

## Chairman's Update

**May 2023**

It looks as though summer is finally here. It's warming up and the sun is out most days and even the rain is abating. We've had so many bank holidays I almost wish I was back at work!

### The Riverboat

We've had a real transformation as the weather has improved. The river levels have dropped almost to normal summer levels, which means that we can relax in the knowledge that a day of rain won't require us to cancel a trip. Of course as the sun comes out more people are about and see the boat on the river, so we are getting a higher take up on trips. We are now running on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, with three trips each day and are getting close to full each time. We also offer the opportunity to charter the boat on other days. This provides an opportunity for a group to organise themselves and we can accommodate different preferences



and timings. So far we have entertained a WI group (pictured), who enjoyed themselves enormously, even though they refused my offer to sing Jerusalem. Shame! We can also coordinate charter trips to fit with other attractions in the city.

We now have advertising fully in place, with leaflets at 30 locations around the city and at tourist spots. We have printed advertising boards fixed to the side of the boat when not



sailing and direction signs in place around the Silk Mill. Our volunteer team also entertained a film crew and actresses who will produce a promotional video for the trips for use in digital marketing. As you can see from the photo our driver Bob hated every moment!

We also took the opportunity to take Silk Mill (Museum of Making) staff on a free trip so that they can recommend us. It was useful to get to know them and discover ways we can work together in developing interest.

Despite the hiatus caused by the local elections we have now picked up progress on the pontoon with the Council. We now understand that they are not sure they have all the funds needed to build it. Whilst this is more than upsetting it has provided us with the opportunity to take more influence in the design and commissioning. The timing of installation looks like it will move on again and beyond June, which will be very disappointing as it means we still cannot take disabled passengers. At least the Council have confirmed their commitment to the scheme, subject to any impact of a change of political control.





We have also continued discussions to push the city centre and Arm developments and looked at options on some design issues. There is still a good appetite from the University and wider to have the project “shovel ready”.

### Working Parties

Our working parties have had a busy month as usual. Focus this month has been on Anglers Lane, where the vegetation has been cut back and the area tidied up again. As you can see it had been pretty much overgrown after the original efforts to clear the area a couple of years ago.



The Borrowash wall has continued with mortar being applied to bed in the stones.

At Draycott further work has been undertaken to manage the vegetation growth along the stretch, but we discov-



ered that vandals have destroyed the steps built a few years ago where the canal goes under Derby Road in Borrowash. The timber frames have been pulled up and thrown across the canal. We're now looking at options to make repairs that are longer lasting—perhaps in concrete.

The highlight of the last month has been training for digger drivers. We now have three more qualified drivers waiting for an opportunity to dig holes in the canal line—perhaps at Draycott Winding Hole?.

For all you avid Waterways World supporters out there you will see that our first trolleys dumped in the Spondon

stretch of our canal made the news. They say any publicity is good, but I'm sure we could find better subjects if asked!

**The Cottages** Our thanks go to the kind donors of artefacts for the Café Museum. We now have a tin bath, hurricane lamp and a few other items to add to the display. We'll also soon have a booklet and an updated information panel describing the restoration effort and some of the history. Visitors are fascinated by the restoration story and it helps the café's business and our support.



I have to thank the reader who pointed out that the rag rug was actually made not of rags, but of wool. My apologies—I should have known that as I'm sure I made one many years ago.

On other developments we make slow, but steady, progress at Sandiacre and in the land purchase at Breaston and at Draycott we now have three quotes for the phase 2 works—almost. Thanks to David for the work so far, we now just need to refine and negotiate!



## Events

We attended Breaston Gala on May 1st and had a brilliant day. We took both pop-up marquees and the new information boards that Peter and I had developed and generated a great deal of interest. We signed a few members and gave away a lot of leaflets. Great interest was shown in the River-

boat and Café. In the picture are Chris, Maz, Anne, Peter, Charlie and David, but we also had support from other members during the day. Thank you all.

We now have a few outdoor events coming in quick succession and whilst the normal culprits have volunteered we'd like to invite any member to come and join the team and share the camaraderie. No particular skills required except an ability to talk and be enthusiastic!

Langley Mill Basin	27th to 29th May
Spirit of Chellaston	17th June
Staveley Basin (Chesterfield Canal)	24th/25th June

## Members' Meetings

We had a well supported and much enjoyed evening listening to how the **Bennerley Viaduct** restoration has progressed by one of their civil engineers.

The **next meeting** will be presented by Rod Auton on Tuesday May 23rd talking about progress on the **Chesterfield Canal**. They are making rapid progress in funding their next stages and I hope you can join me in understanding what's happening and supporting them.

Future meetings for your diaries are:

June 27th	A talk on Sandiacre Lock Cottage
July 25th	Walk - Finding the Derby Canal in Little Eaton

The Little Eaton walk has been postponed to July to avoid a clash with their Carnival Week and a hectic village treasure hunt.

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