

SLEAFORD NAVIGATION NEWS SUMMER 1995

SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST

A strange heading, but following the AGM's agreement to change the status of the society to that of a 'Company Limited by Guarantee', it was decided that a change of name was also necessary to reflect the change.

The new Articles and Memorandum of Association have been passed to the Charity Commissioners for approval and we await their return. The new company will be called the Sleaford Navigation Trust.

SOCIAL EVENTS

STRAWBERRY EVENING

The Society is holding a strawberry and wine evening at Cogglesford Mill, Eastgate, Sleaford on Saturday 8th July at 7.30pm. This is a repeat of last years event which was very successful and we hope that members and friends will help us to repeat that success.

Soft drinks will be served for those of us who need to drive. Please telephone Pat Taylor (01522-790652) if you wish to attend so that we know how many strawberries to pick! The cost is £2 per head.

SLEAFORD CARNIVAL

The Society will be having a float and stall at the Sleaford Carnival on Sunday 9th July. Any offers of help to either get things set up or help on the day would be appreciated. Alternatively we hope you will pay a us visit at the stall during the day.

If you feel able to help then please contact Barbara MacKay (01529-04355)

SLEA WALK

It has been several years since the Society has

organised a walk along the Slea, so it was decided that there will be a stroll from Anwick into Sleaford on September 10th. We will meet on Riverside Lane Anwick at 10.00am to get to Sleaford in time for a pub lunch. Of course, if anyone fancies canoeing it......!

QUIZ

And whilst your diary is out....we are looking to arrange a quiz on 14th October either in Sleaford or Ruskington. Now theres a tempter for the brighter ones amongst us.

ALL CHANGE AT THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Local Government elections have caused many changes to the elected members who serve on North Kesteven District Council's Slea Working Group.

The society is very grateful to the previous members for their support and, as friends of the Society, look forward to seeing them at any of our events. However, we now look forward to meeting with the new members and working with them to carry on the restoration and development of this asset within our community.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Early in May members of the committee met with representatives of Lincolnshire County Council to discuss a way forward in the development of the restoration plans. Having been a major financial contributor to the feasibility study, their support for the project is clear.

The society and County Council now need to examine how we can work together to obtain the major funding that is needed to complete the restoration into Sleaford.

NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY

NRA have replied with observations on the Binnies report and the committee are considering the points raised prior to fixing a meeting.

The Binnies report has enabled all parties to focus attention on the restoration into Sleaford and we have a magnificent opportunity to work together towards its ultimate success.

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

Always supporters of the Society, the Associations engineers have offered help with some of the technical aspects evolving from the Binnies report. This is very much appreciated.

NAVIGATION SEMINAR

Representatives of the Society were invited to a waterways seminar in Nottingham which was attended by a large number of navigation interests.

Guidance was offered on funding including the effectiveness of presentations, as well as water and boat safety.

As everyone will be aware, the National Lottery has provided funds under a variety of headings and the seminar was valuable in unravelling some aspects of the application process. Obviously, a professional application which takes account of the criteria for selection has a greater chance of success than a hastily prepared appeal.

RESTORATION AT COBBLERS

North East Waterway Recovery Group held a work camp at Cobblers lock over the weekend of 17 and 18th June. They achieved good progress in the restoration of the by-wash concreting part of the floor and commencing work on the brickwork of the walls. Many thanks to Neil Evans and Dave Pullen for co-ordinating the work. Thanks too to NEWRG for all their efforts.

It is hoped to have another work party at Cobblers on the weekend of the 22nd and 23rd of July. Contact Dave Pullen (0673-862278) for further details or to let him know you are able to help.

PROJECT MANAGER

You will see from the newsletter that much work goes on behind the scenes, and this is a time when there are no major engineering works in progress. It is becoming harder to keep the pace going by fitting everything around the "day jobs" we all need to pay the mortgage. Evenings are not always suitable for Society business because the people we need to contact are at their posts in the daytime....

The long and short of it is that the committee are considering the option of having someone involved on a more formal basis. At the moment an admin function is needed but as things move on then a "clerk of works" is envisaged. Speak to Martin Chapman or Dave Pullen if you have any thoughts in this area.

BOAT GATHERING

What was anticipated as a small gathering of boats at South Kyme over the May Bank Holiday turned into a sizeable rally with about 15 boats, including two 70' working boats, putting in an appearance during the weekend. I say "about" as boats seemed to be coming and going over the three days.

Pat Taylor turned in some very respectable sales from the Society's stall on the bow of Wigford, The Hayes' family introduction of NB Kyme to Kyme was christened in Gin (the tiller later nearly christened the underside of Halfpenny Hatch bridge).

The Church service was as pleasant as ever with Society members from different age groups taking part in the readings. Thankyou to all those who came and made it such a pleasant weekend. Thanks as well for the warm welcome given by the residents of South Kyme.

Some boaters were slightly alarmed by the sight of the chairman, secretary and a respected local councillor peering out of the undergrowth in pitch darkness on Sunday evening. This proved to be a would-be errand of mercy to re-unite a family of cygnets one of whom had become separated during the day. Earlier in the day the ornithological search had been for a Blackbird but that's another story!

Sadly, Sunday evening's search proved fruitless but everyone was delighted to hear that the family were happily re-united on Monday.

NEXT YEAR'S RALLY

Will be something special! We have been asked by Lincs and South Humberside Branch of IWA to host the Lincolnshire rally to mark the 50th Anniversary of the inauguration of the Inland Waterways Association.

We expect it to be as big an event as the 1994 celebrations. The date is the weekend of May 25th,26th, & 27th, 1996. Get it in your diary. Book in your caravan, tent or even your boat.

SOUTH KYME

I am sure that many society members will be interested to hear of a new history of South Kyme. The following details have been supplied by Margaret Newton who lives in the village.

'In South Kyme Church on Friday, July 7th at 7.30 pm there will be the launch of a book entitled "South Kyme, the History of a Fenland Village". Anyone interested will be welcome. Copies of the book will be on sale at the launch or after the date from J. Newton, The Old Rectory, South Kyme, Lincoln, LN4 4AB. Contact can also be made by phoning 01526-860649.'

Any profits from the book will go toward the church funds.

THE LITERARY SLEA

Members may well be aware that the Slea has already figured in literature. The books 'The Tent of God' and 'The River Slea' were written by the late Anthony Ward of Ruskington.

Chris Hayes remembers Tony Ward as a lecturer in English Literature at York University in the late 60s when the novels were published. Not having any connection with Lincolnshire or navigations at the time she had little realisation of the significance the title of the second book was to have for her in later life!

The novels tell of a family, butchers by trade, who live in Ruskington and, while not strictly autobiographical, the details and observations are clearly drawn from local life. The stories tell of fierce rivalry and affection between two brothers and owe much to D H Lawrence in their appreciation of working class life and family tradition.

Some of the goings-on at Haverholme Lock were probably regarded as quite steamy by

readers in the 60s but perhaps the modern audience is less impressionable! Maybe local residents might be able to confirm if Haverholme was a traditional place to take the girlfriend and indulge in nude bathing. Perhaps, on second thoughts, they might prefer not!

Throughout the books the River Slea is seen as a symbol of a life force and always has a compulsive attraction for the boy. The local knowledge is plentiful and astonishingly detailed. It is very unusual to read novels containing descriptions of locations in the Sleaford area and even to be able to pinpoint houses and bends in the road.

The books seem to be no longer in print but are obtainable through the local library service. They certainly provide interesting reading although some of the descriptions of lock gates and paddle gear are tantalisingly brief and could be historically less accurate than other parts of the writing. Perhaps it should be remembered that the recording of details of navigational and engineering interest was not the author's purpose!



If you have not yet renewed your membership please fill in the form below and return it to Jenny Osborne, with membership fees, to the following address:-

Bank House Farm Ruskington Fen Billinghay Lincs LN4 4DS

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Adult £5.00: Joint £7.00: Junior £0.50

Life £50.00: Joint Life £60.00

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