

Chairman's Update

January 2023

Another year beckons and we look forward to progress on a number of fronts. First we have to get through the winter weather. As you'll see there's been no let up from our volunteers. Whether it is working off the Christmas excesses, having an excuse to get into the open air or just meeting up with old friends to a common purpose we've had continued activity to report. We've also kicked off the behind the scenes activity and made preparations for future activities as the weather improves. They say that late January is the lowest point of the year, so if you're feeling in need of a lift come and join us on a working party—you'll be made most welcome and will help to move us forward. We have tasks for all abilities and levels of expertise!

Eddy Case

Following Eddy's funeral his friends organised a gathering at his local pub and following that at a quiz night to raise some funds. Both were well supported by his friends and the funds raised will now support the Trust and in particular a bench to be constructed on the Draycott canal line in his memory. This will be installed and maintained by his fellow working party volunteers.

Working Parties

Congratulations to David Savidge and his team for substantial delivery over December and January. Whilst the weather has claimed a few cancelled working parties good progress has nevertheless been made. Roger and his team have continued to tidy up a few dangerous trees, but the main thrust has been at Borrowash where the restoration of the banks by Station Road has progressed rapidly.



We have been lucky to be offered the blocks from a Nutbrook Canal bridge that needed to be moved. The development at Stanton Ironworks is now progressing so when we were approached by a director at Wards Recycling to ask if we wanted the blocks we said yes. It's certainly not the normal material for recycling, but we were delighted. And they offered to load up the blocks as well. Roger has masterminded the transfer to be used in the wall at Borrowash. This was agreed after we had



looked at whether we needed a bridge, but couldn't find a practical option. The teams had already planted out trees/whips along the boundary on the off bank. So with the pulling of stumps on one side and wall building on the other the line is really taking shape.

We've also had a team at Sandiacre keeping the line tidy and "relocating" some fruit trees planted on the canal line. We're not absolutely sure who put them there, but moving them out of the canal line before they become established is certainly sensible.

We've also been aware of the increased rain and consequent flood risk. Water levels on the Draycott canal/ditch has built up at times and it has



been really important to ensure that the rubbish that accumulates and blocks the flow is regularly cleared. During the lull in the rain Don has done the same for the Cottages. Rubbish has been cleared from the culverts and to prevent a recurrence has installed a grille as shown across the road. I don't want to tempt fate, but so far so good. The manager at the café has been monitoring developments, which is a real boon. In addition they have been selling our merchandise and doing really well to establish a growing customer base and promoting the story. We know that many of you are supporting the café and both the Trust and the tenant thank you for your support.



Riverboat

We've also been working on protecting the riverboat from the potential floods to come. We've replaced and tested the motor after its service and have constructed a frame to keep the boat from settling back on the jetty after flooding. We've built it higher this year as last year the river flooded to such an extent that the boat overtopped it. Simon has also taken on the challenge of making our commentary automated by switching on tracks according to our GPS positioning. This will make it a lot easier for the crew.

We've been making progress with planning permission for the pontoon. We had to resubmit with changes to deal with earlier objections. That has now been completed and the second round of consultation completed with no further significant objections. We therefore expect it to be tabled at the February committee and hopefully construction will follow promptly. The latest promise by the Council for having it ready to go is for the start of June. This is a further delay from them, but they cite contractors who want to work only after flood risk has subsided in April.



We've been planning the start of the next season already. We're working with the tourist office at DCC to promote the trips. We hope to generate a lot of interest to ensure we continue to be sold out. Discussions include promoting grouped activities—combining us with the Museum of Making and the Cathedral for example. This would then put us into the bus tours market. We are also looking at promotion on a national online booking system. We've also been looking at local promotion so hopefully we will be popular. It will present a good opportunity to earn and promote the project.

We now have a good team of licenced drivers, but **we need more cabin crew**. The job is easy, only requiring an ability to make coffee and talk to customers. We always work with two in the cabin, **so if you would like to offer your time to help** and enjoy our beautiful river please come forward. There's no formal commitment—just put your name on a rota. Please let us know if you are interested by contacting me or emailing Liz Gordon, our Ops Manager, at liz.gordon@derbycanal.org.uk. We need your help!

Atkins Review

This has progressed and together with the result of a report on attractions around the Derby Arm by Katapult consultants means we should be able to present the findings to the council to discuss putting them into operation. It will be obvious to all however that funding and time is in short supply from the Council so our fingers are very firmly crossed that we can mobilise support from funding bodies. Certainly the reports will support this.

Sandiacre

We've made very slow progress on the sewer move over Christmas as we've tried to resolve the issue of a small householder feed coming into the main sewer that we want to move. However the situation may now be starting to move forward as one of the parties causing the challenges seems to have moved on. It is essential that we move this forward as we have an agreed WRG visit to work on the lock in the summer. If we can resolve this last point we should be good to go.



Draycott

We've also made some progress with the Draycott canal. We have been waiting for an overdue report by drainage experts to ensure we can design the canal to take away water that naturally drains into the canal. We received the draft report over Christmas and have now checked out some of the recommendations. Part of the story is to manage the ditches and culverts to the north of the canal line. As the canal will be higher than the ditch in some places it is crucial that we manage the water flows and we now believe we can direct the drainage so that we get a gravity feed into the canal for all but the nearest field. Options for this include a small sump and pump to lift this water from the land drain into the canal. It may be possible to build up the land to prevent flooding—I'm sure we would have no difficulty finding spare material!

There's a bit of negotiation with farmers to sort out, but hopefully we now have a final design and can proceed to requote. Whilst the extra work will not add much to the project—we may even be able to undertake a lot of it with volunteers—inflation in the last few years has been crippling. Rough guesses suggest that we will need to find a

further £200k to complete the works, albeit some of that should come from Network Rail. We have already started to talk to fundraisers.

Engineering Review

Those of you at the AGM will recall we committed to a review of engineering issues. We have had the first session with a presentation by the Eng group to the Board. This discussed issues around Raynesway and generated a few action points, not least of which was to start talking to Network Rail and a few others. We will gradually run through the sections of the canal and reassess/confirm the design issues and options originally put forward by Atkins.

I am pleased to report that we have recently been joined by a possible new member with water engineering a speciality and he has already suggested a few options particularly around the route through the M1.

Members' Meetings We are hopeful that we get good support to the meetings organised by our team. I believe the speakers are both relevant and interesting, but we need your support if we are to continue them.

Meetings will continue to be held at the First Floor, Canal Cottages, Draycott DE72 3PE

Please note the following dates in your diaries.

January 24th	Michael Thacker	Railways in World War 1
February 28th	Clare Howard	The Derby Canal and Gangway in Little Eaton
March 28th	David Jennings	The Derby Canal in Derby City
April 25th	Bennerley Viaduct—Restoration and into the Future	

I hope to see you soon. Chris Madge