

SLEAFORD

NAVIGATION TRUST



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 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

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

Editorial

By now you will have noticed our new illustrated front cover. We hope to improve the quality in future issues and continue to bring you pictures of the restoration when we get the technology more under control!

Gazing into our crystal ball we can foresee that as some of the 'political' problems are sorted out in the near future greater emphasis is going to be placed on the practical side of waterway restoration. In this newsletter there are reports on working parties at Bottom lock and a reminder of the Cogglesford work camp scheduled for June. Anyone interested in giving a hand on some of our work parties can help bring about the restored navigation. Please give either Dave Puller or Steve Hayes a ring.

Articles for the next newsletter will be welcomed by the editors - we will then have to do less intensive pestering of people for copy! Articles of general local interest (good pub, good meal out) and anything of a watery nature!

Strangely enough, nobody has volunteered for the editor's job, so it looks as though you must be "enjoying" our ramblings. However, we would welcome people to share some of the "post-editing" jobs - envelope labelling (labels and envelopes supplied), obtaining the photocopies, collating and stapling the newsletter, envelope stuffing and posting etc. In fact as we stuck on the labels, it occurred to us that there are a large number in Sleaford (including two in one street, we wonder if they know each other?) then a person jogging or on a bike could save quite a bit of Trust funds and have a purposeful bit of exercise..... Feel free to ring and volunteer!

David and Isobel Turner

Social Meeting and Annual General Meeting Friday 12th May, 2000

John Lower of the Chesterfield Canal Trust will be giving a talk on Friday 12th May, 2000 in the Sleaford Sports Pavilion on East Road, Sleaford following the Annual General Meeting of the Trust at 8pm.

We are hoping for a good turnout for our visiting speaker - we promise that the AGM will be short and painless.

If the event is well attended - more will be planned, ideas for future subjects, speakers and possible venues will be welcomed - please let any of the committee know your thoughts.

Springtime in the Fens

Spring has sprung – some of you might add, “yes – a leak!!”

Hedgerows and trees are re-dressing themselves with new leaves and the blackthorn has been in flower for quite some time. There are many places with cowslips in full bloom on the banks. Birds perching in the tree outside the bedroom window happily sing loudly at 5:00 a.m. to tell us what a wonderful day it is.

There are more yellow hammers, chaffinches, greenfinches and goldfinches around than we have seen for several years. Skylarks seem to enjoy the extra cover afforded by faster growing cereals and grass at this time of year, and always sound beautiful, singing as they hover aloft, on a sunny day.

Swallows had arrived by mid April and the cuckoo has also been heard. Marsh harriers can occasionally be seen lazily soaring over wheat and dazzling oilseed rape fields, following the dykes and drains, to suddenly swoop on their prey. Barn owls are seen morning and night catching mice and voles to feed to their young.

Yes, spring is a wonderful time to be out in the countryside.

Norman Osborne

Are you an Idle Cruiser?

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we are planning a cruise on one of the regions scarcely used navigations - the River Idle. The date has had to be brought forward and it is now 20/21st May but it is not too late to join us as there are still just a few places available. The plan is to enter the Idle on the morning tide of Saturday 20th May, returning the following morning.

To cover the Environment Agency charges the cost will be £20 per boat. If you would like to book a place, please send a cheque (payable to SN(S) Ltd) along with your name, address, telephone number, boat name, type and details.

Dave Turner

New Members

Welcome to Mr and Mrs Kimpton of Ruskington

Working Party News

Three days at Bottom Lock in late February and early March was sufficient for the replanking work on the lock gates to be completed. As I mentioned in the January magazine the original planking on the gates has deteriorated from water line upwards (see cover photo) and there was no alternative but to replace it, a job best done during the winter months taking advantage of the reduced level of the Witham.

As with any job of this kind, reliant on the weather and water levels, it is best to take what opportunities you can, so when the conditions appeared right in late February hasty arrangements were made for a work party over the weekend of 26th and 27th. The first job was to erect scaffolding, suspended from the lock sides, to enable a platform to be positioned just above water level. This took a large part of the Saturday, Dave Pullen spending much of it in the Trust's pram dinghy fitting clamps at the lower level. Temporary plywood patches were then removed to reveal the true state of dereliction beneath. It was then time to cut through the planks at the level of the first rail below normal water level and strip the defective planking. The first gate was completely cleared and a start made on the second before it was time to go home.

The following day clearance of the second gate continued whilst a second team made a start on cutting the new planks to length and fitting them into position. It was while we were marking the first board for drilling that we made an astonishing discovery. As we were using second hand timber there was some doubt as to its type but the choice was narrowed somewhat when we dropped it into the lock and it sank to the bottom! It should be born in mind that Bottom lock is very deep even with the Witham at winter level, there is still nine feet of water left in which to lose an unruly piece of wood. Suffice to say it was recovered. I am now fairly sure the wood is greenheart.

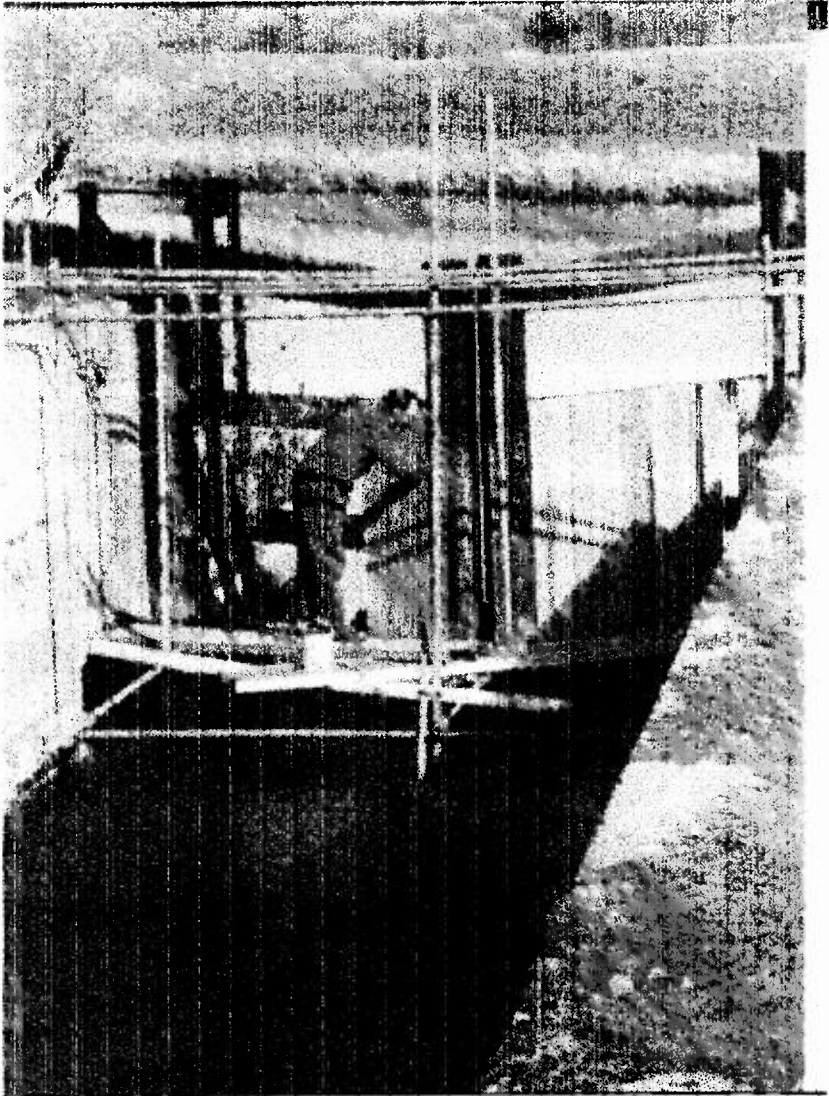
The Environment Agency reserve the right to use the chamber at Bottom lock for flood control purposes so it is important to leave the bottom gates open especially in winter. With this in mind we had erected the scaffolding on specially made rollers which at the end of the day allowed us to move it sufficiently to open the gates.

The third day was Sunday the 5th March when we were able to complete the work dismantle the scaffolding and generally clear up after ourselves. Four extra pieces of timber were required to complete the job for which we chose Ekki - another tropical hardwood that sinks in water. All three days had four workers on site although never quite the same four. They were long days and some additional help would have been useful although many more on site would have resulted in more standing around than faster progress. Much of the equipment used was borrowed but special thanks must be recorded to Mick Golds and the Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association and to John Baylis and the East Midlands - Waterway Recovery Group.

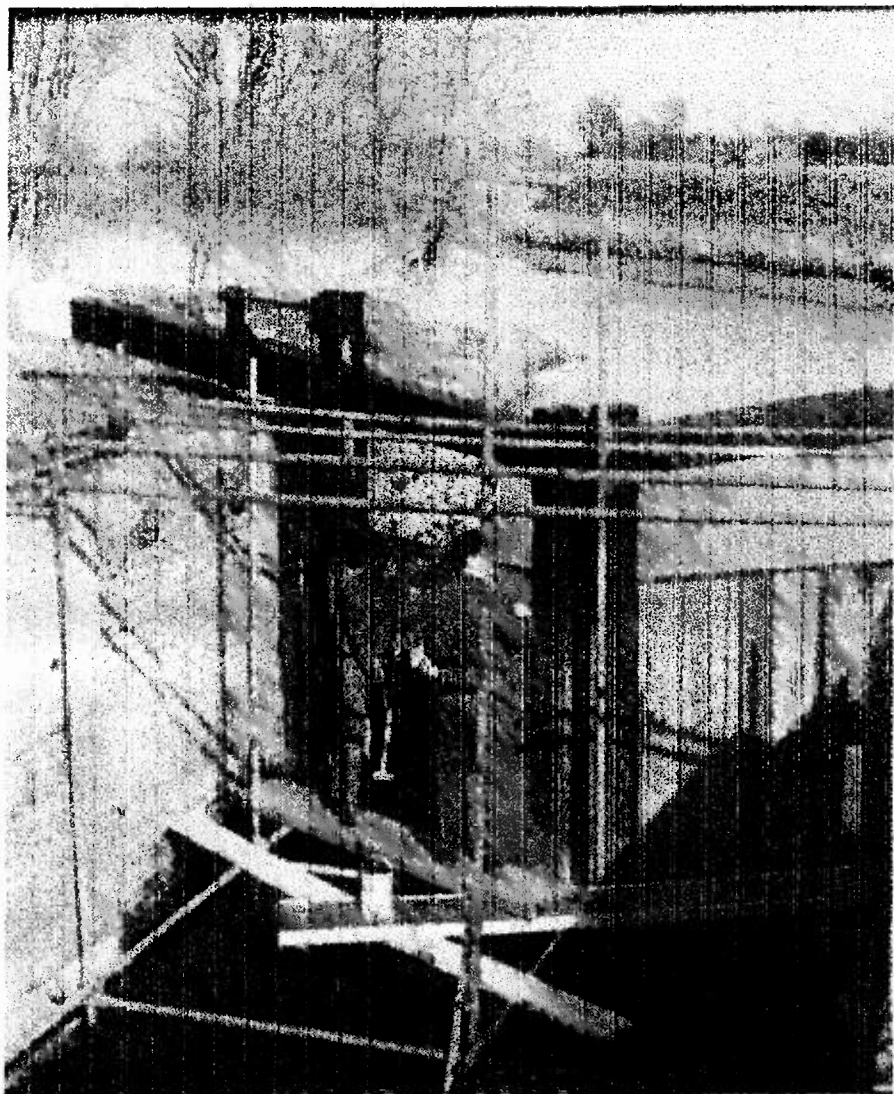
The annual work party to cut the grass, fit the weir boards, paint balance beams and generally tidy up Bottom lock for another year took place on 1st April. The

opportunity was taken to have a good tidy up and complete some finishing touches to the replanking work. To further improve the lock from the boaters perspective it has been decided that the next job ought to be installing bollards as there is nowhere to tie to. Six pieces of 9x9 oak, four feet long going spare anyone?

Dave Turner



Ernest Boddy is pictured here fitting the new planking to the gates at Bottom Lock.



Work almost complete. Ernest Boddy (left) and Norman Osborne in action.

Photographs by Jenny Osborne and Dave Turner.

News of The 'Sales' Company

The first event for the year was 4th March at the charity market at Washingborough Community hall, 11.00am to 3.00pm, we sold a good quantity of bric-a-brac and managed to come home with some emptied boxes! We have also had the stall at Langley Mill for the AWCC annual boat rally 29th April/1st May. Unfortunately we had to attend by car since the Trent was in flood at the wrong time and our boat was marooned at Shardlow. The weather was kind to us and we took over £150, taking home rather less books and plants than we brought.

Sleaford Water Weekend is the next event at the end of May followed by Newark on Water on 9th 10th & 11th June, Strawberry Island is June 17th /18th 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.

Water Weekend 26th - 29th May 2000

Following three successful events in previous years, when thousands of people have enjoyed the River Sleas, this year we hope to have even more music, more canoes, more stalls, more ducks "racing" and a bigger and better craft show at Cogglesford. Why not come and join us? There is a full programme of entertainment throughout the weekend.

The weekend will start with Sleaford Concert Band playing in the marquee next to the river at Eastgate on Friday evening, starting at 7:30pm. There will be a licensed bar and barbecue available.

There will be a duck race and a raft race each day, milling on the hour at Cogglesford Mill and Higgedy Piggledy will entertain us on Saturday evening.

If you enjoy a car boot sale, then be sure to join us on Saturday morning.

On Sunday and Monday, Sleaford Navigation Sales will have a stall of goodies for sale and information for free. Come and talk to us, there is something for all the family and shall be very pleased to have you join us as we promote the use of the Sleas.

If you would like more information, please ring me on 01529 304355.

Barbara MacKay

Snippets

The Fina Points of Life

Steve Hayes with the assistance of some of our local Fina garages continues to collect Fina points which we turn into cash. So far in less than one year we have netted over £900.00 to Trust funds.

Sleaford Riverwalk Project

This is a part of the Sleaford S.R.B. and comprises the improvement of the riverside path from near to the town centre out towards Cogglesford mill. Some improvement works to the path through the town have already been completed and the project will extend this work to adjacent to the swimming baths.

Environmental Assessment

We understand that this is progressing satisfactorily but we have not persuaded Su Sowerby who is co-ordinating the work from the Trust side to write a report. Perhaps next time !

Navigation House

Navigation House has had the work done to make the fabric of the building secure. This involved the installation of a 'Van Ellen' band around it, hopefully, more details in the next newsletter.

Navigate on the Internet.

Don't forget - 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 Sleas 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 by the time you read this, 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 would be only too glad to consider them, if you would like to get in touch with me.

Steve Hayes

Work Camp

Preparations for the camp are proceeding including some site investigations at Cogglesford lock to determine the depth of silt accumulated in the chamber and the height of the bottom sills. In the past I have worked on dozens of camps and have always been impressed by the enthusiasm and determination of the volunteers. Let us hope that for this camp, the first on the Slea for several years, we are treated to our fair share of good weather. All necessary permissions have now been received from N.K.D.C., E. A. and the land owners.

Dave Turner

Sleaford Sports Partnership Open Air Concert Sleaford Rugby Club Saturday 15th July

As a member of Sleaford Sports Partnership we not only get a "home" and a garage but the opportunity to organise a fund raising event!

Sleaford Concert Band will entertain us with various well known pieces including the 1812 Overture with fireworks and rifles - unless you know where we can find a cannon!

Bring your tables, chairs, candles, rugs and perhaps your umbrellas. Picnic before the concert or just come and join us for an evening of very good music.

For more information please ring 01529 304355.

Barbara MacKay.

Waterways Countrywide

We have previously thought about keeping our readers informed about what is happening on other waterway restorations but have not had the space to do so. At present there is just so much happening around the waterways system that it is impossible to ignore it but also impossible to be comprehensive in the limited space afforded by our newsletter. The following should be interesting tasters to most of you.

Chesterfield Canal

Work continues on the section west of Worksop extending navigation to the portal of Norwood tunnel near to the M1 motorway. The 'Nottinghamshire' section is now completed and will be opened with a boat rally at the end of May. Meanwhile work continues on the 'Rotherham' section in which there are 22 locks, all listed structures, all requiring substantial repairs.

Rochdale

Supporters of the Trans-Pennine Rochdale canal stretching 33 miles from Sowerby Bridge in Yorkshire to Manchester have been heart in mouth for the last two years whilst technical problems concerned with a major funding package were sorted out. The result has been an on / off restoration but at last all the problems have been sorted and the full restoration is to go ahead. It is expected to take about three years to complete at a cost of well over £20 million with major contributions coming from the Millennium Commission and English Partnerships. This is the first time that the new Waterways Trust has become directly involved in a restoration. British Waterways have been contracted to manage the restoration and future maintenance work.

Huddersfield Narrow

Another Trans-Pennine canal currently undergoing full restoration. It connects Huddersfield with Ashton-under-Lyne, a distance of 20 miles. Nearly £30 million is being spent with a major contribution from the Heritage Lottery fund to enable full restoration by April 2001. In Huddersfield the derelict canal was built over but major works are underway to 'cut and fill' tunnel underneath industrial buildings to link with the canals previously restored sections. The centre of Slaithwaite is receiving similar treatment whilst on the Lancashire side Stalybridge town centre is one large engineering site. For those with Email the websites www.tameside.gov.uk and www.hcanals.demon.co.uk will keep you abreast of developments. The 'webcam' pictures from Stalybridge are incredible apparently.

Cotswold Canals

Downton bridge at Stonehouse on the Stroudwater canal has been rebuilt and opened to boat traffic marking another important step forward for the Cotswold Canal Trust. The original bridge was replaced by a culvert following the abandonment of the canal in 1954. Currently the CCT are to join forces with British Waterways to investigate and prepare a programme for capital funding to complete restoration on the Stroudwater Navigation and ultimately on the Thames and Severn Canal also.

Diary Dates

- 12th May S.N.T. Annual General Meeting at Sleaford Sports Pavilion. 8pm, followed by social gathering.
- 20th/21st May Boat cruise on River Idle. Details from Dave Turner
- 27th/29th May Sleaford Water Weekend. See article by Barbara MacKay inside.
- 9th /11th June Newark on Water. Boat rally and entertainments. Sales stand in attendance. Phone Pat Taylor for details.
- 17th June Sales Stand at Strawberry Island Boat Club, Doncaster. Phone Pat Taylor for details.
- 15th July Open Air Concert at Sleaford Rugby Club. See article inside.
- 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.
- 2nd September Classic Car rally in Sleaford. 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 Pat Taylor to check prices, availability and postage costs

Front cover picture

shows the state of the gates at Bottom Lock at the start of the work party. Mel Sowerby with a scaffold pole is at the top of the ladder, Dave Pullen is fitting scaffolding clamps from the dinghy and Ernest Boddy is 'imitating the actions of a garden gnome'!