

Diary Dates

30 March		Work Party
19 April	SSP	<u>Quiz Night</u> 7:30 for 8:00 pm (Refreshments included)
3-5 May		S Kyme Boat Gathering
14 May	SNT	AGM
24-6 May		Witham Drains Cruise
7-8 June		Newark Water Festival
21-22 June		Gardner Owners Club (Nottingham)
21-22 June		Work Party - BITM visiting group
27 June - 4 July		Work Camp
5-6 July		Lincoln Water Festival
19 July	SSP	Open Day and Evening BBQ
26-27 July		Heckington Show
22-25 Aug		Nat Waterways Festival, Reading
6 Sept		Sleaford Classic Cars

Meetings marked IWA are organised by the Lincolnshire branch of the Inland Waterways Association and are open to everyone. The venue is St Mary-le-Wigford Church Hall, Lincoln unless otherwise stated. For details contact Mrs V Longthorne on 01949 530138.

Meetings marked SSP are organised by the Sleaford Sports Partnership the venue being the David Williams Pavilion (Sleaford Rugby Club). For details contact Barbara MacKay on 01529 304355 or Norman Osborne on 01526 832256

Front Cover Picture

SNT work party on the Cromford Canal at Ironville, Derbyshire.
L-R Dave Turner, John Jackson, Mel Sowerby, Dave Pullen.

SLEAFORD

NAVIGATION TRUST



NEWSLETTER

No 12 - January 2003

The Sleaford Navigation Trust

A non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No: 3294818.
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Aims and Objectives

To stimulate public interest and appreciation of the history, structure and beauty of the waterway known as the Slea or the Sleaford Navigation and to restore, improve, maintain and conserve and make it fully navigable. To restore associated buildings and structures and to promote the use of the Sleaford Navigation by all appropriate kinds of waterborne traffic and to promote the use of towpaths and adjoining footpaths.

Executive Committee

Chairman : Chris Hayes 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH.
Tel. 01522 689460

Secretary : Steve Hayes as above.

Treasurer : David Turner Brownlow's House, Brownlow's Hill, Coddington, Newark, Notts. NG24 2QA. Tel. 01636 708781
E-mail d-turner@totalise.co.uk

Engineer : David Pullen Brinkburn House, Church Street, Scothern, Lincoln LN2 2UA. Tel. 01673 862278

Martin Chapman

Barbara MacKay : Tel. 01529 304355

Susan Sowerby : Tel. 01522 793149

Pat Taylor : Chairman : Sleaford Navigation (Sales) Ltd. Tel. 01522 790652

David Carnell : Nominee of Lincolnshire IWA

Non Committee Contacts

Membership Secretary : Jenny Osborne, Bank House, Ruskington Fen, Billinghay, Lincoln LN4 4DS. Tel. 01526 832256

Sleaford Sports Partnership Liaison : Norman Osborne, as above.

Editors: Izzie and David Turner, address above.

Articles and opinions in this newsletter are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily reflect SNT policy or the opinion of the editors.

Photographs: Izzie Turner unless otherwise credited.

Editorial

Apologies for another late edition of the Sleaford Navigation Trust newsletter. There is just too much to do and too few hours in the day, but this does bring us on to a very important subject - that of help in running the Trust. Your committee need more help and they need it now. This year, 2003, is going to be the most important year so far in the revival of the waterway with funds now in place for the final studies to identify and solve any potential problems with reopening the navigation and a decision on major European funding for the actual work just months away. Help is needed on several fronts for instance a few new faces on our work parties would be appreciated but for those who would prefer something other than site work we have a variety of tasks both large and small up to and including committee membership. Please give Chris Hayes our chairman or one of the committee a ring to see what we can sort out.

Dave and Izzie Turner

New Members

The Trust welcomes the following members all of whom joined during 2002. Unfortunately, these were omitted last year.

Kenneth Pettican

Elizabeth Hill

Melvyn Haigh

Martin Noble

David Kevill

Nigel Long

David Tomlinson

Mr. & Mrs. J. Mosley

Mr. & Mrs. D. Cakebread

John Jackson

Penny Matuska

Debbie & Gavin Scott

Roland & Mary Hayes

Chairman's Report

Our New President, Dave Fletcher

George Greener, Chairman of British Waterways, said at this year's Annual Meeting, "The man leading this team for the past six years needs no introduction. Dave Fletcher, who retires in December, is an inspirational, energetic and visionary leader. His contribution to the waterways renaissance over the past six years has been immense. Dave has transformed the inland waterways and helped us to lay solid plans for the future."

Even to those of us who have followed the changes that have occurred in the development and restoration of waterways in the past few years a reminder of some of the events may be timely. For others perhaps this is the moment to realise why we are so pleased to welcome Dave as our new President.

In 1996, when Dave Fletcher joined BW as Chief Executive the Kennet and Avon Canal was awarded £25 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the London Waterway Partnership received £28 million to regenerate London's canals. The climate was certainly changing as far as restoration and regeneration were concerned.

In December 1996 he set up the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities and remains its chairman. The Sleaford Navigation is represented at these meetings by David Pullen.

In 1996/7 Dave Fletcher wrote, "...the fundamental challenge has been to secure adequate funding, not just to patch the failing 200 year old structure until next year, but to make a unique part of the nation's heritage and environment secure for another 200 years." The recent collapse of the roof of Harecastle Tunnel was a timely reminder of just how some of the structure needed repair.

Some of the funding came from Government but additional revenue came from the siting of fibre optic cable for telecom networking along hundreds of miles of towpath. Boat licences were also increased even though as a boater himself, Dave realised the decision would not be a popular one.

By 1998 a strategic plan, "Our Plan for the Future 1997-2001" was launched and a 'golden age of canals' was talked of again. More money came from government grants and the Waterways Trust was set up. Dave Fletcher was appointed to its Board of Directors.

BW realised in 1999 that waterways were now being restored at the same rate as they had originally been built 200 years ago. The Heritage Lottery Fund supported the restoration of Anderton Boat Lift, permission was given for the building of the Falkirk Wheel and work started on the restoration of the Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

One of the big differences was the existence of third party funding and Dave Fletcher was now quoted as saying, "Now I believe we are in a position from which we can deliver a secure waterway network that will benefit millions of people for many generations to come. That is a remarkable turnaround."

Plans were now in place for the restoration of the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal, the Cotswold Canal, Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, to develop Paddington Basin.....

The list continues.

Small wonder then that June Pell, Dave's PA, was awarded an MBE and Dave Fletcher a CBE.

Dave Fletcher was made vice-president of IWA in July 2002. The British Waterways magazine Waterfront, in an article entitled "The Dave Years" from which much of this material has been drawn, says, "BW will go from strength to strength, but its loss is the IWA's gain."

Sleaford Navigation Trust has gained immeasurably too.

Inland Waterways Conference 2002

Nearly 100 delegates attended the seventh IWA National Conference for Waterways Societies on 23rd November at Sandwell including Chris and Steve Hayes representing Sleaford Navigation Trust. The theme of the day was Waterways 2020 and emphasis was on the future developments and the completion of restorations. A great deal of what was said has direct relevance to our own restoration and therefore the function of the conference in sharing good practice was very valuable. As a member of the Inland Waterways Association Restoration Committee, Steve Hayes had been one of the conference organisers.

Professor John Hume, a former vice chairman of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council, spoke first on 'Setting priorities for waterways' including determining the quality of assets when tackling restoration. He stressed that establishing ownership of land and structures was vital. "Politics can change" he said. "Just because one Government or council is in favour of a scheme, it does not necessarily follow that any successor will feel the same way. It is vital to get any scheme written into a plan."

John suggested a list of priorities for any group attempting a restoration project. These included good engineering studies, careful investigation of funding opportunities and the protection of land, even if not purchased outright. He stressed the important role of volunteer societies and the need to get full public support if a project were to succeed. "Most importantly believe in the virtue of what you

are doing" he advised. "Do not be afraid to re-invent and rethink goals. Be of good faith, your turn may come sooner than you think"

The second speaker was Geoffrey Holroyde, a member of the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities who spoke on 'Working together - the navigation authorities vision'. He referred to reports that have been produced in recent years advocating the benefits of waterway restoration. "There is" he suggested, "a wealth of funding opportunities coupled with an upsurge in public interest in waterways."

Former IWA chairman Audrey Smith spoke on 'Social Inclusion'. Audrey, a retired teacher and member of IWAAC, had joined a team to research areas of the country which were socially deprived. Looking at the inner city areas of Leicester, Manchester and Birmingham she told of the desperation felt by families on low income and young people who were often of the opinion that they had "nothing to do." She suggested that any waterway society wanting to get young people involved should make approaches to navigation authorities, the Police, the Community Boats Association, IWA, the Groundwork Trust or WRG.

2020 Vision by our new Honorary President, Dave Fletcher.

The morning session was wrapped up by British Waterways' retiring chief executive Dave Fletcher who, to a round of applause, proudly accepted his new 'badge of office' as vice president of IWA from John Fletcher before giving his presentation, 'A vision for UK waterways in 2020.' Dave's 2020 vision outlined a possible chronology of future waterway restorations but stressed that, "BW are now carefully analysing each restoration for its practicability, and its contribution to the network and society at large." The results of a review are expected by mid 2003.

Dave warned that as just navigations, waterways are not viable. "Sustainable is, I think, the more appropriate word" he said. "Any person or organisation whose vision for the future of their waterways was limited to navigation, water management, and water quality, will fail to achieve sustainability. They will thus fail to exploit the massive benefits in economic, social, and environmental terms which waterways can, and must, bring to the wider community. The sustainable future for the waterways lies in regenerating of the whole area through which they pass."

The afternoon session comprised a structured open forum discussion. Topics included the future role of Canal Restoration Trusts and Waterway Recovery Group in a climate where restorations are being completed.

Chris Hayes

Lincolnshire Waterways Project

We can now confirm that the first tranche of Lincolnshire Waterway Project funding has been released by the county council. This comprises two sums of money. £80,000.00 released to British Waterways to match a similar sum they have already raised for a new facilities block in Boston and £50,000.00 made available to the Environment Agency for an Implementation Study for the Slea. The Implementation study is to examine the proposed works and their ramifications including a full Environmental Assessment on the Slea from Cobblers Lock to Sleaford with particular reference to enabling early completion of the section up to and perhaps including Haverholme Lock

Lincolnshire County Council has made it clear that although the waterways project will benefit the whole of the county council area initial work will be in the so called central section defined by the lower Witham and Sleaford/Horncastle cross roads. The Witham will be brought up to the standard expected by visitors and hopefully the navigable area soon extended to take in Sleaford and Horncastle.

It is understood that extending navigation on the Slea up to Haverholme will be the first major practical restoration work within the project.

Dave Turner

Working Party News

Cromford Canal Work Party

Our January work party actually took place on the 2nd February on the Cromford Canal and was our way of showing support for some newcomers to the canal restoration world. Perhaps surprisingly the Friends of the Cromford Canal was set up less than a year ago but some of those present over this February weekend remember working on the canal back in the 1970's in days before British Waterways more enlightened policy toward derelict waterways. The canal has been derelict for over 50 years and runs 14 miles from Langley Mill at the head of the Erewash canal to the foot of the Peak District at Cromford and terminates across the road from one of Sir Richard Arkwright's famous mills.

For this the first work party of the new group it had been decided to stage a clear up on that part of the Ironville locks section of the canal still in British Waterways ownership. BW are already in support of the restoration and thus the necessary permissions were easily obtained and to take advantage of the strong support in the immediate area a clean up was organised and a limited amount of tree clearance undertaken. Andy Martin of Lincs. IWA and no stranger to the Slea was prevailed upon to take a busman's holiday and in one day cut down all the trees that have grown up in the canal bed and through the lock walls. BW turned up with their shredder and with help from the 50 or so volunteers on site Saturday cleared little over half of the brash cut down by Andy. The rest was dealt with on the Sunday.

For my sins John Baylis requested that I take control of a borrowed Tirfor winch and remove some of the resulting stumps from the canal bed. The lower half of the site took care of the Saturday so that on Sunday when Isobel and I were joined by three more of our regular work party we were able to tackle the area around lock two and I soon lost count of the number of tree stumps we dealt with. Lock two lacks its top cill which was removed in the 1970's along with the bed of the canal above and the entire top lock as part of the works to satisfy the reservoir inspectors. The canal is the official overflow channel for Codnor Park reservoir less than 200 yards away. Its waters once supplied the canal but now serves only anglers and wildlife.

Also less than a mile away is the eastern portal of Butterley tunnel one of the major engineering problems on the canal that we at Sleaford are pleased not to have. Among the Cromford friends, at BW and at the Midland Railway Centre the tunnel is seen, however, as one of those golden opportunities for development with public boat trips (as at the newly reopened Huddersfield Canals' Standedge Tunnel) and even round trips involving a return by steam train a very real possibility.

The Friends of the Cromford Canal were very grateful for our assistance and we wish them every success with their project.

Dave Turner

Snippet

We did another display in the Sleaford library window from 31st December to the 14th January which attracted considerable interest.

British Waterways Win more Awards

Best practice awards from the British Urban Regeneration Association have been won by BW in both Scotland and England. North of the boarder the £84.5 million Millennium Link project to revive the Forth & Clyde and Union canals has created employment, leisure, tourism, environmental and social regeneration opportunities. Major obstacles had to be overcome to reconnect the canals particularly the Forth & Clyde which had suffered numerous dropped bridges and was built over in places. The biggest hurdle without doubt was the missing locks at Falkirk but this problem has been turned to good effect by the construction of the worlds first revolving boat lift already Scotland's second most popular tourist attraction. The Falkirk Wheel in its own right was awarded three other awards last year; the Silver Unicorn Award for the best new tourist project by the British Guild of Travel Writers, the top civil engineering project in Scotland award by the Saltire Society, and the Brunel medal for excellence in civil engineering by the Institution of Civil Engineers.

The Best Practice Award in England is for work much closer to home at Newark in Nottinghamshire. British Waterways were a major partner in the Single Regeneration Budget partnership which oversaw the revival of the river frontage in Newark. 12 acres of land were involved with flagship developments being the new marina, the Kiln warehouse - one of the first concrete structures in this country - and the new river bridge. For BW this was a very modest scheme as they have previously been involved in much larger city centre projects in Leeds and Birmingham and are currently embarking on one involving over 700 acres in Nottingham.

Dave Turner