

Chairman's Update

October 2022

Here we are at the end of October. The clocks have gone back and the evenings are getting much shorter. It's still warm, but the rain seems to have set in. Perhaps it's a good time to look forward to our indoor meetings. I hope you think so too and that we'll see you at the two November meetings before we take our December/Christmas break. We have an AGM and then at the end of the month an entertaining speaker who's spent his life doing everything "canal".

The Derby Riverboat

Last week saw the last trips on the Riverboat. The change in weather made life more difficult than we'd expected. Our current moorings are available only as long as we agree **not** to use them when the river rises above 0.8m—that's about 9 inches above normal. Given the rain we've had, the EA site has been forecasting levels rising to 1.2m. All this meant that we had to yet again move the boat into the open to avoid the high water under the bridge. Whilst the forecasts didn't prove to be accurate—the tsunami didn't arrive—we finally called it quits a week early.

It became really difficult to let people know of a cancellation in good time because most of our trips were at weekends and the booking system isn't manned at weekends. And of course we don't get details of passengers to make contact ourselves due to data protection laws. Liz is working on improving the system so it's slicker in future.



The new extensions are in place on the bridge access gates and seem to be much more effective, so thanks to the Council for that. We've also reinforced the steps down onto the boat—thanks Roger and David. We also now have permanent signage ready to be installed next year. It's in aluminium and has anti graffiti protection so fingers crossed. At least the public will find us more easily when we reopen.

We are also moving forward steadily to get the pontoon in place. We now have a position for the major cables from the Silk Mill power station to Spondon to feed Smartparc so final drawings have been produced and we have a promise from the Council that the construction will be complete at the end of March despite a planning decision being delayed until December, so fingers crossed. This would of course mean that the water level restriction under the bridge would no longer be an issue as we could moor on the pontoon.



We have now moved the boat back to its winter mooring near Darley Abbey. There's a touch of irony that we moved it back because water levels were rising, yet still had to manhandle the boat into position around the uneven river floor by the mooring. The water was surprisingly warm! We are now working on a maintenance programme for the boat and jetty to be ready for next year and protect from flood waters that may rise by 9 feet.

Despite the challenges the operation of the Riverboat has been an unqualified success. We took a risk starting operations before everything was in place, but it's paid off. Our volunteer group has steadily built up although it has been fraught at times—sorry Ian. We have had sold out trips for over two months, we've had compliments from virtually all the passengers, we've made some money towards restoration, but most importantly we have shown people what the future could hold and found them excited.

And to cap it all we've discovered a flight of



kingfishers. How about the photo taken by a very quick passenger!

Cottages

Don and Tony remain busy at the cottages and have now reconstructed the old range and installed it in the ground floor "museum". Those of you who saw the heap of rusted and broken parts will be amazed by this photo. I'd almost written it off when it was attacked by intruders early in the restoration, but just look at it now!



Next in line are information boards/pictures for the museum and some storage cupboards upstairs to bring some order to the mayhem and make it available for visitors to the café/cottages.



Working Parties

Work this month has featured maintaining paths, cutting grass and a bit of wall building at Borrowash.

There's also been a major tidy up along the stretch either side of Station Road in Borrowash. However the largest challenge has been managing the growth of reeds at Draycott.



There were times when we thought we'd lose the working parties in the reeds, but fortunately that wasn't the case. Eddy has been working in concert with the vole experts to ensure the habitat is right for them and also of course that the ere is still a stretch of canal available to others.

Further progress is happening slowly at **Sandiacre Lock** with discussions coming to a potentially cost effective and mutually beneficial solution to manage sewer connections for the three residents nearby. This could then bring matters to a conclusion ready for final design and recosting. It's slow but steady.

Events

We attended a Derby event on Pride Park organised by



Marketing Derby in mid October. We were amongst the "Charity" stands, but in a setting that attracted visitors from around 300 local businesses. We were able to present our videos showing how the city centre could look. We had a lot of interest during the day and made some good contacts. Networking pays dividends you just don't know when and how at the time.

MEETINGS will be held at the First Floor, Canal Cottages, Draycott DE72 3PE

AGM Thurs 17th Nov from 7.30pm This will be in person with (we hope) an online feed. The agenda is available at <https://www.derbycanal.org.uk/agm22/> . This will be more than a summary of the year past, but also a chance to set our direction as the effort of the cottages and riverboat comes towards a close.

Final Members' Meeting on Tues 22nd Nov from 7.30pm. Barry Watson will be talking about his experiences on the canals as marina manager, boat broker and particularly **running a canal hotel boat**. Barry comes highly recommended as a speaker and entertainer and recently featured in Waterways World. It's a great final meeting before the Christmas break. Please do support us.

And finally I'd like to thank publicly Peter Warmingham, our Packet editor. You will have seen the latest copy and I'm sure you'll join me in praising the quality of the publication. Not only has he managed the words, but has also been taking top notch photos to support the words and one of which featured in the last WW. I hope to see you soon. Chris Madge



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