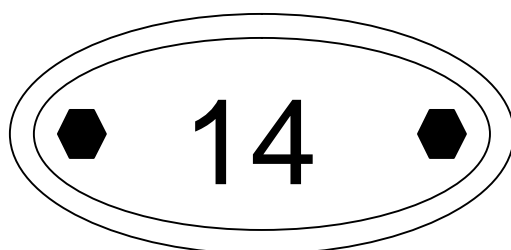
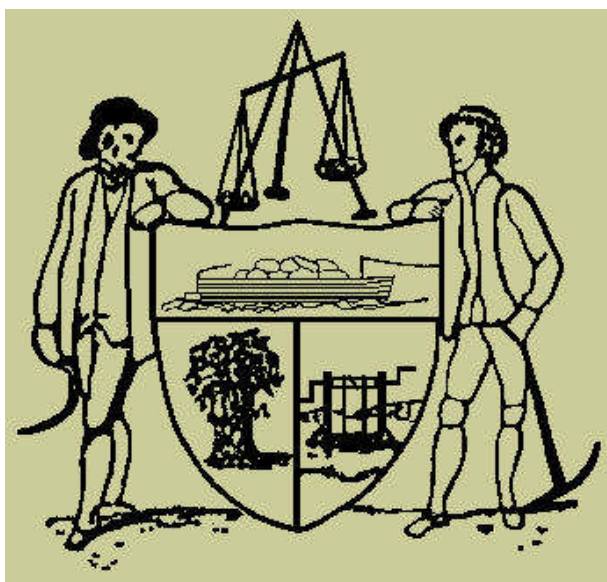


Sleaford Navigation Trust



July 2003

50p
(Free to Members)

The Sleaford Navigation Trust

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Aims & Objectives of SNT

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. To promote the use of the Sleaford navigation by all appropriate kinds of waterborne traffic. To promote the use of towpaths and adjoining footpaths.

*But how do we go about achieving these aims?
I hope to bring you details in future newsletters. Ed*

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

Editorial

Welcome to your first newsletter by the newly appointed editor! Whilst I'm not exactly new to waterways themselves (as you will read about later) I am relatively new to waterway restoration, having only joined the Trust in December 2002, so I'm still finding my feet to a certain extent. I should also warn you that I am a complete novice when it comes to editorship!! I feel I may have a lot to learn over the coming months!! I hope to be able to maintain, or at least come close to, the excellent standard set by Dave and Izzie Turner with their newsletters.

I'm a firm believer in the principle that newsletters such as this should be *by* the members, *for* the members. It's your Trust, your waterway, your passion. I do not intend to fill the pages with my own words – for a start I could not even begin to rival the vast, in-depth, knowledge of waterway politics that Dave has acquired over the years. Nor do I have the insight into the workings of IWA, BW, EA, AINA, NCA (*in fact, who are they all and what do they do?!*) that Chris and Steve Hayes have. However I do intend to find out who they all are, how they affect us and what they can (or should) be doing for us.

I'll also be asking for members to put pen to paper to pass on their knowledge and memories to the rest of us. I feel that everyone out there will have something to offer. There is nothing better than to hear something new about a subject that you love, or even to hear the same facts again but told from a different perspective.

Did you know

..... that Cogglesford Mill in Sleaford has a selection of SNT merchandise for sale? This includes prints, mugs and tea towels along with some items of stationary. The mill is open every day now until September from 12 to 4 pm Mon to Fri and 11 to 4.30pm at weekends & Bank Holidays. Telephone Sleaford Tourist Information Centre on 01529 414294 for further details.

New readers may like to know that the SNT Newsletter is currently published quarterly in January, April, July and October each year.

The AGM took place on 14th May this year in the Rugby Club at Sleaford. Once the formalities were over a very informative presentation was given by Caroline Killeavy, the Waterways Manager for British Waterway's East Midlands area.

Our Chairman was joined on the top table by the Secretary and Treasurer to carry out the formal business of the evening. Chris gave a brief introduction, which included a vision of the future whereby the annual 'Kyme Boat Gathering' would be replaced by a 'Haverholme Gathering'. This is perfectly feasible once Cobblers Lock has been opened and the next upstream stretch of the Navigation is once again open to boats.

She reminded us all that the Lincolnshire Waterways Project is not just about the Slea but includes much more besides and should open up a whole new experience, not just to boaters but to walkers, cyclists, fishermen and indeed all lovers of waterways.

Chris updated those present on the forthcoming meeting of the Northern Canals Association that we, the SNT, are hosting. This is due to take place on 29 June at the Sleaford Rugby Club. All members were invited to attend. (Editors note: as this will take place just as this newsletter is sent out I hope to include a full report on it in the next issue.) It was also announced that, with much regret, the Work Camp planned for 27 June to 4 July has had to be cancelled - relevant permissions for the rebuilding of the by-wash at Haverholme had not been forthcoming in time.

The on-going issue of land purchase was thought to be nearing completion. Negotiations with the Bristol Estate that have been going on since about 1988 are finally reaching a conclusion. More news from the Chairman when the signing takes place! (*Editors note - see page 13 for latest news!!*)

A plea was made to all those present (and there were about 25 of us) to encourage more people to join the Trust. Although our numbers are small our task is large and we need all the support we can get.

Thanks were given to Dave and Izzie Turner for their contribution to the Trust through the Editorship of the newsletter, especially for bringing it up to such a high standard, before handing over the reigns to yours truly.

The Chairman reported that Martin Chapman, a former Chairman of SNT, felt unable to stand for re-election due to his many other commitments. He was thanked by both Chairman and members alike for all his hard work. Debbie Scott, a relatively new member to SNT, who also holds the post of Town Centre Manager here in Sleaford, was voted onto the committee by the Chairman and Secretary.

With all the formalities out of the way, including the acceptance of previous AGM minutes, Directors & Treasurers Reports, the floor was cleared for Caroline Killeavy to give her presentation. As previously mentioned her talk was very informative and certainly opened a few people's eyes as to how British Waterways conduct themselves these days. A separate report on the talk will appear in a future newsletter.

Otters 'thriving' in local waterways

A recent survey by the Environment Agency has shown that the much-loved otter is thriving in our local waterways. The mammal, which rapidly declined in the 1950s due to toxic pesticides, is making a comeback. This is particularly true around Horncastle in both the River Bain and the town's canal. This shows that water quality is much better than in previous decades and that wildlife habitats are improving. The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is reported to have said that the otter chooses its habitat carefully as it is nocturnal so needs somewhere to shelter during the daytime.

It is vital that otters have a plentiful supply of fish so it may be some time before we get to see them on The Slea after the recent chemical spillage that destroyed the existing fish stocks along the length of the waterway. However the fact that they are in the local area can only bode well for us all as they are a vital part of the ecosystem. They are also a fascinating animal to sit and watch should you be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of one!

Martin Noble

Slea Rally 2003 by Chris Hayes, Chairman

The first Bank Holiday in May is traditionally the date for the informal boat gathering on the Sleaford Navigation. This year saw six boats making the usually eventful passage up to Cobblers Lock and, even more importantly, returning to South Kyme facing the right way for return to the River Witham and beyond. For the benefit of newer readers, the head of navigation is at Cobblers Lock near Anwick. The lock has been restored but has no gates as yet because passage beyond there, to Haverholme Lock, will require work on the banks for which funding is not as yet available. Hopefully it will not now be too long before restoration of the next section can take place as part of the Lincolnshire Waterways Project and we shall be able to hold boat gatherings at Haverholme. There is no winding hole, or turning point, to turn a boat of any length between Bottom Lock and Cobblers Lock, so while boats moor in South Kyme for most of the weekend they all have to travel up to Cobblers Lock at some point during the weekend to turn round. The best policy is to journey up to Cobblers together. There can be problems with weed or silt and there can be safety in numbers.

It is also part of the weekend to do 'good works' at Bottom Lock which this year already looked quite spruce thanks to a recent clean up by a SNT working party and the Lincolnshire Branch IWA. The grass got another cut and new planks were fitted to the landing stage below the lock. Work on the landing stage seemed to involve pretty close proximity to the water as securing pins were put underneath the decking but no one took an early bath. The honour of falling in was reserved for Alexandra Boddy off narrow-boat 'Florrie Kendall' whose exertions in a canoe proved a trifle ambitious! Our new editor Martin Noble, together with his partner Chris, joined narrow-boat 'Kyme' for the journey up to South Kyme so had another opportunity for hands on experience.

Progress up to Cobblers Lock on Saturday afternoon was surprisingly swift, about an hour and a half, up to the notorious last bends where things slowed a bit. Turning in the by-wash proved to be the problem of the day as the bottom was very near the top! Dave Pullen did sterling work on the end of a rope to give additional assistance and eventually, some two hours later, all boats had turned.

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Back in South Kyme we all attended the church service, which was particularly significant as it was the last “boat service” which Rev. Abraham will conduct there before his retirement later this year. Penny Carnell presented him with a hand painted canal-ware flatiron doorstep as a memento from SNT. Incidentally, David Pullen’s halo was slightly dented when he suggested we all walk across the field path to the church. Almost immediately we were joined by three very friendly but equally large horses who insisted on being rather too close to us as we crossed the field. My speed certainly increased to an unaccustomed trot, which was totally the wrong reaction as they had the edge on me as far as speed was concerned. Suffice it to say we arrived at church a trifle hysterical with laughter, or maybe relief, and walked back the other way after the service!

As ever the welcome in South Kyme was warm and we were particularly grateful to the gentleman who let us moor at the bottom of his garden. An excellent weekend all round.



Fixing the new landing stage at Bottom Lock
(Photo by Martin Noble)

Martin Noble – A Personal Profile

By way of an introduction I thought I would supplement my first editorial with a personal profile. I started my association with water when I was about twelve years old, helping a neighbour to build one of the first series of *Mirror* dinghies. These were small sailing dinghies supplied in kit form, with the builder having to do everything from cutting the wood to size, through sewing the pieces together and sealing them with fibreglass tape, to applying what seemed like endless coats of yacht varnish with every square inch being rubbed down between coats. I never did thank him for putting me off paint brushes for life at such an early age! All the hard work was well worth it when we eventually launched the dinghy and he took me for my first ever sail.

About the same time as I was building the dinghy my parents also caught the boating bug, just as the caravanning one was wearing off. Their first boat was a 16-foot *Microplus 501* kept on the Grand Union Canal at Uxbridge. '*Miss Sugar*' did the family proud for a couple of years whilst my father was working in London but we soon progressed to a *real* canal boat, buying a part-built narrowboat from Nantwich on the Shropshire Union in 1975. Part-built? Yes, you guessed it, my boat-building skills were called upon once again – but this time it was on a different scale and under the watchful eye of Mother! They subsequently moved on to a fully fitted, purpose built, 62 footer, upon which they lived permanently for 10 years, having sold up their bricks and mortar to 'live their dream'.

With all this water in my blood (did I mention Dad spent 26 years in the Royal Navy?) it came as no shock to anyone who knew me that I joined the merchant navy as a Navigator Cadet. Unfortunately the completion of my training coincided with one of the biggest reductions in the merchant fleet seen for years and I was made redundant. After a couple of odd-jobs I decided to give the Royal Air Force a go and here I am some twenty years later, currently based at RAF Cottesmore as an aircraft engineer and living in Sleaford with my partner Christine. My love of the water has never left me, I'm now a qualified dinghy sailing instructor, enjoy offshore sailing and love nothing more than messing about in, or near, boats!

Apart from boats and boating though I also spend an awful lot of time gardening, buying and selling collectables (particularly Royal Commemorative ware), walking and cycling.

Continued on Page 9

Like many of you out there, I expect, my love of the waterways does not just centre around one aspect of it, it is the *whole* picture that fascinates me! As I said at the beginning, even though I've always been around boats I've never been involved in any restoration work. Both Chris and I were keen to get involved with the local community when we moved to Sleaford in November 2001, we both enjoy the outdoors, meeting new people and being part of something that benefits others.

Although it took us a while to become aware of the existence of SNT a quick chat with Chris and Steve Hayes at the 2002 Christmas Market convinced us that it was something we wanted to become involved in. We both hope to be able to give something to the Trust and look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months.

Martin & Chris

SNT in the News

The South Kyme Gathering was featured in all three of the Sleaford papers. The *Sleaford Target* had a lovely photo on the front page of the Chairman's boat with South Kyme tower in the background along with a dozen words. Whilst we didn't make the front page in the *Sleaford Standard* they did go into more detail about the event and the SNT's aims. The article was accompanied by a shot of all the boats moored at South Kyme. *The Citizen* though gave us the largest spread with two-thirds of the front page given over to a photo and article. All of which is very welcome publicity for us, bringing our activities to the public's attention, which can only lead to better understanding of what we are about and hopefully bring in more members too!

Ed

Chairman's Report by Chris Hayes

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed members to new positions of responsibility and said thank you, but not goodbye, to one of the founders of the original Sleaford Navigation Society.

Martin Chapman was one of a group of people who, in 1977, formed a society whose primary aim was to "restore, improve, maintain, conserve and make fully navigable the Sleaford Navigation. To restore associated buildings and structures and to promote the use of towpaths or footpaths adjoining or near the Sleaford Navigation." Martin served as Chairman of the Society for its duration and it was his vision of a restored waterway and the persuasiveness of approach that set the ball rolling and made sure it didn't roll to a halt. Martin has served as a Director of the Trust since standing down as Chairman and we hope that, in the future, he will be able to return to that directorship to play an active role again in the work of the Trust. The Board of Directors have asked him to accept Honorary Life Membership of the Trust as an indication of gratitude.

We welcome Debbie Scott as a Director, Martin Noble as Editor of the newsletter and John Jackson as Work Party Co-ordinator.

We have now received the draft brief for the Implementation Study for the Sleaford Navigation from the Environment Agency. Comments have been made on the brief by the Board and by the Inland Waterways Association Honorary Engineers. At the end of the period of consultation the brief will go to tender and it is hoped that the Study will be completed by the end of the year.

The purchase of land from the Bristol Estates continues to progress, albeit very slowly! We are now hopeful that signing will take place soon. I am very conscious that I have said this before but, fingers crossed, this time it will happen! Perhaps it might even be reported in the next newsletter..... (Editors Note - See page 13!!)

John Jackson, our Work Party Organiser, has set up an 'SNT Group' on AOL so if you have access to the internet give him a call for further details. See inside the back cover for his telephone number.

Working Parties by Martin Noble

Apologies from Dave Turner for the cancellation of the planned working party on 29 April. Unfortunately circumstances beyond the control of the Trust also led to the cancellation of this years Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) Work Camp. They have already agreed to reschedule the week's camp once we have the relevant information from EA regarding the Haverholme weir.

John Jackson has recently agreed to take over the position of 'Work Party Organiser' that has been vacant for several years. Watch this space for further details of work parties from John once he finds his feet in the job.

Members should note that it has been decided by the committee to change the work party programme to the ***first Sunday*** in the month rather than the last one. This will take effect from September so check the dates on the back cover and amend your diaries accordingly! Details of what work will be taking place will be available nearer the time so please do give John Jackson a call about a week beforehand to find out what's going on, where to meet and so on. You could even e-mail him right now at oswinclose@aol.com if you are into computers! There is always more work than there are pairs of hands so please join us whenever possible.

'Self Sealing Envelopes' (A Short Story by Chris Hayes!!)

If you received an empty envelope instead of the last newsletter, please accept my apologies! I had a telephone call from Sue Sowerby to say that she had received an envelope but no contents and I was left hoping that somehow it had been a fluke. Much later I received a large envelope from the Post Office containing two copies of the newsletter which had been found loose in a post bag. The origin of one was clear to work out - Sue's envelope - but the question is, *who else received the mysterious empty envelope?* Blame it all on the self-sealing envelopes!

Debbie Scott, newly appointed SNT Committee Member & Sleaford Town Centre Manager, introduces herself

In 1992 I started working for North Kesteven District Council at the 'Tales of the River Bank Visitor Centre' on the Witham Bank next to Timberland Pumping Station. Several of our visitors appeared from boats moored on the bank - they always seemed to come from another world! Having been brought up in a fen farming family I was well aware of the importance of the waterways as drainage channels but the 'navigation' side of things only really hit me when we spent some time on my sister in law's narrowboat in Warwickshire.

Sadly that boat was lost as a result of her divorce but the bug was well and truly caught and for the last ten years we have been regular hirers, 'doing' many of the rings especially in the Midlands. As a family we are very fond of locks (they are good exercise and keep the children busy) and are looking forward to doing the Caen Hill flight this summer when we do the return trip Reading to Bristol for some friends who are doing Bristol to Reading.

It's always a highlight of our holidays to meet other SNT people on the waterways. For some years I have been publicity person for the Sleaford Water Weekend - the origins of which were very much with SNT, and I hope to be able to continue promoting the use of the Slea for appropriate navigation, with its important economic benefits to the town in terms of tourism and commerce.

I now work for 'Sleaford Development Group' and see the potential opening of the Slea to navigation as one of the most exciting things happening to the town at the moment. It is our ambition to retire to a narrowboat and, when the time comes, I would very much like to be able to leave the town, one day, via the Slea, to the Witham and beyond.

Land Purchase Agreement Update by Martin Noble

Just as this edition was about to go to print a momentous occasion for the SNT took place at the home of the Chairman - the long awaited Land Purchase Agreement came through from the Bristol Estates Solicitor!! It has taken many years and much hard work to get to this stage but rather than getting some of the details wrong I shall be asking the Chairman herself for a full report for the next newsletter.



Signing of the Land Purchase Agreement

Pat Taylor signs as a witness watched by Chris Hayes, SNT Chairman (left) and Dave Turner, SNT Treasurer (right)

(Photo by Debbie Scott)

SNT in the Public Eye

It's been show time again for Pat Taylor and her Sleaford Navigation Trust stall! June, July and August always see an abundance of outdoor events at which Pat gallantly flies the flag for us all – to date she has attended Newark and Sleaford Water Festivals, with Lincoln round about the time you read this and of course the National being held at Reading this year. These events always give us a wider target audience than just boaters as the people attending get a lot of enjoyment out of all the other activities that go with waterways. It is essential that we attract members from all walks of life as the regeneration of the waterway relies not just on boats and boaters but on all those other users who actually outnumber those actually on the water. We should take these opportunities to really sell ourselves to both the general public and also to all those public authorities who look at these events when measuring public support for a particular activity. Although Pat usually mans these stalls on her own all weekend please do get in touch if you feel able to help in any way at all – setting up or dismantling the stall, selling raffle tickets and other SNT merchandise or even just to give her some moral support. If you were able to 'sell' the Trust then so much the better, people always want to stop and talk about what we are up to so please lend a hand and give her a call on 01522 790652 to see what you can do for your Trust.

Martin Noble

Letters to The Editor

As you can see this section is a 'letter-free zone' at the moment as nobody has had the chance to write to me yet - but please don't let that put you off, I'd love to hear from you!!

The Fens Waterways Link

The 'Fens Waterways Link' forms Phase Two of the Fens Waterway Regeneration Project and aims to connect the cathedral cities of Lincoln, Peterborough and Ely. It will link the navigations of the Trent, Fossdyke and Witham with the Nene. This in turn will then connect with the Ouse, Middle Levels, and Grand Union Canal to Nottingham.

The obvious benefit of this to the Slea is that it will increase the amount of potential visitors to, and users of, the waterway through increased boat traffic passing the end of the Navigation at Chapel Hill on the Witham. Additionally it will serve to attract more people into the area through the establishment of new recreational and tourist facilities – as well as the improvement of those existing ones.

This is just the sort of thing that potential backers of our project will be looking for as it undoubtedly increases the economic viability of any regeneration plans we have for our own waterway.

The Environment Agency have produced a glossy leaflet outlining the proposals along with the obligatory web-site where they are asking for peoples opinions via both an online opinion poll and a feedback form. The site may be found at www.fenswaterways.com and is well worth a visit. Please register your support for this project as it can only be of benefit to our own cause.

Martin Noble

Regeneration of Sleaford by Martin Noble

The regeneration of the historic town of Sleaford continues to make the headlines, continues to bring in more people to the town and continues to help focus national authorities on what is happening in this part of the world.

New 'Old Style' street furniture at Sleaford watering hole

A Sleaford pub restaurant, which sits besides the Sleas in the heart of the town, has added to the attraction of the area currently undergoing regeneration by installing Victorian style street lights and an old-fashioned red telephone box in their courtyard. '*The Barge & Bottle*' stands in the shadow of the Hub and adjacent to Navigation Yard, both of which are fast becoming the most talked about features in the town. The phone box will provide payphone facilities whilst the pub is open but will be locked out of hours for security - lets hope the vandals manage to keep their hands off it! The lights, although running off electricity rather than gas, will add to the atmosphere around this historic part of town.

Topping Out at The Hub



The Hub, Sleaford
(Photo by Martin Noble)

The refurbishment of the former Hubbards seed warehouse that stands in one corner of Navigation Yard on the opposite bank to the *Barge & Bottle* is nearing completion. A recent 'topping out' ceremony took place that saw local dignitaries laying the final piece of stonework. The Hub restoration project has cost £2.4 million and will house a 2D arts workshop, gallery and exhibition centre. It is reported to have wonderful views over the town and gives visitors a birds eye view of the River Sleas - hopefully it will not be too long before that view includes a boat or two, a true indication that the restoration of the Navigation has been successfully completed.

More Regeneration of Sleaford

Navigation House to get £360,000 facelift

The elaborate building known as Navigation House, built in 1838 for the Sleaford Navigation Company, was designed to house the weighing office and the clerks dwelling. As such it played a key role in the history of the Slea in its heyday and continues to do so today as one of the only surviving examples of this type of building in the country. The first phase of restoration work should start before the end of June and is expected to take about six months. Beyond that the interior will be turned into a visitor centre and museum. The work forms part of the Sleaford Pride project and has attracted funding from the Heritage Lottery, North Kesteven District Council, the Single Regeneration Budget and East Midland Development Agency.



Navigation House, Sleaford
(Photo by Martin Noble)

Time is fast running out for you to grab your chance of winning £100 in the Annual SNT Grand Prize Draw. Contact any of the Committee for details of where to get tickets!!

Future Newsletters

As I mentioned in the Editorial I have a few ideas of my own for how the newsletters might appear in the future and what sort of information they may contain. Some of the things I'm looking at including are:

- profiles of SNT members
- memories of The Sleat (did you work or grow up on or near the river?),
- boating, walking and fishing matters
- useful website addresses
- explanations of who the numerous waterway bodies are

However I am keen that they reflect the wishes of you, the members. To that end I would appreciate it if you would take 5 minutes to complete the details on the enclosed sheet with your own thoughts and return the page to me, or even give me a call or e-mail if you wish.

I fully appreciate that you've all joined the SNT for differing reasons and that you may not wish to be involved in a practical way. However if there are any budding historians or reporters out there or anyone simply interested in 'having their say' or making a contribution in any way, shape or form I would love to hear from them.

Contributions will always be welcome, be they handwritten or in some type of electronic format. Photographs too, which can be returned should you wish. I will endeavour to publish your article in the next available issue but may occasionally have to hold an item over until another issue if space is tight. Please let me have your articles by 10th of the month prior to issue.

Always feel free to offer me any advice, guidance or assistance!!

The Editor

Your Executive Committee

Chairman	Chris Hayes 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH Tel 01522 689460
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Ordinary Member	Debbie Scott Tel 01529 305755
Ordinary Member	Barbara Jones Tel 01529 303749
Ordinary Member	Susan Sowerby Tel 01522 793149
Chairman, Sleaford Navigation (Sales) Ltd	Pat Taylor Tel 01522 790652
Lincolnshire IWA Nominee	David Carnell

But what sort of people are they, what do they do within SNT, what are their hobbies?

Watch out for more *Personal Profiles* – if I can persuade them to expose themselves!!

Non Committee Contacts

Membership Secretary	Jenny Osborne, Bank House, Ruskington Fen, Billingham, Lincoln LN4 4DS Tel 01526 832256
Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP) Liaison	Norman Osborne Contact as above
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Editor	Martin Noble 20 Curlew Way, Sleaford, Lincs NG34 7UD Tel 01529 413135 Mobile 07799 000046 e-mail martin@noble6161.fsnet.co.uk

Dates for your diary...

The following activities are planned over the next few months so please make a note of them and endeavour to support your Trust in any way you can.

27 June – 4 July
WRG Work Camp

Unfortunately this was cancelled due to lack of consents for rebuilding the weir at Haverholme.

5 – 6 July
Lincoln Water Festival

SNT promotional stand near Brayford Pool, in the centre of the cities Water Festival activities.
Please contact Pat Taylor on 01522 790652 for details of how you can help.

19 July
Sleaford Rugby Club
Open Day & Evening
BBQ

Day of fun and activities at the David Williams Pavilion in Sleaford.
For more details contact our SSP Representative Norman Osborne on 01526 832256

26 – 27 July
Heckington Show

SNT promotional stand at this traditional country show.
Please contact Pat Taylor on 01522 790652 for details of how you can help.

27 July
SNT Work Party

Working Party @ Haverholme Lock to carry out further work on the access track.
Contact John Jackson on 01529 410427 for details.

22 – 25 August
National Waterways
Festival, Reading

SNT promotional stand at the premier inland waterways festival, co-hosted with Taste of Lincolnshire.
Please contact Pat Taylor on 01522 790652 for details of how you can help.

6 September
Sleaford Classic Cars

SNT promotional stand at this popular local event.
Drawing of SNT winning raffle ticket.
Please contact Pat Taylor on 01522 790652 for details of how you can help.

7 September
SNT Work Party

Contact John Jackson on 01529 410427 for details of this months working party.

5 October
SNT Work Party

Contact John Jackson on 01529 410427 for details of this months working party.