

The Packet

Issue 94 Spring 2023



Suggested Donation £1

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	Sandiacre
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	Spondon
Chris Rees-Fitzpatrick:	Chellaston

For company law purposes all directors listed above are also deemed to be trustees and together with those listed above as trustees form the advisory committee.

Front Cover

Dead Tree Stump Removal at Borrowash

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From the Editor



Another six months has passed since the last Packet! The Working Parties have been busy on the canal line, doing essential tree work and bramble clearance, etc, before the nesting season resumes.

They have been particularly busy at Borrowash, restoring the 'Great Wall'.

Thanks to Keith Johnson for the first of two articles about his time spent organising working parties.

Thanks also to Andrew Murdoch for his amazing sketches of the Derby Canal drawn from old photographs, sometimes an amalgamation of several.

The canal restoration is a community project and I think we see both the good and the not so good in society: on the one hand the dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly all year on the canal, and



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on the other those who cause problems by stealing from our container items bought with donated funds, starting grass fires, filling a lock back up with litter after it has been cleared, setting the riverboat loose or attempting to drive along the towpath at Chellaston - not advisable!

The hapless driver of the car in the photo got himself well and truly stuck. I'm told that cars are driven along there fairly regularly. As there is nowhere to turn round, they have to reverse all the way out which can take a long time. Apparently the couple who live nearby once timed one when they saw it go down and it took two hours for them to get back!

The riverboat trips resumed on 1st April, again operating from Causey Bridge using the same pool-style ladder access as last year through to June when the floating pontoon is expected to become available. The sailing times are 12.30pm, 1.45pm, and 3pm each Saturday and Sunday and Bank Holidays. Additional Wednesday sailings will commence from 17 May. Tickets can again be booked through the Derby Live website.

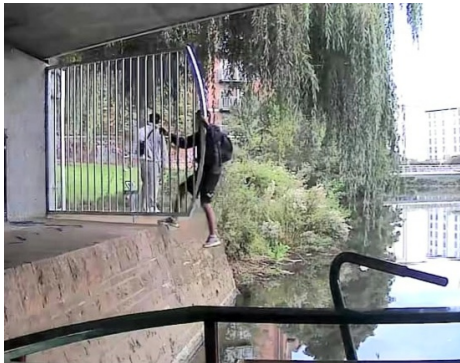
The trip boat team would like some additional 'cabin crew' to help during the trips and getting visitors on and off the boat. If you could help, please contact Liz Gordon at:
liz.gordon@derbycanal.org.uk.

Contributions to future issues of *The Packet* will be most welcome - if you have anything you think might be of interest to readers, please forward it to me at:
peter.warmingham@derbycanal.org.uk

Chairman/Communications Report

The Derby Riverboat

In September the riverboat was operating and power had been connected to the charging point mid month - it was a relief not to be totally reliant on the sun. The trek to the open bank, chosen for it's inaccessibility to vandals, but a treacherous clamber across a wall, through brambles and down a steep bank was no more. Neither was the worry that the riverboat had been set loose, although we had suffered "visitations" as captured on our security camera and frightened off by our alarm system. The council were meant to be adding extra protection to the gates which couldn't come quickly enough. Pity they didn't get the design right first time.



On a more positive note we now had three drivers, with another three awaiting licensing, together with a good number of volunteers for cabin crew - also extra dates released on the booking engines every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons until the end of October.

The shirt sponsorship deal had materialised. Not only did we get crew shirts and driver fleeces, but also shirts



for sale to adult and child passengers, as modelled by our volunteer crew.

We hoped to get a joint promotion with the Museum of Making and new volunteers, David and Pauline, had supplied some really excellent historical information. It would be great if the Museum recognised canal heritage in Derby!

The riverboat trips are very tranquil until the resident pair of kingfishers, that regularly appears, is spotted. The river is edged by magnificent trees and with autumn approaching we could already see the leaves changing colour - it was going to be spectacular.

The last trips on the riverboat took place in the third week of October 2022, the change in weather having made life more difficult than expected. We were not allowed to use our moorings under the bridge if the river level was more than 0.8m - that's about 9 inches above normal. After the rain we'd had, levels rising to 1.2m were forecast so we had to 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 was difficult to let people know of a cancellation in good time as most of our trips were at weekends when the booking system wasn't open. Also, the data protection laws prevented us from accessing passenger details and making contact ourselves. Liz has been working on making the system slicker in future.



The new bridge gate access extensions were in place and seemed to be much more effective - we thank the Council for that. Roger and David had reinforced the steps down onto the riverboat and we had permanent signage ready to be installed. It's in aluminium and has anti-graffiti protection. At least the public will be able to find us more easily when it is installed.

We also made steady progress with the pontoon. We had a position for the major cables from the Silk Mill power station to feed Smartparc at Spondon and final drawings had been produced. The council had promised that construction would be complete at the end of March 2023, ending the issue of water levels under the bridge as we can moor on the pontoon instead.

We moved the riverboat back to its winter mooring near Darley Abbey. It was ironic that although the water levels were rising, we still had to manhandle the riverboat into position around the

uneven river floor by the mooring. The water was surprisingly warm! We



worked on a maintenance programme for the riverboat and jetty for 2023 to protect from flood waters up to 9 feet above normal.

The riverboat operation was a great success. It was risky starting before everything was in place, but it paid off. Our volunteer group steadily built up, although it was fraught at times. Our trips sold out for over two months and we received compliments from virtually all the passengers, made some money towards restoration, but most importantly, excited people by showing



them what the future could hold. And to cap it all we've discovered a flight of kingfishers. How about the photo taken by a very quick passenger!



The rain in October caused river levels to rise in November. The highest level up to the last week of October was 1.4m - a way short of the 3.2m record - but there was a very noticeable impact on water speed and volume. We reconstructed the jetty protection, making it higher this year than last, and cleared away low branches to allow for a substantial rise in the river.



Winter maintenance was also under way. We took the motor down to Devon for service ready for the new year. Compared to the diesel engines we are used to it is very small, allowing us to remove it ourselves and transport it in

the back of a car. Again we'd learnt lessons in maintenance and amended the routines accordingly.

By October we had answered all the questions posed in the planning process for the pontoon and expected it to be discussed at the Planning Committee meeting in mid February 2023.



In January we worked to protect the riverboat from any future floods. We replaced and tested the motor after its service and constructed a frame to keep the boat from settling back on the jetty after flooding. We built it higher this year - last year the river flooded so much that the boat over-topped it. Simon took on the challenge of automating our commentary by switching on tracks according to our GPS positioning, making it a lot easier for the crew.

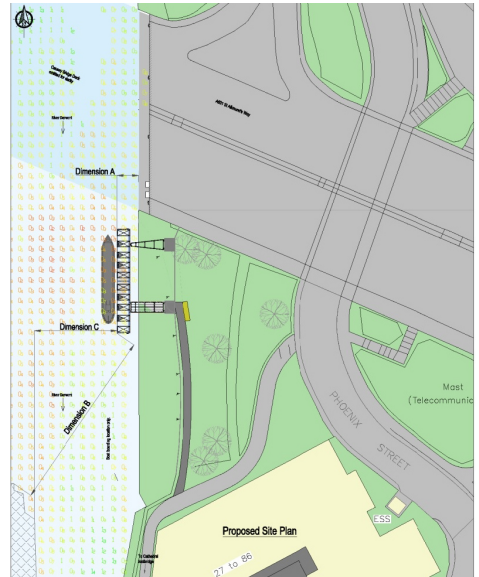
We made further progress with planning permission for the pontoon. The second round of consultation was completed with no further significant objections. Our application was still expected to be tabled in February and for construction to follow promptly. The Council promised completion by June, citing contractors who wanted to work only

after the flood risk subsided. We were already planning the start of the next season, working with the tourist office at Derby City Council to promote the trips, and hoping to generate lots of interest to ensure we continue to be sold out. Discussions included the promotion of grouped activities - combining us with the Museum of Making and the Cathedral, for example, putting us into the bus tours market. We also looked at promotion both on a national online booking system and locally.

Normally in February I'm constantly looking at weather forecasts to check for potential floods. Last year the water levels in the Derwent rose significantly so there was much checking that the riverboat was safe and secure, and that our knots were holding.

The volume of rain also caused concern about the Draycott section and the drainage from the Cottages. However, as there had been so little rain I wondered if the water level would be sufficient to get the boat out of its winter mooring at Darley Abbey. Hopefully she could be floated out without having to clear a channel by hand. That water was cold!

That should be the last time we have these concerns as we were hoping to be at the new pontoon in June, planning permission having been granted on 16th February. It had been a trial as there were many comments to deal with. One was about wildlife conditions, especially after the Council decided we needed to take down three trees on site. A balance had to be found between heritage concerns to make the pontoon blend in and rowers' concerns that it should be clearly visible.



Another concern was that the river would be narrowed for other users. We consulted widely with rowers to deal with matters raised. We even relocated the pontoon to be as near as possible to the bridge, so avoiding both the island in the river and the high voltage power cables destined to power Smart Parc in Spondon.

Duncan Inwood had shepherded the application through the process so we were wary when told there would be an objector speaking at the planning meeting. We prepared to combat the possible challenges from one of the Rowing Club captains and were pleasantly surprised to find he simply wanted to thank everyone for the extensive consultation. We are obviously delighted as sharing the river is key to our success.

Our timetable was set so that we operated on any afternoon, but started with weekends from April 1st, extending this to include Wednesdays and bank holidays from May and offering charters and group bookings on other days - volunteers permitting.

We thanked those who had already offered to staff the cabin, but there was plenty of space for those still wondering. I was delighted to be contacted by Sue, who was helping us by developing an on-line schedule for volunteers to make management much easier.

The Cottages

In September the hitching rail was proving popular with visitors, especially with the addition of wood chippings in the horse stand. Not such good news that the trees on the café site had ash dieback. One needed to come down for safety reasons, but we were trying to save the other one. The site just wouldn't be the same without the trees.

We were progressing with the Museum Room - we had installed skirting boards and painted the doors, etc. Don commissioned a welder to restore the damaged range and fireplace ready for display and we were gathering the info for the story boards. We are indebted to the generosity from a long time member from Canada, who has donated a large sum to fund this work.

In October, Don and Tony were still busy at the cottages, having reconstructed the old range and installed it in the "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 were information boards/pictures for the museum and storage cupboards upstairs to bring some order to the mayhem and make it available for visitors.



The rain through October had impacts I'm sure you saw. It was good to see reservoirs slowly filling up again but it did cause us some concerns. Much of the canal design challenge at Draycott is related to the flow of water around the cottages. In heavy downpours a substantial flow builds up as rainwater rushes down Hopwell road and its ditches. Water came up to the edge of the car park but it soon dissipated. However, it affected the workings of the water supply, which had to be solved urgently as both commercial and

residential premises relied on it. First the excess water shorted out the electricity supply to the pump. This has been resolved and the pump made more robust for future use.

A couple of days later the borehole pump failed and had to be replaced. It's all good now and we have a better maintenance check regime in place. We can't disrupt the business of the café or the showers of the residents.

Meanwhile Don and Tony completed the storage cupboards and constructed a large table for meetings in the same room. They had refitted an old fire surround in the main meeting room and had also pretty much completed work on the museum room. We still needed to get the art work and artefacts completed, but we are nearly there!



There remained challenges finalising the café lease - we had to satisfy the Charities Commission that all was above board. Whilst I understood that safeguards are needed, it was sad to think of the time we needed to invest, and the advisers fees that have to be paid out, to prove that we were doing things in the interest of the Trust.

Sandiacre Bottom Lock

In September progress was made with a new suggestion from Severn Trent Water on how to route pipes for residents nearby.

By October a potentially cost effective and mutually beneficial solution to manage sewer connections for the three residents nearby was almost agreed. This would bring matters to a conclusion ready for final design and re-costing. Progress slowed through November awaiting a push by the Trust to get loose ends tied up on the design.

Draycott Canal

In November we were still awaiting design input from consultants who have been slowed following a death in the family of the lead consultant. We expected to get their conclusions ready

More progress on the sewer move was made over Christmas as we tried to resolve the issue of a small householder feed coming into the main sewer that we want to move. However, it appeared that the situation might be starting to resolve - one of the parties causing the challenges seemed to have moved on. It was essential to progress this as we have an agreed Waterway Recovery Group visit to work on the lock in the summer. If we can resolve this last point we should be good to go.

for costing. This was also slowed by the lack of progress with Network Rail on the cost of repairs. The Trust has decided to moderate our claim in the expectation of a quick settlement, which will allow us

to move matters on. Whilst this may mean an increased shortfall in funding, we have already contacted a fundraiser who should be able to help us access funds when we know how much we need.

The draft of the overdue report to ensure we can design the canal to take away water that naturally drains into the canal was received over Christmas and we checked out some of the recommendations in January.



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 to manage water flows and we now believe the drainage can be directed 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 do, but hopefully we have a final design and can get new quotes. The

extra work won't add much to the project - volunteers may even be able to do much of it - but inflation in the last few years has been crippling. A rough guess is that we need a further £200k to complete the works, albeit some should come from Network Rail. We were already talking to fundraisers.

In February further work was done at the Draycott canal site. Fortunately we investigated the proposed drainage before the land dried out. Water flows could be seen to follow the lines suggested in the design plan. We've used that to open discussions with the land owners to see if we can at least organise the water, both to the north and uphill, from the canal at Draycott. David and Chris are making progress with contractors to check and refine the quotations for the planned work.

We also checked progress with the ecologists, but it was apparent that there was no longer time to organise the water vole removal within the constraints set. The ability to get contractors quotes lined up, funding raised and contractors ready to go in the summer was also beyond us. This meant resetting to next year which is disappointing, but perhaps inevitable.

In the meantime we had started negotiations to acquire another stretch of canal path from Sustrans across Hopwell Road from the Cottages. This area used to be a winding hole and wharf. Once we owned it plans could be made for some longer term restoration.

BLACKWOOD CLARINETS

INNOVATIVE CLARINET ENSEMBLE BASED IN THE EAST MIDLANDS



Blackwood is an ensemble of clarinettists drawn from bands and orchestras of the East Midlands. The players join together to showcase this most versatile of wind instruments. Over the last five years Blackwood has developed from a small group of friends to become a true choir, from the piccolo clarinet to the booming contra bass.

Blackwood enjoys sponsorship from both Windblowers, Nottingham's specialist retailer, and, courtesy of Barnes and Mullins Ltd, Vandoren, the world renowned French reed and mouthpiece maker.

In 2019 the group left the U.K. for the first time, performing 3 concerts in the Marina Alta, Costa Blanca area of Spain.

The ensemble regularly play in support of good causes, most recently the Children's Bereavement Centre, a charity based in Newark.

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Working Parties

In September we continued working to keep on top of the various sections under our active management.



The pictures show further work tidying up at Borrowwash. It's a substantial job to keep it under control. Not only this area, but also Spondon, Sandiacre, mending the broken vole fencing at Draycott and



trimming the hedge along the Derby Road.



A concerted effort was also made to give the Anglers Lane minions a haircut once nesting was over.



Those of you who know the Spondon Bourne area may have seen the approach of Severn Trent equipment.

This is designed to bore 250m underground and install two 600mm diameter water pipes to feed the Celanese development. The drilling will go under the Spondon length of canal and some land still owned by Derby City Council. We had an agreement in principle that the pipes (which would be 8m and 13m below the surface) won't prevent restoration above them. At present there is a standard prevention of building 8m either side of any water pipes.



In October's we maintained paths, cut grass, worked on rebuilding the wall at Borrowash and did a major tidy up along the stretch either side of Station Road in Borrowash. However the greatest challenge was managing the growth of reeds at Draycott.

At times we thought we'd lose the working parties in the reeds, but



fortunately that wasn't the case. Eddy had been working in concert with the vole experts to ensure the habitat was right for them and also of course that there was still a stretch of canal available to others.





There was more of the same in November with work again concentrated in Borrowwash and Draycott. The wall was progressing well and Keith's team made good progress pulling out tree stumps along the tow path. At Draycott the bunds had been maintained to allow water to flow away quickly and the arrangement seemed to be working well. It was planned to continue with this work, and make



another appearance at Chellaston, over the month ahead.

Congratulations to David Savidge and his team for substantial delivery over December and January. Whilst the weather claimed a few cancelled working parties, good progress had nevertheless been made. Roger and his team continued to tidy up a few dangerous trees, but the main thrust



had been at Borrowwash where the restoration of the banks by Station Road had progressed rapidly.

We were lucky to be offered the blocks from a Nutbrook Canal bridge that needed to be moved. The development at Stanton Ironworks was 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 masterminded the transfer of the blocks to be used in the wall at Borrowwash. 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 also had a team at Sandiacre keeping the line tidy and “relocating” some fruit trees planted on the canal line. We weren’t sure who put them there, but moving them out of the canal line before they become established was certainly sensible.

We were aware of the increased rain and consequent flood risk. Water levels in the Draycott canal/ditch built up at times and it was really important to ensure that rubbish that accumulated, blocking the flow, was regularly cleared. During the lull in the rain, Don did the same for the Cottages, clearing the rubbish from the culverts and installing a grille to prevent a recurrence - so far so good!



The manager at the café was monitoring developments - a real boon. They were also selling our merchandise, growing the customer base and promoting the story. Many of you were supporting the

café, and both the Trust and the tenant thank you for your support.



The working parties made good progress in February. The 'Great Wall of Borrowwash' had grown and a systematic process was developed to transport, clean and install the stones retrieved from the Nutbrook canal.

Roger and his team continued to tidy up a few dangerous trees at Chellaston and in Borrowwash behind Manor Road.



Atkins Report

We expected to present the findings to the council, together with those of a report on attractions around the Derby Arm by Katapult consultants, to discuss implementing them. However, it would be obvious to all that funding and time

from the Council is in short supply so our fingers were very firmly crossed that support could be mobilised from funding bodies. Certainly the reports will support this.

Events

We attended Shardlow Inland Port Festival on 10th/11th September. Many thanks for the support of all who came. It was a great opportunity to catch up with a few members and put our case across.



We were in the Clock Warehouse garden, by the trip boat from Nottingham (not as good as ours last year), and shared with the IWA. We put the marquee up in a rainstorm - not the best weather for such an event. The most unusual element was the arrival of an old fire engine from Budleigh Salterton. It was a long way to come so no wonder it was late!

In mid October we attended a Derby event on Pride Park organised by Marketing Derby. We were amongst the "Charity" stands but in a setting that attracted visitors from around 300 local businesses. We presented our videos showing how the city centre could look. We had a lot of interest and made some good contacts. Networking pays dividends - you just don't know when and how at the time.

We are planning to support the following events next year:



Breaston Gala Monday 1st May

Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association at Langley Mill Sat 27th to Mon 29th May

Spirit of Chellaston Sat 17th June
Breaston Navigation TBA

This will depend on your support on the stall, so please let me know if you are available and would like to help.



Engineering Review

At the AGM we committed to a review of engineering issues. We have had the first session where the Engineering Group gave a presentation to the Board. Raynesway related issues were discussed - this 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 who has already suggested a few options, particularly around the route through the M1.

Our call for engineering expertise was answered and we were talking to a potential Civil Engineering volunteer and a consultancy that is considering offering us pro bono assistance in some of the more technical areas. We are directing this expertise to planning how we cross the Motorway as there is a specific funding pot that may be available for us.

Chellaston

We picked up the pace at Chellaston and had a further meeting with the developers there. Our previous meeting was nine months before but progress was interrupted by our key champion being voted out at the elections last year.

We had hoped that our new Trustee from Chellaston, Councillor Ingall, could have picked up the pace, but personal issues precluded this. We are indebted to Harvey Jennings for picking up the ball.

In a very interesting meeting with the developers, the value to them of drainage solutions and the use of spoil from the canal line to help level and develop the large site was discussed. Apparently the access road from the A50

is under way and housing alongside the canal is likely to be completed within 5 years with the remaining houses taking a further 10 years.

It was encouraging that the developers set an early date for a follow up meeting. We have issues to resolve getting to and under the A50, but after that the prospects are very good.

We talked with South Derbyshire District Council to work out how we resolve the section south of the A50 and promote the marina plans with the landowner. We hope we can reach a positive consensus and together drive a solution in this area.

Meetings

We held our AGM on Thurs 17th Nov. It turned out to be a bit of a marathon with some complex accounts to explain and a couple of motions from the floor dealing with future priorities.

Thanks to all who stayed to the end and gave their views. Full minutes are available on the Trust (under Organisation/The Trust & its Structure - scroll down to Trust Membership), but in

essence we have set a priority for the Engineering Group to present an updated engineering plan for approval by the Trustees and Directors. The second motion calling for more regular reporting was eventually withdrawn.

This year's recipient of the Kate Birtles award, in recognition of his tireless work with the forestry team and engineering group, his prompt help in repairing the steps safely at Causey Bridge and the recovery of an unwanted canal bridge at Stanton, was Roger Ashmead.

The November meeting was a talk, and entertainment, by Barry Watson who related his experiences as marina manager, boat broker and, in particular, running a canal hotel boat. Barry came highly recommended as a speaker and entertainer and was recently featured in

SmartParc Links

We have been consulted about an urgent need to find a route for a high voltage electricity cable to SmartParc. This is the other end of the one from the generating station at the Museum of Making that caused us concern with the pontoon. However, using the engineering links developed through

Waterways World. Sadly my plea for support fell on deaf ears as we had only 11 attendees, but a comment from the floor that this was the best talk for ten years perhaps indicated what the others had missed.

We had an excellent turn out, however, for a very entertaining talk on the use of railways in World War 1 in January and I am hopeful that we will get good support at future meetings organised by our team - we need your support if we are to continue them.

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

April 25th 7.30pm
Bennerley Viaduct - Restoration and into the Future

the Raynesway and pontoon projects we've been able to minimise the disruption of the cable running alongside the canal line from Spondon roundabout on the A52 to Station Road. It is perhaps a sign that we get involved before decisions are made and that helps all parties in the long run.

A Brief History of Time Spent on the Derby Canal

Part 1: Eastern Arm Work 2015 to 2022 - Keith Johnson

Introduction

This article, one of a two-part trilogy, relates my experience of work on the Derby Canal along its eastern arm from Spondon to Sandiacre where most of my involvement has been. Some of this may even be true.

Canals and Me

I'd been interested in canals for decades, taking many narrow-boat holidays since the 1980s and always intending to get involved in some sort of canal restoration project but while working full time and with other distractions, I'd not had enough spare time to commit.

However, from 2014, early retirement started to look possible and so I began looking for pastimes to replace employment.

2015 - Beginnings

Early in 2015, what came to be my last year at work (correction, paid work) I happened to attend the Breaston Mayday Gala at which, among the various stands, was a Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust (DSCT or "Trust") tent, into which I was lured and talked-at until I'd bought or sworn agreement to something. Being careful with money, I thought that the "swearing" option was cheaper so filled out their volunteer form. That was the point in time and space when/where my involvement with the Derby Canal started; a sort of event horizon from which there/then is no escape.

A few weeks later I started attending the Sunday Work Parties, (WPs), along sections of the canal's eastern arm, mainly at Borrowwash between Station Road and Fosse Close and at Draycott



Figure 1: Borrowwash tree round-up; Anne with branding iron plus me pointing to the nearest pub

between Derby Road and Hopwell Road. These areas were linear jungles, somewhere under which, I distinctly remember being assured, was a canal, then being given a pair of clippers and told to find it, as the photo at Borrowwash East earth bridge shows (figure 1).

Through 2015 until mid-2016 my canal activity memories are a little hazy as I had no need to keep canal work records. By cunning and stealth, I had managed to dodge any lead responsibility for WPs or anything else canal-wise. Also, the practice of calling into the pub on the way home from WPs, (where it was obligatory to talk codswallop about what we'd done), didn't promote crystal-clear memories.

2016

By early 2016 I was retired and the Trust's focus was on the canal line at Borrowwash East. From late winter, work started in earnest with much clearing of scrub and trees from the bed near Station Road through the spring. Figure 2 shows Roger (the one in hi-viz) standing in the forest that used to be there while figure 3 shows the same area after some



Figure 2: Twig poacher caught in the act at Borrowwash

clearance. Much effort was spent moving tree debris from the cut to the dump, especially from the offside as the water depth there at that time was well deeper than wellie height. This obstruction wasted precious Man-Hours (MHs) getting around it and it's drainage



Figure 3: Caber tossing championships Borrowwash cut 2016; arguing where it landed

would be dealt with some months later. This work at Borrowwash East fired my interest for canal work generally and especially at Borrowwash as that location seemed to offer a good chance of progress without needing special tools or machinery, just graft. By the spring of 2016 I had become involved in “extra” (i.e. unpublished on the website) WPs at Borrowwash, mainly investigating features related to the bottom lock.

DSCS committee

At that time there were two committees: the “Trust”, which did overall control of the project, and the “Society” (DSCS) which did the short-term organising of work, labour, tools etc. By early spring 2016 I was attending the DSCS committee meetings and, from May, became a committee member (the standard punishment for those who grumble) with a view to increasing the

rate of progress of this project, especially at Borrowwash East. In the early summer of 2016, Roger (also on the DSCS committee) had been given responsibility for work planning at Borrowwash and by mid-June had produced the first detailed plan for work there.

By mid-summer the main work focus was at the east end of the Borrowwash section in the bottom lock area where the WPs started to make inroads into the then very heavily overgrown lock. During one of the first WPs fighting its way into the upstream end of the lock, one of our number tripped and fell from the coping stones into the lock paddle area; a fall of about six feet onto stone blocks lying at all angles, potentially a guaranteed serious injury but at that time that area was so overgrown with thick vegetation that our intrepid acrobat (I won't release your name, Peter) simply fell onto a “vegetation mattress” and suffered little harm having been cushioned by the scrub, it was THAT overgrown. The things people do for attention, eh?

At the July DSCS committee meeting, after deciding whether lock-side acrobatics should go on the “do” or the “not-do” list, another item discussed was my offer to start leading weekday WPs. My argument boiled down to increased MHs, volunteer availability and less upset to local residents. Weekday WPs were agreed to, Wednesday the weekday and Borrowwash East the site. The mandate was that Borrowwash East should be cleared starting from its bottom lock and working upstream toward Station Road as per Roger's plan of June 2016.

So on a mid-August Wednesday in 2016,

at Borrowash Bottom Lock, two plus myself started week-day WPs clearing the lock invert. These WPs were intended to be fortnightly but not everybody checked the website for which week was “on” and they became weekly by default. After a couple of weeks carrying tools to the lock from nearby roads where our cars had to be parked, I spent several days clearing the very overgrown lock access track from Mear Drive enough for our vehicles to use, thus reducing backaches, hernias and chuntering.

The first couple of months of Borrowash weekday WPs were mostly spent clearing the lock invert and lower approach pound of unwanted objects and materials. Some tree removal was also carried out along the bed and in September, the last trees in the upper approach of the lock were felled and their debris cleared. We had a bonus in mid-September when the local Geocache group attended Borrowash East as a team. Under Eddy's direction they cleared the canal line jungle downstream of Borrowash Bottom Lock between the Sustrans path and the Ock Brook all in one WP session.



Figure 4: Borrowash Bottom Lock invert cleared

By early October 2016 the Borrowash Bottom Lock invert had been largely cleared of unwanted material leaving loose stone blocks and one big stack of bricks there much as shown in figure 4, but the lock surround and most of the canal line back to Station Road was still a jungle, mainly of brambles, ash saplings and other assorted vegetation.

We then continued clearing the bed from the lock towards Station Road. In the lower half of the cut, the eight foot high brambles, piles of old cuttings and several saplings in the bed were cleared by the end of November 2016, leaving some two dozen stumps of trees, cut down many years before, yet to be extracted from the bed. Clearing the upper half of the cut would have to wait until after its drainage was improved.

2017

My top two priorities for 2017 were to drain the Borrowash East upper cut and to prepare for, and begin, bottom lock restoration work. There was little work done on the lower cut, other than keeping brambles in check.

Upper cut drainage improvements amounted to making the earth bridge link pipe work and before that, finding it among the rubble and tree stumps (the upstream end of the pipe is somewhere under the tree we were felling in figure 1). Link pipe repairs were complete by the end of March allowing wellies to be used to access most of the upper cut for most of the year. The old link pipe had never worked as it was incomplete and any “drainage” had been via leaks and evaporation.

From March to June 2017, the brickwork



Figure 5: Borrowwash Bottom Lock, lower offside gate recess "as found"

and stonework at Borrowwash Bottom Lock were inspected (figure 5) and their repairs planned. From late March we started clearing the lock offside bank to look there for stone blocks needed for the coming lock restoration (figure 6). Over the same period, a safety and



Figure 6: Borrowwash Bottom Lock off-bank stone and brick repository de-cloaked

security fence around the lock area was installed. Repair of the lower gate recesses was started in early September, just as the rain increased and the lock invert water was getting deeper. Figure 7 shows Don's team's handiwork on the lower near-side gate recess. The near-side lock bank was cleared by the end of October.



Figure 7: Borrowwash Bottom Lock, lower near-side gate recess, repairs begin

Elsewhere at Sandiacre East, I led about six WPs in June and July to clear Lock Lane Bridge of undergrowth - a dead tree leaning on it and ivy all over one side of it - all completed before the August Bank Holiday week-end for the IWA festival at Ilkeston.

There was a plan to fell the tow path trees near Station Road (figure 8) in October 2017 and the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) team were booked for this. However, due to a last minute complication, that task was not possible at that time and the WRG team were diverted to other felling tasks at the Canal Cottages and Sandiacre Bottom Lock.

2017 at the newly acquired Canal Cottages (Hopwell Road, Draycott) was a



Figure 8: Scott about to teach a squirrel a severe lesson for mooning him, Ian keeps out of it

time for much planning and preparation. The work there was mostly tidying the yard and inside the building for access and safety. The first open day was in November and the storage container was delivered and installed a couple of days before Christmas.

2018 was a busy year, working flat-out on the Canal Cottages, ownership of the Borrowash West and Sandiacre canal sections that were obtained in May, preparation for the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG)'s visit to Borrowash Bottom Lock in July, and felling tow path trees near Station Road, Borrowash in August. By mid-year we had half a dozen sites needing some attention plus the new Wheeldon housing estate at Spondon which would involve us. This was stretching our limited manpower somewhat so that some sites were missing out on basic maintenance let alone progress.

Much of the work at Borrowash East was preparation of the bottom lock for the WRG team's first visit but also the continued clearance of the cut,

especially the lower half plus some wall stonework searches in the lower cut.

In the lower cut, the last dozen stumps were extracted from its bed in April after which it was viable to mow this bed using machinery. In May, under Gary's leadership, several search trenches were dug into both nearside and offside banks of the lower cut searching for wall stonework. The nearside searches mostly had "finds" but none of the offside ones did (for the depth that they were safe to excavate).

The main highlight of the year at Borrowash was of course the visit of the WRG to the bottom lock in late July. Much of our work there for the previous two years had been in preparation for that, culminating in the last nine months of repairs to the lock brickwork and stonework under Don's guidance - also finding stone blocks in the area and moving them around for access, safety and cataloguing. Until March the lock repairs had been carried out using small amounts of mortar which could be hand mixed but after that concrete was also needed, a mixer was needed and a way to get it to site.

The first WRG visit to Borrowash Bottom Lock was a boost in restoration progress with extensive work rebuilding the paddle area, the lower wing-walls, the lower approach offside wall (Tina's wall), refitting coping stones and re-pointing brickwork, plus a few other tasks. My main involvement was keeping kit maintained and materials supplied.

In the upper cut of Borrowash East most of the tow path trees near Station Road were felled in mid-August and the last

few in mid-December (figure 9). There was also wall tracing and bank clearance, mainly offside.



Figure 9: The last Borrowwash East tow path trees felled, December 2018

From late August 2018, in order to spread the labour a little more evenly, I instigated a second WP on the Wednesday (the day when I was available) and started to deliver tools to the first site (usually Borrowwash East led by David) and then drive to the second site (mostly Sandiacre) to lead that WP at the usual start time with the reverse procedure at the WP finish. While we got more sites worked, it meant that both WP leaders had to start earlier and finish later.

Of the sections acquired in May, my WPs did some scrub clearance at Sandiacre West, cleared the Sandiacre bottom lock area of masonry, cuttings and rubbish but did very little to Borrowwash West as labour was too stretched. As for Draycott West, I attended about 10 WPs there during 2018.

2015-2018 Support Activities: Equipment

Early in 2017, I repaired one of the two 2"

water pumps that I'd found in the canal stores to assist with the upper cut drainage work at Borrowwash at that time. The pump was also used later for the bottom lock drainage before virtually every restoration WP. For these lock pump-outs the standard input filter was not ideal and so in late November I made a new type (figure 10) that would cope with the shallow water of the lock invert. Also at that time I repaired the "Wacker" ground compactor for work at the Canal Cottages.



Figure 10: Shallow draught pump filter

WP notification

Until early 2018, reference to future WP details was via the website calendar. These details were input maybe some weeks before the WP date and by the time of the WP some details were often out of date. In mid-February 2018, I introduced an e-mail briefing to likely WP attendees, distributed a few days before the WP, with the latest details (site, work planned, tools required etc.) which saved volunteers attending the wrong site with the wrong tools.

Work plans and records

From early August 2018, I started to

compile a list of work, done and pending, in that current year, mostly about the sites that I was involved in, for distribution around the other WP leaders and committee members to coordinate work. At that time these “plans and records” were in text form, the first being distributed in mid-September 2018.

Mechanisation

During 2018, there had been much internal debate about our ability to cope with the increased land maintenance

Name of Our Canal?

We were recently contacted by an author and photographer who is currently putting a book together that will cover the Derby Canal, as well as other waterways in the region, principally the Cromford, Erewash, Nottingham, Nutbrook and T&M canals together with the River Trent. He said that it appeared that our restored canal will be known as the Derby and Sandiacre Canal, whereas the historic name is the Derby Canal. He asked us if we could confirm if that is the current intention and how the naming decision came about?

The enquiry was addressed by Paul Turner, who replied:

“You are correct in that the canal was run by the Derby Canal Company but when it came to starting the restoration project it was clear that there was little interest in the City of Derby and when we launched the scheme most of the volunteers/members were from Erewash, the Borough Council, Press and general public being much more canal aware as the Erewash Canal had been saved from closure and was being

workload of so many sections. The methods that we had at that time were too labour intensive for the limited workforce that we had and there was a need to employ more mechanisation. A tractor with mowing and chipping capabilities was sought.

Part 2 of Keith's article is to be included in a future edition: Ed

actively used. We also found old maps which showed the east/west arm of the canal from Sandiacre to Derby shown as the “Derby to Sandiacre Canal”. And so, for political and publicity reasons the Derby & Sandiacre Canal COMPANY was launched by me, Michael Handford (IWA) and Miss Raj Sahota (SDTEC)* on 3rd December 1993, which then became the Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust Ltd, a company limited by guarantee/registered charity 3rd November 1994. We have subsequently formed the Derby Canal Co Ltd 31st March 2021, a wholly owned subsidiary, to hold trading assets and for tax mitigation reasons.

My view is that as, for all intents and purposes, the waterway is now being generally known by its original name, the Derby Canal, I suggest that term is used”.

** South Derbyshire Training & Enterprise Council (abolished April 2001)*

[I did once wonder why we aren't called the Derby, Sandiacre and Swarkestone Canal Trust - Ed.]

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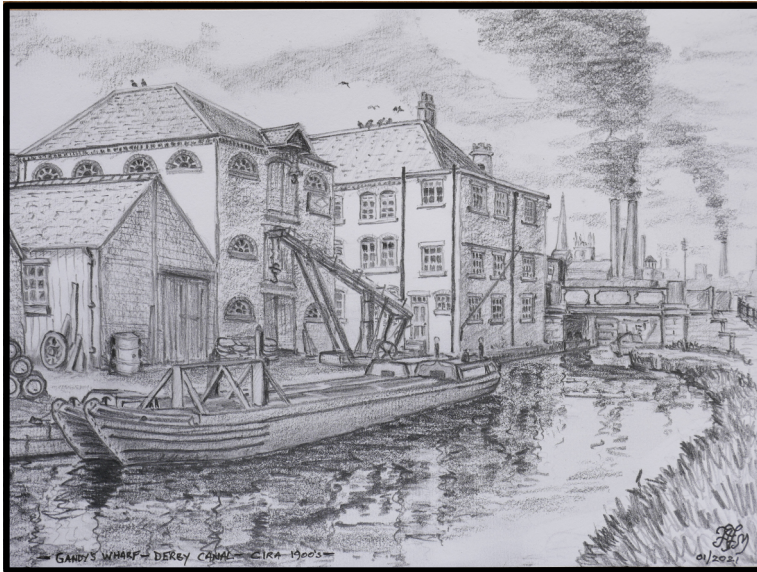
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Sketches of the Old Derby Canal by Andrew Murdoch



Gandy's Wharf - Derby Canal - Circa 1900's



*The Suddall's and Day's Lock from the Cattle Market Bridge - Derby Canal
Circa -1900's*

GPS Regulated Commentary System

We have installed the new GPS regulated commentary system on the riverboat. Thanks to Simon for his work over the winter. He's programmed the system to work out where it is and control the commentary accordingly. A very pleasant trip upriver to calibrate it ensued and a new screen was added so that we could monitor the results. I'm told it is a very cost effective system

working from a Raspberry Pi and based loosely on a system that the Friends of the Cromford Canal programmed for their riverboat over the lockdown. The cabin crew will be delighted that they don't have to manually control the recording to take account of the varied driving speeds and water flow and can instead focus on customers.

Would you like to help the Derby Canal Restoration?

The DSCT would like to thank to those who have already come forward to help with the restoration.

For civil engineering we now have a tunnel expert and a company providing CE consultancy, although specific expertise on roads and canals is still required.

Sue Basker has offered an admin support role, starting with an on-line booking system for riverboat volunteers on our website.

We now have access to a fundraiser on a paid basis, but a volunteer is still needed to work with her.

There are still vacancies in the following areas:

Bridges: Are you a civil or structural engineer (whether currently retired or a trainee/student) with knowledge of road bridge design and/or construction? If so, the Trust's engineering team would really appreciate some specialist knowledge and assistance.

If you are interested, then please contact Chris Rees-Fitzpatrick on 07757 979271 or by email at

chris.reesfitzpatrick@derbycanal.org.uk to discuss further.

Ecology: Do you have a fascination with flora and fauna, do you want to help rejuvenate the biodiversity of the canal route? Can you get involved with surveys and monitoring? We are looking to plan our restorations to improve wildlife for all, so whether you simply have an interest or you have any ecology qualifications you would be more than welcome.

If you are interested, then please contact Chris Madge on 07827 946444 or by email at

chris.madge@derbycanal.org.uk to discuss further.

Marketing: Do you have marketing skills (whether currently employed in this field, retired or a trainee/student)? If so, the Trust's Communications Group would welcome input as to how we may develop a wider audience to our activities. As a volunteer in this area, you would support our existing website, social media and Packet volunteers.

If you are interested, then please contact Chris Madge as above to discuss further.

In all the above cases experience and knowledge is very helpful, but the key criteria is a desire to change our communities for the better. The amount

of time spent will be set by your availability, but the salary is non-existent!

Obituary for Eddy Case



It was with shock and great sadness that we learnt that Eddy Case had passed away in hospital on 28th December 2022.

Eddy first introduced himself to us at a lock wind at Swarkestone with his favourite

comment “Hi, I’m Ed Case”. He had been told to “get an interest” and he did that with a vengeance. He was soon Vice Chairman of the Society, and he was a great support, particularly with working parties. He duly stepped up to Chairman later when Chris moved to the Trust. He trained to become our expert in voles

and, with Di, kept us up to date with ecology and monitored vole activity. He was particularly proud of his garden and involvement with wildlife and the village of Draycott, particularly the pubs. He was a popular figure with an easy charm. He stepped back a little following his stroke a couple of years ago, but remained the life and soul of the party throughout.

Following Eddy’s funeral his friends organised a gathering at his local pub, and 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.

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Please note the new format of the email addresses - Ed

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