



SLEAFORD NAVIGATION NEWS

SPRING 1995

THE THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN CHAPMAN

As this is the first newsletter of 1995 I'm not sure whether we should be wishing you Happy New Year or Happy Easter. Let's make it both. May you enjoy the pleasures of the waterways and countryside during the coming year!

THANK YOU SLEAFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Sleaford Chamber of Commerce arranged a sponsored walk along the new Leadenham Bypass and split the proceeds between research for Leukemia and the Sleaford Navigation Society. We are very grateful for this type of support as our funds are always stretched and a donation such as this helps towards the day to day campaigning costs of restoring the navigation. The restoration of the Sleaford Navigation is a project which can show benefits to many parts of the community, and it is gratifying to have the business sector of the town assisting us at a practical level.

THE BINNIES REPORT ON THE FEASIBILITY OF RESTORING THE SLEA INTO SLEAFORD

Mike Handford joined with Binnies and society members to present the report to the sponsors at a Presentation Launch, in Sleaford in early December. Mike who was, until recently, Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association's National Restoration Committee

made the point to the sponsors that, there was no restoration project that he was aware of that had failed to go ahead through a lack of money. If the will of the local community is there restorations will succeed!

The report concluded that restoration back into Sleaford is indeed possible and, additionally, identified that the solution to the problem of the Sleas drying up is not only water supply but, to a large extent, leakage through the bed of the navigation.

When the original navigation was built in the 1790's the bed was lined with a layer of clay, a method known as puddling, to stop leakage and, over the years, this has become damaged. Our forefathers built the navigation and lined it for their benefit and that of future generations. In turn we are turning our attentions back to the waterway to restore and repair it for our own benefit and so to pass it on to the future.

Working on contractors prices Binnies have estimated that a figure of £3.9M would be necessary to fund the restoration from Sleaford through to Haverholme. Clearly a certain amount of the work is beyond the scope of voluntary labour but on the other hand there will be much scope for job creation schemes and for volunteers. This will cut the cost a great deal.

Members can see a copy of the report by getting in touch with Barbara MacKay (0529 304355). As the reports are very expensive to reproduce there has to be a returnable deposit of £5.00.

RESTORATION IN SLEAFORD

Having by now read and digested the findings of the Binnies study the committee have agreed to turn their attentions to the restoration of the pounds above and below Cogglesford Lock. Restoration of these two pounds would open up an attractive stretch of waterway through the town. This would give us the potential of operating a trip boat that would be able to work from the the centre of Sleaford to the Sleaford bypass. The engineering committee is currently working on a programme to take this idea further.

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION DONATION

The Lincs and South Humberside branch of the Inland Waterways Association has donated £500 to the society. We have had superb support from them over the years and yet again they are in the forefront of offering assistance as the society goes into another phase of the restoration. Many thanks!!

THE SLEAFORD CUP

When the navigation was opened in 1794, a silver cup was presented to Benjamin Handley, a local banker, by the canal company in recognition of the financial support that he had given them to get the waterway open. The whereabouts of the cup was unknown for many years, but it eventually re-emerged in South Africa in the hands of Mrs Graham, a descendant of Benjamin Handley. Mrs Graham died last year and her daughter, Mrs Hill, has brought the cup back to the UK. She and her brother have most generously decided to donate the cup back to the society, and it will return to Sleaford 201 years after it was originally presented. The society is currently exploring places where it can be displayed for as many people to see it as possible.

DYING TOWNS AND VILLAGES

There was recently, in Sleaford, a conference about the problems of decay in towns and villages. A problem that is not peculiar to Lincolnshire alone. It was, however, gratifying to note that, in a news report on local radio and television, that a restored Slea was acknowledged as, 'an unrivalled asset that had the potential to stop Sleaford's decline'. There are many towns, both large and small, around the country who are looking to a restored waterway to revitalise their communities. The restoration of the last stretch of the Slea could do the same for Sleaford!!

KEEP BUYING YOUR LOTTERY TICKETS

The society are applying to the Heritage Fund of the National Lottery for funds to help the restoration. Alternatively if you should win then perhaps?

RAFFLE TICKETS

We are enclosing two books of raffle tickets, with this newsletter, for our Summer Raffle, please try and sell them. Please send money and ticket stubs back to Steve Hayes, 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 8TH, Tel (01522-689460). Also if you should need any more raffle tickets then they are also obtainable from Steve.

WASHINGBOROUGH CHARITIES FAIR

Society members were out showing the banner at this recent event and managed to gain a new member and take some money to swell the funds. Chris Hayes was interviewed by Radio Lincolnshire on the purpose and aims of the society. Another welcome piece of publicity!

BOAT GATHERING

This years water based event will be a gathering of boats in South Kyme over the weekend of 27th to 28th May. Although this year will be a rather lower key event than the celebrations of last year we hope that as many members as possible will be present to make it an enjoyable weekend.

There will be a early barbecue on the Saturday evening which will be followed by dance in the village hall to the Edsels, making a return after their success of last year. On the Sunday morning there will be a church service followed by a pub lunch. If any members would like a lunch could they please get in touch with Pat Taylor (01522-790652).

1996 will see the Slea play host to the Lincolnshire & South Humberside IWA when they celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Inland Waterways Association. We hope that it will be a similar size event to that we held last year for our bi-centenary. Watch out for future developments, we will keep you informed as they happen.

WORKING PARTIES & RESTORATION NEWS

Following a series of successful Sunday working parties up to the end of 1994 we now have a nice tidy lock island and compound at Cobblers Lock.

The next job was to tackle the by-pass sluice brickwork and spillway, and we have made a good start on this. The main task was to drive sheet steel piling upstream and downstream of the spillway to form shuttering so that concrete can be laid. When we have concreted the downstream part this will form a base for repairing the brickwork forming the side walls of the sluice chamber. It is these bricks that have to be reclaimed or old bricks use because the whole of Cobblers Lock and the sluice are listed structures.

During the winter, having worked to remove undergrowth and general debris from the sluice, it is easy to see why the listed status applies to the Cobblers complex. In particular the architectural quality of the line and form of the sweeping downstream wing walls capped off perfectly with precisely cut sandstone masonry is now very evident. It is worth remembering that these structures were built just over 200 years ago, and it is only right that we should take great care in restoring them. The skill of the original designers is quite inspiring.

Work on the sluice has, unfortunately, been forced to a standstill so far in 1995 as water levels in the Slea have been at record heights compared to most recent winters. The piling and spillway have constantly been under about 2ft of water, it's hard to believe that this is a river with serious summer flow problems.

We expect work at Cobblers to start again in May, and we also have a weekend work camp from NEWRG scheduled for later in the summer.

David Pullen, Engineering and Restoration Team

SOCIETY TO FORM A LIMITED COMPANY

For the last few months the society has been exploring the possibility of changing its status to that of a company limited by guarantee. Many of the waterways restoration groups have gone along this particular route as it offers not only a more formal status but also greater protection for its members. A small sub-committee has been liaising with a specialist firm of solicitors and draft articles have now been drawn up. The executive committee will come to this years AGM with proposals for the change. The change of status will, however, not alter the society's charitable status.

AGM

Please make a note that our annual general meeting is on Wednesday 3rd May at the Solo Club in Sleaford, starting at 8.00pm. The speaker this year is Roger Valentine from the NRA, who is the Anglian Region Navigational and Recreation Officer. The topical issue concerning the future Navigation Authority and the possibility of a unified structure will be discussed.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is to remind all members that their annual subscriptions are due as from the date of the AGM, and the good news is that there is no change in the rate of subscriptions from last year. Please don't forget to renew as your fees are a vital source of income to the society. All fees should be forwarded to Jenny Osbourne at Bank House Farm, Ruskington Fen, Billinghay, Lincs, LN4 4DS.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
RENEWAL

To assist Jenny Osborne in establishing an up to date list of members and their addresses we are asking all members to fill in the form below and return it to Jenny, with their membership fees, to the following address:-

Jenny Osborn
Bank House Farm
Ruskington Fen
Billinghay
Lincoln
Lincs LN4 4DS

Subscriptions 1995/96

Adult £5.00: Joint £7.00: Junior £0.50
Life £50.00: Joint Life £60.00

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Warning - For stockmarket linked investments, their value can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the money invested. The past is not necessarily a guide to future performance.