

# SLEAFORD

NAVIGATION TRUST



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2000

# The Sleaford Navigation Trust

A non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No: 3294818.  
Registered Office 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH  
Registered as a Charity, No: 1060234.

## 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

The members of the Executive Committee are the Directors of the Trust.

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

**Secretary : Steve Hayes** Address and telephone as for Chris Hayes

**Treasurer : David Turner** Brownlows House, Brownlows Hill, Coddington,  
Newark, Notts. NG24 2QA. Tel. 01636 708781

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

**Martin Chapman**

**Barbara MacKay**

**Susan Sowerby** 01522 793149

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

**David Carnell** Nominee of Lincolnshire and South Humberside IWA

## Non Committee Contacts

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

**Editors for this issue:** Izzie and David Turner, address above.

## Editorial

Yes, it's us here again as no one has come forward with a desire to try their hand at editing. We are sure that out there, somewhere, there is at least one of you with a secret desire to see how it feels to sit in the 'hot seat'. The last three editions of the magazine have been produced on our dated 486 computer using an old word processing package. 'Stone Age' is how one friend described our version of 'Word'. We are sure things would be much simpler with a desk top publishing package but we have proved that it is not essential. Interested? like to try it out for one issue? or just want to talk it over? then give us a ring. Training can be provided.

It is customary at this time of year to wish all our readers the very best for the new year, to look back at the old one and do a bit of crystal ball gazing regarding the new. This time it is rather special and we ought perhaps to have devoted a page or two to putting progress to date and plans for the future into perspective - perhaps next time. But very briefly let's remember 8 miles of this 13 mile navigation is open to boats coming from the national navigation system, and that this waterway is going to be fully reopened before this millennium is very old.

David and Isobel Turner

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Sleaford Navigation Trust will be held at 8pm on Friday **12th May, 2000** in the Sleaford Sports Pavilion on East Road, Sleaford.

### Agenda

1. To receive apologies for absence.
  2. To receive the Director's report for the year ending 31st December, 1999.
  3. To receive the Accounts and Auditors Report for the year ending 31st December, 1999.
  4. To elect Ordinary Directors to serve on the Executive Committee of the Trust.  
*Three directors, determined by lot, retire by rotation and they all offer themselves for re-election:*  
Martin Chapman, Barbara MacKay, Dave Pullen  
*The Secretary would be pleased to receive nominations for additional Directors.*
  6. To re-appoint Robt. A. Page Kirk Cree Jepson of Nottingham as the Company's auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.  
*(Note. The auditors have so far not made any charge to the Trust)*
  7. To transact any other business deemed appropriate by the Chairman.
- Following the formal part of the meeting (usually short and painless!) there will be time for a social gathering, hopefully with a guest speaker.

## Chairman's Address

If it isn't too late I should like to wish all members and friends of Sleaford Navigation Trust a Happy New Year and New Millennium. Isn't it strange how all the hype about the end of the Millennium and the fears of the collapse of Technology as we know it seems such a long time ago already? Planes did not fall from the skies, computers did not self-destruct and canals did not empty themselves in breaches!

So what do we hope for in the New Year? There are many plans in operation and we hope to see them come to fruition in the coming months.

The Environmental Assessment Study is now underway and is another step forward towards restoration.

Work will start at Cogglesford Lock when WRG visit us in June to fit stop plank grooves preparatory to full restoration work.

Plans are going ahead for the next Water Weekend in Sleaford providing another opportunity for local people to recognise the value of the amenity on their doorstep. Maintenance work is planned for the lock gates at Bottom Lock where planking has deteriorated with the passage of time and water.

The Executive Board of the Trust will be extended by the invitation of Nominee Directors to represent a variety of related interests.

Sounds quite a bit to be getting on with! That doesn't include work being undertaken in meetings of the Executive Board, in Management Sub-Committee meetings, Sales Company meetings, by members representing the Trust in the meetings of other groups and organisations, manning sales and promotional stalls, preparing news letters, maintenance work, grass cutting, etc., etc., etc. It may not always seem that a lot is happening on the surface but perhaps it's rather like the analogy of the swan, not a great deal of activity on view to the public but a hell of a lot of paddling beneath the surface!

Should any reader feel that they might like to indulge in a bit of paddling themselves, we should be very grateful to hear from you. We are trying to compile a list of people we could call on for help in a variety of ways. So if your forte is building bonfires or selling raffle tickets, don't be shy. Your Trust Needs You!

I would also like to take the opportunity of thanking all those people who have helped in the last century in ways too numerous to mention. Your support and goodwill mean a great deal to me and to the rest of the Executive Board. Restoration will take place this century although a date for the re-opening boat rally in Sleaford has yet to be arranged! Watch this space!

Chris Hayes  
Jan 2000

## Sleaford Sports Partnership

### **What? Who? Why?**

These are the questions often asked when the Sleaford Sports Partnership crops up. Many of you who have been actively involved in the restoration of the Navigation will recall that we have often been helped by the Waterway Recovery Group, who have members all over the country who enjoy a "holiday" shovelling mud or bricklaying and doing various other jobs involved in restoring the waterways. When W.R.G. have helped us in the past they have stayed overnight at the Sleaford Rugby Club and used their facilities of showers and bar ---- or should that be the other way round.

Almost 3 years ago the Navigation Trust, along with the Sleaford Ladies Rugby Club and the Sleaford Netball Club, were approached by the Rugby Club to join in the formation of the Sleaford Sports Partnership as part of an application for a Lottery Grant for a new pavilion and sports ground. SNT would be able to use the facilities in the new building for meetings etc. and also have a garage-type store (with water, light and electricity services laid on) for our equipment.

Building started in January 1999 after grants from the Lottery and the Foundation for Sports and Arts had been awarded and the official opening ceremony took place on 30th August.

On the 19th September a group of us dismantled the old site hut at Cobbler's Lock and took it along with the equipment from the compound to be stored in our new store at the Sports Partnership.

### **When?**

The SNT AGM is booked for Friday 12th May at the new pavilion so all members will have the opportunity to see the facilities for themselves.

Remember that all SNT members are automatically members of the Sleaford Sports Partnership. You are welcome to attend SSP social functions (and help in the organisation of them). Functions so far booked include:

*Saturday 4th March:* SSP Race Night details from Linda 01529-303335 or Barbara 01529-304355 or Norman 01526-832256

*Sunday 2nd April:* East Anglia Waterways Association AGM

*Friday 12th May:* SNT AGM

Hopefully in the early summer the Waterway Recovery Group will be re-visiting us and enjoying their stay in new surroundings.

Finally, please remember the pavilion is available for booking, with or without in-house catering for any function, meeting or party.

Details from Linda Wells 01529-303335 (most evenings 7:00-10:30pm)

Norman Osborne.

## Voyage to New York an East Anglian Escapade

*Reproduced from 'Erewhash Outlook' by permission of the author, Val Roberts.*

Part 3 or "The second determined assault on the Drains".

In early September 1995, we had occasion to take 'Ambergate' to a party on the Chesterfield Canal, and on the way back we resolved to "finish off" the Drains. We daggered along the Witham, passed down Anton's Gowt, turned right along Frith Bank Drain to Cowbridge Lock. We were somewhat shot down to find no water above! A phone call to the Witham Fourth District Drainage Board elicited the information that it was nothing they had done - there was just no water - sorry! We had to wait for it to rain!

Thwarted in our intentions we decided to have a go at Lush's Drain, and so backed out of Cowbridge Lock and proceeded along the West Fen Drain to the junction thereof. We negotiated the junction and the following bend with some difficulty, and after about 400 yds came to a bridge with a headroom of 3' 8". As it was pouring with rain and we were somewhat fed up, we tied up for the night. In the morning we cycled via the roads and path along the Stonebridge Drain to follow the line of Lush's Drain to where it meets the West Fen Catchwater on a different level. There were five more bridges, two nice brick arches, one flat but with navigation headroom and a further footbridge at 3' 5".

We carried on along West Fen Drain to try our luck on what we have come to call Unidentified drain. We jiggled into the entrance OK and carried on to the second bridge, which is a lowish stone-faced Armco tube. We stripped the roof and got through. We passed one other bridge and came to a footbridge at 3' 7". Groo!! (we still did not have a map at this stage and were approaching blind). This bridge is very frustrating, as just beyond was a junction where we could possibly have winded. We walked up and found a second low bridge, followed the channel to Bramley, where we found an old farm labourer - he didn't know the name of the drain either. The channel turns right again here, and although we didn't walk any further, there was a third low bridge, and we could see a brick arch in the distance. We began to reverse out and at the first bridge a couple came out of their house here and said they had never seen a boat up here in the twelve years they had lived there. Had we got through the tube down there?! Blow me they were going to have a boat again now if they could moor it at the bottom of their garden!

After getting out of Unidentified drain, we continued along the Howbridge drain, with the intention of seeing if we could get 'Ambergate' with its more shallow draft - 2' 8" - rather than Dane along to Howbridge. We couldn't. We stuck in the same place, and after reversing out we couldn't get Ambergate's 62' winded at Bettinson's bridge either. The datum post here was showing minus 1. After much struggling we

managed to get her pointing along Castle Dyke - OK - we'll go that way. We knew we could get her through the B1192 bridge, and perhaps the weed wouldn't be so bad?....

We persevered over a bank slip, but couldn't get through the first arch bridge No. 4. There was about a foot of water! People in the adjacent house said there had been a burst water main, which had washed a shoal of gravel into the bridge hole since our passage with Dane earlier in the year.

We reversed back to Bettinson's bridge, back along the Howbridge drain to the junction with Sandy Bank drain, where we wended easily. For some inexplicable reason we didn't attempt the Sandy Bank drain! We left the system via Newham drain.

So we've still got some unexplored drains to look at next time we are passing Anton's Gowt.

PS Points to remember when navigating the drains:-

It takes five times as long to reverse out as it does to get in.

Watch out for eel nets.

## **Navigate on the Internet.**

With the rise of electronic communication and the ease of use of some of the new software becoming available I decided that the time was right to have a go at producing a web site to let the world know all about the Slea.

After a few false starts and quite a bit of experimentation I eventually got to the stage where I was happy with a few pages combining some text and a few pictures. The next problem, how to get them from my computer onto the web. Fortunately, after a little help, I discovered how to effect the transfer from my computer.

As a result the Trust now has a site, on the Internet, that can be accessed by typing in the address, <http://www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk>. Like anything that is new I still hope to develop the site and include more information as and when it is available. So far there are sections about:- The Trust and its objectives, it's committees and their membership. How and where the Slea can be seen, and also links to other web sites, both locally and nationally. The next section to be added will be a short history of the Sleaford Navigation, written for us by Simon Pawley. I hope that this new section will be in place sometime during January, but I am looking for a few photographs to include with the history that will make the pages more attractive.

If any member has any suggestions for information to include on the web site then I would be only too glad to consider them, if you would like to get in touch with me.

Steve Hayes

## Wood you Help this Man !

As reported previously the planking on the gates at Bottom Lock has begun to deteriorate near to the downstream water level and partial replanking will have to be carried out in the not too distant future. The plan is to take advantage of the lowered winter water level in the Witham and lower Slea and replace the top eight feet of the planking without taking the gates out of the water. With this in mind Dave Carnell was able to beg some very nice pieces of wood recently removed from a bridge across the River Anchome. 'The only thing' said Dave 'is that they are a bit thick and could do with cutting down'.

That is where I became involved and also volunteered my brother-in-law Clive who is a Nottingham based cabinet maker with his own business and a workshop full of joinery equipment. The timbers were ferried down from the far north of the county in batches and when a suitable date could be arranged I loaded them all into the Land Rover - glad I replaced the back springs last year - and headed for Nottingham.

Perhaps I should say that the timbers in question were 11 by 4 inches in section and over 8 feet long - not much fun to lug around on your own. In all there were 14 of them and the idea was to turn them from 11 by 4 into 11 by 2; quite a bit of cutting! Fortunately Clive has a circular saw with a 30 inch blade, but deep cutting is not as easy as it might appear and so we were fortunate to have Alan back from retirement to give advise based upon his 50 years in the woodworking business.

With Clive and myself togged up in ear defenders, goggles and gloves he pushed the wood into the saw whilst I squirted paraffin onto the blade as a lubricant and pulled the cut timbers off the saw. Sounds fairly straight forward but the great enemy of deep cutting is heat which once transferred to the body of the cutting blade causes it to distort, give off blue smoke and make the wood do a sort of saint vitas dance - much to the alarm of everyone concerned. Apart from making it impossible to cut in a straight line it takes much longer for the blade to cool than to warm up consequently progress was not what I had hoped and it was necessary for me to return another day to finish off the work.

Once opened it was possible to identify the wood as Iroko, a tropical hardwood imported into this country in great quantities from the 1930's onwards. It is an excellent wood for joinery, often used for boatbuilding and is sometimes known as 'poor man's teak'. Well, the wood is now cut and ready for nailing onto the lock gate frames at Bottom lock which with a bit of luck will be in the very near future. River levels permitting the plan is to do the work one weekend in March so if you might be able to help give Steve Hayes a ring for final details.

Dave Turner



## **New Members**

Welcome to the following new members:

Ruth Bradford-Harris

Jack Cowley

Robert Portlock

J. K. Williams-Ball

Sharon and Bob Burn

## **News of The 'Sales' Company**

We attended 9 venues from March to November with the sales stall last year. As well as selling our merchandise and bric-a-brac for the Trust we have lots of old and new faces coming to visit us, so it is quite a social occasion.

There is always a lot of interest shown in what is happening with the restoration. We are already getting dates for this year - the first one is 4th March the charity market at Washingborough Community hall, 11.00am to 3.00pm. Then we will be at Langley Mill for the boat rally 29th April/1st May, followed by Newark 9th 10th & 11th June and Lincoln 8th & 9th July. We are always looking for additional dates - anything to make some money for the funds. We are also always looking for additional helpers so if you fancy an afternoon in pleasant company manning the stall for a good cause - *get in touch.*

If you can't get to any of the events but would like to help the funds many items can be posted to you - it will be at cost. Please see the list on the back cover and/or give me a ring.

Pat Taylor

Chairman - Sleaford Navigation (Sales) Ltd.

## **Having a Ball at the E.G.M.?**

Those of you who missed the occasion will not understand the title - so apologies and an explanation - a large marquee had been erected adjacent to the Sleaford Sports Pavilion and when we arrived smartly dressed people were scampering through the rain from their cars to it in anticipation of a good night out.

A select turnout braved the rain to approve the two resolutions concerning nominee directors. Subsequent to this, British Waterways and the Environment Agency have been invited to appoint nominees to the Executive Board.

## **Environmental Assessment**

As part of the scheme for the restoration of the Slea back to navigable standards there are a number of studies that need to be completed if the Trust is to stand a chance of receiving lottery money, or any other major grant aid.

The first of these, a 'Feasibility Study', was completed some time ago. The Trust has now decided that as further restoration work is imminent it will be necessary to get the next study underway.

At the start of December 1999, ESL Ltd. of Horncastle was commissioned to undertake an environmental assessment of the river from Carre Street in the centre of Sleaford down to Cobblers Lock. Their task is to look at any environmental issues that may arise as a result of restoration of the Navigation, suggest remedies where appropriate and put forward any other changes that may produce environmental gain at little cost to the Trust. Sue Sowerby has agreed to act as the liaison between the Trust and ESL Ltd and also to help out with certain aspects of the study. If anybody feels able to help her with this task I am sure that she would be very grateful. She can be reached on the contact number on the inside front cover of this newsletter.

Steve Hayes

## **Morning Campers!**

Waterway Recovery Group the national co-ordinating body for volunteer labour on the canal system has agreed to run one of their camps this year on the Slea. WRG hold about 20 week long camps every year with work ranging from simple agricultural clearance to complex construction tasks. This will be the first camp on the Slea for some years since the rebuilding of the top cill of Cobblers lock.

The work this time will be centred on two locks. The primary task will be to install stop plank groves at the bottom end of Cogglesford lock which is not going to be quite so easy as it might have been a few years ago when the Slea was practically dry in summer. The other 'main' job is to clear the by-wash at Haverholme lock. For anyone interested in joining in the fun the details are WRG camp 04, 24/06/00 to 01/07/00, accommodation at the Sleaford Sports Partnership, cost (to cover food etc.) £35.00. WRG do not usually take bookings for less than the full week. Enquiries to WRG Canal Camps, PO Box 114, Rickmansworth, WD3 1ZY.

Local volunteers may be welcome to join in the fun on a daily basis, but this must be by prior arrangement in order to ensure the smooth running of the camp.

Dave Turner

## **Are you an Idle Cruiser?**

We are planning a cruise on the late May Bank Holiday weekend onto one of the regions scarcely used navigations - the River Idle. The plan is to enter the Idle on the afternoon tide of Saturday 29th May, returning the following afternoon.

To cover the Environment Agency charges the cost will be £20 per boat. If you would like to book a place, please send a £5 deposit (payable to SN(S) Ltd) along with your name, address, telephone number, boat name, type and details. Deposits will be returned if for any reason the cruise cannot go ahead.

Dave Turner

## **Snippets**

### **The Fina Points of Life**

For those of you using Fina petrol and diesel in your vehicles the Trust is continuing to benefit from their points scheme. You too can help when you fill up by collecting the points and sending the cards when full to Steve Hayes or if your garage has an SNT charity card ask the attendant to put the points onto that.

### **Haverholme Lock**

The owner, NKDC, has given approval to the Trust to remove a small number of young trees which are threatening the structure of the lock.

### **Sleaford Riverwalk Project**

The Trust has joined with NKDC and the Civic Trust in an application for lottery arts funding to enable improvements to the riverside path in Sleaford between Carre St and the leisure centre. This funding is to allow a more desirable surface than ordinary black tarmac which is all that the allocated County Council funding of £8,000 could provide.

### **Cogglesford Mill**

Still no news about the S.R.B. funding for the design works for the restoration of the lock.

### **Navigation Warehouse**

The Trust was most impressed with the excellent appearance of the rebuilt warehouse in Sleaford and the Chairman has written to congratulate NKDC.

### **Working Party News**

A working party at Cobblers Lock on 18th September last year removed the shed and tidied up the compound and lock. A large assortment of equipment, mainly scaffolding poles, and materials were moved off site to be stored in the lock up provided for us at the Sports Partnership headquarters.

## Diary Dates

- 4th March** Charity market at Washingborough, Sales stand in attendance. Phone Pat Taylor for details.
- 4th March** **Sleaford Sports Partnership Race Night.** Details from Linda 01529-30335 or Barbara 01529-304355 or Norman 01526-832256.
- 2nd April** AGM of the East Anglian Waterways Association. Non-members are welcome at Sleaford Sports Pavilion. Meet at 10am for coffee before a walk around Navigation Wharf, House etc. from 11:00 to 12:30pm. Lunch at the pavilion (£5 per head, must be pre-booked via Dave Carnell, tel. 01469 530138. Please give 10 days notice) The AGM follows lunch.
- 12th May** S.N.T. Annual General Meeting at Sleaford Sports Pavilion. 8pm, followed by social gathering
- 27th/28th May** Boat cruise on River Idle. Details from Dave Turner
- 9th-11th June** Newark on Water. Boat rally and entertainments. Sales stand in attendance. Phone Pat Taylor for details.
- 24th June - 1st July** Waterway Recovery Group canal camp. Main work site will be Cogglesford Lock.
- 8th/9th July** Boat rally in Lincoln. Sales stand in attendance. Phone Pat Taylor for details.
- 7th/8th October** Inland Waterways Protection Society walks on the Slea and the Grantham Canal - details nearer the time from David Turner.

## Pat's Emporium - Mail Order Sales

Polo Shirts (various designs), Cobblers Sweatshirts, T Shirts, Head of navigation plaques, Photo Keyring, Jotters, Mugs (various designs), Book Marks, Rubbers Cogglesford Notelets, Pencil Sharpeners, Pencils, Car Stickers, Necklaces, Rulers Pens

*Please ring to check prices, availability and postage costs*

Pat Taylor