary.harding@derbycanal.org.uk

or telephone on 01332 517564

Cheques payable to Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust can be sent to me at 3 Kingsmuir Road Derby DE3 0PY

Don't forget that you need to be in it to win it!

the land or an 'in perpetuity rent' if the landowner didn't want to sell.

The Committee employed a 'Clerk to the Committee' who wasn't just a person who could write but worked as a Solicitor in private practice. He was the man to deal with all the legal aspects of building and managing the business in general, based on the decisions made by the Committee.

We are going to include in this and future editions of The Packet, letters copied into a book chiefly held by two of the Clerks, Mr. William Jeffrey Lockett and Mr. Horatio Bateman. Both came

from very wealthy local families. It is presumed that the Copy Book only contains copies of letters each Clerk wrote from their own offices and not from the Canal Office on Cockpit Hill.

The copies are not as we would keep copies today. We keep exact copies of letters, but these seem to be more of an Aide Memoir for the Clerks. The letters are full of abbreviations that we don't use at all and words are missed out. There is a great lack of paragraphs, full stops, commas and the use of capital letters is prolific. It could be that by glancing at the words written with capital letters, the Clerk could immediately recognise the whole content of the letter.

In the original, abbreviations were denoted by a squiggle over the top of the word. As no such squiggle is available on a modern computer, and an apostrophe has been used as we would today.

The letters would have been written by clerks for the Company Clerk. Think 'Bob Cratchit' working for a minimum wage. Some of the writing is very juvenile and the clerks certainly would not have passed their 2024 SATS tests in primary school.

The letter in the box below has been copied exactly as it was written in the book.

Derby Canal Company Names and Shames It's Subscribers

Purchasers of shares of the Derby Canal Company are required to make a subscription of £10 per share per year. Each share costs, we believe, £100 and many shareholders have bought only 1 share. The subscriptions continue up until the time the Canal is finished, working and earning money. Then a twice-a-year dividend will be paid to each shareholder.

£1 in 1795 has the same value as £111.50p in 2024, and so only the wealthy can buy shares and sustain paying the annual subscriptions.

When shareholders fail to pay their subscriptions, the Canal Company sends them a demand which is called a 'Call'. Sometimes they make up to 9 Calls

making stronger and more threatening demands to their shareholders.

The Canal is due to open this year, 1796, and the Canal Company is becoming ever more desperate for money because it still has to buy or arrange rental on land across which the Canal passes. Today, W J Lockett, Solicitor and Clerk to the Derby Canal Company sent this letter out to some of its shareholders.



To Mr. J Bullivant

Langley

March 10th 1795

Derby Canal

At a meeting of the Comm'ee for conducting the affairs of the undertaking, held at the George Inn in Derby on Thursday 12th day of March inst. it was ordered that the Sol'ors do bring action ag't all the subscribers who shall not on the 25th day of this March have paid all the Calls w'ch have been made and are due upon their shares for the recovery of such arrears and that the order being communicated to such subscribers in a letter and published in the Derby Leicester and Nott'm newspapers.

Sir, I must earnestly intreat your attention to the order of the Comm'ee sent to you as above.

I am Sir

Y'

WJL

Similar letters sent to two others

A Short History of Aqueduct Cottage - Ian Hooker



Aqueduct Cottage is said to be the most photographed building on the Cromford

canal. But passers by might wonder why it was ever built there with access only

on foot and no connections with modern facilities.



Like other isolated cottages across the countryside beside disused canals it began its existence as a lock-keepers' cottage. But here, at the junction of the Cromford canal and Mr Nightingale's Lea Wood Arm, it was never a normal lock; it was apparently only a lock gate. There was no need to change levels but the gate was there to ensure that no water from the Cromford Canal should be used to fill the Lea Wood Arm.



When Peter Nightingale decided to build an arm of the canal just half a mile up the valley to serve his mills and other businesses at Lea Bridge he was given permission to join the Cromford but only on condition that there was a lock gate

at the junction, that the water in the arm should stand a foot above that in the canal, and that there should be a "manager" on duty six days a week to manage that gate. Hence the need for on-site accommodation and Aqueduct Cottage was built there.



The original cottage was just one room upstairs and one down. Later, another one-up-and-one-down was built next to it, so it seems that, for a time there were two lock-keepers on site probably sharing their duties on the gate and also as lengthsmen on the arm.

But the lock gate was only in use for about 16 years. The water used to fill the Lea Wood Arm came from the Lea Brook as it passed by Lea Bridge. Lea Brook was a tributary of the River Derwent. Mill owners downstream on the Derwent complained that the water from the brook was being "stolen" from them because rather than feeding the River Derwent and hence their mills, it was being lost down the Cromford Canal and from there went away to the River Trent.

A solution was found by shortening the Lea Wood Arm by almost half and ceasing to use the Lea Brook. But there was no other water supply so the Cromford Canal Company relented and

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POLITE and BAG up all the
WASTE afterwards

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GOOD JOB
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allowed the arm to fill from their canal after all. The lock gate was redundant, so too were the lock-keepers and their accommodations. The 1851 census record shows “2 houses both unoccupied”.



Thereafter we believe tenants in the cottage (by then opened into one cottage) were probably employed on the Cromford and High Peak Railway running from nearby. From 1883 the cottage was lived in by the Eaton family, Josiah and Ann, with eight children and after Ann's death in 1922, one or other of her daughters and their families were there until about 1950 when it was sold along with the residue of the Nightingale Estate.



The last resident was a Mr Bowler who left in 1968. He was ill and the cottage,

lacking any amenities and with the roof already beginning to fail, was regarded as unfit for habitation. Mr Bowler was transferred to Babbington Hospital and never returned. For a few years in the 1970's a group of walkers from Derby were allowed to use the cottage as a bunkhouse. They attempted to make repairs, but the rate of decay (and acts of vandals) defeated them. Thereafter, the story of the cottage was one of increasing decline and it disappeared under a mantle of trees and other greenery.



Until now. In 1997 Aqueduct Cottage and the 75 acres of woodland behind it were purchased by residents of Holloway and surrounding villages with the intention that they should remain as a public amenity in perpetuity. In 2012 they were given to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to be held for that purpose. Under the leadership of a volunteer, Ron Common, with gifts and grants and thousands of hours of volunteer labour the cottage and its surroundings have been restored to their former glory. Perhaps not the picturesque charm of the cottage covered in ivy as in the Edwardian photographs, but now solid, and shining, and set for another 200 years.

Derby Canal Painting - Martin Wright



“My name is Martin Wright and I'm a local Oil Painter from Borrowash, I'm often out and about Plein-Air painting my local area. For this particular painting it was part of an international challenge I was doing throughout January to paint everyday from life (which I successfully did).

I love to paint on location as I try to capture what I feel as much as what I see, so having a location like this round the corner is great for painting. The trust has created a special place by putting in this canal, it's a lovely walk and great for wildlife. A local told me they often see a kingfisher, clearly a lot of hard work and dedication has been applied here. This little painting is a celebration of that, no

doubt it will be a location I return to many times”.



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.

New volunteers to support existing “experts” in all fields, except ecology where we are looking for a volunteer to take the lead as detailed below, will always be warmly welcomed.

If you know someone with building or site management skills who have perhaps recently retired, why not suggest they get in touch with us as we will need those skills for projects such as Sandiacre bottom lock restoration, the Spondon Bourne culvert and the canal rebuild generally.

Some specific areas where we would to strengthen our teams are:

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.



Update from Chesterfield Canal Trust - Rod Auton

We are now getting well into our Staveley Town Deal project.

The new Trans Pennine Trail bridge was lowered into place on 21st October witnessed by a large crowd of onlookers.



This was a pretty spectacular event because it is 38 metres long and weighs 40 tonnes. It was covered by BBC Look North and later by Calendar News.

The bridge was formally opened on 6th



December. After the usual speeches and ribbon cutting, we made sure that the first people to ceremonially ride across were schoolchildren from Hollingwood Primary School. They got a fantastic reception from the 50+ invited guests. This was a statement that what we are doing is for future generations to enjoy.

During the course of this year, we will be moving lots of clay, putting in a pumping system, building a new lock and restoring 400m of the canal to Bellhouse Basin.

Meanwhile Derbyshire County Council's new building, called the Moorings, is going up at Staveley Town Basin. This will be opening later in the year and will include a restaurant, retail and offices.

The other big event, on February 28th, was the launch of the master plan to complete the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal as part of a large regeneration project.

The work on this started last June. It covers the Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management aspects of full restoration. They focus on establishing a framework for the regeneration of the canal corridor not just the restoration of the canal itself.

Eighteen different hubs have been identified along the canal corridor. The report provides a summary of each site, some background information, potential project ideas and how they align with the drivers for change which are – Live, Work, Play, Health, Heritage and Environment.

The potential financial returns from these drivers include £252 million in Visitor Expenditure, £132 million in Art & Heritage Engagement and £116 million in Job Creation.

The master plan was compiled by Focus Consultants and Sigma Architects. It was commissioned by the Chesterfield Canal Partnership, which is composed of

the local authorities along the route, the Canal & River Trust, the Inland Waterways Association and the Chesterfield Canal Trust.

The vision is for the Chesterfield Canal corridor to be reclaimed as a place for

the local community to live, enjoy, and be employed; for tourists and visitors to come, play and stay; for new and existing businesses to grow and prosper; and for nature and biodiversity to thrive.



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