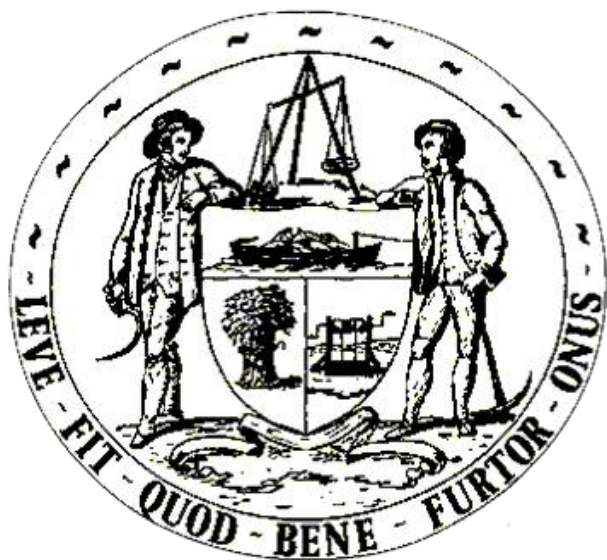


SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST



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Winter 2010

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 Sleas, 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: sleaford.navigation@ntlworld.com or

10 Chelmer Close

North Hykeham

Lincoln

LN6 8TH

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

Since the last newsletter we've had the exciting opening of the new slipway (and the official opening of the footbridge) at Eastgate car park in Sleaford. There is a lot more on this event later in the newsletter, but I'd like to say it was good to see boats in Sleaford.

I hope the current weather has not caused too many problems for boaters, as some rivers in the local area have been frozen.

From this newsletter on, we're changing the address for submission of articles. Rather than being sent directly to me, instead send them to sleaford.navigation@ntlworld.com, or the postal address given opposite. This allows all of the articles to be gathered together before being sent to me, which should make putting together a newsletter easier. As always, we welcome all relevant submissions, and the newsletter relies on these submissions in order to be produced.

This newsletter is also the first one to be sent to some members via email. If you wish to receive your newsletter by email, please let us know by emailing the address given above, or me at david@digital-clouds.com. This way you will receive a colour electronic copy of the email instead of the black and white paper version.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

David Osborne



A wintery view of the
Slea near Sleaford
Leisure Centre

*Photo supplied by
Norman Osborne*

Chairman's Report

Chris Hayes

As we approach the end of the year I feel I can look back with a great deal of pleasure on what has been achieved. The slipway and bridge opening are a real step forward in themselves but also focus attention on the work and ambitions of the Trust. As has often been said, a rural waterway gives few opportunities for the general public to be aware of restoration work. The work in Sleaford has been very much in the public eye and the resulting support from local people has been welcome indeed.

As I have written elsewhere in the account of the opening, thanks are due to many members and friends, as always. We were delighted to welcome the two trailboats Olive and Bobbles to the event and to see Schandelle on the Slea once more. John Lower is an SNT member and had previously brought his boat to Sleaford to help us publicise the potential of the top pound. It was good too to see old friends like David Tomlinson make the journey to celebrate with us.

That feeling of friendship towards the Trust is very important and we saw it as ever in South Kyme earlier in the year and in Worksop when we attended a Canal Festival on the Chesterfield Canal. The Chesterfield Canal Trust had brought their promotional stand to Sleaford for the opening and we returned the favour with a joint Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership and Sleaford Navigation Trust stand at their festival.

We have new plans afoot for future developments and hope that those, together with what has been completed already, will give others the opportunity to enjoy the waterway. Enjoyment can come from volunteering and this is the focus of our new information leaflet. You may have already seen a copy but if not they are available at several locations in Sleaford or could be sent to you on request.

I'd like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year complete with everything you most want. (Do you think Santa could manage a bit of dredging? Perhaps the elves would like SNT T-shirts as an incentive!)

Weed Cutting on the Slea

Chris Hayes

On June 21st, that's right, Midsummer's Evening, a group of ten Sleaford Navigation Trust volunteers spent the evening in the River Slea cutting and removing weed. The operation was in preparation for the boats and canoes using the river during the official opening of the bridge and slipway on July 3rd. (A report of that event appears elsewhere in the newsletter.)

The weed was cut with a chain scythe which is specifically designed for weed cutting with minimum environmental and ecological impact. The weed was then dragged to the banks and spread out to allow aquatic invertebrates to escape back into the water.



The chain scythe in action

Photo supplied by David Osborne

It takes a special kind of volunteer to spend an evening weed cutting in celebration of the summer solstice and perhaps the Druids have more interesting ways! In fact, although the midsummer activity may have a romantic appeal, we actually repeated the operation three times in all because we had been advised that this would be a more effective and ecologically friendly way of approaching the task.

This was definitely an opportunity for donning

waders but it was probably as well that the weather was warm as not all participants remained dry during the proceedings. Operating the chain involved two people walking along the river bed with the cutter between them. At least one volunteer found that there is considerable difference in

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water depth as you wade through the Slea and that shelves end without warning!

Thanks again to all who took part. The midges were ferocious and some of us bore the evidence of their attacks for quite a considerable time. Overall though the fun and the camaraderie were worth it all and reminded you of the social benefits of volunteering!

SNT members cutting
weed near Cogglesford
Mill

*Photo supplied by David
Osborne*



Congratulations and Celebrations...

(Apologies to Cliff Richard fans!)

Chris Hayes

The sun shone and the band played and it felt as if most of Sleaford had turned out to help us celebrate the opening of the new lift bridge and slipway on July 3rd. It was wonderful to see so many well-wishers lining the banks of the Slea and to hear all the encouraging, positive comments. Local support for any restoration is vital and we were very grateful to Sleaford Town Council for allowing the use of Eastgate Green for the event. I heard many comments throughout the day on how good it was to see boats back in the town again and that unsolicited enthusiasm is really important to the Trust.

The culmination of 5 years' work, this new Head of Navigation project was completed thanks to continued support from Mary Powell and funding from the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental) and the Inland Waterways Association. The slipway and bridge allow small boats to access the top pound but are also a statement of the Trust's ultimate aim of full restoration to navigation of the remaining 4½ miles needed to connect the top pound to the restored section of the Sleaford Navigation.



Chris Hayes & Councillor
Eddie Poll cut the
ribbon

*Photo supplied by David
Osborne*

The slipway was formally opened when Lincolnshire County Councillor Eddie Poll and I cut the ribbon although I have to say I hadn't realised how lengthy a process that could be when all the photographers are given the opportunity to get just the angle and shot they want. John Lower's boat 'Schandelle' was then launched with due ceremony down the slipway and took Eddie Poll and David Pullen, SNT project manager of the slipway installation, on an inaugural trip down to Cogglesford Lock, passing beneath the raised lift bridge. Canoeists from Boston and Sleaford canoe clubs followed while visiting trailboats Olive and Bobbles brought up the rear and gave Sleaford a glimpse of the variety of boats the slipway will attract.

Having done the formal bit with speech and ribbon cutting I must admit I ran to the bridge to see the boat go underneath and did a rather less formal whoop of "YES!" as it did so.

A series of stalls including ones for the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, Tastes of Lincolnshire and Chesterfield Canal Trust gave Eastgate Green a



Schandelle followed by canoes

Photo supplied by David Osborne

positively carnival atmosphere and there were cookery demonstrations from Rachel Green and even a duck race in support of a local nursery to round off the day. It truly was a community event with a hog roast, food stalls, face-painting and some visitors even trying their hand at canoeing.

I cannot possibly describe the opening without giving my sincere thanks to all those people who have been involved in both the project and the event itself. David Pullen deserves special mention for the magnificent way in which he has project managed the slipway and liaised between the various parties involved. It's a long time since the first plans were formulated and it wasn't until the end of the day when we were packing up

display boards and gazebos while the trailboaters were enjoying a barbecue in the evening sunshine that Steve and I had a full realisation of what had happened and what this meant in terms of achievement for the Trust. That was a good moment.



Stalls on Riverside Green

Photo supplied by David Osborne

So after all the inevitable stress and headache of the event was over and there had been an audible sigh of satisfaction and relief, what happened next? I found myself saying, "That was really good, we ought to do it again you know.

Derek Smith from Olive said that it would be a good venue for a trailboat rally and Eastgate Green did look wonderful. What do you think?"

Watch this space.



Canoes & the trailboats near the Hub

Photo supplied by David Osborne

Sue Sowerby and Pat Taylor on the SNT stand

Photo supplied by David Osborne



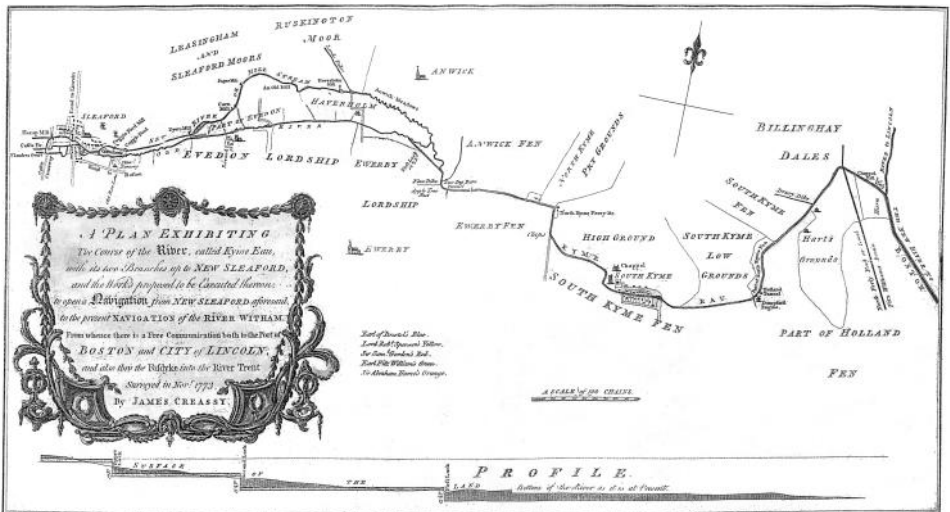
Trailboats moored near the slipway

Photo supplied by David Osborne

New discoveries on old matters

Chris Hayes

For many years Steve Hayes has been giving presentations to a variety of groups on the history of the Sleaford Navigation and current developments. In these he has referred briefly to the plan put forward by James Creassy in 1773 but moved on to say that the preferred option was that proposed by William Jessop and adopted in 1792. Only recently did a copy of the map outlining Creassy's proposal come into our possession and when we looked at the plan in detail some surprising things came to light.



Creassy intended creating a navigation on the Old Slea which was something we had not been aware of. He planned to build only three locks between the River Witham and Sleaford with depths of 12'6", 15'6" and 17' respectively. Our first reaction to this was to question whether he, or indeed anyone else at the time, had the engineering skill to build locks of this size bearing in mind the water pressure they would sustain. We then began to think about the amount of bank work that would be needed and the effect that would have on drainage into the river. We concluded that perhaps this man was an enthusiastic amateur rather than an engineer.

With the benefit of Google we checked him out and discovered that he was certainly experienced in engineering in the context of drainage and was a local

man. The detail we found is reproduced separately but shows his involvement in works on the Witham between Boston and Chapel Hill. It also shows that he was known to Sir Joseph Banks and was much more respected than we had imagined. Banks was an extremely important and influential figure in the creation of the Sleaford Navigation and the Horncastle Canal as well as being recognised as a national authority on scientific matters and botany.

Interestingly, the map confirms what both Steve and I had suspected, that the driving force on the New Slea was the millers not the Navigation. The New Slea is clearly marked on the map as a Millstream and as it is shown in existence at least twenty years prior to any of the work done by Jessop, then it is clear that its creation was for the benefit of the highly influential millers. Perhaps this is also one of the reasons why Creassy's idea was not adopted. His plan could well have drawn water away from the mills whereas Jessop's design accommodated them. Certainly part of the New Slea shows convoluted bends which Jessop straightened out but the waterway was clearly in place prior to his works.

A few extra screens have had to be added to the Powerpoint presentation!

A biographical dictionary of civil engineers in Great Britain and Ireland

A. W. Skempton

CREASSY, James (c. 1710-1807). Surveyor and civil engineer, was 'born and bred in the midst of the Fens'. He first comes to notice as 'James Creassy of Boston', employed as a freelance surveyor on the Witham Drainage and Navigation scheme under the direction of Langley Edwards from 1762 to 1768. His tasks included setting out most of the 9 mile new cut from Boston to Chapel Hill, surveying Holland Fen, and (with James Hogard) measuring the quantity of excavation in the new cut. On the Black Sluice Drainage, also under Edwards's direction, he made a survey (1766) and measured up the new outfall sluice (1768).

In March 1771 Creassy reported on a project for a navigation from Sleaford to the Witham at Chapel Hill, having made the survey in 1773. His report is

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notable for minutely detailed specifications and estimates for the locks. Nothing came of the scheme for the time being. The navigation was eventually carried out on a somewhat different plan between 1792 and 1791 by William Jessop and John Hudson.

Creassy retained a connection with the Witham. He deputised for one of the Commissioners at a meeting in March 1775. Later that year he drew up plans with estimates for improving drainage of the fens adjacent to the river between Lincoln and Chapel Hill, by cutting drains on each side of the river. The high and low lands water would thus be kept separate. John Smith Jr. gave his opinion on the proposals in a report signed by both men and dated January 1776

Next year, at the request of Lord Townshend, Master General of Ordnance and a Board Member of Bedford Level Corporation, Creassy 'took a view' of the Middle and South levels to see how their drainage could be improved. On the same principle of separating high and low lands water, he recommended the provision of drains on both sides of the River Ouse downstream from Denver with outfall sluices into the river just above King's Lynn, the drain on the east side to continue upstream to the higher ground at the river Cam.

This report was one of several in response to a set of proposals submitted to Parliament by the Corporation in February 1777. The Bill failed on its second reading. The solution finally adopted was to effect a major improvement in the river by the Eau Brink Cut, sanctioned by an Act of 1795.

Creassy came to the attention of Colonel Henry Watson while the latter was in England before returning to India in 1777 as Chief Engineer, Bengal. Several years earlier Watson had drawn up plans for docks and a yard for fitting out ships at Calcutta. He was now prepared to start work, seemingly at his own expense, and materials were arriving on site. At Watson's request, Creassy came out to superintend the work, at what is said to have been a large salary. Details of the operations are not known but the first ship, the *Nonsuch*, was launched from the dock in 1781. Unable to obtain any financial compensation Watson sent Creassy back to England to represent the case, but without success.

Creassy, who made his return journey via Egypt, Italy and the Netherlands viewing all the great works of drainage, both ancient and modern, was back in Lincolnshire before November 1782. He spoke of undertaking a 'voyage of

discovery', though it is unlikely this ever took place. The next reference to him is in 1785 when he had moved to London and reported, in March, on the river Nene outfall and, in April, on the drainage of low grounds in Wainfleet, north of Boston.

In India, Watson's health declined. He resigned the service in January 1786 and several months later embarked for England. Creassy visited Dover to greet his return but Watson died immediately after arrival on 19 September, as Creassy informed Sir Joseph Banks in a letter written next day.

In 1791 Creassy reported on Moulton and Holbeach sea banks, writing from London. Next year he was proposing to publish a map of the Fens. In 1800 he carried out a small but very successful job for William Madocks: a sea bank 2 miles long and varying in height from 11 to 20 ft. to reclaim about 1,100 acres of sand and salt marsh in Traeth Mawr on the coast of north Wales at the site of what was to become Portmadoc.

Some two hundred men were employed, with one hundred and fifty barrows, and the bank was built in six months at a cost of about £3000. In addition Creassy cut two catchwater drains and there were two sluices in the bank 'for venting the inland waters'. Two years later a large tract of the reclaimed land was under wheat and rape, followed in 1803 by barley and grass.

By the end of 1800, if not earlier, he moved to Burwood Copse, near Crawley, Sussex. From that address he reported in 1801 on the drainage of Keyingham Level and in 1802 on the Leven Canal, both in the East Riding. In 1806 he surveyed the river Adur in Sussex regarding improvements in drainage and navigation. Also in 1806 he prepared plans for a new sea bank to enclose an area of land in Traeth Mawr, much more extensive than that reclaimed in 1800, but before anything could be done he died in March 1807 at the age of sixty-seven and was buried at Crawley.

New members

We would like to welcome our new members, Mr. Howard Buck & Mr. Robin Wade

The Slea in Winter



The Slea above Haverholme Lock

Photo supplied by David Osborne



Cogglesford in the snow

Photo supplied by Norman Osborne

Committee

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Secretary	Steve Hayes Contact as above
Treasurer	Penny Carnell Conifer Cottage, Northend, Goxhill, South Humberside, DN19 7JX Tel: 01469530138
Engineer	David Pullen Brinkburn House, Church Street, Scothern, Lincoln LN2 2UA Tel: 01673 862278
Director	John Line Tel: 07967362141
Ordinary Member	Debbie Scott Tel: 01529 305755
Ordinary Member	Susan Sowerby Tel: 01522 856810
Chairman, Sleaford Navigation (Sales) Ltd	Pat Taylor Tel: 01522 790652
Lincolnshire IWA Nominee	David Carnell

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Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP) Liaison	Norman Osborne Contact number as above
Editor	David Osborne Contact number as above Email: david@digital-clouds.com
Work Party Organisers	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.

Saturday 30th April– Monday 2nd May	South Kyme Boat Gathering
Monday 30th May	Witham Navigable Drains cruise
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

