

Chairman's Update

August 2025

Welcome to the August update. Perhaps you're reading this in a deck chair on the beach, relaxing by a pool with a glass of wine or a very cool beer in the sun or even better on the back of a narrow (or wide) boat on a canal. Hopefully you'll be happy to hear that whilst much of the country is on holiday our volunteers have still been busy. If you've been on a narrowboat I'm hoping that you've not been too affected by low water levels and closures. The ongoing challenges of maintaining the network continue, so it may be good timing that our next meeting in September will feature Sean McGinley from CRT. It'll be good to get an update on the challenges and life after Richard Parry.

Working Parties

With holiday season upon us activities have been able to focus on other tasks as well as the almost interminable mowing. The key



progress with mowing has been at Draycott along the path and bund and along the path to Breaston beside the corn-fields. At Draycott we first had to clear the rubble still remaining from the earlier bridge demolition. The mowing also disturbed a wasps nest, but fortunately no serious casualties.



At the cottages the water supply enhancements are progressing. We finally resolved a persistent small leak in the borehole supply by getting a professional to strip down and rebuild the pipework. We thought it was a simple matter and the plumber agreed to fit it in with the landlords' certificates for the tenancies. All went well and the



leak was stopped, but then we couldn't get the water flowing again. Of course the café was starting to get busier and keen to start up the coffee machines again, so no pressure! After scratching of heads and phone calls we discovered that a valve had stuck closed. It was soon sorted



and the kit reassembled and fortunately everything quickly went back to normal and the enhanced sealed and lockable manhole that Don and Tony had recently fitted was put back in place. We now have a company from Wirksworth that have already reviewed the water treatment and will help us to write a comprehensive maintenance plan and test the system going forward.

We have purchased the bike stand and will be fitting it shortly. All in all, we're very happy with our tenants, who pay the rent each month and have all now been resident for at least a year and seem settled. They have reported that there now seems to be worrying behaviour with cars parking up after the café has closed: the suspicion is that individuals are leaving their cars there and dealing drugs on the canal line. We are currently discussing whether we should instal an entrance barrier so that

it can be locked at night and therefore discourage parking by unwanted visitors. We certainly need to ensure that our tenants feel safe on site.

We now have a meeting agreed with the Council in September to discuss work at Spondon Bourne, so we may start some work there soon.

And finally there's a rumour that work on the great wall of Borrowash may soon be completed as the reconstruction approaches the eastern end of the canal section!

David has reported that over the last few years our trailer is nearing the end of its useful life and will need replacing next year. The one we have was bought second hand many years ago and, like Trigger's broom, has had most bits of it replaced several times. We are starting to raise funds for a replacement, but if you know of one available please let us know. In the meantime the quarterly draw proceeds will be put towards it. Contact gary.harding@derbycanal.org.uk if you'd like to join the monthly draw at £1 per month!



Riverboat

I'm delighted to say that we've been running the Riverboat with full passenger lists and more charters throughout August and our volunteer force continues to get rave reports. The full passenger lists not only provide income for the Trust, but also underpin our claim for funding of the new pontoon access, so it's doubly important. Fortunately we passed our BSS with flying colours, so we are all set for the next four years!

As expected, the flood defence works have now started. The



first impact was the closure of the footbridge over the Derwent and of the footpaths near to it. The demolition of the building shown is now imminent, but delayed by a bat in the attic! As you can see the materials for demolition and subsequent works compound are already being assembled.



Given the closure of the bridge we have had to look at alternative ways to get passengers to the boat. We continue to work well with the contractors and



they have helped with signage, but we needed to clear an overgrown pavement from Stuart Street. We now look to pick up passengers on Exeter Bridge and escort them to the boat. We expect further restrictions on Phoenix Green soon so this arrangement means we won't need to change arrangements later.

All this means it's extra work for our volunteers to collect the passengers. Of course some locals also find their own way, so it keeps us busy and on our toes! However everyone seems to be happy with the trip and so far numbers are unaffected.

All of this will be avoided when we get our new pontoon in place. That won't be until next season now, so we are focussing on getting planning permission in place as quickly as possible. As usual any

application requires many assessments primarily on heritage, wildlife and the environment agency (flood risk). Duncan is coordinating the documents ready to be submitted shortly. We are most grateful to Maxwell Craven, a longtime supporter and member, who has written our "Heritage Statement" to go with positive support from the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site at Derbyshire CC.



The ecology survey will take place next week and in advance of this we have cleared the site of Himalayan Balsam. As you can see it had taken over the site so would certainly prevent any effective survey taking place.

Our progress with the EA has been limited. We applied for a permit in March and still await action. Latest chases by supportive local officers say it may be around a month, but



we keep pushing. There's more to sort as well including formal agreement to occupy the land with the Council and support by neighbours such as the rowing clubs and the museum, but we think we are nearly there now.

We still await a second quote for the movement of the power cable, which awaits some Council input, but are assuming we can work with the one we already have and have been raising funding to cover the cost. We have asked if there's a case for the cost to be covered by National Grid, but if we need it completing we'll have to bite the bullet. Overall we are planning to get it done in March and with that in mind we have called in design engineers for the supplier to vet the detail and warrant the stability of the fixings during a flood.

With the absence of a new winter mooring it means we will be back at the Darley Abbey mooring over the winter. We have agreed to maintain the jetty while we use it, so we'll need a working party to replace any rotten timber ahead of the winter.



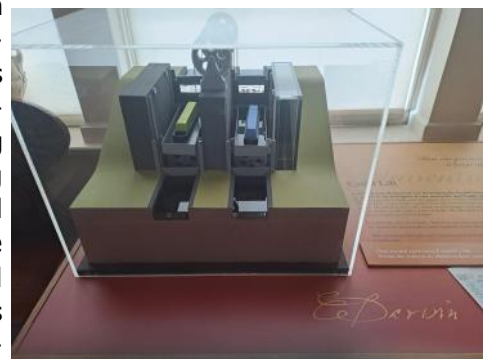
Derby Riverside

We have made some progress around the riverside development that will be put in place when the office blocks are demolished, probably in 2027. Working with the Council appointed designer and the university expert



we've made further progress on enhancing the bare design. So that we can properly interpret "Erasmus Darwin's Garden" we've been researching his background. There's currently a museum at his initial residence in Lichfield, which has lots of information about his life. He was a doctor to key people of the time including Brindley, Joseph wright, Whitehurst (clocks) and Watt (Steam Engines). He was the founder of the Lunar Society in the midlands, maintained a botanical garden in both Lichfield and later in Derby to support medicinal needs and dabbled in all sorts of discoveries and inventions ranging

from a speech machine, a water closet, a handwriting duplicating machine to, most relevant to us, a canal boat lift. The Lichfield museum has his notebook as well as a model of the boat lift. He moved to Derby with his second wife and lived on Full Street and set up his second "Physics" Garden on the site to be recreated as his Gardens across the river. He also lived for a period at Bread-sall Priory and is buried in the village.



So we have lots of material to fill the area, not least his amazing capacity to experiment and innovate.

Other Projects

In other areas it has been slow going, mainly due to holiday absences. Sandiacre continues and we are in discussion with lawyers on how to manage the lock development. Contacts with our key neighbour are going well, but we need to ensure the Trust is properly protected from criticism on this project, particularly as we have his permission to demolish his garage. We also now have the further S106 funds of £97k towards the project.



The hydrology survey has now been concluded for the main project at Draycott/Breaston and we await a meeting to develop the flood defence argument. With this in mind we have been networking with the East Midlands Mayor's office. I attended a meeting of business leaders used to inform her of local priorities under the heading of achieving "inclusive Growth". It is interesting to understand where funding priorities will be set and this will be useful in the forthcoming promised meeting to discuss the

Draycott/Breaston project. If we can get the canal recognised as an infrastructure investment it will help immensely.

IWA AGM

Many of you will be members of the IWA and therefore aware that their AGM will be held locally—in Nottingham— on Saturday 27th September. I sit on two groups for the IWA—the Restoration panel and the Finance Committee. I'm therefore aware that the financial position has improved substantially due to improving control and additional bequests, but there seems to be a debate building on how (and perhaps if) IWA should support restoration. I give a small amount of time in the belief that the IWA is key to restoration going forward particularly because (subject to Sean McGinley's comments) CRT is less likely to commit to restoration in future given funding issues.

I would therefore urge you to register for the meeting and make your views clear—especially if you agree with me!!

Members' Meetings

Our last talk before the summer break was by Robert Mee, who talked about the Derwent Valley and the development along the river's course and as always was very well received.

Our Next Meeting will be held on September 23rd at the Cottages. We will have a presentation from Sean McGinley, who has been a senior manager with CRT as long as I've been with DSCT. He has recently been given the responsibility for Restoration nationally (I believe he has also retained his previous role of Director of Yorkshire and North East Region). I am delighted that he has agreed to attend and again would urge you to come along to get an update from a very knowledgeable and senior engineer in CRT.

Future Meetings will be held at the Cottages as usual starting at 7.30pm.

October 28th	AGM
November 25th	Brian Dale
December	No meeting

Hope to see you soon.

Chris