

## Chairman's Update

### August 2022

Well it looks like the temperatures have dropped a little and we've even had some rain. Not enough of course to fill the reservoirs for the canals, but at least it's something. So, how have we filled our time over the last month? It's a story of a more of the same on maintenance and at last the start of operations of the Riverboat, albeit slowly. On other projects we've been hampered by council officers, consultants and contractors taking holidays, but hopefully matters will be back to normal in September.

During the month I, and many others in the waterways world, attended John Baylis' funeral. John was a past Trustee and a very practical man, who has been restoring canals for 50 years. Whilst it was a sad event we were able to celebrate John's life and remember him with great fondness.

#### Working Parties

We've continued working to keep on top of the various sections under our active management.



David has been using the good weather to good effect and working parties have brightened up a



few areas. The paint brushes have been out and we now have a very green container and sparkling black and white barriers at Borrowash. This is in addition to trimming grass on paths (but not too wide just yet).



Meanwhile a few intrepid explorers have tackled the growing reeds in the ditch at Draycott. At present as you can see there's very little water in the ditch so this sort of work is a lot easier. Working parties have also been trimming at Draycott, Breaston and Sandiacre and a push has been undertaken to improve the overgrown Spondon stretch.

Thanks to those that have contributed to the "policy on maintenance". David has pulled together a first draft ready for review next month.



## Cottages

Thanks to Don, Brian and Tony for completing the Hitching Rail outside the café.

You'll see that they have moved the tree stumps after a fair bit of saw work so we now have a stumpery. I never realised there was such a feature until now. However it's obviously a good idea as the stumps have been populated by both wasps and bees. Hopefully they won't upset the horses. The rails have been supplied by Erewash Riders, who also provided the design and our trio built the picnic bench from planks to sit over the access to the culvert. They've even added a mounting step made out of some left over blocks.

All this is of course on the understanding that it will be relocated when we put the canal through.



At **Sandiacre Lock**, we have made some progress. We've proved that no bats reside in the lock walls and we've surveyed the garden levels and the resident drains to help us to plot a course to reroute the sewer between the trees. We also have an option in principle to take a few houses off the main sewer that may work for us. We are now waiting for people to return from holiday to get a conclusion drawn and design moved on. As before we progress slowly, but surely.

At **Draycott** we have commissioned a drains expert and await the design, so we can move things forward. No progress with Network rail yet though.

## The Derby Riverboat—At last!

Yes, we have commenced operation of the Passenger Riverboat. Our first fee paying passengers were on board on 21st August following a press weekend launch the previous Sunday. The press launch went well—we had a Central News TV camera, local radio and the local paper and we even attracted national press coverage. We were also pleased to demonstrate the offering to the Chief Exec at Derby City Council, who has been very supportive and was delighted that between us we were delivering a new activity for Derby residents and visitors.

So, it may not be a fully resourced service yet and we may not be able to take disabled passengers yet, but we are on the river. We are



also currently running purely on solar panels as the final meter connection of the back up recharge point is taking longer than expected—apparently the number of new connections has escalated and engineers available reduced. The latest date for connection is mid September. In the meantime it means managing the batteries by ensuring the boat is moored in the open for a spell as the current mooring is under a very large bridge.





On the positive side since the last update the Council have installed security gates on the temporary mooring. We have licenced the boat itself and licenced me personally as the first driver and are in the process of adding the other six trained volunteer drivers. We are still looking at cabin crew—so feel free to volunteer if you can.

Planning permission for the Phase 2 pontoon has received the required 15 objections to require a decision at a planning committee meeting, but the nearest is mid October. This means that the likelihood of building it this year has reduced, but we will keep on pushing. Many of the objections are around restricting the river use of others and I'm pleased to report that we have had constructive talks with the Rowing Clubs and hope to reach an amicable solution that suits all. Whilst we are currently running only on Sunday afternoons, we will be extending the schedule as soon as practicable as we are currently sold out for September! We are expecting some branded shirts courtesy of our sponsor, Ecotricity, so we should look the part.



## Events



We attended the IWA Festival of Water in Burton over the Bank Holiday weekend.

Whilst it wasn't as busy as pre pandemic shows it is obviously coming back in popularity. We met a few friends there, signed up a few new members and generally promoted the cause. I am assured that the beer tent was a major attraction, although it ran out of beer on a couple of occasions. We were able to promote the boat and that was very well received.

The final event of the year will be at Shardlow Inland Port Festival on 10/11th September. All are welcome!

## Members Meetings

In late July I led a very large group around the city centre explaining some of the vision for development around the flood defences and including a canal basin and lock outside the Council House. We were joined by Max Craven, who also provided some heritage information about the original use of the river by the Silk Mill. The only sadness was that we couldn't see the Riverboat in operation as we still waiting for licences.

**Indoor Meetings** will be held at the Draycott Cottages, First Floor

Tues 27th Sept	7.30pm	Brian Dale	Railway Accidents and how to avoid them
Tues 25th Oct	7.30pm	Dave Savidge	Waterway Recovery work camps at Derby
Tues 22nd Nov	7.30pm	Barry Watson	The Agony and Ecstasy of a Canal Hotel Boater

We are still waiting for our accounts to be signed, so watch this space for an AGM date.

Take care and I hope to see you soon.

Chris Madge

