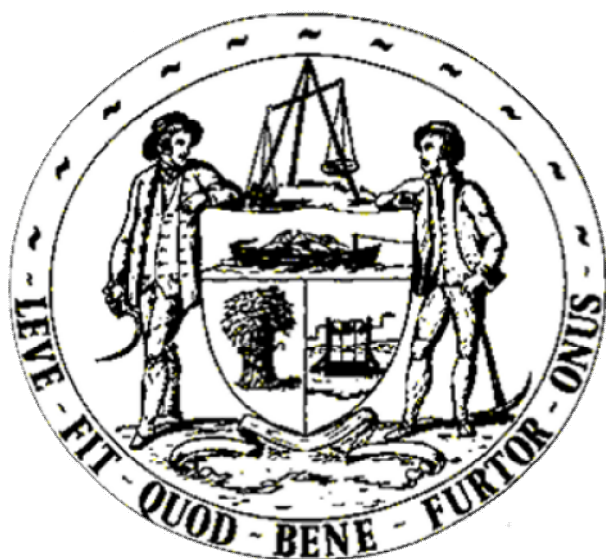


SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST



30

February 2009

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

Aims & Objectives

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

Please send all articles to either: david.osborne1987@gmail.com or norman.osborne@farming.co.uk.

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

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Editorial

I'd like to start this issue by wishing everyone a slightly belated Happy New Year.

This issue of the newsletter is a long one, with two major events being covered: the installation of a new footbridge in Sleaford, and the work on renovating Bottom Lock being finished. We have two articles on the bridge, both written by Steve Hayes, covering the planning and installation of the bridge, and an article about the work at Bottom Lock written by David Pullen.

Some of the updates on both Bottom Lock and the bridge have made it onto the Trust's website and blog, which is worth a visit. The website can be found www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk, and the blog is located at sleafordnavigation.blogspot.com, and is a good source of news between newsletters.

I'd like to apologise for mistakenly crediting the article about Da Vinci to Steve Hayes last issue, it was in fact written by Don Baines and sent to me by Steve.

As always, if anyone has any articles or photos for the newsletter, please send them to david.osborne1987@gmail.com, as the newsletter relies on these submissions.

David Osborne

Chairman's Report

Chris Hayes

Looking back over 2008 I can only say thank you to all those people who have helped make it such a good year for the Sleaford Navigation Trust. It has been a year in which we have seen major works at Bottom Lock with new gates, floating moorings and lock ladders. As I write this we are also only days away from the installation of the new lift bridge in Sleaford so that too will be complete within 2008. It is wonderful to see these projects finally come to fruition and to look forward to the slipway and winding hole as one of the projects for 2009.

It's a long way from the preliminary discussion in committee to the finished article and there are always a few hiccups along the way. Dave Pullen has done a brilliant job in project managing the Bottom Lock works and seeing it through the various problems along the way. I really can't thank him enough. I know he had anticipated the joy of the moment of completion when he would lift the guillotine gate to fill the lock for the first time with the new gates. Nature beat him to it as the high water level overtopped the piling dam and there had to be a speedy exit of all workers from the lock! Nevertheless we have a photo of a tired but happy Honorary Engineer at the lock. He has a lot to be proud of.

There has been a certain amount of badinage in the past about the shared interests of Dave Pullen and Norman Osborne. They have enjoyed technical exercises concerning water depth, can both give you precise detail on rain fall, have shared a canoe and seem to relish opportunities to don chest waders! Norman has been a continuing support to Dave throughout the works at Bottom Lock and has spent considerable time collecting and transporting goods as needed. I'm glad to have the chance of publicly thanking Norman too for all the time and work he has put in.

Steve Hayes has liaised with the Lincolnshire County Council Highways Dept. regarding the lift bridge in Sleaford although in this case the Trust has not been responsible for project management. Again things have not always gone smoothly and the role has not been without its problems. Thanks are due to Steve too for his initial pursuit of funding and persistence.

The trouble with saying thank you is that singling out people creates the danger of leaving others out. The committee and members have contributed

at all levels while the work party team has been vital to the whole operation at Bottom Lock as they put up security fences, re-pointed brickwork, put in fish refuges, rescued fish trapped in the draining of the lock and did many of these in the most appalling weather. What has been wonderful throughout is that they seem to have enjoyed it! Friendship and the ability to have a laugh remain an important part of SNT and long may they do so.

Thanks are also due to the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership and to Mary Powell in particular without whose help none of these things would have happened. SNT have worked closely with LWP throughout the year and are very grateful for what is now happening throughout Lincolnshire waterways.

Thank you for all you have done throughout 2008 and let's hope that 2009 builds on the success of 2008 for the Trust

The Hume Restaurant

South Kyme

Barbara & Jimmy Jones



Photo supplied by Norman Osborne

The Hume is easy to find in the middle of South Kyme, close to the river, with a large car park at the rear. Access for those who are less mobile is no problem.

We have visited twice in recent months, once as a guest and the second time because we enjoyed our first visit. There is a large bar area with tables for those who do not wish to eat in the dining room or who want a light meal.

(Continued on page 6)

The dining room is attractive, with different sized tables and the large mirror reflects light and looks elegant. The menu accommodates all tastes and appetites, having a good selection of fish, meat and vegetarian dishes. Lamb and pork are served with or without interesting sauces, vegetables are fresh and crisp chips accompany the excellent steaks. The corned beef pie was a challenge for a hungry person but one worth tackling. Sweets, selected from a trolley holding individual portions on different shaped plates, tempt even the strong willed.

The welcome we received was friendly and professional and the bill less than we have received in other establishments serving food of a comparable standard.

Sleaford Footbridge

Steve Hayes

By the time that you read this article the bridge should, at long last, fingers crossed, be in place. I hope!

I find it very difficult to write this piece for the newsletter because we have gone through such a rollercoaster ride of high and lows of emotions from the first concept to the final installation of the bridge.

The original idea came from a project to create a new Head of Navigation which was put forward as an entry in the IWA's Diamond Jubilee Award competition. We didn't win the £100K funding but came a very close second. We were delighted however that our project bid impressed Mary Powell from LWP sufficiently for her to say that she would like to include the plan into the Partnership's programme of works. The Head of Navigation project was broken down into two parts, the slipway/winding hole and the new footbridge. This was done to enable the Trust to apply for a grant from WREN. Although the footbridge was eligible for such a grant, the rest of the works weren't.

The first design for the bridge was very much like a traditional Dutch style lift bridge, however, this was vetoed by the Environmental Agency because it posed a significant flood risk, having supports in the water.

Dave Cragg from Lincolnshire County Council came up with an alternative idea which was acceptable to the EA. This involved an arch which supported the deck of the bridge, the centre part of which could lift. You could say it was a sort of cross between Sydney Harbour Bridge and Tower Bridge, only on a considerably smaller scale!

The Trust duly applied for a grant from WREN and were delighted to be awarded the maximum grant of £50,000. IWA's Restoration Committee also stepped in with a grant of £5,000 which acted as leverage for the WREN grant. Other money came from the local branch of the IWA with LWP providing the remainder of the funding.

The contract for design and fabrication was awarded to Britton Fabrications, a firm from Hucknall. They normally make metal gantries for roads and motorways but had fabricated some smaller bridges and wanted to extend their portfolio to include a lift bridge.

Before installation of the bridge there were a multitude of works to be done including rerouting the water pipe that ran underneath the bridge. This was achieved by using a mole to bore underneath the river. No, not some small trained furry creature but a rather larger mechanical device! There was also an electrical cable to be moved which took a certain amount of time as a new route had to be established. One option was to lead the cable about 400yds to somewhere on the far side of Navigation House but it was eventually decided that a route that went 20yds across the car park might be easier!

The 5th of November saw the old bridge lifted out so that work could begin to make the new abutments for the bridge. This has involved installing temporary dams along the sides of the river to allow the foundations to be excavated and the concrete to be poured to make the abutments, obviously the concrete also needs time to set before the bridge is put in place.

A combination of events has dictated progress with the project and the Trust would have liked to get the bridge in place before now, but it seems that it will be installed before the end of the year. I hope to have some stop press pictures for this issue of the newsletter but, failing that, they will be in the next one.

Stop Press Bridge Update

Steve Hayes

On a bitterly cold 29th December the bridge finally arrived in Sleaford! The crane arrived on site about 7.30 in the morning to set up, though I have to be honest that was before I arrived to view the events!

At first sight the bridge looked a bit like a giant Meccano Kit with two large artic lorries carrying all the parts. The first part to be unloaded was a large frame, a jig, for the bridge to be assembled on. This made sure that all of the parts were in the correct alignment for a quick and accurate assembly. First to be put in place on the assembly jig were the two ends. This was achieved with a few lifts from the crane and use of crowbars from Briton's assembly team to sit the ends in the correct place. The second lorry was then unloaded with the counterweight, lifting deck and joining beams being put onto the ground next to the main assembly.



Unloading the bridge



Pre-assembly in the car park

The next part to be assembled was the lifting deck. This had to be a very careful lift as the deck had to be lifted at an angle so that the pivot points had room to fit into the slots made for them in the end part. After one or two tries and some adjustment to the lifting straps to get the correct angle this was eventually achieved successfully.

*Photos supplied by
Steve Hayes*



The bridge being assembled

The next stage was to lift the four joining beams and bolt them into place. This took place fairly quickly with the two beams on one side being lifted and bolted up closely followed by the two beams on the other side.

All this work took till lunchtime. Time for a quick sandwich and a warm up in the car! After lunch it was a case of a final tightening of all the bolts with an air

spanner to prepare for the big lift. This was going to be best viewed from the New Street side of the river. Unsurprisingly a number of local Trust members were present at this time! Excitement mounted as we could see the assembly team placing the lifting strops onto the bridge and the crane swinging into position.



Ready for lifting



The bridge being lifted over the trees

The crane revved up and the bridge, minus the counterweight, was lifted up and over the trees. This was quite a height, in fact, big as the crane was, it was nearly at its full reach.

The new abutments were ready to receive the bridge, the team having already removed the nuts from the anchor bolts. Despite one or two doubters who thought that the bolts weren't lined up correctly, the bridge dropped into place with little fuss or effort and the lifting strops were finally removed.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)



The bridge in position, and being fixed to the abutments



The last big lift of the day was to put the counterweight into place. This was not part of the original lift as it would have contributed an extra four tons to the overall weight and would have made the lift very unbalanced. The assembly comprised mainly of bolting the pivot bearings to the main structure and fastening connecting rods from the counterweight arm to the end of the lifting span.

The counterweight being lifted into position

With the counterweight in place the final shape of the bridge was complete.

The only work that now remains to be done is to fit the mechanism to raise the bridge and also to make good the access walkways either side of the bridge. Both jobs should be happening by the middle of January.

*Photos supplied by
Steve Hayes*



In place at last

The Bottom Lock Project

David Pullen

When Kyme Bottom Lock was restored to navigation in 1988 it was of necessity done with minimum funds and as a result it has never been what might be described as “user-friendly”.

Also after over 20 years the lock gates were in a very poor state as the photos in the previous newsletter showed. The gates were becoming so weak and difficult to open that The Trust was strongly considering closing the lock permanently until they could be replaced. Several times in the previous 7-8 years we patched up the gates, on two occasions using RAF volunteer divers to carry out inspections and repairs. It was therefore with huge relief that in December 2007 we learned that the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership (LWP) had, on our behalf, successfully bid for and won funding to replace the gates and to upgrade the other facilities. The objective has been to get Bottom Lock up to the same standards as the other navigable waterways in Lincolnshire.

(Continued on page 12)

The full project principally consisted of:

- New Lock Gates
- Landing pontoons upstream and downstream of the lock
- A stop log system
- Lock safety ladders

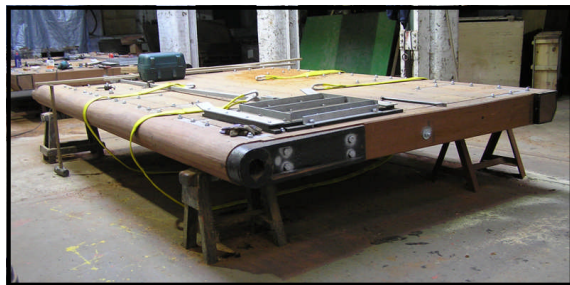
Removing the old gates.

The project got under way in June 2008 when the old gates were lifted out for inspection and measurement. Although The Trust had got drawings of the existing gates we did know that they were modified on site in 1988 and we wanted to ensure the new gates were exactly the right size. Also the lock gate furniture, i.e. the paddle winding gear, the pintles which the gates pivot on, and some other iron work, were also to be re-cycled for use on the new gates.

The New Gates

The tender to supply and fit the new gates was awarded to Hargreaves Lock Gates of Halifax. Hargreaves parent company is a foundry business which had previously made lock gate furniture and other canal fittings for the Rochdale Canal Company. When the Rochdale Canal workshops at Callis Mill were closed in March 2008 Hargreaves took on Nigel Lord and Richard Booth, previously of Callis Mill, and formed the new business. Although the original tender was for European Oak for a very small increase in cost we were able to change this to Ekki, which is a very dense hardwood which is much longer lasting than Oak. Ekki is a slow growing hardwood from Equatorial East Africa and the timber for our gates has full Forestry Sustainability Council (FSC) certification to ensure that the forests are being properly managed and re-planted after felling. In order to counteract the extra weight of the gates we extended the balance beams by 0.5m for extra weight and leverage. We can expect the new gates to last at least 30 years and possibly up to 50 years.

A further significant variation is that the gate paddles (sluices) are now in slides on the upstream side of the gates, rather than in rebates within the gates, and they are made from plastics rather than timber. The new paddles are therefore much easier to wind up and down than before.



New gates in construction at Hargreaves

Photo supplied by David Pullen

The new gates were more or less a perfect fit on arrival at

Bottom Lock and only required planing of the mitres where the gates meet together, this being in no small way due to the skill and accuracy of the

work done by Nigel Lord and his carpenters at Hargreaves. The Trust is extremely pleased with the new gates and we cannot praise enough the work done for us by Hargreaves.

Lock gates hung in the lock.

Photo supplied by Steve Hayes



Hargreaves also carried out re-trimming works to the gate cills using Ekki planking to ensure the cills last as long as the gates.

Draining the lock

However whilst the fitting of the new gates was quick and easy the project did have several other more difficult challenges. The main one was how to drain the lock in order to fit the new gates. Whilst some navigation engineers do carry this out with the lock “in water” this doesn’t give any opportunity to inspect and repair the gate cills, or to inspect the condition of the lock chamber generally. Also The Trust had no drawings or details of how the lock is constructed, and we also wanted, if possible, to fit a stop log system so that future maintenance and repairs can be done with much less expense.

A further complication was that the Land Drainage Consent (LDC) given by The Environment Agency (EA) required that a dam had to be removable within 24

(Continued on page 14)

hours notice in case of a flooding event upstream on the Slea. Exceptionally we were therefore given permission by LWP to use a single price contract by The Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (BSIDB) as we needed absolute confidence that there would be local engineers and equipment available if such an emergency occurred.

Together with engineers from BSIDB we discussed how to construct a coffer dam downstream of the lock. The upstream dam would be formed by the existing guillotine gate, (this did actually create a 100% water seal!). After studying old pictures of how the lock was dammed off in 1988 we decided to use the same method. This involved (or so we thought) vertical sheet piles inside the lock chamber just downstream of the lock gate recesses.



Constructing the dam

Photo supplied by David Pullen

BSIDB began attempting to install the dam on 14 October but immediately found that it was impossible to drive piles at the position where the previous dam had been. This caused much head scratching! Unfortunately despite a lot of questioning and research we had not been able to find anyone or anything which told us how the

previous dam had been installed. Fortunately there was some leeway in the works programme and we were able to research and evaluate alternative methods of damming the channel. Eventually we had to move the coffer dam approximately 7 m downstream to a line across the downstream channel just beyond the tails of the wing walls. However this then required a dam of approximately 18 m length instead of 4.5m inside the lock walls. There was therefore an unavoidable delay whilst extra piling supporting beams were hired in or manufactured. Also the main piling crane had to be re-jibbed to reach the longer distance across the channel.

Eventually, due in no small measure to the skill, determination and perseverance of the engineers from BSIDB, the dam was complete on 29 October and we were able to drain the lock using powerful pumps on hire from

BSIDB. On inspection of the lock foundations we learned that the wing walls downstream of the gates are built on a horizontal raft of large timbers, thought to be similar to railway sleepers. It remains a matter of some speculation as to how the 1988 dam was constructed, but we strongly suspect that it was a method which would not be even faintly considered safe in today's H&S interpretation and practice.

We also had to re-drain the lock twice due to high river levels below the lock. Significant rainfall events on 29 October and again on 8 November caused the level in the lower Witham to rise and back up the Slea thus over-topping the coffer dam. On the first occasion this happened overnight and by morning the level had dropped and within about an hour of pumping the lock was drained again. On 10 November the lock flooded overnight again just prior to completion of the cill works and had to be drained again in order to complete the job.



The completed dam

Photo supplied by David Osborne



Just as the work was finished the dam was overtopped again as the Witham rose suddenly due to the tide at Boston and we had to evacuate the lock rather rapidly for the last time!

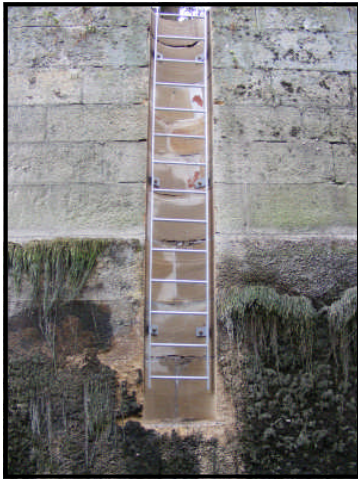
High water overtops the dam

Photo supplied by David Pullen

(Continued on page 16)

Lock Safety Ladders

The lock safety ladders were constructed and installed by Condor Projects of Hull. The main feature of their design is that it involves minimal structural damage to the lock walls. As Bottom



Lock ladder

Photo supplied by David Osborne

Lock is constructed mainly from large masonry blocks (thought to be Yorkshire Gritstone), it was possible to cut vertical semi-circular recesses using a specially designed diamond cutting rig. The semi circular shape minimises stress concentration as there are no corners, and the circular shape is stronger than a rectangular recess. The result is very neat and tidy ladder recesses with the purpose built ladders bolted into the recess.



Cutting the lock ladder grooves

Photo supplied by David Pullen

Stop Log System

Prior to designing this project The Trust had often yearned for a method of draining the lock for maintenance, but it would have been impossible to install any such facility without draining the lock- a catch 22 situation! However with the coffer dam now installed well away from the gates it now became feasible to cut vertical stop log slots in the lock walls downstream of the gates recesses. Nigel Lord at Hargreaves used his previous experience to design a suitable method and Hargreaves were authorised to construct and install the vertical grooves in the masonry and to supply and fit a bottom cill timber on which to drop the stop logs. The stop logs are also of FSC Ekki. An SNT work party assisted in the installation by putting in concrete haunching either side of the cill beam to seal it to the timber raft. The Ekki stop logs will be stored



Trust members concreting
stop board base

*Photo supplied by Norman
Osborne*

in an old barn at Bridge Farm by kind permission of Andrew Means.

Landing Pontoons

For the previous 20 years or so there have never been adequate landings or moorings for boaters to operate the lock. On the downstream side there is a small temporary jetty constructed from scaffolding tubes and planks. This suffers from settlement due to inadequate depth of footings in the soft river bank and SNT has regularly had to modify and repair it to render it safe and usable. On leaving the lock upstream it was always a case of inching out of the lock and jumping on the stern of the boat, or on approaching from upstream it was a case of just nosing up to the lock and commanding some compliant crew member to jump onto the upper lock wall!

The upgrade project has now resulted in two very fine 10m long floating pontoons upstream and downstream of the lock. The pontoons have been supplied and installed by Intermarine to the same specification and appearance in particular to the BW pontoons on the River Witham. In order to minimise maintenance and to avoid interfering with EA bank trimming and



maintenance operations the access bridges are connected directly between the pontoons and the lock walls. These new pontoons are not provided for mooring other than for operating the lock and hence they have been kept to a minimum length.

Downstream pontoon

*Photo supplied by Norman
Osborne*

(Continued on page 18)



Upstream pontoon

Photo supplied by Norman Osborne

The pontoons are restrained by vertical steel stanchions piled in to the river bed (by BSIDB) to facilitate maximum river levels on both sides of the lock. In other words there is no way they are going to float away off downstream and have to be recovered from Boston Grand Sluice!

Guillotine gate gearbox

The project has also provided a replacement gearbox for the guillotine gate to reduce the inordinate number of turns required to lift or lower the gate. This is also a safety matter in that prior to this the delay in dropping or opening the gate in case of a boating emergency in the lock was considerable. The new gearbox has more than halved the number of turns.

SNT work parties

The Trust carried out a number of work parties during the project including preparation of the site, e.g. safety fencing, pointing brickwork on the wing walls and concreting the stop log cill. At the time of writing in the New Year we still have to remove the old landing jetty, paint the pontoon stanchions and do several other minor jobs to complete the whole project ready for the new boating season in the spring.

Ecology

The ecological survey and report, which was needed for planning permission and LDC, called for proactive ecological mitigation measures. In particular this included provision of floating fish refuges ("refugia"!), and preservation of

potential Grey Wagtail nesting sites in the lock walls. Fish refuges have been placed next to the downstream pontoon and further ones will be located next to the upstream pontoon. Potential nesting sites in the downstream wing walls have been left in the form of ledges and recesses in the brick face.

When the lock was being drained the first time SNT carried out a fish rescue and released about 100 trapped fish into the downstream channel. These were mainly small to medium sized Perch, a number of reasonable sized Eels, and some small Pike. However on re-draining the lock the first time we discovered a sizeable Pike has swum over the top of the dam and it was not without some trauma (not to the fish!) that it was caught and hauled up to be landed and then released upstream.



David Pullen: A happy engineer

Landowner co-operation and support

The project could not have been completed without the considerable efforts and professional competence of all the contractors and suppliers. However a special acknowledgment is also due to the landowners and farmers who allowed us access and provided services. In particular thanks to Andrew Means (Bridge Farm) for access across his farm for the plant and materials and for transporting both the old and new lock gates and storing the stop logs. We must also thank Andrew Nicholson at Terry Booth Farm, North Kyme for allowing us to use his farm drive for vehicular access when the access via Bridge Farm and along the bank top became too soft.

Photo supplied by Norman Osborne

Funding

Finally without funding the project would have never been possible. The team at LWP, being Mary Powell, Dilys Britt and latterly Andy Jee have all supported us 100% both in preparing the original funding bid and in administering the funds whilst the project was in progress.

Sky Gypsy

Neil & Sue Ramsey

(Continued from last issue)

After passing through the Camargue region of France with its flamingos and herds of wild white horses we finally emerged from the inland waterways into the Mediterranean at Sete and turned right towards Spain. It was now mid October so we decided to try and find a cheap, convenient place to spend the winter and following advice from other 'liveaboards' that we had met, made for the Bay of Rosas on the Costa Brava. I'm sure that in the high season it would have been far too crowded and touristy for our taste but it turned out to be an ideal wintering hole - cheap moorings with water and electricity provided, a nearby outdoor market held twice weekly and quite a substantial expat. community which meant that we could do book swaps and plunder their local knowledge for anything else we needed.

However, come Spring we were more than ready to move on again and having decided to give the over-developed Balearics and southern Spanish coast a miss, we retraced our steps to the French border and embarked upon a season on the Riviera. We took our time, never bothering to move from a secure anchorage if it was threatening to rain or be blustery. Once we were storm bound for almost a week on the islands just off Marseilles where the French Count of Monte Cristo was imprisoned but once June arrived the weather settled and we simply sailed gently from one beautiful anchorage to another. There are so many places only accessible by boat - Les Calanques near Cassis are deep inlets almost like fjords with crystal clear water and steep rocky sides, the Isles de Porquerolles are part of the French National Park System, some of the smaller islands reserved for naturists. The whole group are nature reserves with smoking and motor vehicles banned so even the people who cross by ferry to holiday there have to travel about by water or on foot or by bicycle.

Even the well known places on the Riviera present an entirely different aspect when you arrive by water and even the most exclusive and expensive allow you to tie up to the quay for three to four hours whilst you fill your water tanks and buy fresh provisions. We were very pleasantly surprised to find no high

rise hotels crowding the beaches, except perhaps in Nice. St. Tropez, Cannes, Villefranche and Menton were enchanting and one of our most wonderfully welcoming receptions was at the harbour of Monte Carlo. It was almost unbelievable to be able to spend a couple of nights on our almost shabby yacht amongst all the millionaires craft and moored alongside the Casino and the motor racing circuit.

With no household bills, no car, no telephone (this was before the advent of “mobiles”) we certainly found it possible to live and live well on the basic pension. I had it paid directly into my UK bank and simply used hole-in-the-wall machines to get local currency whenever we needed it.

We moved on from France to Italy, finding more beautiful harbours and anchorages, like fairytale, fabulous Portofino and Chiavari where the cool marble colonnades made us feel as if we were on a stage set from Shakespeare. A very warm welcome awaited us at the Yacht Club in Genoa, the harbourmaster had been a submariner during the war and bombed by a Mosquito, which he swore must have been mine! So we ended up staying there for free and exploring the area for about a month.

The east coast of Italy is less popular with tourists, which sounded to be our style, so we planned to gently work our way all the way down to the “toe” and then up the other side to Venice. However when we arrived at the island of Elba in September we were hooked. It is a favourite wintering place for liveaboards and for good reason. A free, totally sheltered harbour with all facilities close by, it didn’t take much persuasion from other residents for us to decide to stay awhile. The permanent winter community comprised people from Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Denmark, USA and other English plus there was a continuous flow of boats of all nationalities calling in for a few days on their way to or from the Balearics, or the Greek Islands off the French or Italian mainland to the African coast.

Away from the harbour of Portoferraio the rest of Elba is beautiful too and

(Continued on page 22)

very easy to explore by bus, bicycle or on foot. We had a favourite pebbly beach a short walk away, which had the most amazing coloured stones that shone like jewels in the sunshine when the sea washed over them and the pathway down to this beach was a mass of colour and scent in February when all the spring flowers came out.

We stayed on Elba for nine months and totally fell in love with it but eventually moved on again and continued our Gypsy lifestyle around the Mediterranean and the inland European waterways finally arriving back in Holland after seven years adventuring. Then, for various reasons, including declining health, we decided that the time had come to rejoin conventional society so very reluctantly sold Sky Gypsy and found a house.

However, we can still see the river from our windows and have two small dinghies to play with in the summertime so the sailing hobby that became a dream and a way of life after retirement is still going strong.

The Slea Journey: Part 3

Norman Osborne

You may recall that in part 1 we traced the Slea from source at West Willoughby to Sleaford, then in part 2 we continued the journey to Haverholme.

Now we start from Haverholme car park and cross the stone roadbridge and follow the towpath towards Anwick. A new footbridge crosses the feeder from the Ruskington and Leasingham Becks. In the distance we can see Moy Park (Padleys) factory on the main road and then we come to the end of River Lane Anwick.

The land on both sides of the Navigation is low lying and quite wet, particularly on the south side, where the area of woodland is known locally as The Claims and is part of the Haverholme Estate. There is a heronry and



Old River Sleas joins the Navigation below
Cobblers Lock

Photo supplied by Norman Osborne

rookery here and it is also home to deer and swans, as well as many smaller birds, including kingfishers. Ahead can be seen South Kyme Tower.

On reaching the lock we pass over the by-wash footbridge. Cobblers Lock chamber was restored 1990-1992 with help from our friends from Waterways Recovery Group (WRG), Langley Mill and the IWA. As there are no lock gates, this is the present Head of Navigation and also the site of the confluence with the Old River Sleas, immediately below the lock. The stretch of river from here to the Witham is stocked with some large fish, which can often be seen.

After crossing the lower end of the by-wash the river is still bounded on the south bank by the woodland until a sharp right turn, shown on old maps as “Appletreeness”, which at one time was head of navigation.

In the building accounts of Tattershall Castle c1450 records show that “35 cartloads of plaster of Paris from Londonthorpe were loaded on to boats at Appletreeness, on the river Sleas near Haverholme, to be taken by water to Tattershall”. Wilsford stone was also loaded here 1503-1515 to be “boated” to Tattershall and then loaded into carts again to be delivered to Louth.

As the river turns north east, the south bank is bounded by Ewerby Waithe, and the 13 wind turbines at Bicker Fen can be seen in the distance, gracefully generating power.

This relatively long straight stretch of river ends at the Ferry Farm corner,

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)

where the towpath crosses the river to the other bank at Ha’penny Hatch, or as more locally known Ha’penny Toll bridge, which, until lowered by the county council around the early 1970’s was a classic canal hump back bridge. The next 0.25mile follows the course of the Roman Car Dyke and then turns east, past the farm Bailey Bridge, (lifted by the SNT and WRG in 2005) to approach South Kyme.



Ha’penny Toll Bridge

Photo supplied by Norman Osborne



South Kyme Church and
Tower

Photos supplied by Norman Osborne



In Roman times South Kyme was on an island in the fens and relatively close to the sea. As we approach the village the 77 ft. high stone tower is a clear landmark on the skyline and is all that remains of the castle. The adjacent church is on the site of an Augustine priory founded in the 12th century.



Low Road Bridge

Photo supplied by Norman Osborne

The river, known here as the Kyme Eau, bends round the tower and enters the village under an attractively restored road bridge, opposite The Hume.

South Kyme can be taken as an example of a village which has been enhanced by the restoration of the waterway and many properties now have gardens attractively landscaped to the water's edge, some having their own moorings. It has become a

tradition for there to be a boat gathering at the May Bank Holiday at South Kyme, where boaters and the village people share community events and attend the Sunday morning church service.

Garden Moorings

Photo supplied by Norman Osborne



Holdingham Mill

The pictures on the next page have kindly been supplied by a member of the Trust, and show Holdingham Mill in times gone by.



Holdingham Mill



Aerial view of
Holdingham Mill



House at
Holdingham Mill

Committee

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Secretary	Steve Hayes Contact as above
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Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP) Liaison	Norman Osborne Contact number as above
Editor	David 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. All Sleaford Sports Partnership Events will be held at the David Williams Pavilion, Sleaford Rugby Club, Ruskington Road, Sleaford, NG34 7SP.

February 14th	Sleaford Sports Partnership Salsa Night
March 20th	Opening of the link lock—Boston
April 10th-13th	Drains Cruise—details to be arranged
April 25th	Water Railway Moving Celebration
April 25th	Sleaford Sports Partnership Race Night
May 1st - 4th	Bottom Lock Re-opening Gathering at South Kyme
May 23rd - 25th	National Campaign Rally, Chesterfield Canal
August 29th - 31st	National Waterways Festival
Usually Second Sunday of the Month	SNT Work Parties. Contact Mel Sowerby (01522 856810 or sowerbys@ntlworld.com) for details.

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

All SNT members are automatically SSP members, and 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 available from Norman on 01526 832256, or Barbara on 01529 303749

