

# Chairman's Update

## October 2025

I'm writing this just after British Summer Time has ended. It's great to get an extra hour overnight, but of course we now see it getting dark so much earlier. There's talk again that we should cease the process of changing the clocks. These days most clocks seem to change themselves, but having grandchildren I am reliably informed that young children don't. I think it's one of those things where you can't please everyone.

Last month I was again musing on the changes in weather. We now seem to have had a month of reasonable amounts of rain, but I've received a notification that under Severn Trent's drought provisions they are warning about abstracting extra flow from the River Derwent to fill Carsington Reservoir, etc. ready for next year. I miss the previous stability in weather.

### Working Parties



Our forestry team have been busy as the autumn season opens for tree maintenance. With chain saws and working at heights involved we have to be careful when we deal with trees. At Sandiacre an Ash suffering from Die Back had a hanging branch that formed a danger to the public so the team had to tidy it up. It was a job for the tower scaffold. It's much safer, but of course takes so much longer and with Ash trees dying it becomes an increasingly likely problem.



The major improvement this month is at Borrowwash, where the increasingly difficult steps down to the Ock Brook crossing had worn away. The guys have made a superb job of restoring the steps for the public. Let's hope we don't get another deluge to damage them again.

David has entertained another corporate working party, with a second visit from Alstom.

They've done a good job clearing the ground on the Draycott to Breaston stretch around the pipe bridge.

And further down the path where the Golden stream crosses we've been erecting a barrier so that children can't fall down into the stream. The Parish Council asked us to do the work following a complaint about safety from a member of the public. Of course having completed the work we were then taken to task on social media for hampering wildlife.



As I suggested earlier—you can't please everyone.

Perhaps the most important activity this month has been the cutting of reeds at Draycott. Fortunately the weather has been really dry, so there's been a chance to get into the ditch to trim them before the winter rains come. Of



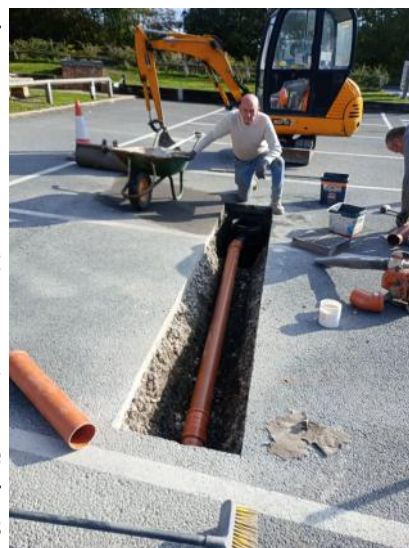
course we had hoped that we'd be financed to get a digger and dredge the ditch in good time, but Network Rail seemed to have



other priorities. Past experience suggests that they have more to lose than we do, but with the concrete bridge having been eliminated it makes sense for us to allow water to flow towards Derby Road

rather than puddle around the Cottages.

The cottages area has been a bit quieter this month, although we have managed to complete a new drain in the car park to ensure the water disperses more quickly. We've had the original carpark contractor in to do it and connect it to the land drains underneath. When it rains we now hope that the water doesn't collect in puddles.



We've also completed the final requirement on the upgrades to the water processing system—to instal an automatic cut off on the UV lamp. If it stops working the flow will stop until the bulb is replaced. We also now have a maintenance schedule in place, so I think we've covered all the bases. In addition we've had a full range of water sampling and tests and have heard nothing. We were told if there's

an issue you'll know tomorrow so that sounds promising. I'm delighted we've finally worked through the process. Inevitably I think it is more about proving the water is OK rather than improving the quality. Just as well with the number of coffees I've had in the Café!



And finally, we've upgraded the sign at Borrowash bottom lock. It was suffering from corrosion, so needed some tender care with a welder—thanks Roger. It gets a lot of traffic there and a good sign is good publicity. It also gives us a chance to recognise a change in name. We are renaming it Dagley's Lock after Nigel who spent so many years organising local support and maintaining the section at Borrowash until cancer prevented him from continuing.

## Riverboat

We've finally finished the season and the boat has been popular throughout this year, although we reduced the number of sailings in October. This is despite the challenge of passengers finding the boat through the OCOR works.

We tried to meet people at Exeter Bridge, but it seemed that some people just insisted on finding their own way—I guess the signage from the OCOR works helped them. One couple were so keen they arrived an hour early to make sure they didn't miss it, although another insisted they were there on time, despite our crew waiting after sailing time for them and then complained when they missed the boat. It takes all sorts!



The last few trips have been beautiful as autumn sets in and the trees change colour. We've also been well supported by the local kingfishers again this year. They are always a high spot of any trip.



With the end of the season we've now looked at maintenance before the boat is moored upstream at the jetty for the winter. Simon and Neil have given the electric motor the once over and applied grease liberally. We've also rebuilt the frame at the winter jetty in Darley Abbey to prevent the



boat resting on the structure after flooding. Think we're getting the hang of it all now after so many years, but hopefully this will be the last time. Fingers crossed!

The OCOR works are progressing quickly. The centre of Derby has equipment and compounds in place like this one outside Exeter House. The old Nat West bank on Stuart Street - Compton House - is soon to be demolished, but they plan to retain the art deco clock and columns.



### New Pontoon

In the last update I mentioned the Biodiversity Net Gain issue that had come to light in planning. After no response from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust we have consulted with the Council planners and taken direction. This means we have had to employ consultants to undertake specific surveys and then do the maths and certify what we need to deliver. Whilst existing surveys continue to suggest there is no wildlife to enhance it seems there is no way around the legal requirement. We are lucky that the corporate donation will just about cover the additional cost of £5k, but the time delay is now causing issues. We cannot get the remaining funding without planning permission, which means we cannot order the pontoon etc until next year, and this will inevitably move the installation forward and threaten when we can restart the Riverboat. We are looking at temporary options, but they aren't good. Looking for the silver lining it appears that the city are planning celebrations in June next year to celebrate 50 years of twinning with Osnabruck, so they will want the Riverboat running by then. Sometimes it seems rules trump common sense.

Within the list of what we need is a definition of finishes for the pontoon, so the trip to Hampshire earlier will at least allow us to show the planned finishes and components.

### Derby Riverside



With OCOR 2 about to be kick started and OCOR 3—the flood defences from the city centre weir to Spondon—are now under consideration we will be looking at how we can influence the development to cater for river traffic. It's very early days, but it will be better than playing catch up as we have been doing with the second phase.



Our tower clock experts are under way, but they've asked if we know of anyone who can help them repair the part shown. Anyone who can recreate the lugs on the assembly shown please let me know. Apparently this has become worn over the years.

## Other Projects

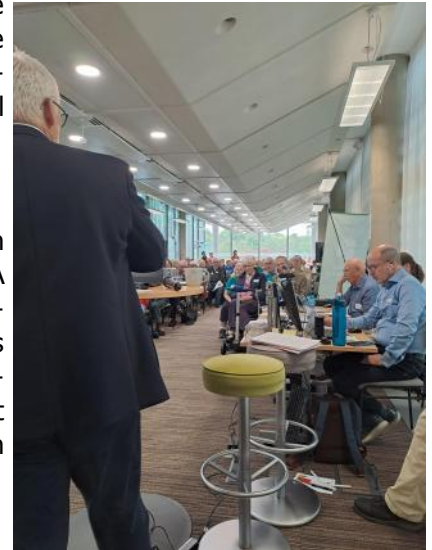
At Sandiacre we have now hired a specialist to handle our negotiations between neighbours and Severn Trent about compensation for land impacts or disruption. If we can get this resolved legally we can move on. Having a professional involved should pay for itself in reducing our potential liability and move the matter on. The funding applications are currently being prepared with a view to getting work under way next year.

At Draycott we have now been promised access to the hydrology report and are working with the County Council Flood team to promote the bigger, 5 mile project. EMCCA have responded positively and have agreed to consider our request for feasibility funding when a new recruit joins them in the new year.

We have two new Trustees, from South Derbyshire and the County and we have now spent time updating them on our plans in the expectation that they can influence planning and/or lend support in favour of the canal. The County Trustee is from the new Reform administration, which may give us a better understanding of their approach to our project, given that the national headlines suggest they don't support ecological improvement.

## IWA

Martin presented at the IWA AGM as planned and the suggestions on "Grey Water Transfer" were received positively. We also had the IWA Chairman and others looking at our progress and seemingly being impressed by the successes at the Cottages. The project at the IWA is progressing positively and looks like we may get additional central resource provided for restoration. This of course would have been most helpful for us with BNG or the Sandiacre negotiations. Better late than never.



## Members' Meetings

Our last meeting with Sean McGinley from CRT was well received by a full house. He answered many questions fully and honestly about how they will work with restoration groups going forward.

**Our Next Meeting** will be the AGM at 7.30pm on 28th October at the Cottages as already notified . Unfortunately Brian Dale is unable to give his talk on 25th November. We will now be entertained by Paul Sturges who will talk about Derby in the 1950s. I can just about remember the year, although I didn't live in Derby at the time. Bring your nostalgia with you.

Future Meetings will be held at the Cottages as usual starting at 7.30pm and Anne will give an update on plans for 2026 at the AGM.

Hope to see you soon.

Chris