

Chairman's Update

July 2026

We seem to alternate between floods and drought these days. Here we are with the umpteenth heat-wave causing problems and wildfires in the neighbouring Peak District. Perhaps a small consolation is that it is so much worse in Europe. I saw a map of current wildfires throughout Europe in the news a few days ago and it was truly horrific. Whilst the predictions have been around for a couple of decades now it seems that the predictions are rapidly becoming a reality.

This of course affects us all and it is important that as an organisation we not only adapt to the changing scene, but also seek opportunities to secure and develop our waterways. The growing recognition that canals can aid water distribution and add significantly to amenity needs to be promoted as a way to secure and fund the heritage that we support. This month you'll see that we have been making the most of the dry season to manage the canal line, whilst preparing for future floods. Fortunately it appears we have a growing body of support for canals in their developing role in the country's infrastructure.

Working Parties

Despite the absence of rain the canal line has still grown and in some cases, particularly where we have stretches of restored canal, it's taken advantage of the moisture the canal brings. The teams have been working at Draycott (below) and Spondon by the Dial estate trying to manage the reed and other growth in the canal bed. There are rumours that David has had to develop his risk assessment for working parties this month. The growth is so high that there's a risk of losing volunteers, so David is counting them out and counting them back home again.



Other excitement this month has been trimming back the hedge on Derby



Road in Draycott (left) to allow pedestrians a safer route beside the road, which seems to have been welcomed by locals.

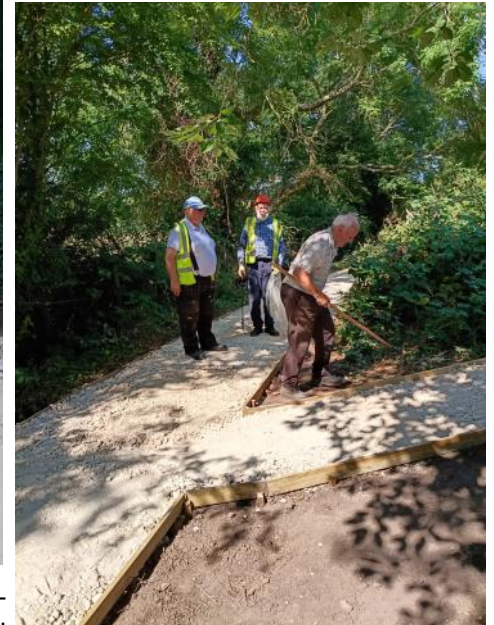
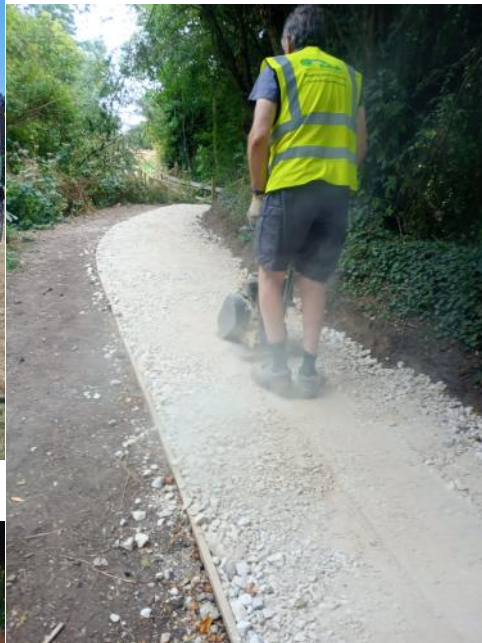
David was called to yet another fallen tree at Chellaston and went to have a look, but a day after the report he found the tree had disappeared—presumably taken away by the tree fairies for their log burners. At least it saves us a job.

It all makes a pleasant change from grass mowing headlines, although we are now looking to replace the push mower that after 20 years is spending more time being repaired than mowing and we are looking to get a grant for a substantial and reliable new machine.



The most dramatic work accomplished this month has been at Spondon Bourne, where the party led by Tony and Don have progressed to laying a limestone path. We are all delighted with the project as the guys have gained practical assistance from local residents, the council have donated 30 tons of limestone together with a small grant to cover our costs for other materials and plant hire. It has met our promises to the locals and gained more awareness for the larger project locally.

However the path is the first phase only and we are still looking to widen the bridge and level the access on each side so that pushchairs, etc can use it. We have been asked to look at extending it to cope with horses and are pursuing that with the British Horse Society and Erewash Riders. This will be handled through the County Council as it is their bridge, although early signs



are that the required width and implications of future impact on canal restoration may make this impractical. However, there may still be value to us in recognising it as an alternative cycle route from the current road option.

We've also heard in the last couple of days that we can get a long lease for the surrounding land from DCC. This is progress, although no doubt we will be asking for modifications, such as an option to buy, to ensure the canal can be restored in future. Having control of the land will be welcome, although there are currently restrictions on the management of trees there and, as discovered last week, it may need policing against anti social behaviour.

However it is a positive step in that it provides further evidence of support for the project overall. This is important because the recent announcement will bring together S Derbyshire, Erewash and Derby City councils in 2028 with the assumption that personnel from DCC will be the most influential and DCC currently has by far the largest proportion of the canal line still in third party hands. This is a further precedent for future transfers.

Riverboat

Last month I reported a problem with the motor on the boat. We are fortunate that with so many engineers as volunteers we had no shortage of suggestions—and an ability to try to resolve them.

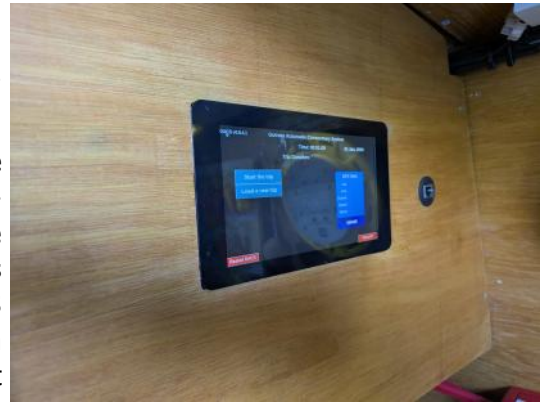
On the list of possible issues was that the prop shaft had become distorted, so was not running smoothly. If you look carefully at the photo opposite you'll see the laser light checking the alignment. Much more scientific than my broom handle on



the shaft in the water. Fortunately both tests proved this wasn't the issue. In the end it turned out to be a broken drive belt, which was fixed during the service visit by the supplier. Our resident engineers grilled the mechanic as he underwent the checks and balanced the motors and control systems, so we now have a more thorough understanding of how it works, etc. Mike has already updated our manuals in true Rolls Royce style!



Simon and Mike have also upgraded the commentary system so we deal with a few glitches from last year. It is GPS run, so if the boat took a short cut we might not finish one commentary before we started the next, which made it difficult to understand.



Happily, the boat has been running well since then and we've had a very good pick up in passenger numbers—and our publicity hasn't kicked in yet! We've even got a charter this weekend for two boats full of German visitors.

Gute Reise!

Our new pontoon seems to be getting closer. We now have a date in mid August for the completion of the cable relocation. The cost over-run seems manageable within the contingency—so far. I did have a sleepless night when I received an erroneous bill for £281,000, which was later cancelled. The troublesome millstone still sits under a plastic cover on the grass awaiting lifting gear to get it into the museum.

We are still arguing the terms of the Indemnity against damage to cables in the river, but have made representations to DCC that perhaps they should encourage National Grid to move them on safety grounds. Perhaps we'll let them finish the work in August before we take that point further though.

We still have not received the final detail from the pontoon suppliers to allow us to clear planning constraints, but have been promised (not for the first time) that it is imminent. Fortunately with the cable delays this has not affected our

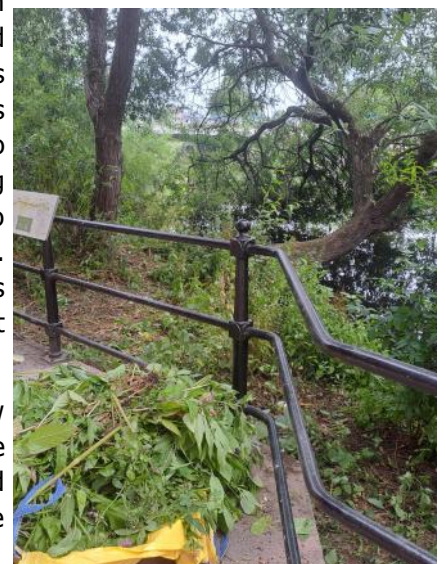


critical path yet, however the delivery time has slipped again until some time in September. We still await the grant payment from DCC, but expect to receive it in good time.



Now that the path works have been completed by NG and access opened again and in anticipation of the works we have been clearing the site. It is infested with Himalayan Balsam, so we've had a couple of days clearing that and the litter from the bank. So far we've had 6 ton bags to remove. We are also planning to trim the trees growing from the river edge so that the pontoon stays can be affixed.

Despite the further delay we are now looking at how we announce the opening. DCC are keen to be involved as I'm sure it will be a good story for the city. It may also be an opportunity to get closer to the Museum and get more prominence of the historic canal system.



Strangely, while this saga has continued we have been approached to create a disembarkation point in Darley Abbey, with the costs being rolled into a bid for a Derbyshire riverside path. I think this would be very straightforward in comparison with the one described above, although maybe I won't be betting on it.

Riverside

Over the month Mike has been active in promoting the OCOR 2 and OCOR 3 projects and gaining support. We now have an opportunity to discuss these with the Council and ensure we get full collaboration from all stakeholders prior to further promotion.

Draycott/Breaston

There has been little progress on this while we await the EMCCA project manager in September. We have supplied them with a full brief of past progress and key contacts and await an invite to the first meeting. In the meantime we have another meeting set with Peveril, who continue to develop their plans and will no doubt update us on current intentions at that meeting.

The consultation to instal pylons across the canal line at Draycott continue and we are aware of several ecological surveys being carried out at Draycott in support of that. We have registered our intent to claim for Biodiversity Net Gain funding from NG. They will be required to fund compensatory projects in the area when they erect their pylons and we want to be recipients. It is therefore very timely that we have been approached by a new volunteer, who has offered to lead on our ecology development. Fran has some expertise at a senior level and will research options and propose a more strategic approach for us to wildlife. It is important that we get on the front foot in this area to maintain our support across the local communities. Fran came to us as a result of continued adverse comments through social media about our working parties impact on wildlife. When I suggested that they should help us improve up front they were strangely silent. However Fran had seen the thread and as a supporter came forward herself to help. She already has ideas on how to engage with students at the local universities and how to tweak our reporting and she will be involved with NG to cover off BNG.

We are only as good as our volunteers and I'm sure Fran will add to our expertise, just as we have seen recently with Martin and Paul, and hopefully attract younger supporters.

At **Sandiacre** we still await a proposal from our neighbour, but have been promised we will get it in the near future. Mike has now submitted a second bid for funding and we hope to get an update in August. When we have funding we can push for progress more actively.

Land issues

The Sustrans and other Breaston purchases are still on track for August/September. We have had further positive encouragement on purchases of land from Erewash BC. We submitted evidence of amenity value and designs, which seems to have answered relevant questions comprehensively. We now await them to pursue the internal review and approval process required. We are advised that the timetable will be completed in the new year, which will be before the local government reorganisation kicks in. This will help our cash flow by spreading out the purchases a little.

Events

Our volunteers attended the carnival at Long Eaton having restocked our canal ware stock. We met a fair number of people, but takings were not good. It did at least demonstrate the canal restoration in a location where we hope to be undertaking restoration soon.

The last planned event will be a celebration of history at Derby Market Hall on 22nd/23rd August.

Cottages

We've now notified tenants of rent increases and expect them to start in September. If they all go through it should add a further £5k p.a. to our income, so fingers crossed. We had not previously applied increases to sitting tenants, but the new legislation set down a process for annual rises so we simply followed it. The rises were



advised as current market rents by the new agents as required by the new legislation. However the process threw up



notice of a leaking shower at a tenant so we've had the problem diagnosed and stripped the tiles so that a more flexible panel finish could be applied. Whilst this was an unexpected expense we've seen it as a good investment in keeping the tenants happy and justifying the rent increase.



Having said that the dry weather is not helping us as the aquifer from which we pump water to supply the café and tenants cottages is getting very low and with at least another 6 weeks of summer to go we have invested in extra filtration supplies to reduce the likelihood of running out of water.

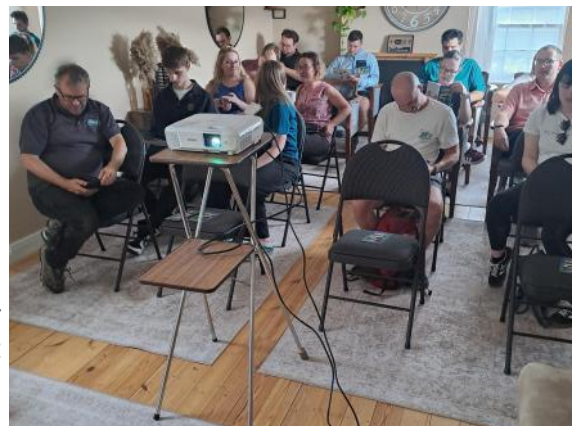
IWA Support We have finally been notified that new support for restoration that I campaigned for is to commence with a meeting in August and two new part time restoration leads will be employed as soon as possible. We expect this to provide expertise in areas needed by most restorations.

Admin Our financial accounts for both companies are now ready in advance of the AGM. We will also be meeting to consider a full blown review of the website. This is particularly important as we apply for grant funding and the content in some areas is now out of date. If anyone has any comments/suggestions or offers of help please let me know at chris.madge@derbycanal.org.uk

Trustees Meeting Each quarter we hold a Trustees Meeting. This brings together our directors and counsellor Trustees from Erewash, S Derbyshire, Derby City and County. In the past attendance has been a bit patchy, but I have to offer a vote of thanks to current trustees, who offer their active support in the matters outlined above. The development at Sandiacre, Breaston, the pontoon and works at Spondon have been aided substantially by their chasing officers on our behalf. I am grateful to them all.

Meetings

We were asked to present to a group of 20 engineers from the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management by one of our key supporters at STW. This we did at the Cottages and we were able to describe the project, and also signpost our ideas for water transfer, control and conservation to them. I believe it was a success—certainly everyone appeared very interested and stayed to inspect the work done to date at Draycott. It appeared that a large number of attendees worked in the water industry or the Environment Agency, so hopefully will benefit us in future.



Members Meetings



On 23rd June we met for a tour around the Severn Trent Sewage Treatment Works at Raynesway. Not only did we see how our sewage is treated, but were also informed of progress on the Minworth to London water transfer programme by the project manager Sarah Jayne. I'm pleased to say that we didn't need masks and were amazed at the size of the site and the volumes of effluent processed each day.



Our next meeting from **7.30pm on 28th July** (and the last before the summer break) is a talk at the Cottages about finding hidden treasure beneath our feet. You may have seen the TV programme, but here's a chance to hear the real story about detectorists from a local enthusiast and learn about some of the unexpected finds.

Future meetings are

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

26th October AGM

24th November Railway accidents caused by Human Error by Brian Dale

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

Thanks for your support.

Chris