

Chairman's Update

April 2023

March was officially the wettest March for ages and if we're not careful April won't be much better. It's great to think the reservoirs might be topped up, but it's making life difficult planning working parties and boat trips. I hate having to cancel boat trips if the water and flow is too high—it's not just letting people down with little notice, but also losing the possible income.

Looking at the month ahead we have plenty of opportunity to get the boat in action as we have Spring bank holiday and the coronation holiday as well as the Easter break just gone. Hopefully we'll have better weather and good crowds and involvement. As you can see below we will also be attending the first event of the year at Breaston shortly and are looking for volunteers to help out.

The Riverboat

Despite the complaints above we have had a couple of successful weekends afloat, although water levels are still relatively high. It just takes a day of rain to cause us problems. However as you can see, when the sun comes out it is wonderful.

Maintenance is almost done with new coats of paint completing the job. We now have advertising boards to fit over the windows while Outram is moored up. These together with organised leaflet drops should help to increase interest, but the sun is probably our best means of promotion. We'll be providing a trip for Museum of Making staff, who will then be able to promote us more effectively to Museum visitors. We plan to work closely together and are grateful for access to their drinking water and facilities.



We've had very limited contact with the City Council—I presume the elections and budget cuts are to blame, but we do now have a date to meet the pontoon suppliers to push that forward. Hopefully June will see it in place? In the meantime we continue to push the city centre and Arm developments and Vice Chairman Mike is having good success in gaining support from the University and senior Rolls Royce management. His aim is to have the project "shovel ready" should funds become available from Government schemes or local employers.

Working Parties

Working parties are back on track with the insurance claim agreed for equipment replacement. The team has already attacked the grass at Borrowash and it now looks pristine as you can see.



At Draycott the "canal" has been filling up again with accumulating vegetation, so the team have cleared it all yet again and allowed the water level to fall back to normal.



In order to reduce maintenance they've also enhanced the "gate" to allow a better flow through and easier clearance.

As well as the grass cutting the teams have been planting saplings on top of the Great Wall of Borrowash.

On the other side of Station Road a space has been cleared to allow for digger driver training. This is to be supplied for several interested volunteers who have put themselves forward for future



with a project within the IWA being undertaken by Chesterfield, Buckingham and me on behalf of Derby to expand the provision of central help for restoration projects.

excavation works. David has organised the special training via Waterways Recovery Group and is talking to them about a further WRG visit to Borrowash later in the summer. This could fit well



A little further up the canal line by Ullikers Bridge we had some sad news from local farmers, the Meynalls. They informed us that one of the horses grazing by the canal line had been poisoned by sycamore shoots. It is a pretty gruesome death and the remaining animals have been removed from possible harm, but we are looking at how we can map out the various trees between Spondon Bourne and Station Road, Borrowash, so that we can see which to encourage and which will be in the way and non-native. We may combine this with the farmer's research at Ullikers.

And finally we have proof that we are a proper canal. We have our first shopping trolleys dumped in it at the Spondon section. No doubt they will be removed reasonably quickly, but

The Cottages

We have now been able to install a memorial bench on behalf of past Erewash Riders members. It has been installed by Brian Allen. It is made of recycled plastic and bolted into concrete blocks to make sure it isn't moved. The installation is on a temporary basis—until the Hopwell Road Crossing is constructed—but at that time I'm sure we can relocate it.

With that in mind we are making steady progress with the negotiation to buy the winding hole east of Hopwell Road together with the section of canal path running towards Breaston. We hope to have this concluded shortly and that will allow further plans for water and tree management going forward.





Also at the Cottage Café Don and Tony have added the finishing touches to the décor in the Museum room. As you can see they have found a rag rug, mirror other furniture and even got the look alike gas mantle operating. It's now an added feature as café visitors can take afternoon tea in the room.

And on the subject of restoration we have received a donation of a model narrowboat that wasn't quite finished by the member before he



died. If anyone would like to take the matter on and add the finishing touches we would have a fine model to display to the public. Please let me know if you are interested.



The Trust has taken the view that the Trust will take over management of the lettings of the cottages. At present we tend to deal with all the issues ourselves, so there's little point in paying out fees without good reason. Unfortunately we will have one tenant moving out shortly and will be readvertising for a new tenant for the middle cottage.

Events

This is the final call for support at Breaston Gala on 1st May starting at 11a.m. and at Langley Mill between Sat 27th to Mon 29th May. Our stall is being gradually improved and boards updated so we just need people to talk about what is happening and sign up a few new supporters. Please don't be shy—this is a relaxed and pleasant few hours mingling with other volunteers and the public. Anyone else that can help on these dates, please let me know.

Members' Meetings

Many thanks go to David and Pauline Jennings talking about The Derby Canal in the city. At the meeting copies of the audience were handed large photos to look through and I've never seen such interest and chatter as everyone reminisced and compared notes.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday April 25th talking about **Bennerley Viaduct**. This project has made quick progress and we will learn about how the restoration and funding was achieved and particularly about how volunteers continue to play an important part in its operation and maintenance.

Future meetings for your diaries are

May 23rd	Rod Auton	Update from Chesterfield Canal Trust
June 27th	Walk	Finding the Derby Canal in Little Eaton

Meetings will continue to be held on each fourth Tuesday from 7.30pm on the First Floor, Canal Cottages, Draycott DE72 3PE unless indicated otherwise.

I hope to see you soon.

Chris Madge