

## Chairman's Update

### Christmas 2023

It's been very busy at the Trust and as we've had the AGM recently I thought a combined November and December might be the order of the day. I have no illusions that I'm competing with the King's Christmas message, but perhaps it might distract you from festivities for a moment or two. And of course when it comes to those New Year resolutions please spare us a thought. You'll see below that there's lots of scope for joining our volunteers in whatever capacity, for encouraging friends and families to join us (gift memberships are available on the website) or for supporting us financially. Whilst we have a slowly growing band of volunteers there's always room for more and I'd like to think that all our supporters enjoy the camaraderie.

Whilst the main rush of water has subsided we have had more mini flood events and sorting out the claims and managing the risk over the rest of the winter takes away focus from the new projects.

#### Draycott

Our focus has been on restoring the properties after the flood. Inevitably as a large area was flooded it means contractors are extremely busy and it takes time to get surveys and work organised.

However we are making progress. At the moment the tenant in the smallest property has vacated, but another is still on site and the third has moved out, but wants to move back in again if we get it back in order in a couple of months. The tenant that is still in place is obviously living in a place with no ground floor carpets. So while this continues it is likely that we will be losing the rental income.

The surveys have concluded that we need to strip out the kitchens and a metre of plasterboard on the ground floor and replace it and skirting, architrave, etc together with internal doors. This then allows specialist drying to take place and they are recommending pressurised hot air drying injected through pipes drilled in the concrete base.

Of course this only works if we don't get further flooding and about three weeks after the first major flood we had a rerun, albeit to a lower level, but enough to get some water into the building. So we've been pulling together an urgent plan to prevent recurrence. First on the list is to buy door flood barriers. We had already purchased a sample for No 1 and tested it out satisfactorily during the later high water. Protection for Nos 2 and 3 is now on its way to us. You can see the items on this link

<https://youtu.be/xPNJuFcq8bA>

More than that we are also looking at coating the floors and walls (tanking) and are receiving profes-

sional advice. This would be an improvement, so it would be at our cost, but if we can undertake the work ourselves we'd save money and probably to do it faster as we could avoid contractors workload and their holiday period. Anyone interested in volunteering—you'd be MOST welcome!

We've also noticed that the considerable rainfall has disturbed the aquifer from which we get water, causing it to pick up silt. So we've also upgraded the filtration system to make sure the water is clear, whatever the weather. As you can see we've gone for bigger units that have almost ten times the effectiveness—just to be sure.

And the longer term search to divert and hold back the water continues. We have to work with our neighbours and, as you might expect, consensus isn't easy to achieve. We've had special meetings to look at all options including a review of the canal design to add alleviation measures around Hopwell Road. One idea that is being looked at is the



earlier introduction of stop planks at Derby Road, which would allow us to lower the canal level in advance of forecast bad weather and have long term benefits for the canal, but this is going to be next spring or later before it's in place. As already reported, we have plans on the drawing board to create an attenuation pound to the east of Hopwell Road on the "Sustrans" land and are looking to get planning permission applied for in the hopes that Sustrans will move more quickly than they have to date and allow works in the summer.

This has become more relevant as we have now submitted an expression of interest to OFWAT on a bid of over £2m. This is the brainchild of Martin, our volunteer Civil Engineer, who has spent a number of years in the water industry and looks to involve Network Rail on Flood relief and Severn Trent Water on water transfer. This is really cutting edge and gives us the potential to get large levels of funding in an otherwise sparse supply of grants. This plan looks to deal with works between Derby and Church Wilne and is on an altogether larger scale. Canals are now being increasingly identified as a means of transferring water across the country such as the Thames and Severn transferring water to meet London's increasing demands.

This has inevitably started research on the land ownership along that line and has uncovered the opportunity to acquire further land on the line. Indeed we have managed to get a stay of a sale of a section of the line to an "unsupportive" party and are now trying to get funds together to make an offer and prevent the sale of what would become a ransom strip. We need to raise around £200k to do this at a time when our main source of income at the cottages has stopped, pending restoration. So if you or someone you know would like to help with a loan (interest at 3%) or a donation PLEASE let us know. It would be a tragedy to lose a section that is so critical to our success.

In the meantime the café continues to sail through the challenges and are still as busy as usual. It looks like they've taken a leaf from Matlock Bath and attracting the bikers—or are the Mods back in fashion?



## Working Parties



In the face of all these challenges/opportunities our working parties have been busy as usual.

There's been further work in completing the mowing and latterly we've turned towards managing the trees. After work tidying the walls at Borrowash the team has been planting up mostly hawthorn (well it was the May Canal!) at Borrowash.



There's also been a lot of work to clear up the area around Ulliker's Bridge near Spondon. Roger and team have been clearing out sycamores that have been poisoning horses and of course are non-native, but as above the area has been replanted and insect houses installed.

We've received a lot of compliments about the area—and I don't just mean those looking for logs.



At Draycott there's also been substantial activity. When we trained digger drivers we didn't anticipate they'd be in use quite so quickly, but after the floods we looked at the flow rate on the "canal" on the Golden Mile. It was apparent that the land bridge in the middle was silting up and flows reduced. There were also many reeds growing in



the canal itself, which can also impede the flow.

So our team of trained volunteers and a few looking to help out assembled at Draycott and under the supervision of Paul Shaw practised their skills. The plan was to cut another



channel to divert the main stream joining the canal at the land bridge to go around the bridge and not be held back by the silted up bridge hole. With all the rain previously we had to do a late ground safety check, but luckily all went ahead and the new channel was formed. The next day the team was employed digging out the worst patch of reeds. It's not an easy task for the digger driver in those circumstances. It's not so much the technique as the number of supervisors sitting on the bridge offering advice!!

Once that was completed they turned their attention to lowering the bunds by Derby Road. It will mean there's less water, but it reduces the possibility of flooding over this winter ahead of more constructive works on stop planks later in 2024.



## Riverboat

We were relieved to see that the boat had suffered no issues during the October flood and we kept a close eye on the levels so that we could move the boat to more secure moorings a week or so later. This time there was surely no need to paddle in the river to get it into place. There was certainly plenty of water! Since mooring it we've had some reasonably high waters and the frame to hold the boat



off the jetty has performed well. The picture shows it in operation with the bottom floor of the jetty totally submerged.

We've also had a day undertaking winter maintenance and preparation for poor weather. It meant we were able to add a few more instru-

ments to monitor the new engine and clean out the bilges. We've completely stripped out the ballast in the bow to suck out residue water so it stays pretty much dry over the winter. Can't have the boat rusting from the inside!



We had thought of bringing the boat back to the bridge, but couldn't do that as the rate of water flow hasn't allowed it and the power take off that would have been useful for welding, etc has tripped during the record floods. Thanks to Simon for replacing the relevant parts and getting it going again and saving an argument with suppliers about their design, etc. The plan of course is that the take off will be moved onto the pontoon and rise with the water, but.....

On the subject of the pontoon the inevitable post flood review of the pontoon base design has been undertaken and some minor amendments suggested. We now await quotes to see if the Council's remaining budget will cover it and have been promised these in early January. Mike is busily working to get funding to cover the rest.

We were delighted to have a positive meeting with the new Leader at Derby City Council, Baggy Shanker, and hope to get support for the projects going forward, although funding seems very unlikely in the current circumstance with other Councils such as Nottingham declaring themselves bankrupt.

We were also invited to a meeting with developers looking to work on the east bank of the Derwent post flood defence work. They have picked up our designs for the city centre basin and seem keen to go with it. It's the first time we've seen developers involve the community BEFORE they draw up their plans and designs. Fingers crossed!



## Other Projects

Sandiacre has moved on and we expect revised costings in the new year. It is still a very positive approach and we have high hopes of work taking place in 2024 (assuming the quote isn't too great). However we've been delighted with positive talks to route the sewer more cost effectively under a nearby garage and the agreement of the owner that we can demolish it to allow access. He will also gain by STW providing flexibility for his future extension. Looks like a win for everyone.

We are grateful to the offer of some pro bono work from a large planning consultancy in Derby, Rogers Leask, who are looking at the practical planning around the Derby Arm development and especially the challenges raised around the capped off contaminated land that we would look to use.

We have also established contact with Network Rail around the electrification project. Whilst it has been a positive contact and in good time to discuss influence planning/design we understand that current improved technology will not require the substantial raising of bridges as before. This would have an impact at Borrowash, where we were hoping to share costs for raising the railway bridge with our own bridge over the canal. This should also give a better understanding of works required at Raynesway.

## IWA

I am a member of a panel at the IWA dealing with Restoration issues and how the IWA supports restoration. Most of you will have followed the recent hiatus at the organisation with several CEO and Chairmen resigning in quick succession. It appears that new Trustees have been appointed and they recognise the need for a basic rethink. I am also part of a small team trying to define the needs of the local restoration Trusts going forward. I believe that we need a national body to help us, particularly with technical advice, but it is in the interests of us all to get the organisation functioning strongly again. I urge all IWA members to respond to the questionnaire that has been circulated and plug the restoration cause.

## Members' Meetings

After an entertaining, if worrying, talk on aircraft safety by Brian Dale in October we held our AGM in November. I'm attaching a copy of the minutes of the meeting. Derek gave us a full picture of the accounting issues that he's dealt with this year, but otherwise it was largely uneventful. It did

provide an opportunity for me to thank, on behalf of the Trustees, all our many volunteers for their support across our many activities. It's when you look back over a year that you realise the extent of the effort that we've seen and the continued impact of all that effort. Slowly, but surely people and organisations are supporting the cause.

We were also able to recognise our Editor Peter Warmingham with the award of the Kate Birtles Trophy. This award recognises one of our volunteers who has had a major impact in progressing our work over the past year. It is named after keen volunteer Kate Birtles, sadly no longer with us, and presented by Paul.

Peter has recently taken over the Packet production and a growing list of other Comms tasks. It is very important that we keep up to date with our own members, and also to show a positive face to outside bodies and Peter has been very effective in reaching that wider audience by articles written in other publications.



Future meetings were also announced, so please pencil them into your diaries. As usual meetings will be at the Cottages in Hopwell Road, Draycott, DE72 3PE starting at 7.30pm.

January 23rd	The Life of James Brindley	by Cliff Lea
February 27th	The Friargate Line	by Keith Blood
March 26th	The Woodland Trust	by Gerald Price
April 23rd	The Ilkeston Tramway	by Stephen Flanders
May 28th	The Carlisle Ship Canal	by David Ramshaw

On June 25th we will be organising a short walk, but the location has yet to be decided.

And finally just a reminder of things to consider in your New Year resolutions: you could volunteer for our working parties or to help restore the Cottages, you could support financially the purchase of critical land in Breaston, you could join us on the summer events promoting the cause or you could join the team covering wildlife issues including water voles or tree identification for which training could be given.

Whatever you decide to do have a happy Christmas and a successful 2024.

Thanks for your support.

Chris Madge

