

Chairman's Update

June 2026

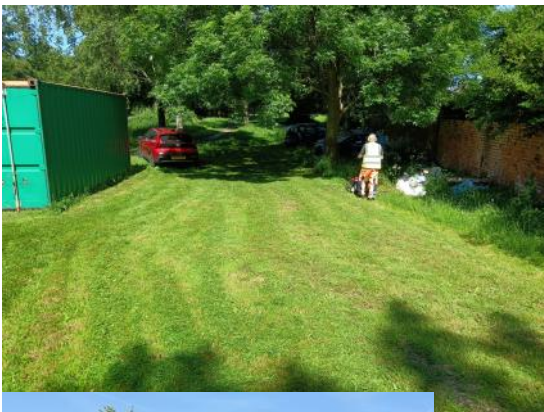
Here we are approaching the longest day with an amber warning for another heatwave. I've just come back from a couple of weeks on our share boat and it was an education. A two week break allows for a longer route, so I'd been at pains to plan a varied trip, which retraced part of our honeymoon route. How romantic! However as we left the weather turned from heatwave to downpour, but that's no problem as I'd packed a waterproof. However what we didn't know was that the winds had dropped a few cracked willows to close off our canal route. However, the CRT team was there within a few hours and cleared a path through three separate tree blockages by home time. We appreciated the recent lock gate replacements, but not the sudden closure of a river lock. At least we thought that the rains will be helping, but sadly we were informed that the Wolverhampton flight were already working to reduced hours to "save water".



So overall impressions were that CRT were on the ball in clearing temporary blockages, but the network surely needs much more investment to get the assets up to spec. It convinces me that in these straitened times canals need to be treated as part of the national water infrastructure if they are ever to be valued and funded. Our members meeting on 23rd at Severn Trent Raynesway will cover this and is very timely as are our own plans to use canals to manage water flows

Working Parties

I may have been away David and the teams have been as active as ever. Unfortunately much of the work involves keeping the grass in check. Thanks as al-



ways to the team, who deal with the repetitive tasks that are so necessary. As you can see we've some large areas to mow as well as the linear path. Key areas of work include the paddock at



Breaston and the canal line around Borrowash. There's also been some trimming of nettles and verge growth, particularly around Ulliker's Bridge, that's caused a few comments on Social Media. It does seem that whatever we do there are a few people who want to complain. It's unfair to call this "vandalism" and we are grateful to those who defend us on Facebook, etc. I know the team works very carefully to avoid disturbing or affecting wildlife, but we do need to maintain the path. I guess you can't satisfy all of the people all of the time.





Thanks also to Brian, resident gardener and bird feeder at the Cottages. Brian originally planted the whips on the boundary hedge and virtually every one succeeded. He's now trimmed them to their final size and really smartened the place up as you can see.



Other hedge work has been undertaken to keep back the hedge along the access road by Dagley's Lock.



In addition the interpretation panels have been refurbished at Draycott and Breaston. They're much more legible with a new clear Perspex cover.



Perhaps the less usual activities undertaken during the month were the discovery and recovery of barriers preventing access under the Derby Road bridge in Draycott. We think they've been left after work by the Highways, but we will find a good use for them and the path is open again to the public.

We also had a call from the Breaston in Bloom team. A couple of years ago they set up a display by the Navigation of a cut down narrowboat. It needed some maintenance and we were approached to help. I'm not sure it was our responsibility, but in the spirit of community support and perhaps some goodwill and prominence of the canal theme at a busy location our team went to help.



At Spondon Bourne Tony and Don have put in a bid for a grant to cover the costs and plan to complete the path—with local volunteers— next month. We are also reviewing the bridge improvements and seeking permission and some funding to improve that bottleneck.

Riverboat

The cable relocation continues. Last month I reported that an historical water wheel support was holding things up. Things moved on and the council conservation officer allowed the newly found structure to be excavated and removed. It was apparently a millstone and the museum are keen to display it.

With this now cleared, the works resumed and the cables laid and trenches rough filled as you can see. Of course this delayed works so the planned power connection work slot was missed. We are now awaiting a revised slot within the next few weeks to dig at either end to joint the old to the new cable. Whilst we await the cost implications with some concern this further delay shouldn't affect the pontoon installation.

We now have confirmation of the design resilience with only a minor tweak required. This is being redrawn ready for the instructions to manufacture and to satisfy planning conditions. Other matters seem to be aligning so we might submit for clearance in the next week and commission the build. In this area the costs seem to be under control and this will allow us to submit the DCC grant application paperwork to cover those costs. Latest estimate for completion is probably August now. Whilst the season may be fast disappearing at least we'll catch the summer holidays and establish winter moorings.

In the meantime we've started running the service from under Causey bridge again. However our first day of trips resulted in some strange behaviours of the boat electric motor. An unusual power reduction and strange noises do not bode well. We noticed it at the end of last season and thought we'd resolved it over the winter, but apparently not. We therefore decided to stop the service while we investigated properly. Better not to risk losing power in the middle of a trip—we'd never live it down. We've checked all the mechanical pieces and now await a visit from the manufacturers in a day or so to check the electrics. Hopefully we'll be back in operation in a week or so. We continue to get interest with a number of calls/emails to ask why the public can't book the service. That's encouraging for the future especially as we haven't been able to promote it.

Riverside

We've had further progress in pushing the riverside development, both short and longer term with support from key university departments, including ecology and hydrology, and the involvement of members of the Derby Nature Collective that we've been supporting. It means we have active involvement and support from the likes of Natural England, the EA and DCC. In addition Mike has also gained the very positive support of Marketing Derby to push the project for local business support. We now have conversations with two developer/contractors with a view to gaining project manager support for Erasmus Darwin Gardens at least, which will ease our workload.

Draycott/Breaston

We reported in the last Update that we had a meeting with the EMCCA directorate planned in June. That's taken place and with a very positive outcome. Our challenge has been to get all the interested bodies—Network Rail, EA, STW, National Grid, Derbyshire County and Erewash Borough Councils to coordinate efforts so that funding could be shared and benefits received by all. We have now been offered an EMCCA Project Manager, who will call the various parties together and develop a way forward. There is also the possibility of funding for a business plan and feasibility study when it's agreed what is needed. The down side is it will be in September as EMCCA are still recruiting the project manager, but other than that we couldn't ask for more.

This project has also been boosted by an increasing interest of a local developer, Peveril, who own so much of the land around the Draycott/Breaston area. It's a very attractive prospect for us as they are looking to incorporate a large chunk of canal into their proposed developments. With the



they own to the north and south of the canal line and with their openminded approach we could see a development that not only provides a mile of canal, but also makes it a major amenity attraction with potential for a small basin. It would also enable us to slightly vary the route and therefore preserve the existing wooded area, which has been of great concern for a while as it really would be a waste to fell so many established trees, even though Ash die back is prevalent there.

Of course the possible development that Peveril are looking at would provide a significant impact on the village with 1,000 houses being suggested by them and there is considerable unrest from existing residents. A recent local meeting was attended by some very vociferous local residents against any development, although there were also many others undecided. They argue that the flood risk will need to be addressed as properties regularly flood in Breaston, but of course our proposals deal with the flood risk. Hopefully we can get a consensus so that the impact on those with houses built around them will obviously be seen to be outweighed by the benefits we bring for the village as a whole. Let's hope we can get a full and honest debate about it all. From our point of view it is obviously very exciting and could deliver a major step forward in the near term.

When we add this to the discussions with EMCCA it provides an even more compelling argument and I'm sure Peveril will be invited by EMCCA to participate.

At **Sandiacre** Lock our meeting with our key neighbour went well. We were joined by the STW land agent. They explained what the neighbour would be entitled to in compensation from STW (and therefore from us). It currently stands at very little. The key concern continues to be the impact on development value. As a result the neighbour, and more importantly his son, will explore developments and possible planned development to establish what loss might be incurred. When we have that we can draw up agreements. This will also work subsequently with other neighbours, albeit they will be less affected by the works.

Mike has submitted our first bid to test the water and we will be working on further ones over the coming weeks.

Land issues

Given the progress noted above the purchase of land from Sustrans will be key, but their solicitors don't seem to be in any rush. We are now expecting the autumn for completion, which suits us just fine as we have other land purchases that are more time critical that we should prioritise as funds for land purchase are limited.

We expect completion on the other, much smaller parcel in August. Contact with the owner of the land at Swarkestone has stalled again as we have discovered that probate still has to be settled.

However, we have made good progress with purchase of land from Erewash BC. After a meeting we were asked to provide evidence of the affect on amenity value (the Council is obliged to ensure they do not dispose of land that is valuable for public amenity) and detailed route plans. We'll provide these shortly and believe that this could lead to an agreed purchase price being enacted in September.

Events

David has been concerned that the planned event at Long Eaton Carnival on Saturday 20th June might be cancelled as we had too few supporters to man it. Unfortunately we rely on the same people and holidays and other commitments from them put the event in jeopardy. However a few arms have been twisted and we now have a presence there, where they expect in excess of 10,000 visitors each year.

The only other planned event will be at Derby Market Hall on 22nd and 23rd August.

David is also looking to see if we can promote our works outside the cottages as this is the the 230th anniversary of the Derby Canal opening.

Please contact David Savidge if you can help with these events.

Meetings

Our last meeting was a presentation about Mill Life at Belper and we enjoyed three speakers for the price of one, which made a real change from the normal Powerpoint presentation. They were equally impressed with our Cottages development.

Our outside meeting will be on **Tuesday 23rd June starting at 7pm** and we will meet ahead of that in the STW car park in front of the Severn Trent building off Megaloughton Lane. This will be a tour of the works and include a report on the water transfer project that STW are undertaking to move water from their processing plant at Minworth down to the south east. Our guide will be Sarah-Jayne O'Kane who is their Project Manager. She has asked that we **wear stout footwear** for the tour (she's suggested walking boots). I'm relieved to see that she hasn't suggested wellingtons!

As an organisation we are very keen to make contact with STW personnel wherever we can. They will be instrumental in delivering our project especially as water transfer and sewer diversions are undertaken.

With this in mind I'll be presenting to a regional group of water engineers hosted by one of supporters working within STW, hopefully to further support and develop the ties with critical experts.

Future meetings are

28th July Finding treasure as a detectorist by Tim Mellor

23rd Sept From the Trent to the Mersey by Alastair Clarke

26th October AGM

Meetings will be held **at the Cottages as usual starting at 7.30pm** for all but the June meeting.

On a final note can I send our concerns to Roger and Sarah, who many of you know as keen volunteers and supporters of our Trust. Their son is recovering from a serious motor accident and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Thankyou for as always and have a good holiday season.

Chris