



# SLEAFORD NAVIGATION NEWS

## WINTER 1997

This will be a short newsletter to accompany the final report and accounts of the Sleaford Navigation Society without incurring additional postal charges. The Charity Commission finally closed their file on the society on 18th September this year and the distribution of the report and accounts is the last duty of the former Society's committee.

### Navigation Yard

**Navigation Warehouse:** The main concern of the Trust over the summer and autumn months has been the District Council plans for Navigation Yard particularly the inclusion within those plans of the demolition of Navigation Warehouse. Whilst the Trust council supports the revitalisation of this much neglected area of Sleaford it has not felt able to sit back and let the demolition of the warehouse, an historic part of the old navigation, go unchallenged. The decision to take a stand was not taken lightly bearing in mind the good relationship that has existed for some time between NKDC and the Trust and the danger of making life difficult for our partnership on the SRB project. We have been joined in our opposition by the Sleaford Civic Trust, Lincs IWA, Heritage Lincolnshire, Sleaford Museums Group, and numerous individuals who have made written objections. Lincs IWA has applied to the Department of National Heritage to have the warehouse listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and a decision is still awaited. The latest news from NKDC is that the demolition of the warehouse has been withdrawn from the planning application for Navigation Yard because of strong public concern. We understand that the warehouse will be renovated and used for the same purpose as the building that was proposed to replace it, that is for craft units with temporary residential facilities for use in connection with the exhibition hall to be built immediately in front of it.

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Navigation House: Plans to turn the former weighbridge office and wharfingers house into a small museum telling the story of the navigation have not been pushed forward because of concerns about the long term viability of the project. Tony Hirst, Director of the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port visited the site during July and has provided much useful information concerning the setting up and running of a museum. Steve Hayes also took advantage of a Northern Canals Association meeting hosted by the Foxton Inclined Plain Trust to pick up some comparative visitor figures for their museum. Unfortunately these seem to indicate that a small museum in Sleaford may not be viable.

## Water Retention Study (Jubilee Court to Cogglesford Lock)

The study by Sir William Halcrow & Partners is still not finalised, extra work being required after the Environment Agency raised several queries from reading the draft copy. It is understood that nothing major is outstanding. The study is to identify the most suitable upper water level and to find engineering solutions to the problems associated with changing the river level on this section.

## Land Purchase

The Trust has been approached by the owner of a substantial length of the River Slea with a view to its purchase by the Trust. We have decided to pursue this matter and negotiations are in progress to see if suitable terms can be agreed.

## Membership

Despite Steve Hayes' note in the Summer edition of Sleaford Navigation News most members of the Society have not yet applied for membership of the Trust. From a legal viewpoint the Society and the Trust are two different organisations and company law prevents us from just assuming a member of one will wish to join the other. Another membership application form is enclosed with this newsletter so if you did not complete the one that was sent out in the summer - **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO FILL IT IN.** This applies to all "members" irrespective of how you pay your membership. Speaking of which we now recommend payment by bank standing order but are also pleased to accept cheques and cash (but not cash through the post). The Trust Executive has decided to dispense with the fixed membership year of 1st May to 30th April operated by the Society and to operate a one year from application system. You can now join the Trust during any month of the year and receive a full 12 months membership. Any member who pays income tax - that will be most of you - can help the Trust even more by signing a covenant form enabling the Trust to claim some of that tax back from the Inland Revenue. It will not cost you a penny.

## Social Evening

The Friends of the Sleaford Navigation has organised a social evening for 10th January at which Daystar Theatre will be performing. The performance, which will be on a seasonal theme, will start at 7.30 pm at the Lion Hotel in Sleaford. Cost £3.00 per adults, £2.00 concessions. For further information ring Pat Taylor on 01522 790652.

## Sleaford Fanfare Water Weekend

Following the successful 1997 Water Festival in Sleaford, it has been decided to hold a similar event next year. The Trust will be assisting with the organisation of the festival but will not be taking overall responsibility this time. For further details or to offer help, please ring Barbara MacKay on 01529 304355.

More Socials? Feedback and ideas from you all for future social events would be welcome. Please ring Steve Hayes (see below)

## Just a Little Help

If there is anyone living in the Lincoln area who would like to help the Trust by taking over a small job - we have a vacancy for a person to fold newsletters and stuff them into envelopes. Please contact Steve Hayes if you can help.

## Northern Canals Association

The September meeting of the group was hosted by the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust. The main speaker was Dr Micheal Streeter from English Heritage, who explained their attitude to building preservation. This proved to be a timely source of assistance in our campaign to save Navigation Warehouse! This was followed by lunch and a tour of the inclined plane site. The day was concluded by a question and answer session, often a valuable source of information of the various problems encountered by other restoration groups and the way in which they have been solved.

## Inland Waterways Association - Canal Societies Meeting

This was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November at the Council House in Sandwell, Birmingham. It was the second such annual meeting and was attended by the majority of the national waterways restoration groups.

The main speakers were very interesting and topics discussed included Andy Screen talking about 'Conflict on the Towing Paths', Nick Grazebrook on 'Legal Concerns', a talk on improving publicity and public relations, and a presentation on 'Wildlife and Waterway Restoration' by David Wood of Rotherham MBC. The most thought provoking talk, however, was by David Fletcher, Chief Executive, British Waterways. He talked about the plans that BW have for the future, possible restructuring, and the implications that this may have for the future of BW and the waterways system.

If any members would like to see notes from the conference would they please send a stamped addressed envelope to Steve Hayes.

## Environmental Impact Study

As part of the restoration of the Slea the Trust will be required to carry out an environmental study to assess the impact that the restoration will have on the flora and fauna along the course of the river. The Trust would be very grateful to hear from anybody who feels able to help, alternatively if you know any one who could help please point them our way! Any volunteers should contact Steve Hayes.

## Work Parties

When the work party went to Bottom Lock at the end of October a small area of defective brickwork was spotted in one of the bottom wing walls. There will be a work party to rectify the problem on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1998. Contact Pat Taylor for details 01522 790652.

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