

SLEAFORD

NAVIGATION TRUST



NEWSLETTER

No 8 - December 2001

The Sleaford Navigation Trust

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Registered Office 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH
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Web Page: www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk

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

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

Secretary : Steve Hayes as above.

Treasurer : David Turner Brownlow's House, Brownlow's Hill, Coddington, Newark, Notts. NG24 2QA. Tel. 01636 708781
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Martin Chapman

Barbara MacKay : Tel. 01529 304355

Susan Sowerby : Tel. 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

Sleaford Sports Partnership Liaison : Norman Osborne, as above.

Editors: Izzie and David Turner, address above.

Articles and opinions in this newsletter are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily reflect SNT policy or the opinion of the editors.

Photographs: Izzie Turner unless otherwise credited.

Editorial

First of all our apologies for the late production of this issue.

Hopefully the foot and mouth crisis is now and Lincolnshire footpaths including those alongside the river have reopened. Although we had to cancel a number of work parties we were eventually given permission by NKDC to access the lock at Haverholme via the permissive footpath from the car park near Haverholme bridge and a full summers activities took place. See the reports later in this newsletter.

Now that regular work parties are taking place every month it is pleasing to report that our efforts have been recognised by no less a body than Shell UK. As part of their social investment programme they have given us a grant from their Shell Better Britain Campaign. The grant, for £825, is to match a similar amount promised to us by the IWA at national level and will be used for the purchase of tools and equipment for work party use.

Over the years that we have been involved with the Trust (and previously the society) there have been several tantalising glimpses of major funding that would have made significant advances to our project. Sadly none of these opportunities came to fruition but we have recently learned of another such opportunity and although it is still early days we are quietly confident that a significant sum could eventually be made available. Read the article by Mary Powell and as they say, watch this space!

David and Isobel Turner

Annual General Meeting and Social Meeting

The Annual General Meeting took place at the sports pavilion (Rugby Club) on Friday 11th May. The various report and accounts were all approved as were the re-election of your Chairman and Treasurer. After the formal part of the meeting there followed a talk by Tim Smith of ESL (Ecological Services) Ltd who completed the ecological study on behalf of the Trust. Tim explained what was involved in completing the survey and how the information was gathered from previous surveys, from contact with other groups and by site investigation. We are very pleased that Tim is able to report that restoration of the navigation into Sleaford will not have any serious adverse effects on the flora and fauna of the Slea and that on balance the scheme will have a neutral impact. Tim answered questions after his presentation and when challenged to come up with how our project could be made to increase the gain to the environment suggested we omit a number of bricks in the lock tail wing walls to provide 'nest boxes' for wagtails. We plan to do just that.

Working Party News

With the permission of NKDC the first task of the May work party was to take out a section of the fence at the back of the car park at Haverholme so that we have dumper and Land Rover access to the lock side. The fence was then made to bolt back into position. We had also hoped to install a temporary bridge for barrowing across the lock but problems over transport meant that on the day of the work party the bridge was still much nearer to the Humber than the Slea. (Dave Carnell, who was bringing the bridge, lives in North Lincs) The bridge was eventually erected in June when the WRG group BITM joined us for the weekend and building work on the by-wash began. BITM fielded a team of nine which is quite a bit down on what they can sometimes manage but even so, with the SNT helpers, they mixed and placed the first three concrete panels for the base of the new by-wash and used up most of the 11 tons of aggregate we had.

In July it was the turn of Canal Camp to lend us a hand. This is another arm of the WRG organisation which provides volunteers on a week long activity break. Our first concern however, was the vandalism that had taken place in the weeks following the BITM visit when the demountable fence section had been ripped out as had the decking to our bridge. Consequently the day before work camp arrived Trust volunteers were to be found on site replacing the bridge deck and strengthening the whole structure.

The camp cast two more base panels for the by-wash which is as much as we can do of the base until agreement with the Environment Agency can be reached over flow levels in times of flood. Obviously we can not do anything that would increase the risk of flooding to land or property and the Agency has decided to do more research before making a final decision on what flows to expect.

The camp then moved on to wall building, bringing the brickwork on the south side up to finished brick level and backing it up with concrete. This is now ready for copings. The north side is more complicated because the design chosen involves an intermediate level so that there will be an inner and an outer wall. The inner wall was also completed as far as the brickwork which was again backed up with concrete.

It was not all building, a team of very patient people cleaned up several hundred bricks for reuse and about 20 willow trees growing in the river below the lock were cut down and the roots of about a dozen of them winched out. The last tree stump on the lock side, a large and difficult specimen, was also removed and burned with the others. The team made an excellent contribution to the restoration working very hard though almost all of them had no previous experience of any form of physical work. About half of them were girls, mostly students, including one from Spain who had never even seen a lock before.

Since the camp we have had two more work parties and have completed the removal of tree stumps around the lock area except for one that it is considered too dangerous to remove in view of the state of the brick work around it. This particular stump will be removed when the brick work is taken down and rebuilt in due course. It is nice to think we have no more winching of tree roots to do and that the machine now go back to its owner, Andy Martin, who has loaned it to us for practically every work party since the 2000 work camp.

The last work party took place on Sunday 25th November when we concreted the foundations for the outer wall of the by-wash.

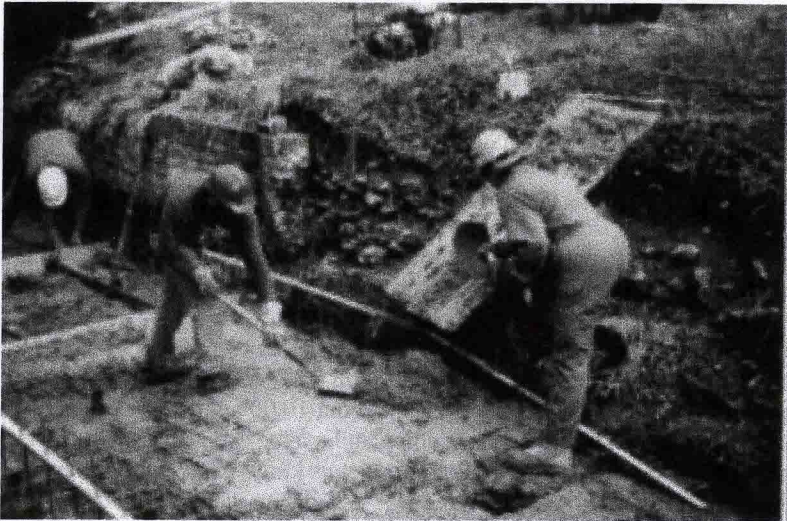
The next work party will be on Sunday 30th December when we will be having a sort-out of the lockup garage at the Rugby Club ready to start the New Year on an organised and tidy footing! We work from about 10.00 am until 4.30 so why not come and have a look at what we are doing and maybe even give us a hand even if for only an hour or so. It will helpful if you let us know in advance either by telephoning Dave Pullen or myself then we can ensure there is a suitable amount of work to be done

Work parties normally take place on the last Sunday of each month but please ring Dave Pullen (address and phone number inside front cover) for further details. Alternatively Email myself. See also 'Diary Dates' on the back cover.

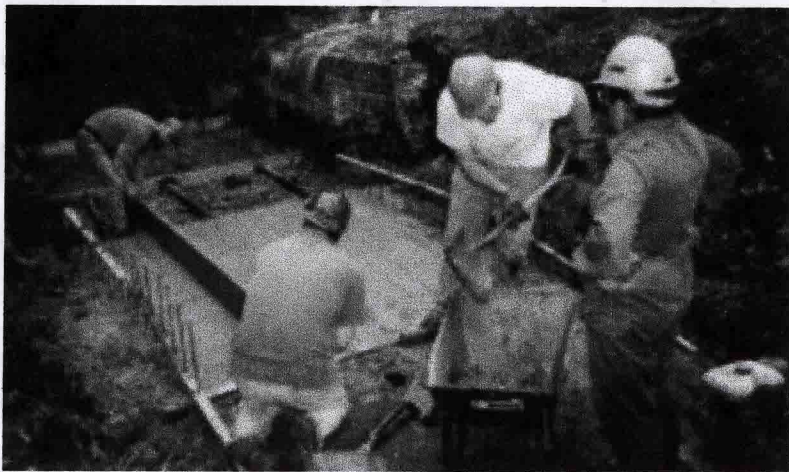
Dave Turner



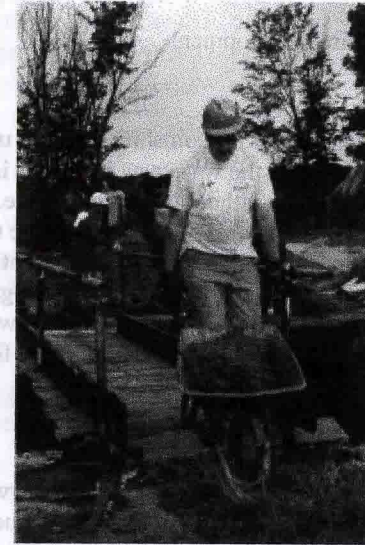
Constructing the barrow bridge at Haverholme. Photo courtesy of BITM.



BITM placing concrete for the new bywash at Haverholme.
Photo courtesy of BITM.



BITM and SNT members levelling the concrete in Haverholme bywash.
Photo courtesy of BITM.



Barrow bridge in use. Photo courtesy of BITM.

WRG Canal Camps

Our sincere thanks to the Waterway Recovery Group for providing us with this summers camp and for their continued support for next year by booking a camp for August 10th to 17th.

Probation Service Help Out

The October work party would have had a very low turnout if it had not been for the assistance provided by the Probation Service. The service oversees a number of offenders whose punishment is a number of hours community service. Five of them and their supervisor joined us at Haverholme and all appeared to enjoy the experience giving our effort a real boost. They also came and helped with the concreting in November.

WATERWAYS OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

Press Release by Lincolnshire Development

Current Position.

It is fair to say that the waterways of Lincolnshire are both underused and under developed. This is mainly because the waterway system is isolated from the national network with access being difficult although not impossible. Accessing the waterways is either via the Trent or via The Wash, both are tidal and either access point is considered dangerous for the amateur sailor and not recommended for inland pleasure craft. The Fens for example has more navigable waterway miles than the Norfolk Broads but currently Lincolnshire's waterways are used mainly by local people and there is virtually no commercial boat hire for tourist use.

What is Envisaged.

Fens Tourism, through an Objective 5b funded Fens Waterways Regeneration Study have looked at the navigation links from the south. The study shows that it is feasible (using existing non navigable waterways), in economic, engineering and environmental terms to create a new Witham - Nene - Ouse link route. This would open up exciting associated development opportunities, particularly in tourism and leisure, for not just the Fens but the whole of Lincolnshire.

This is a massive project and Fens Tourism have rightly handed it to the Environment Agency who are now the lead partner and they have allocated it priority 1 status at national level. The Environment Agency are submitting an Objective 2 bid for a feasibility study into the two links: Witham - Nene and Earith - Ramsey and are looking for matched funding. Boston Borough and South Holland are already committed. Interestingly, British Waterways next major project (now that they have restored the tunnel under the Pennines) is to be a link from the Great Ouse to the Grand Union Canal (Milton Keynes - Bedford). This connection would further draw Lincolnshire into the national network.

It is by looking at a map of the waterways of Eastern England that the implications of the Witham - Ouse link become apparent. By water, Lincolnshire becomes accessible to pleasure craft from Peterborough, Cambridge and all points west and south. The Lincolnshire waterways then become a resource for both locals and visitors alike and their tourism potential can be unleashed.

In addition, through Lincolnshire Tourism and with the support of British Waterways another project is looking at a vision for the improvement and management of the whole waterways network in the County. In brief, if the new links were created, it would be undesirable if boat users entering from the National network were to find our waterways facilities of a poor quality. The scoping

project would look at small scale facilities such as new moorings and cycle paths but also larger developments such as the restoration of the Sleaford Navigation and the Horncastle Canal. This project is currently being funded by the County Council (via the Tourism budget), all the district councils and British Waterways. It is envisaged that it will lead to an Objective 2 bid, with Lincolnshire Development being the lead partner.

Soundings.

The development of the Waterways fits well with what already attracts visitors to Lincolnshire. Research confirms that it is the county's heritage and rural nature and its perception, variously described as hassle free, laid back, quiet and peaceful.

There is unanimous support and agreement from all the Districts that our waterways are under developed and that their regeneration could lead to the sort of step change in Lincolnshire's tourism product that we are all looking for. Both projects are fully integrated with each other.

The Tourism Officer has taken informal soundings across the tourist industry to find out how they feel about the above. Support was enthusiastic and a unanimous feeling that the project is exciting but more importantly that "It will make a difference".

Mary Powell, Lincolnshire Development

Sleaford Navigation Trust has joined the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, as has the national Inland Waterways Association, and we are looking forward to the next few years with great anticipation. The prospect of major funding even if it is still somewhat remote at this stage has given us the incentive to begin a total review of our position and what needs doing to bring about a full restoration of the navigation. We propose to continue our activities including Work Parties but it is now much more important to determine what work is best done by volunteers and which by specialist contractors.

As well as work parties there is an even greater need for support in all areas of our activities and additional help with or without becoming a member of the Management Committee is needed now more than ever before.

With increasing prospect of boats returning to Sleaford in the next few years can **you** find the time to help shape the course of the restoration? Please contact one of the committee members - see inside front cover.

Rochdale

As major works on the Huddersfield drew to a close, work on the adjacent Rochdale stepped up a pace. There are no record breaking tunnels on this canal as on its neighbour but some people thought a tunnel would be the only way to get past a supermarket built which was built across the line of the navigation in less enlightened times. In the event the supermarket was compulsorily purchased from the Co-op and has now been demolished. The north-western half of the canal is now accessible again to boats.

Manchester, Bolton & Bury

There has been concern in the north west for some time that the final section of the Manchester and Salford inner relief road would sever this derelict canal near to its junction with the river Irwell. But, as the first test of new Government guidance on road building, John Spellar the Transport Minister announced an additional £300,000 for the project to enable a full navigable headroom culvert to be constructed.

Pocklington

The Countryside Agency has granted £15,000 from its Local Heritage Initiative to enable significant restoration to the top lock on this canal. The canal is nearly nine miles long and has nine locks five of which have previously been repaired.

Broads Authority

Although originally involved with British Waterways and the Environment Agency in the development of the Boat Safety Scheme the BA decided not to enforce the new regulations on its boaters. The Authority is now confident that the revised BSS will be a workable safety code which can be supported by all responsible boat owners. The new regulations will be phased in for the 7,500 boats involved.

The Waterways Trust

Following the meeting in Leeds reported on in the April issue Chris Hayes wrote to Roger Hanbury the Chief Executive of The Waterways Trust to open a dialogue with a view to exploring ways in which they may be able to assist with the restoration. Roger has decided to make time to come and see the river and talk to us about how we might work together.

Restoration Committee

The Restoration Committee of the Inland Waterways Association is as its name suggests concerned with anything pertaining to the restoration of a waterway to navigation. It meets six times a year at a venue adjacent to one of the many restoration schemes around the country. For their meeting in early November we were pleased to welcome them to Sleaford, the morning's formal meeting was followed by an afternoon of site visits.

One of the committee members, Roy Sutton one of the IWA's Hon. Engineers, agreed to stay on for a day after the meeting to inspect Haverholme Lock and report to us on what repairs are necessary. From this we will be able to make an estimate of the restoration cost.

Wanted - this, that AND the other!

Pat Taylor has contrived to sell a wide variety of bric-a-brac, books, plants etc. on the stall throughout last year and if you can contribute any more this would be appreciated - got to keep Pat's spare room full!

Also it would be pleasing to widen the circle of helpers so if you would like to help out with the combined Trust and Sales company stand even if just for part of a day Pat Taylor would be pleased to hear from you.

Snippets...

Huddersfield Narrow

The Huddersfield Narrow canal reopened in May to a good deal of publicity. The initial opening was a series of local affairs with ceremonies taking place in several of the towns en route. The reason for this became obvious on 3rd September when HRH The Prince of Wales visited Marsden to officially declare the canal open. There have been a few teething troubles with the canal but everyone has commented on how well the BW men on the ground have coped with the problems.

Diary Dates

2001

13th Dec. 7:45pm IWA: Pie and Pea Supper, Jubilee Hall, Heighington.

2002

17th Jan. 7:45pm IWA Lincolnshire Wolds.

16th Feb. 7:30pm SSP Race Night

21st Feb. 7:45pm IWA John Nuttall (BW) talking on the restoration of the Chesterfield and Grantham Canals.

16th Mar. 7:30pm SSP Irish Night

13th April 7:30 pm SSP Quiz Night

13th Jul. 7:30pm SSP Music and Fireworks

Meetings marked IWA are organised by the Lincolnshire branch of the Inland Waterways Association and are open to everyone. The venue is St Mary-le-Wigford Church Hall, Lincoln unless otherwise stated. For details contact Mrs V Longthorne on 01949 530138.

Meetings marked SSP are organised by the Sleaford Sports Partnership the venue being Sleaford Rugby Club. For details contact Barbara MacKay on 01529 304355 or Norman Osborne on 01526 832256

Pat's Emporium - 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

WRG Canal Campers Summer 2001 at Haverholme.