

Chairman's Update

June 2023

I am writing this update on Midsummer Day and we are supporting Chesterfield Canal Trust at their Staveley Basin event. It's good to see what is happening nearby and there are always lessons to learn from others. When you see progress elsewhere I always feel it shows what can be done and how much support there is for the canal sector generally. At the talk from the Chesterfield last month Rod Auton told us that 5 years ago they took lessons from us and now look at the scale of their latest project. At a time when funding for CRT hangs in the balance it's another indication that we are stronger together.

Events

This month has seen quite a bit of activity at events. Not just the Chesterfield at Staveley, where they had all four of their trip boats at the basin and plying their trade, but also at Langley Mill Basin and Chellaston.

Langley Mill was a traditional canal based event, which is put on by the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association every five years to celebrate bringing the Basin back to life. It was held over the Whit bank holiday over three days. We had lots of boats, lots of canal people and some magnificent fly pasts. It was a time for catching up with fellow enthusiasts and comparing notes and even testing out the beer tent. It was very enjoyable and generated a good level of interest and support.



Water activities at Staveley Festival

The Spirit of Chellaston took place three weeks later. As a local public event our objective was to inform and engage with locals. We continue our dialogue with local developers and want to ensure the public there know what we are doing and have every chance to support us. Unfortunately it was a reasonably quiet event.

We are still doing the reckoning at Chesterfield, but the event was prefaced with a run down for "dignitaries" of what they were doing. I was invited and found it useful to see the landscape ready for their next push and of course catch up with CRT and IWA senior people and remind

them what we are doing.

Looking forward we have decided not to attend the National IWA at Pelsell—it's too far away to be likely to generate interest in Derby and a long way for volunteers to travel for a three day event. We are planning to attend again at Shardlow this year over the weekend of 9th/10th of September. As always let us know if you can help.

Working Parties

We've seen a real increase in companies offering volunteer support. Pictured are volunteers from Vinci Construction, who are joining us for a few weeks. It's a great option to build relationships with supportive companies, although needs a fair



bit of organisation and safety checking. Within the companies we are talking to we have a possible provider of aggregate materials and Rolls Royce staff. They all seem to enjoy it and it really helps to spread the message. We hope that some of the volunteers will also continue to support us privately.

Whilst it's more of the same with our volunteer working parties, you can see from the photos that



the grass is looking good at Borrowash and by Station Road; work has also been undertaken at Sandiacre and Spondon. The planted whips have taken and are progressing well at Borrowash.



The most important achievement has been Eddy's bench installed at Draycott. It was a real team effort and the opening was undertaken by Eddy's widow, Linda, and all his and her friends.



Activity has also been seen at **Chellaston**. We continue to have a regular and positive dialogue with the developers of land alongside the canal at Chellaston. Development there is a slow process, but it is important to be in at the start rather than arguing changes when plans have been drawn up. In preparation for this we have undertaken Ground Penetrating Radar on the field south of the A50 to determine the location of major gas pipes and utilities. Early results suggest they will be deep enough to be lower than any marina, but we await final confirmation. With this we can look again at options for development of the connection to the Trent and Mersey at Swarkestone Lock and formulate a plan to work with the farmer and the developer across the A50.

We have been pushing on with plans to progress the sewer relocation at **Sandiacre Lock**. We have had further meetings with Severn Trent and residents on site and now think we have a plan, but we will be looking at further exploratory groundworks.



At **Draycott** we have refined the quotes for works and have visited



David Savidge, Derek Lord, Chris ReesFitzPatrick and Chris Madge at the Lichfield and Hatherton site

the Lichfield and Hatherton to see one of the bidders in action. They are currently installing a length of lined canal close to the A38. Our thanks particularly to Bob Williams and engineer Derek Lord for giving us their time and expertise. Taking their advice we are looking to employ a managing engineer to specify and control the works and will be talking to a possible candidate in late June.

Whilst managing the bids is important we are also trying to agree the drainage of nearby fields with the aim of additional watering of the canal and avoidance of wet patches. The first meeting with the owner seemed to be positive.

ICE A strange heading for midsummer, but it stands for the Institute of Civil Engineers. As we've previously reported we are looking to recruit help to fill some critical gaps. One of these is the Civil Engineering brief. I was invited to speak to the East Midlands branch about the canal and I'm delighted to say that Martin, with experience in roads and water, offered his help. This is in addition to a couple of other experts in tunnels and general construction that we have already attracted. We now believe that we can be more proactive in planning without incurring consultancy fees. This is a precursor for grant fundraising as it will demonstrate our competence. We still need extra help with ecology and fundraising, but I'm sure we will, in time, fill those gaps as well.

Breaston We have now agreed a price with Sustrans for land east of Hopwell Road going towards Breaston. This will be financed from profits from the Cottages and once completed we will be looking at restoring the winding hole using our new found expertise and regular volunteers with their new equipment training skills.

The Riverboat

I'm pleased to report that we are filling all available slots on the Riverboat. That means we are filling 9 trips each week with 12 passengers. We also have a few specials that are separately catered for. The last was a walking group who came with high expectations, but left promising to come again.

Our volunteers are working well and getting rave reviews and the message is spreading gradually. We welcome extra volunteers as this will allow us to add additional slots and generate funds for the restoration works.

We have been trying to work more closely with other attractions in the City and on midsummer day we were able to play our part in the "Furthest from the Sea" activities across the city. We agreed

That they could have use of the boat and crew for the day and they operated trips on a pirate theme. Actors boarded the boat and enhanced the sailing experience of their passengers by playing out acts on board. In addition Phoenix



Green was taken over by musicians and catering tents. I am delighted that we have had several enquiries to use the boat in a more creative fashion. We gained good coverage and great publicity that will no doubt stand us in good stead going forward.

During the winter we used a jetty owned by a lady in Folly Road. It has been vital, but over time it is suffering, so I was delighted that Simon Knott and I could spend a few hours repairing the jetty and replacing rotten boards. We could not have managed without her help and it is not impossible that with slow progress on the pontoon we may need to ask for it again over the winter.

On the subject of the pontoon I have managed to visit the preferred supplier and check out the specification. We now await a specification and engineering calculations for the ground anchors. We had been promised these a week ago, but this has now slipped by six weeks. Sometimes I despair of the lack of urgency, but once we have the Council's spec we can take a more proactive approach to building it, perhaps using the extra skills described above and raising funding to plug the, as yet, unquantified gap.

We now have a couple of new Trustees appointed by the city Council including a Labour Counsellor and are hopeful that we can re-establish political ties through them. We have also had a positive meeting with St Modwens (organised by the Chief executive of DCC) and are working through the limitations and opportunities to see how we can deliver the Derby Arm.

Members' Meetings

The **next meeting** will be presented by Glyn Stenson on Tuesday June 27th from 7.30pm at the Draycott Canal Cottages (DE72 3PE). He will be telling us about the Lock Cottage and more besides.

The final meeting before the summer break will be a walk around Little Eaton from 7pm on July 25th. It will take an hour and finish at the New Inn.

I hope to see you soon.

Chris Madge

