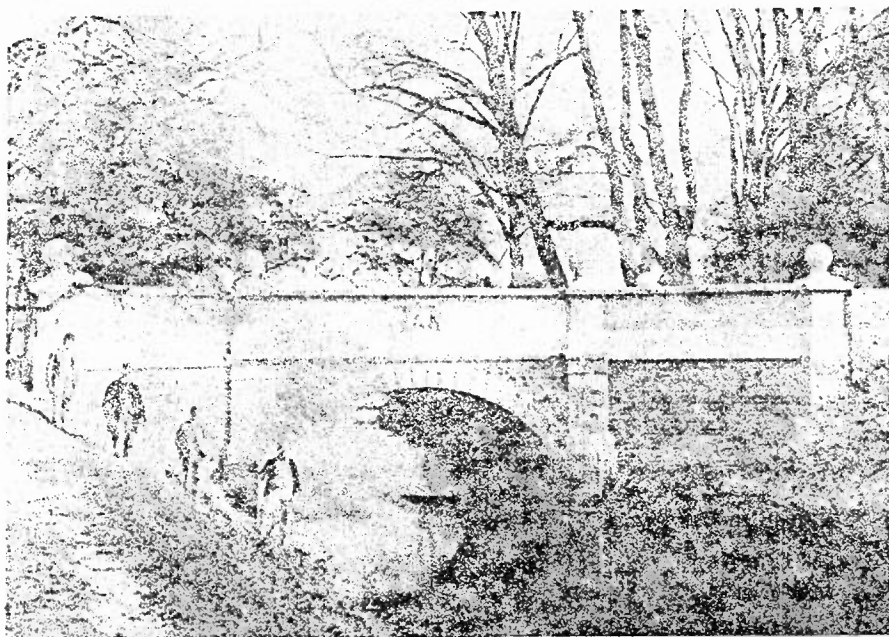


SLEAFORD

NAVIGATION TRUST



NEWSLETTER

No 5 - September 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
Email Dave@diturner.freemove.co.uk

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 IWA

Non Committee Contacts

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

Editors: Izzie and David Turner, address above.

Editorial

First of all apologies for the terrible quality of reproduction of the photographs in the April newsletter. When we received them - by Email - the quality was astounding but went down a little when turned into black and white for the newsletter but still very acceptable. Fate struck as we produced the master copies to send for duplication in the form of a printer failure forcing us to fall back on an old borrowed printer.

There have been several interesting developments since the production of the April magazine all helping to bring our ultimate goal of full restoration of the Slea that little bit closer. On the ground the most spectacular was the Waterway Recovery Group canal camp about which there is a separate article. This camp was important in it's own right but having made a start at Haverholme there is every reason to continue working there at least until volunteer work opportunities open up at Cogglesford. See our Diary Dates for the two work parties booked for this autumn.

Some time ago the Trust made the decision to make Cogglesford the priority for restoration thus backing up NKDC's SRB initiative and for even longer years we have been trying to purchase Cogglesford lock. We have now got as far as the solicitor stage - never can anything have moved more slowly. Nevertheless the Trust has established a fund to cover the purchase price of £6,000 plus another £1,000 to cover solicitors fees. To date the fund exceeds £3,500 and with promises of another £1,850 we are effectively three quarters of the way there. Special thanks to the Lincolnshire branch of the Inland Waterways Association who have most generously contributed £2,000.

David and Isobel Turner

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

No surprises at the AGM which went off satisfactorily although we would have welcomed a few more people. The formal meeting lasted less than half an hour and was followed by John Lower of the Chesterfield Canal Trust giving a talk on developments on their waterway in the last few years. John is an entertaining speaker and showed an excellent set of slides bringing us up to date with the restoration of the Chesterfield. After many years in the wilderness the restoration took off a few years ago with big money being spent bringing back to use important stretches of the navigation, most spectacularly the ongoing restoration of the 7 mile 30 lock section from Worksop to the summit. They have also suffered some big set backs with the development-lead proposal to restore much of the summit section and open up Norwood tunnel being unexpectedly turned down by the planning authority. We wish them well and look forward to the day when it is again possible to navigate all the way to Chesterfield.

Idle Cruise

There has got to be easier ways of raising money for the restoration of the Slea than this but for those of us that enjoy boating there can be few that are more enjoyable. The boat cruise on the River Idle over the 20th/21st May weekend went off very well indeed. I have not previously cruised the river but according to friends who experienced it in the early 1970's it has improved so much it is not the same river. All 20 boats taking part in the cruise reached Bawtry with no trouble at all and neither was turning round as much trouble as was feared that it might be. Certainly the river's condition owes much to the Environment Agency who have over the years carried out a good deal of dredging for flood control reasons - not for navigation - and who now impound the water at a level conducive to navigation rather than letting it all go at low tide.

Turning round at Bawtry was always going to be the 'interesting' bit for the full length narrow boat owners amongst us. There were four 70 foot working boats and several more pleasure boats around the 60 foot mark with only one less than 40 foot. The end of the recognised navigation is Bawtry bridge, a very nice structure in it's own right, and the recognised turning point is about 100 yards downstream at the reeded up junction of the former town arm. The arm was for many years the main course of the navigation leading into the town, an important port from medieval times onwards. Unfortunately for Bawtry the opening of the Chesterfield canal took away much of it's trade to the extent that the builders of the Great Northern Railway were allowed to divert the river out of the town and block the arm where the railway crosses it.

The river at this point is nearly 60 feet wide but as for safety reasons it is best to turn with bows into the arm the stern has to work round against the current. About 12 boats turned at the arm but the rest (including two of the full length craft) managed to get round upstream of the bridge where Newark member Ernest Boddy harnessed quite a few of his Fordson horses in Florrie Kendal's engine room to operate a "turn you round or snap your rope service". At least 4 ropes were broken in this way! Two overnight stopping places were favoured with a Stockwith Yacht Club contingent staying at Misson whilst most of us returned to Haxey Gate in the rain which set in late afternoon and continued all evening. There are no public moorings on the river so it is best to make arrangements beforehand.

'Locking out' onto the Trent is the only occasion that I have been in a lock in which the water goes first up and then down. This is the effect because the tide makes the Trent higher than the Idle and so boats are initially raised up to that level but then have to wait until it has gone down sufficiently to allow for headroom under the outer sluice. All very interesting to us normally flat water boaters. With 17 boats out of the 20 locking into the Chesterfield canal it took several hours to get everyone in but Barry Turner (no relation) the very helpful sluice keeper at Stockwith let us stay in the safety of the Idle as we waited our turn.

Judging by the comments as we left I think we may be doing this again.

Dave Turner

Repairs to the Haverholme Bridge

Extract from 'The Story of the People of Ewerby and Haverholme'
by Les Gostick

In the same month as the Ashford meeting the Earl wrote to the Ruskington Local board of Health requesting that the Parish should carry out repairs to three bridges, two on the north side of the river and the main one across the river to Haverholme Priory. The arguments which followed revolved on whether the bridges were within the parish boundary or not. Enquiries were made and it was found that the boundary was along the centre of the river. The meeting was adjourned and the matter put to Messrs. Peake Snow and Peake, who concluded that it was the responsibility of the County. Some of the members wanted half the bridge to be lowered as that would be the cheapest method, the Chairman having said he had ascertained that it was not a County bridge! It was then decided to obtain Counsel's opinion. This was duly carried out and in January 1891 the Clerk read out a letter he had received from Messrs. Rodgers and Jessopp, Sols, Sleaford, with reference to obtaining the opinion of Counsel in connection with the repair of the bridge. The Clerk remarked that he had been informed by old inhabitants that the river was formerly crossed by ford and that they used to walk across.

Mr. F. Pattinson remarked "You must not go by hearsay". When the Council received Counsel's report the Chairman remarked that a legal opinion had been received but would prefer to discuss it in private – the reporters thereupon withdrew. In the meantime Lord Winchilsea had drawn the County Council Highways Committee's attention to the Sleaford Navigation Abandonment Act which cast the maintaining of Haverholme Bridge on the County. The Clerk was instructed to look into the matter and report to another meeting of the Committee. This was done and a lengthy discussion took place as to who was responsible for the repairs. It was agreed that the Bridge was in a serious condition and that a serious accident could happen, but all the old arguments were aired again and again, although there seemed to be no doubt that it was the County Council's responsibility. Councillor Jessopp moved the motion that steps be taken at once to repair the bridge, but an amendment was carried that the whole question should be referred back to the Highways Committee.

In February 1892 the Highways Committee decided that any new bridge proposed to be built should have a 4ft headway only, but the County Council said it should be 6ft, and that this had been agreed with the Earl of Winchilsea and the Marquis of Bristol. The County Surveyor having reported that the condition of the Bridge was gradually worse it was resolved that the arch of the bridge should be centred. It was also resolved that the County Surveyor should prepare and submit plans to the next meeting and estimate the cost of taking down and rebuilding the Western face of the bridge. He was also directed to advertise for tenders for the work.

In August the County Surveyor produced two plans and designs for the new Bridge, one with a flat span having a clear headway of 6ft, and the other with an arched span having a headway of 6ft from the centre of the arch, the parapet and facings of each bridge to be Weldon Rag and Freestone, the latter design being of an ornamental

nature to cost from £725 to £750, the former being of a plainer description to cost from £675 to £700. It was resolved by the Committee that as Lord Winchilsea had expressed a wish to have the bridge built with Weldon Rag, to permit the bridge to be built of such material if Lord Winchilsea was prepared to meet any additional cost above the cost of the ordinary County Bridge recommended to be erected and the cost of any work of an ornamental character – Earl Winchilsea; “ I am quite prepared to bear the extra cost”. The Council’s response was “Hear Hear” and thus we were blessed with one of the most beautiful bridges in the neighbourhood, in spite of all the efforts of the County Council to wriggle out of their responsibilities.

Haverholme Bridge was built in 1893 (see date on bridge) Thanks to Norman Osborne for finding this article and Barbara MacKay for the cover photograph..

Working Party News

The main item of news on the working party front is the Waterway Recovery Group canal camp held on the navigation in June. WRG run in excess of 20 volunteer canal camps every year and it had been planned to use this camp to install downstream stop plank grooves at Cogglesford lock. To this effect plans were made and permissions obtained before the event, Dave Carnell and Dave Pullen putting in most of the work to get us this far.

The following article is taken from the WRG magazine ‘Navvies’ with kind permission of the author, who was also the camp leader

Sleaford: “it smelt worse than any baby’s nappy...”

Camp 0004: Sleaford Navigation

24th June - 1st July 2000

In the weeks leading up to the camp, things were very uncertain: first it was on, then it was off, then it was on... (memories of Pant?) Di and I had gone up to make a site inspection at the end of March, combining it with a BITM dig on the Louth Canal, and Dave Carnell of SNT had met us to show us the planned work. Cogglesford Lock, on the edge of Sleaford, needed quite a bit of ivy clearance and pointing and the installation of stop plank channels and this was to be the main task, probably with scaffolding being installed in the lock. A secondary task was to clear a by-wash on Haverholme Lock, so the water could be diverted and that lock repaired at a later date. Then the RAINS CAME. Apparently Lincolnshire had an overdose over the next 6 weeks or so, and by early June a torrent of water was pouring through Cogglesford Lock. An attempt was made to divert the flow - unsuccessfully and even Noah’s Ark would have been swept away. Our revered chairman considered either cancelling or diverting the camp to another venue. Seven days before the start of the

camp, Dave Carnell took the decision that there would be enough work to keep us occupied on the by-wash, which then became the main work site.

We went in with chainsaws on the first day, cutting down the trees that had to come out, to a manageable height for removing with a Tirfor winch. Then the trunks were cut into lengths that we could hide up in the woods - and still the local vandals managed to sneak in that night and roll the trunks back into the river, so they all had to be retrieved the next morning - very frustrating! By the end of the first day, it had become evident that there was far more work involved than we'd realised, and a camp of mainly first-timers had to knuckle down and probably work harder than they had ever done in their lives! Poor Richard, in particular, marvelled at the energy and stamina of the females in the group, and occupied himself in between bursts of work throwing sticks for Katy (much to her delight). Our two youngest, Bonnie (a D of E) and Roland, proved that being slim with no *obvious* muscle was no indicator of strength and they lifted and pulled and shovelled s.t as well as any of us.

A large section of the by-wash was hardly visible when we started, with trees, shrubs, nettles and ropes of ivy covering it, but once we had cut down some of the trees and started clearing it, it became clear that it had originally been stone-faced in the invert as well as the sides. A certain amount of silt had built up in the bottom, which had to be dug out by hand, but the worst problem was the trees growing out of the side of both by-wash and lock. We couldn't get hold of a Tirfor until Thursday, so as much preparation was done as possible, sawing through roots and digging stone out, but one nearly defeated us even then. Dave, Alan, and Dave Turner of the Trust, all took turns straining on the Tirfor handles, and when at last the earth started to move everyone gathered round and a cheer echoed round the valley.

The by-wash consisted of a stretch in water - but filled with reeds - then a weir under a broadwalk-type bridge, from where the ground dropped away for a long section, finally tumbling over a natural stone outcrop to drop into the river below the lock. Di spent 3 days proving that she's never happier than when soaking wet, covered in mud, and smelling to high heaven, pulling reeds out of the section in water, and keeping Roland, Anna and Phil busy carting away huge heaps of stinking vegetation. Anna, the mother of a small toddler, swears that it smelt worse than any baby's nappy, and we were happy to take her word for it!

George, our American navvy, cleared a long section of by-wash wall, while Ken did a splendid job clearing ivy from round the lock and back from the coping stones.

Miriam kept us from getting dehydrated by keeping the Burco and teapot on the go. A local farmer, Norman Osborne, who is a member of the Trust, brought his tractor and flail in and cleared some of the vegetation round Cobblers Lock, which was finished off by a small team, and the ivy was cleared from round Cogglesford Lock, even if we couldn't actually work on the lock. A tree creeper and a dipper were both nesting in the sides of the lock, so that might have prevented us anyway.

The amount of work achieved delighted the Trust, and also our team got a great sense of satisfaction. We had a new WRG dog, Bella, who seemed to enjoy herself, even if she didn't quite get into the state that Katy managed each day.

Talking of dogs, we probably had more problems with the accommodation than we expected. We were staying at a relatively newly built rugby club, which appeared to

be very plush. However, despite Dave Carnell checking in advance on our behalf whether dogs were allowed, and being assured that they were, when we arrived we were met with a lady steward of the Club insisting that no dogs were allowed. We had also thought that we would be staying - and sleeping - in the large carpeted club room upstairs (complete with long well-stocked bar, which remained obstinately closed throughout our visit). But no: other plans had been made by the rugby club, and we were to sleep in small concrete-floored changing rooms downstairs. These did have showers, which were great, but were very cramped. There were only a men's loo and washing facilities on that corridor, and the steward suggested that we use it in shifts in the mornings! I had visions of also having to have breakfast in shifts, and not arriving on site until 10 at the earliest. However, it turned out that there were ladies cloakrooms upstairs. Next problem was that the place was like Fort Knox. The outer door was both locked and alarmed during the day when we were out, and was supposed to be at night once we were in. The door to the corridor with the changing rooms was also locked, as were each of the changing rooms separately, and we were instructed to keep them locked even while we were upstairs in the clubroom. Finally, the clubroom itself was also locked, and sorting out all the different keys could have been a nightmare, except after Sunday the steward was on holiday and we gradually relaxed the rules! The dogs had been kept in the changing rooms, but on the final night all twelve of us and the 2 canine WRGies enjoyed the comfort of the clubroom.

Phil uncomplainingly got up early each morning and helped me cook breakfast, so we could all get off to site in good time. Miriam and Anna turned out to be excellent cooks, so we were all kept well fed, and there were outings to cinema, swimming pool, bowling alley and an assortment of pubs, in one of which - way out in the countryside - we trebled the number of local drinkers.

We were well supported by the local Sleaford Navigation Trust members, who were very helpful.

Rachael Banyard

WRG/English Translation: "Pant" refers to a place on the Montgomery Canal where a canal camp had to be cancelled. "BITM" (pronounced Bitum) is a mobile Midlands-based WRG working party group. Note also that WRG is pronounced Werg! Rachael has already volunteered to come back and lead another camp next year.

1999 Accounts and Directors Report

Trust members will find enclosed the 1999 accounts and directors report which were not ready in time for inclusion with the April newsletter. If you have any questions regarding either of these documents please contact me if possible by Email or post as both methods give me time to research the answers.

Dave Turner

Waterways for Tomorrow

This long awaited follow up to the White Paper '*A New Deal for Transport; Better for Everyone*' was published in June. For some reason I had understood that it was going to deal with commercial carriage by water but in the event it deals with water transport in the widest possible sense and impacts on existing waterways, those to be restored and those planned for the future. It is a measure of how far the waterways have come in the last few years, when, in his forward Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott says 'Today everyone enjoys the waterways. But only 35 years ago the future of the nationalised system hung in the balance'. He pays credit to Barbara Castle who saw the enormous potential the waterways had for recreation and amenity and laid the foundation for modern waterway development with the 1968 Transport Act. Apparently his enthusiasm for waterways was much in evidence at the launch of the document.

The document deals with all navigable waterways although it naturally concentrates particularly on British Waterways as the operators of the largest chunk of the state owned sector. BW are certainly in favour with the current government not only do they receive glowing reports but many of their recommendations are incorporated within the document. They have been particularly successful in recent months in gaining additional finance specifically to assist with eliminating the enormous backlog of safety related maintenance that for years has prevented any serious long term planning at BW headquarters.

Some have hailed *Waterways for Tomorrow* as everything the waterways enthusiast could want but in reality it is just one more step on the road to return waterways to a centre stage position. It is not envisaged that legislation will follow on from this document neither will there be any Ministerial orders or their like, the recommendations remaining just that recommendations. But even so this is high powered guidance and short of waving a magic wand it goes a long way to addressing the problems faced by the typical waterway restoration group.

One feature I particularly liked was the very accurate waterways map included inside the back cover. Unlike some others published recently Sleaford was definitely on this map and the navigation was correctly drawn with navigable and unnavigable sections.

Key Points

Waterways for Tomorrow is not an easy document to abridge and every reviewer is going to have their own list of significant features. Here are mine.....

- **PPG's** There will not be a specific Planning Policy Guideline devoted to canals but as the existing series come up for review they will be revised with regard to the contribution that navigations can make.
- **New Roads** The agencies responsible for new road schemes should henceforth take proper account not only of existing navigations but also those subject to restoration schemes. This particular point should bring an end to the recent batch of public battles to ensure bridges are built to allow for navigation.

- **The Environmental Debate** Pressure appears to be coming from above to persuade English Nature to consult and discuss with interested parties where there is or appears to be a conflict between navigation and nature conservation interests.
- **Money and Support** The Regional Development Agencies and local authorities should support worthwhile restoration schemes.
- **Partnerships** These continue to be the fashionable way forward and the Government is particularly looking to BW and the Environment Agency to co-operate more over the operation of their respective navigations. At present cost is one of several factors that discourages boaters from using both systems.
- **Freight Facilities Grants** Minor but possibly significant changes to the rules relating to Freight Facilities Grants may help to generate a few more traffics on the commercial waterways. Perhaps this is the area of the report where more could have been done. Whilst inland waterways are clearly never again going to play more than a very minor role in freight transport I do not see that much has been done to help rebuild the confidence of an industry on the verge of extinction.

Dave Turner

The Waterways Trust

This new body on the waterways scene was initially set up by British Waterways to take over the running of the three major canal museums which have joined forces to form one unit although still operating on three sites. TWT has now taken on a much wider remit becoming involved in all waterway heritage matters and taking a lead in selected restoration projects. The objective is that TWT will become a major fund raiser and organiser at the strategic level, able to operate in both the public and private sectors. Already it has taken the leading role in the Ribble Link Waterway which will connect the isolated Lancaster canal to the main canal system - a brand new Navigation for which funding has been secured in full.

As reported in the April newsletter TWT has taken over the formerly privately owned Rochdale canal having stepped into the breach to resolve difficulties over the timing of major restoration grants. Also in the north-west the Anderton lift has received the benefit of TWT involvement in putting together a £7.2 million funding package to enable full restoration, the last £250k of which is the subject of a public appeal.

So what will be next? We already know! At the British Waterways Annual Meeting it was announced that the next round of restorations were already being worked on and that studies were to be undertaken to test the viability of the following 6 restoration/ development projects:

The Bedford to Milton Keynes Link. This will be a new waterway to link the Great Ouse with the Grand Union canal. It would make the Ouse much more accessible to craft from the main canal system and complete a ring, which is an important consideration for many holidaymakers.

Foxton Inclined Plane. Canal features, especially major ones, can be real “honey pot” sites and the two sets of 5 staircase locks in Leicestershire attract tourists in hoards. The adjacent inclined plane built to replace the locks at the turn of the last century but not a commercial success at the time would be even more popular when restored.

Cotswold Canals. Until about a hundred years ago the Thames and Severn canal and the Stroudwater canal linked the river Thames to the Gloucester and Sharpness canal. When restored (there is no question of if) this will be a major link passing through extremely scenic countryside. Twenty years ago many saw this as a hopeless case for restoration but now with volunteer effort continuing unabated and sustained major backing from Gloucestershire County Council the outlook is quite different.

The Droitwich Canals More years ago than I like to admit I was employed as the full time Project Manager on this restoration. The completion of the restoration of these two minor Worcestershire canals would be a great satisfaction to me.

Montgomery Canal Effectively a branch of the Llangollen canal, which is perhaps the busiest canal on the system, this is set in the attractive rural English/Welsh border country. Substantial sections of this waterway are already restored.

Lancaster Canal Northern Reaches Following the current work at its southern end to link the Lancaster to the main canal system it may soon be the turn of the northern end. A few miles north of Lancaster the canal ceases to be navigable at the bottom of a flight of locks. Restoring from there to the former terminus at Kendal is now to be assessed despite the problem of three low level motorway crossings. It is known that British Waterways have on their ‘wish list’ a desire to see a few miles of new waterway to link to Lake Windermere....

Dave Turner

New Members

A warm welcome to,
Mr and Mrs L and D McLaughin

Diary Dates

- 23rd September Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP) Quiz Night. Teams required, ring Norman Osborne (01526 832256)
- 7th October Inland Waterways Protection Society walk on the Grantham Canal
Ring David Turner for details (01636 708781)
- 8th October Inland Waterways Protection Society walk on the Slea
Ring David Turner for details (01636 708781)
- 8th October Work party at Haverholme lock meet at the car park by the bridge at 10am. The work will be tree stump removal finishing off the work started by the canal camp.
- 4th November SSP Bonfire and fireworks. Ring Norman Osborne, as above.
- 18th/19th Nov. A weekend work party at Haverholme to install a new concrete base to the by-wash channel. We will be joined by the WRG BITM group. So if you want to know what all those letters stand for join us at Haverholme.

Pat's Emperium - Mail Order Sales

Polo Shirts (various designs), Cobblers Sweatshirts, T Shirts, Head of navigation plaques, Photo Key ring, 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

Haverholme Bridge believed to have been taken shortly after completion in 1893. See the article inside about the building of the bridge. This picture was recently given to the Trust by a Sleaford resident. We are keen to build up our collection of historic photographs of the navigation - either in use or after abandonment, please contact any committee member if you can help.