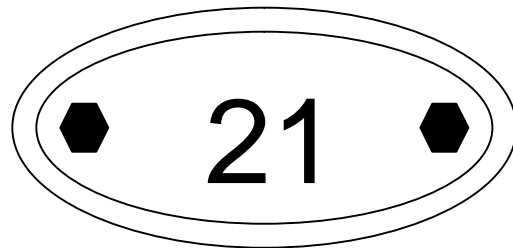
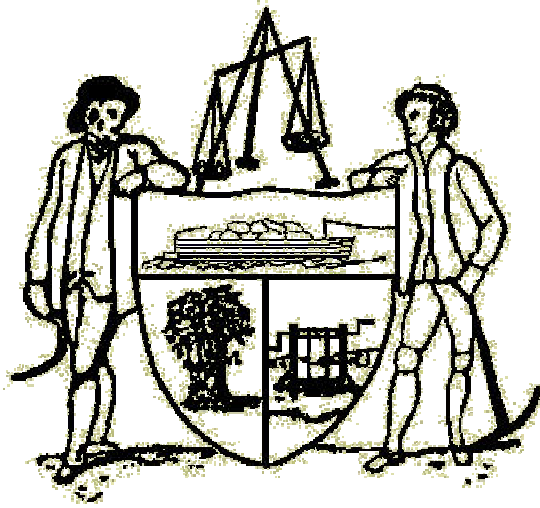


# *Sleaford Navigation Trust*



April 2005

## The Sleaford Navigation Trust .....

... is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No 3294818)

... has a Registered Office at 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 8TH

... is registered as a Charity (No 1060234)

... has a web page: [www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk](http://www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk)

### Aims & Objectives of SNT

The Trust aims to stimulate public interest and appreciation of the history, structure and beauty of the waterway known as the Slea, or the Sleaford Navigation. It aims to restore, improve, maintain and conserve the waterway in order to make it fully navigable. Furthermore it means to restore associated buildings and structures and to promote the use of the Sleaford Navigation by all appropriate kinds of waterborne traffic. In addition it wishes to promote the use of towpaths and adjoining footpaths for recreational activities.

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 the Spring edition of your favourite newsletter – hopefully you’ll find it packed with interesting articles and exciting news?!!!! If not then please let us know; in fact better still let us have some ideas of what you’d like to see! However with the rich variety of items submitted to me over the last few months I feel sure that all of you will find something that appeals to you in this edition.

Without wishing to spoil the surprises we have news about restoration, conservation, interpretation and local history. Your Committee has been working hard on your behalf to bring us closer to our goal of opening up the whole length of the Slea for us all to enjoy in whatever way we choose. We’ve got dredging of the watercourse itself, improvements to pathways alongside the water, interpretation and presentation of the history of the Slea.....and it doesn’t stop there! They are already looking at future events both on and off the water – an event specifically for small boats (be they canoes, kayaks, rowing boats or models!), another one for those of us keen to don our walking boots - all manner of suggestions are being put forward but please let us have yours too. It is, after all, *your* Trust. And *your* support and input are just as vital as that from those who sit on the Committee, in fact more so as without your support there would be no Trust. You will have the ideal opportunity to voice your thoughts at the Annual General Meeting that has been set for 4<sup>th</sup> May, details of which appear later.

Two memorable events that happened in my life this month both have a (loose) connection with the Slea. Firstly I was fortunate enough to meet up with Nigel Stennett-Cox, the son of a former owner of Cogglesford Mill. What a wealth of memories he had to share!! You’ll find some of them here in the newsletter. I’m sure that his article will trigger your own memories of that period. Whatever these are, however trivial they may seem to you, please take time to capture them, if not for yourself then for the generations that come after you. We’re all in danger of loosing that recent history if we’re not careful.

The other link with the Navigation is something that has set me off on a bit of a local & family history trail of my own! I’ve recently bought an 18<sup>th</sup> century provincial token (like a copper coin but not from the Royal Mint) that dates back to the late 1700s, issued by Thomas Ball of Sleaford with “Success to Navigation” stamped on one side. As I’m struggling to find any hard and fast facts about this ‘coin’ may I plead for anyone out there who thinks they might be able to shed some light on the matter to please get in touch!! It’s driving me mad so any help you can give would be much appreciated!

Enjoy your reading and I look forward to meeting many of you at the AGM.

*Martin Noble*

## Chairman's Report for April 2005

Chris Hayes

As you will see elsewhere in the newsletter, work is progressing rapidly with Navigation House. In the past months I have been working with Mike Oakenfull, the designer responsible for display material in the house, in order to make sure that the message given to visitors reflects the past of the navigation and also the future. I am pleased to say that Mike has agreed to speak at the AGM about the thinking behind the display in Navigation House.

One of the rooms is centred on the navigation and in there it is intended to have a short video which will illustrate the Slea as a rural waterway and show its original trade connection to the waterway system. Mike has contracted the production of this video to Jan Lower of Elbow Productions Ltd. and on a very snowy day in February we met up in Sleaford to identify possible locations and images to be used in the video.

This also gave me the opportunity of a preview of Navigation House where the tiled flooring was being put in place. The re-plastering means that the house looks light inside and the whole impression is very different from the sad state we have known for so long. The company doing the work are specialists in restoration of historical buildings and it was very reassuring to see the attention to detail and care that was being given to the work.

Turning to the present, British Waterways, through the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, are currently involved in on the ground assessment of such issues as content of dredgings on the lower part of the Slea and we await their findings. Their engineer will be meeting David Pullen, our Honorary Engineer, shortly to draw on our first hand experience.

Work parties recently have had the benefit of the purchase of a new tirfor, a winch for helping to remove tree trunks, and we shall no doubt be demonstrating this piece of equipment during the shared work party on March 20<sup>th</sup> at Haverholme when we will be joined by Adrian Royston of Leisure Connections and a group of conservation volunteers. Feel free to join us at any of our future work parties and see the tirfor in action for yourself!

## Navigation House Update

Since the last newsletter work has continued on Navigation House and the difference to the external appearance is striking. Window frames based on the surviving originals have been fitted, chimney pots replaced and the front door even boasts a proud number 1!

Access to the house will not be by that sloping front door however, but round the side where a ramp is currently being built for wheelchair access.

The view from the top floor of the nearby Hub places the house firmly in the context of Navigation Yard and the centre of Sleaford. From that viewpoint it is easy to imagine the prosperity and achievement that were embodied in the building of the house by the 'Company of the Proprietors of the Sleaford Navigation'. The Company and Navigation House were then the "Hub" of trade and business for Sleaford as the clerk collected tolls for goods being carried on the waterway and managed the traffic.

Inside too, restoration is nearly complete and the focus has been on recreating, as far as possible, the original features. Fireplaces have been reconstructed and floors tiled to give as faithful an impression as possible of the original building. In keeping with this, lime plaster has been used on the walls rather than modern alternatives but this has brought with it some problems. The plaster needs longer to dry out than a modern formula and the process needs to be gradual. This means that work on fitting the interior display material cannot take place as early as hoped and it seems the proposed Easter opening may have to be delayed until May.

The room to the left of the front door, when viewed from the outside, will recreate the clerk's office with desk, documents, toll charts and bills of lading. At the last meeting we even discussed the inclusion of the clerk's cat! The abundance of grain in the yard must have led to mice and we felt sure that a cat would have been essential! Visitors won't be able to stroke the cat though, the room will be viewed through a window rather than entered.

Details of the exhibition material are still being finalised with a working party, on which the Navigation Trust is represented, assisting the designer by providing information and local knowledge.

*Chris Hayes*



Restoration nears completion in the Weighing Room as the *Grand Opening* approaches. If you think the outside looks remarkable wait until you see the inside – or so I'm told!!

*Many thanks to Steve Hayes for these shots of Navigation House.*

## It's AGM Time Again!!

This year's AGM will once again be held in the Sleaford Rugby Club, taking place on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May it is scheduled to start at 7.30pm. All Trust members are cordially invited to attend and are encouraged to bring along any friends or relatives who might be interested in joining our organisation.

Once the formalities have been completed Mike Oakenfall has agreed to give a presentation on his work at Navigation House (see this month's Chairman's Report for further details).

### **SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST** **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Sleaford Navigation Trust will be held at the Sleaford Sports Partnership, Sleaford, on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2005, starting at 7.30 p.m. for the purpose of transacting the following business:

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive the Directors Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004.
3. To receive the Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004.
4. To re-appoint Page Kirk of Nottingham as the Company's Auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.
5. Election of Directors. Barbara Jones, David Pullen and Christine Hayes are due to retire by rotation. To elect Melvin Sowerby and Martin Noble as Directors.
6. To transact any other business that may be deemed appropriate by the Chairman.

## Letter to The Editor from Nigel Stennett-Cox

This letter is sent to you in your capacity as Editor of the Sleaford Navigation Trust newsletter, and I hope you will consider publishing it. There is much in the way of memories and anecdotes that I can supply about Cogglesford Mill, the house (now, of course, a restaurant) and perhaps to a lesser extent the river itself.

I am, incidentally, most impressed with the work of restoration and research which has been done over the last couple of decades, and have learned a lot from the back issues of the newsletter which you gave me. I found the booklet about Cogglesford Mill particularly interesting too since, although I have local man Dr. Simon Pawley's books, "The Book of Sleaford" and "Sleaford and the Slea", they don't seem to contain much 20<sup>th</sup> century material relating to the Mill and House.

In view of the newsletter being a small publication, and having no wish to monopolise the best part of an issue, I'll confine this letter to introducing myself and my reasons for an interest in the Mill and House in particular.

My grandfather was the John Robert Cox who assumed the tenancy of the House and about 115 acres of farmland from The Bristol Estates in 1933. (This is misprinted as 1993 in the Cogglesford Mill booklet) I was always told it was 1933 and can vouch, with some evidence, that he was still *Farm Foreman* at Franks's farm in Leasingham in c.1930, and, according to the Lincolnshire Archives, when his first wife Beatrice died in 1934, their address was Cogglesford Mill. Franks's farm in Leasingham is, of course, still there and in the same family so far as I know.

Two years later to the month, in April 1936, J.R. Cox married Annie Stennett of Helpringham who already had a son, Roy, with no father recorded on his Birth Certificate and who had been born in 1922. Roy took the surname of Stennett-Cox but tended to just use the "Cox". Together they farmed the land up until 1965 when "J.R." died suddenly in the September and with that the tenancy was lost. Annie had sadly died of cancer, in the house in 1941. In 1946 Roy married my mother Agnes Muxlow of Leasingham and I was born in 1947.

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Although I spent much of my early years living at the farm, it was with J.R and my maternal grandmother, who was his live-in housekeeper, and my parents lived first in Leasingham, and then from c. 1952-56, in King John Street, Sleaford. From 1956 my parents and I lived in the Cogglesford Mill House.

I was still living at home when the farm tenancy was lost and can remember the anxiety about us potentially losing our home and Roy his place of work since by then he had become mostly reliant upon scrap dealing from the yard for an income. He had learned that trade, incidentally, from travellers who had stayed in the paddock at the bottom of our yard in the fifties, paying my grandfather a bit of rent, on land that is now industrial.

By extreme good fortune, the Bristol Estates sold my father the house, yard, and mill; the latter had not been part of my grandfather's tenancy. When I was a small child, a family, or rather, an elderly couple, called Wattam lived in a cottage integral with our house but internally separate, and in the part nearest to the East Road. Jack Wattam did caretaking duties for the mill and associated sewage plant, keeping his tools in the mill; we never had a key until Roy bought it. The Wattam's, by the way, died in the early sixties.

Some of this material is in the booklet referred to but I can also say that my father paid £2000 for the house, mill, and yard in c.1966 and obtained an agreement whereby he paid four annual instalments, with no interest, of £500. I had not known, until I read it in the booklet, that he was the first non "Lord of the Manor" owner. He then stored some of his scrap in it whilst it became gradually more derelict.

Since this was meant to be short, I'll save more for later!

Nigel Stennett-Cox, BSc, MSc  
North Walsham  
Norfolk

P.S. I saw mention of Sonia Rolt in the newsletter and therein lies another link with my own passion of vintage cars!





*Coggesford Mill as seen from downstream c1920*

Work Party News for January & February 2005  
Mel Sowerby

We have been lucky with the weather for both these weekends, let's hope it continues!! Most of the trees in the water have now been removed with the help of a 5 ton tirfor and some able-bodied members taking turns to attach chains and retract the cable. A slow but efficient way of bringing the roots to the waters edge and up the bank to be removed into the undergrowth and out of sight.

At the time of writing this there is only one tree left to clear along with some branches further upstream that are already cut awaiting the tirfor. This work was planned for March and the bank from the by-wash upstream can be improved. We moved the date of March's work party to coincide with a group who plan to tidy the pathways and help clear the rest of the undergrowth in the by-wash. Norman showed his skill with the camera and I am sure these pictures will find their way into future newsletters.

Work parties for April and May will be as normal 2nd weekend in the month. Venues to be decided as we are awaiting the divers report from Bottom Lock and access at Cobblers Lock.

See you soon, Mel

# The London Canal Museum

by

**John Buchanan**

The London Canal Museum has been open now for over ten years. There are continuing efforts by management to improve things, including recent installation of facilities for the disabled. When entering the museum there is a shop and reception for visitors, the entrance fee is £3.00.

The museum is in the site of a warehouse used by nineteenth century ice merchant and ice cream maker, Carlo Gatti. This accounts for some of the exhibits on display. There is a trolley bicycle in a central position when going further into the museum. This is the type of vehicle ice cream sellers used when the Gatti firm was on the premises. Those visitors who wish to learn about Carlo Gatti and his use of the museum over a hundred years ago, should look at the display blocks on the right.

A play area for children is to be found here, at the bottom of the horse ramp, which took the horses up to the stables on the upper floor. Opposite this are wallboards giving a brief history of canals in Britain. Next to them is the butty *Coronis*, into which you can go inside. It is now much easier to enter the butty, and there is the chance to find out how people living on working canal boats coped. The small kitchen space is worth looking at, and please do listen to the audio narrative installed near the front of *Coronis*.

There are items of canalware dotted around this floor. They need to be viewed in conjunction with the items used to keep these boats working, which can be found on both floors.

The London Canal Museum has become adept at collating such items of canal history. Such pieces, some of which are beautifully decorated, need to be viewed in context. When going to the upper level of this floor there are human models wearing the type of clothes worn by boat people. These are cared for on a regular basis by craftspeople hired by the museum.

When on a higher level take a look out into Battlebridge Basin. There one sees *Bantam Tug*, now fully restored and in full working order. It is sometimes still used as a working tug, and can be seen at Little Venice during their canal festival. Also on this level is an information board showing what the local area was like when it was fully devoted to industry. If visitors come up where the models are, they can go down the other side and see the cargo handling equipment.

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Nearby are the partly excavated ice wells used by Carlo Gatti. This building was ideal being near water, and the wells themselves are below water level meaning they are cold. The ice, brought from Norway, was transported by barge from the Port of London along the Regents Canal to the Gatti warehouse. Wealthy people had their own ice wells at the time Gatti was beginning his business in the nineteenth century.

Gatti also owned emporiums in nearby Central London to sell his ice cream, which accounts for the stables upstairs as horses would be used to take the carts on their rounds.

Apart from the lift for the disabled, there are stairs with non-slip grips taking visitors to the upper floor. Near the stairs is a display case with models of various kinds of barge. Display stands on this floor give interesting information on various topics. Some of these provide a history of the Regents Canal, which is of course the local canal to North London. Visitors will learn about important events in Regents Canal history. Also to be found here is information about the building of steel narrowboats made for the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company.

There is a stable with a model horse. Nearby are various items of horse related interest. They were not necessarily used on the horses Gatti had to draw his carts, but the type of harness worn by horses leading barges along the canal. Barges would not have engines in those days and were drawn along by sturdy horses.

Also on this floor are two videos to be seen by the public. They relate to the history of the Regents Canal and the London Canal Museum.

The nearest station is Kings Cross underground. Buses pass the bottom of New Wharf Road and they stop in nearby Caledonian Road going the other way.

Opening hours are Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., staffed by volunteers. Entrance fee is £3.00 with concessions. The museum is open on Bank Holiday Monday's but closed at Christmas and New Years Day.

*Editors Note: Sounds like its well worth a visit, hopefully our very own Navigation House will match it for local interest and imaginative interpretation!*

## **Slea Helps Tsunami Victims**

It was pleasing to see that the Slea has played a part in helping the victims of the recent Tsunami tragedy. The local press reported that a small group of school friends and their parents completed a sponsored walk along a seven-mile stretch of the river from Cogglesford Mill downstream to South Kyme. They raised in excess of £200 for the appeal fund. This is a lovely stretch of the river to walk along and has the added bonus that groups can park at each end of the stretch if you don't fancy the return journey on foot!

Martin Noble

## **The answer to the long-standing 'Low Cills' question?**

*The following e-mail was received from our previous Editor in January:*

Martin

I have just read an interesting article in the February 2005 edition of the Waterways World about the Grand Sluice at Boston. If the author, Pat Jones, is correct he has answered the question as to why Bottom Lock is so deep. The old theory that it was built that way because the Witham was tidal cannot be correct because the Sleaford Navigation was not begun until over 30 years after the Grand Sluice was constructed.

I suppose, with hindsight, it is easy to see that the exceptionally low cill levels would allow the rivers to be used in winter despite the lowering of the top level.

Can anyone confirm the deep cills on the Horncastle bottom lock and at Anton Gowt? Does anyone know if the Witham has been lowered every winter since 1871?

Perhaps if we can get the bottom end of the Slea dredged properly we are half way at least to becoming a *year round* rather than *six month* navigation.

Dave Turner

## **Lincolnshire IWA Campaign Cruise.**

Over the May Bank Holiday weekend, 28<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May, boats are cruising the unique network of waterways to the north of Boston. The boats will enter the system at the Antons' Gowt Lock, on the River Witham, at lunch time on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and proceed along the Frith Bank Drain to Cowbridge Lock. From there they will head into the centre of Boston via the Maud Foster Drain, spending the afternoon there before returning to Cowbridge for an informal bar-b-que. Sunday will see us cruising the northern reaches of the system. This will allow us to visit the *Vintage Tractor and Steam Rally* at Carrington, prior to returning to Antons' Gowt and the River Witham on Monday. Anyone interested in further details may contact Dave and Penny Carnell on 01469-530138.

## **“Pic over the past”**

**by  
Chris Hayes**

As part of the selection process of display material for Navigation House, North Kesteven District Council hosted a two-day display of more than two hundred archive photographs in the Hub. The intention was that visitors would select their favourites that would form a bank of photos from which a series of displays would be formed. In this way the images on show would change throughout the year.

The photographs themselves had come from a variety of sources but are not at present available in a book or for purchase. Many visitors did ask if that would be the case so perhaps that will now be an option to be considered.

Several show the Sleas but none depict working boats. Nevertheless there are some delightful pictures of people walking by the river or rowing in small boats. Enjoyment of water does not change with the years!

In a slightly less romantic mode, interesting photographs of Cogglesford Mill showed the buildings which housed the sewage pumping equipment to the side of the lock and there were also images of various sluices on the waterway.

Well over four hundred visitors came to the exhibition and it will be interesting to see which the most popular photographs were.

## **Footpaths Around The Slea**

Our Chairman met with a gentleman by the name of Hugh Marrows earlier in the year to discuss footpaths. Hugh works with Mary Powell on the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership project and is currently investigating walks both along the banks of the Slea and also those that link to it. His aim is to apparently go to print in the future, possibly in the LWP Newsletter initially but let's hope they extend that out to a nice little booklet that is widely available to everyone, whether they're a local or a visitor.

It is understood that a similar project is being undertaken for the cyclists amongst us too, so hopefully I'll soon be spoilt for choice – do I don walking boots or lycra shorts?!! Fortunately I can only leave you with a 'mental picture' of that as space for photographs is at a premium this month!!!

Martin Noble

## **Attention All Boaters - Possible Stoppage!**

The bottom gates at Bottom Lock are, sadly, becoming rather decrepit in their age and in need of replacement. Some work has been done by Trust volunteers in the past to re-panel sections but the current state of the gates is giving us real cause for concern. So much so that we will have to make a decision at the next Management Sub-Committee meeting as to whether or not we will be able to open the Navigation for use by boats this Spring.

Safety considerations are increasingly important these days and the concern here is that, if there were a problem with the panels of the bottom gates suddenly giving way, the top guillotine gate is notoriously slow to operate and could create a serious health and safety issue.

We still await assessment of when work funded by the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership can start and, in the light of that expectation, expenditure on expensive remedial measures would seem to be wasteful of resources.

A final assessment of the situation has yet to be made but should the decision be not to open the Navigation that information will be made available locally and through the waterways press.

Chris Hayes

## SPAM as an art-form!

No, not a contender for the Turner Prize in the form of a replica of Anderton Lift made out of tins of luncheon meat! Sleaford.navigation@ntlworld.com , in common with all Email addresses, receives its fair share of unwanted communications. One of the first daily tasks at the computer is to delete a selection of these that have managed to slip through any selection process by the deliberate misspelling of keywords such as “software”.

Recently however I have become fascinated by the curious form of English in which some of these adverts have been written. The writers appear to have a dictionary and Thesaurus but scant knowledge of English usage or shades of meaning. How else could the would-be provider of Viagra to SNT be titling an Email, “Supple and soluble tablets for actual guys”? I can work backwards to establish that “actual guys” are meant to be “real men” but what can a “supple” tablet be? Chewy?

This of course leads me to the art form. Decoding this language has become akin to solving a good crossword puzzle. I offer a few titbits for your amusement.

We have been offered medication at “gnomish prices” but a competitor offered to beat that with “elfin monetary value”! “Actual guys” have friends called “Real fellows”, odd how that conjures up a picture of a London Gentlemen’s Club with much hearty back-slapping. We have also been offered a “Recent direction for missing weight” (*a new way to loose weight?!).*

Perhaps the prize so far should go to the following advert for Viagra for sheer confusion and variety of terms:

“Our lozenges are only like normal lozenges but they are especially formulated to be pliable and soluble below the lingua. The pills is sorbed at the oral fissure and goes into the blood instantly alternatively of acting through with the tummytum. This results in a quicker much more powerful outcome which even up to 46 hour.”

You guessed it, it’s those *Actual Guys* again!

Chris Hayes

## ***"Wurgies" to be seen in Sleaford!***

Waterway Recovery Group or WRG for short (usually pronounced "wurg", members can be known as "wurgies") as many of you will be well aware, is an organisation of volunteers whose aim is the restoration of waterways. The organisation is highly professional and runs camps throughout the year at locations all over the country.

Those attending pay £42 per week for the privilege of digging, scrub clearing, hedge-laying or whatever the task at hand may be. They also have basic accommodation provided, are usually pretty well fed, meet an amazing variety of people and, if they didn't have it before, get the bug for canal restoration. Some are students but others come from all walks of life and countries of origin.

WRG have visited the Slea for many years and their efforts have contributed to much of the restoration work over the years. Recently, the footbridge over the bywash at Haverholme Lock was built by WRG and much of the rebuilding of Cobblers Lock was the result of their work.

This year we are hoping that WRG will be working on the stretch of footpath below Cogglesford Lock. The land there forms part of the stretch bought by the Sleaford Navigation Trust from the Bristol Estates and we would like to make the area more accessible to all users by improving the width and surface of the footpath.

Funding for the works will come from the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership and we hope the works will help to emphasise that the promotion of the Slea is not just about boating.

Chris Hayes



## Wheels and Wings

### (Cycling around Lincolnshire's Waterways by Martin Noble)

As keen supporters of the Slea you will all be aware that, at present, there are no cycling options along our waterway; however there are opportunities on nearby waterways to get astride your trusty iron steed and head off into the countryside!

In fact you don't even need to have your own set of wheels now that Witham Cycle Hire has opened its doors. Based at Boston Grand Sluice Lock on the River Witham it is situated next to the (relatively) new visitor centre there. Opened in August of last year (but closed for the winter season) it has bikes for all ages on offer complete with baby seats, tag-alongs and helmets for hire. You can even reserve a bike in advance by calling 07796 194095.

Last year also saw the opening of a new section of multi-user path alongside the River Witham, open to both cyclists and walkers alike. The original path from Lincoln to Washingborough covered some 2 ½ miles. This new 3-mile stretch, imaginatively named the 'Water Rail Way', takes you from Washingborough to Five Mile Bridge. The project was undertaken as part of Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership Waterways I initiative. There are plans to extend this section further downstream to Bardney (another 4 miles), under Waterways II, and eventually to Boston. That will give a stretch of almost 20 miles open to all you peddle-pushers out there!

For those of you unfamiliar with the path there are access points at Waterside South, Lincoln; The Old Station at Washingborough and from Five Mile Lane (as you head out of Washingborough towards Bardney). It is wide enough for two cyclists to ride comfortably abreast and soon has you out of the city into the Lincolnshire countryside. With plenty of wildlife along the path's corridor and on the waterways either side of you there are a number of suitable picnic places with which to make it an enjoyable day out for all the family.

But why the name 'Water Rail Way'? Its rather imaginative name is taken from both its railway connection (not long after leaving Lincoln the path joins a disused railway line) and from the fact that, if you are very lucky, you might spot a secretive little bird by the same name around the Washingborough section. The *water rail* is more often heard rather than seen, apparently squealing like a pig with a sharp 'kek ... kek ... kek' added for good measure!! Smaller and slimmer than a moorhen it is more common in eastern areas of England than elsewhere so keep your eyes peeled. It breeds on freshwater wetlands, especially in areas where there is an abundance of reeds and sedges. Colouring is predominantly chestnut brown and black upper-parts with a grey face and under-parts, black and white bars on the flanks are rounded off with a long red bill.

## Pat Taylor

(a personal profile from one of our most dedicated members)

I've been a boater since 1978 and a member of I.W.A (Lincs branch) since the early eighties. We joined the Sleaford Navigation Society (now Trust) in 1982 and I became a committee member after the death of my husband Derek in 1987 to carry on his work.

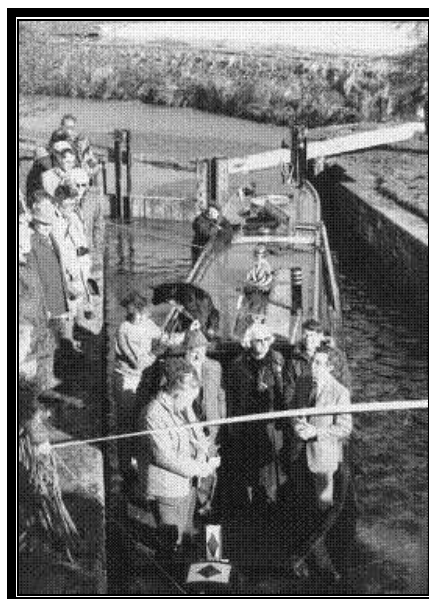
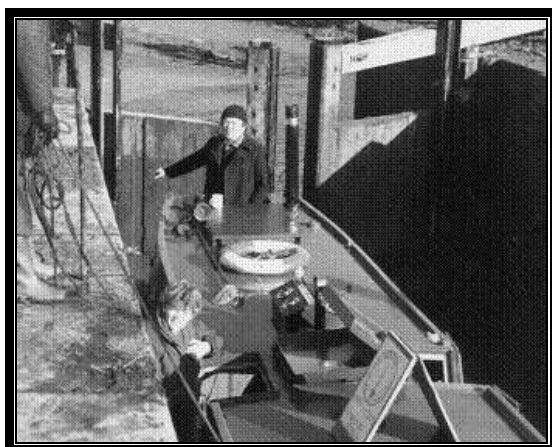
Prior to this, in November 1986, I was onboard our narrowboat *Wigford*, for the re-opening of Bottom Lock. It was a very exciting event. On that day we were able to cruise as far as the footbridge in South Kyme, which was the head of navigation at that time. In April 1988, after the footbridge had been raised, we cruised as far as Cobblers Lock for the first time, an eventful trip with many visitors on board as ballast to get us under the Bailey bridge.

Soon after this I started selling our merchandise, initially T-shirts, sweatshirts, Slea mugs and 'Head of Navigation' plaques. However, as many of you know, the sales list has grown greatly since then! The sales stand is now at many events, near and far, with the help of Rodney and other willing helpers.

*Wigford* has cruised most of England's Waterways and we have lots of boating friends all over the country. I am very lucky to have Susan, my daughter, and Mel, my son-in-law, with me and also the next generation of *Wigford's* crew.

We must never lose Derek's dream of getting *Wigford* to Sleaford!!

Derek Taylor, Pat's late husband, at the tiller of *Wigford* going into Bottom Lock at the re-opening. Sue Sowerby (nee Taylor) is on the side of *Wigford*



The cutting of the ribbon! Martin Chapman, the first Chairman of Sleaford Navigation Society is on the right. Pat Taylor is on the side of *Wigford* to the left.

*Were you there? Would you care to share your memories with us?*

## Your Executive Committee

Chairman	Chris Hayes 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH Tel 01522 689460
Secretary	Steve Hayes Contact as above
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Engineer	David Pullen Brinkburn House, Church Street, Scothern, Lincoln LN2 2UA Tel 01673 862278
Ordinary Member	Debbie Scott Tel 01529 305755
Ordinary Member	Barbara Jones Tel 01529 303749
Ordinary Member	Susan Sowerby Tel 01522 856810
Chairman, Sleaford Navigation (Sales) Ltd	Pat Taylor Tel 01522 790652
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Editor	Martin Noble 20 Curlew Way, Sleaford, Lincs NG34 7UD Mobile 07799 000046 e-mail martin@noble6161.fsnet.co.uk

## Non Committee Contacts

Membership Secretary	Jenny Osborne, Bank House, Ruskington Fen, Billinghay, Lincoln LN4 4DS Tel 01526 832256
Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP) Liaison	Norman Osborne Contact number as above
Work Party Organisers	John Jackson      Tel 01529 410427 Mel Sowerby      Tel 01522 856810

## 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.

Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> April SNT Work Party	Dig out those wellies and get stuck in at Cobblers Lock! Contact Mel Sowerby on 01522 856810 for further details.
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> April SSP	<i>Quiz Night</i> at Sleaford Rugby Club. See SSP box at bottom of page for more information.
Sat & Sun 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> May Mills Weekend FoCM Event	National Mills Weekend – milling demonstrations at Cogglesford Mill between 11am and 4pm. Contact Sleaford TIC on 01529 414294.
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> May SNT Work Party	More wellington and wader activities at Cogglesford! Contact Mel Sowerby on 01522 856810 for further details.
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May Honey, Bees & Bears FoCM Event	Honey & Bee Keeping Day – related workshops and information with the annual <i>Teddy Bears Picnic</i> and children’s activities. 11am to 4pm. TIC 01529 414294.
May Bank Holiday IWA Campaign Cruise	See page 13 for full details of this exciting cruise and give Dave or Penny a call!
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> June SNT Work Party	Let’s hope it’s a warm and sunny day preparing for the WRG Camp! Contact Mel Sowerby on 01522 856810 for further details.
25 <sup>th</sup> June – 2 <sup>nd</sup> July WRG Work Camp	Footpath upgrade to be carried out below Cogglesford Lock by the Waterways Recovery Group.
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> July Lincoln Waterfront Festival	The ever-popular waterside festival. Further details to follow in local press.
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> July SNT Work Party	Don’t forget your sun-cream! Contact Mel Sowerby on 01522 856810 for further details.
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> July Craft Event @ Mill FoCM Event	He can go and play in the mud at the Work Party; she can go to the Mill and get crafty!! Demonstrations, workshops and refreshments from 11am to 4pm.
13 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup> August Sleaford Water Weekend Known as “ <b>Splashy Bits</b> ” this year!!!!	Loads of activities planned on and around the waterway in Sleaford (let’s hope the water stays in the river this year and doesn’t fall from the sky!) Further details to follow.
10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> September Heritage Weekend	With a theme of ‘Transport’ this year SNT aim to join with FoCM for a joint venture. Watch out for further details.

FoCM = Friends of Cogglesford Mill

SSP = Sleaford Sports Partnership

### ***Sleaford Navigation Trust is a member of the Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP).***

**All Sleaford Navigation Trust Members are welcome to join in any of the SSP events**, which are all held at the David Williams Pavilion, Sleaford Rugby Club, Ruskington Road, Sleaford. Further details may be obtained from Norman on 01526 832256, or Barbara on 01529 303749

