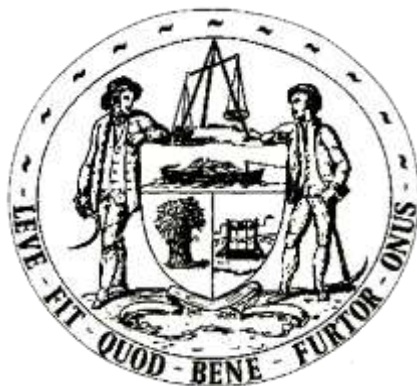


Sleaford Navigation Trust



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Autumn2022

The Sleaford Navigation Trust: -

... is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No. 3294818)

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...is registered as a Charity (No. 1060234)

...has a website: www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk

...is on facebook: Sleaford Navigation Trust

...is on Twitter: @SleafordNavigationTrust

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.

Newsletters

To request an email version contact:
secretary@sleafordnavigation.co.uk

Articles

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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

Our thanks to Westgate Print of Sleaford for their help with printing

Editorial

Another season, another newsletter. Some sad farewells, glad welcomes, news of events that have happened, events to be planned, work undertaken and hopes of funding for new projects, can be found in these pages.

As usual, if you would like to contribute an article or photographs, please do get in touch - contact details are on the back page.

Debbie Scott, Editor

The remains of Haveholme
Priory as viewed from the Lock

Photo: S Hayes



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With all the changes we've seen over the last few months, the loss of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the accession of HM King Charles III, the seemingly constant changes in Downing Street occupants and Cabinet Ministers, it's now hard to define what we mean by normal, but Steve has been out and about spreading the word about Sleaford Navigation in what we hope will be just the first of his new series of talks to other organisations.

Back on the road again.

A few years ago the Trust invited a representative from the Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln to speak at the AGM in Sleaford. The speaker gave an insight into what the Centre was commemorating and also the creation of the building and spire. He was also interested to hear of the work of SNT and took details of the Facebook page and website.

Earlier this year, we were quite surprised to get a call from him asking if a representative from the Trust could return the favour as a speaker, not for the Bomber Command Centre but for the U3A in Bourne. The power of networking is amazing and sometimes unexpected!

Steve addressed the group on Tuesday 6th September and had been pre-warned that the audience would be predominantly made up of retired engineers. This meant he was able to give a slightly different slant to his presentation adding more technical detail to both the historical construction and restoration sections. The level and number of questions which followed indicated the appreciation of the audience and their specialist interest. He commented afterwards how good it was to be able to interact with people again after the enforced cessation of such presentations during the pandemic.

To book one of Steve's talks, please see the contact details on the back page or see the website www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk

We've been saddened to hear of the deaths of two of the Trust's friends, Martin Chapman, our founding Chairman who was someone without whom the Society, as it was then, would probably never have got off the ground, and John Baylis, a friend in IWA and involved in many other Canal groups, who was very supportive of the Sleaford Navigation.

Recollections and photographs have been supplied by members.

Martin Chapman 1947 to 2022



Martin enjoying a BBQ at Bottom Lock July 1995

Chris Hayes remembers:

Members of the Trust were manning a stand at Heckington Show at the end of July when we heard the sad news that Martin, who had been diagnosed

with Alzheimer's disease a few years ago, had suddenly deteriorated and was in a care home. We were shocked to hear this but totally unprepared to hear the subsequent news of his death on Sunday 31st July.

Martin was the driving force behind the original Sleaford Navigation Society, founded in 1977. A group of local people had joined together to support a plan to save Navigation House which had fallen into serious disrepair and was in danger of collapse or even demolition. They recognised the importance of the heritage of the house and the role it and the Sleaford Navigation had played in the prosperity of Sleaford. Thankfully, their intervention



March 1993 Martin supervising the start of the Mass Paddle from Sleaford to South Kyme

was successful although it would be many years before Navigation House was fully restored and open to the public.

It was Martin who looked beyond the original focus of the campaign to consider the benefit to Sleaford of a restored navigation with boats coming up from the Witham into the town again. This led him to establish the society to “restore, improve, maintain, conserve and make fully navigable, the Sleaford Navigation”. He was joined by others drawn from different areas of interest but with a common aim to bring the waterway back into use. Connections were made with

other waterway restoration groups and the Inland Waterways Association and representation made to the then Lincolnshire River Board to restore Bottom Lock to navigation. Somewhat to the surprise of the Society delegation, the response was favourable and then began a whole programme of raising awareness of the cause, securing further support from the County and District Councils, seeking funding for the studies and works to make the dream a reality.

Martin and his wife, Pat, planting flowers around the Derek Taylor’s commemorative plaque, May 1999 at Bottom Lock, now known as Taylors Lock





Bottom Lock was restored and re-opened, boats travelled up to South Kyme and Cobblers Lock was rebuilt. Without Martin's vision, determination and persuasive powers this would not

Martin with Jenny Osborne raising the profile of Sleaford Navigation at the Sleaford Carnival in May 1995

have happened. We have a lot to thank him for.

Barbara Jones remembers:

The death of Martin brings much sadness but the SNT newsletter gives us the opportunity to remember him as he would wish,

Martin spent part of his early working life at sea but he always had a love of canals and narrowboats. His vision saw the creation of the Sleaford Navigation Society and eventually the Sleaford Navigation Trust.

With like-minded people Martin worked, and some would say dreamed, tirelessly to promote the development and leisure use of the Slea. Who could forget new lock gates, boat gatherings with Bramley, or building a cardboard canoe? Who would want to?

Many hours were spent with STC, NKDC and LCC showing them what the Navigation could bring to individuals and to Sleaford, without him seeing the final result he hoped for.

Work and family commitments eventually made it necessary for

Martin to walk away from the Chairmanship of SNT, but, I am sure, his wish for development and success never changed.

In memory of John Baylis:

John Baylis, who died aged 82 on 7th July, was possibly the most influential character in the East Midlands waterways over a period spanning near half a century. He was an IWA trustee for thirty years, a deputy national chairman, and one of the most hard-working committee chairmen in IWA's history during his eleven-year stint as chairman of IWA's Navigation, Technical & Amenity Committee. The hand of John Baylis was behind the early days of virtually every waterway restoration scheme in the East Midlands. He served as a director on Waterway Recovery Group's board for forty years, and was WRG deputy chairman for most of that period.

In 1974 he formed an IWA and Retford & Worksop Boat Club initiative to restore Morse Lock on the Chesterfield Canal to create a winding hole above Worksop; this led to the creation of the Chesterfield Canal Society in 1976. After many years, the Chesterfield Canal Society acquired money and convinced BW of the merits of restoration, and by 2005 the whole of the connected part of the canal was restored to Norwood Tunnel.

The list of canal societies and trusts that benefitted from John's friendship, direction, expertise and boundless enthusiasm is just too extensive to be recorded here but we are proud to be able to say that Sleaford Navigation Trust was in that number. John, together with others from the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association, played a huge part in the rebuilding of Cobblers Lock, among other projects. He and Christine, his wife, often joined us at boat gatherings and Navigable Drains cruises on their boat Thornbury.

John was a recipient of IWA's most prestigious award, the Cyril Styring Trophy, he was awarded IWA Honorary Life Membership in 2010 and awarded a British Empire Medal in the Queen's Diamond

Jubilee honours list in 2012. His loss will be felt by the many people who had the pleasure of knowing him but his legacy to the waterways lives on.

(Adapted by Chris Hayes, with permission, from the reading given by Neil Edwards at John's funeral on August 2nd 2022)

Talking of friends of our Navigation, the following is reproduced from an article written by Bill Hunt in 1978.

FRIEND OF A KING, AND FRIEND TO A TOWN ...

'The inhabitants of the town and the neighbourhood of Sleaford are highly sensible of the distinguished support afforded to the Sleaford Navigation by Sir Joseph Banks. Bart., and that his personal attendance and extensive information on the subject at several meetings held in the country and during the progress of the Bill through Parliament, very essentially promoted its success.'

This was the beginning of a vote of thanks given by the people of Sleaford on 22 June 1792 to Sir Joseph Banks, who had worked untiringly both within Lincolnshire and in London, for a Navigation for Sleaford. Of all the people who helped to promote the Sleaford Navigation Company during the latter part of the 18th century, surely none was as nationally famous as Sir Joseph.

Born in 1743 in Argyll Street in London, he entered into a fortune, part of which is today the Revesby Estate, while still at university. Rather than idle his life away in the social round, as was the custom of many of the aristocracy at that time, he devoted himself to his passion for botany. In the capacity of botanist he sailed with Captain Cook on the 'Endeavour' to Australia in 1768 and on his return, received greater credit than Cook for many of the discoveries made. He became a friend of King George III and achieved a status which we would today call his 'chief scientific advisor.' His contribution to science was recognised in 1778 when he was elected President of the Royal Society, a position he held until his death in 1820.

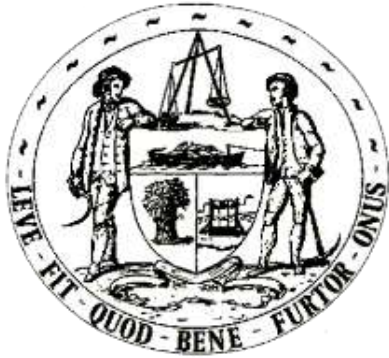
Sir Joseph always took an intense interest in any aspect of public works in Lincolnshire which he considered would be an advantage for the county and it can almost be said that without his active support such projects were often doomed to failure.

He played a small part in the attempt to establish the Navigation by Act of Parliament in 1784 but opposition in respect of necessary toll reductions on the River Witham for Sleaford goods and also from local landowners frustrated these efforts. With a renewed attempt to obtain an Act in 1791, Sir Joseph seems to have thrown his, by then not inconsiderable, support and influence behind the promoters of the scheme. He was not simply content to let others do the work but put himself to trouble to help. For example, in October 1791, he and three other supporters rowed all the way from Sleaford to Holland Fen examining the drainage tunnels through the river banks which would need altering if the river was to carry barge traffic.

He wrote prolifically to all who may have been influential in securing the success of the Act, pointing out the advantages that a Navigation would bring to Sleaford. One such person was Mrs Mary Nesbitt, the owner of the Corn Mill (Nash's) and the Paper Mill, both near Evedon. She finally agreed to drop her opposition to the scheme as Sir Joseph had personally guaranteed that her mills would suffer no loss of water to them on account of the river being made navigable. However, this was not until after he had had a very stormy meeting with John Nichols, an engineer she had engaged to look after her interests. Nichols was by no means an amateur - he was President of the Smeatonian Society - today known as the Institute of Civil Engineers. Banks felt himself able to argue the water problems as he was being advised by William Jessop, certainly the most capable canal engineer of his day and the man who, with John Hudson, had been engaged to make a survey of the Slea for a Navigation.

In March 1792 the Sleaford Navigation Bill entered Parliament and

it looked as if it was going to fail as the others had done before due to the opposition against it. Throughout the proceedings the only person who showed no fear of failure was Sir Joseph. Almost until the last day of the Committee examination it looked like failing when, quite inexplicably, the offending clause in the Bill which was causing all the trouble, was agreed and the Bill passed. Had Sir Joseph used his influence in parliamentary and Court circles to ensure the passage of this Bill? It is possible but there is no evidence to prove such an idea.



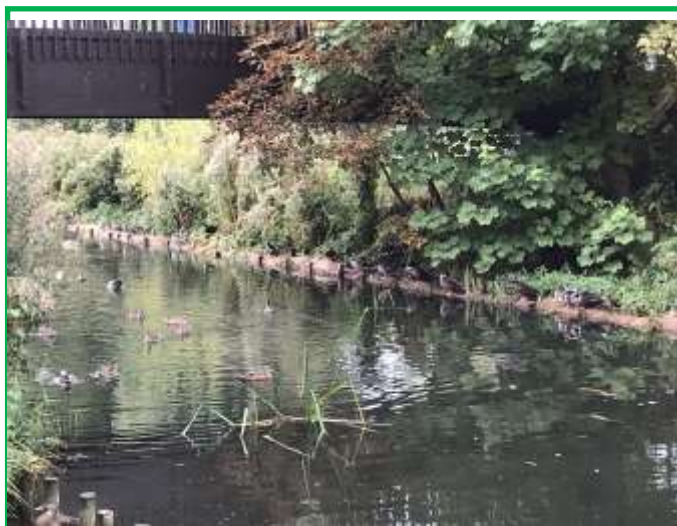
The day before the Sleaford Navigation Bill received the Royal Assent, Benjamin Handley, the then-clerk to the supporters, was instructed by the shareholders to write to Sir Joseph to thank him for his support and to make one final request - they would be honoured if he would design a coat-of-arms for use as the seal of the company in the future. He agreed and, after at least two draft designs had been drawn and rejected by him, submitted one in which the importance of the two main commodities to be carried by the new waterway, corn and coal, were recognised. The supporter on the left is a farm labourer with his sickle and, on the right, a coal-worker with his pick.

He also suggested a very apt motto, a line from Ovid. '*Leve fit quod bene Furtur onus*' which, translated, means 'The burden which is carried correctly becomes light'. The draft design was submitted for the approval of the shareholders at their first meeting after the Act became law, held at the 'George Inn'. Sleaford, on Friday. 22 June 1792. Great celebrations took place in the town that day, as the newspapers tell us, welcoming the prosperity it was hoped the Navigation would bring. One wonders what was behind Benjamin Handley's statement in a letter to Sir Joseph

written the next day in which he said that, in being passed from person to person, the design became 'mislaid' and so he could not return the original immediately to Sir Joseph, who wanted it for his records. Fortunately it was found but there is no record of who had it.

This letter was almost the final official communication which the Navigation had with Sir Joseph and the company included with it their own vote of thanks for what he had done for them and the importance they attached to his participation is evident in what they said.

'Resolved unanimously that the thanks of the Company of Proprietors of the Sleaford Navigation be given to Sir Joseph Banks, Bart., for the essential services derived from his support of the scheme of Navigation and of the Bill through Parliament and also for the honour of the very suitable device which, at their request, he has formed for the Common Seal of the company and that this Resolution be transmitted to Sir Joseph Banks as the first of the company under their Common Seal.'



Witham Slea Blue Green Project

Work continues with the installation of coir roll to the banks in the top pound, led by Lions Environmental and helped by volunteers.

Grantham Angling Association Fly Fishing Section

In September, Chris, Steve and Debbie met up with Chris Moses and Stuart Scotton to discuss an extension to the current trial arrangement whereby the GAAFFS is granted the fishing rights to the length of the river owned by the Trust, i.e., the Top Pound and



Photo: Debbie Scott

downstream of Cogglesford towards the bypass. The terms of the deal include not actually fishing the Top Pound but helping to conserve the fish there by monitoring illegal use by other anglers, which is something the Trust has not had the resources to do in the past. We've also found out since then that NKDC Officers and Hill Holt Wood, who manage Lollycocks, are also keen to deter 'anglers' following the discovery of large amounts of angling detritus in the area, especially line, hooks, and beer cans, all of which conflict with the site's nature conservation status. We hope to work together to find a resolution.



Cogglesford Watermill - an update from Anne Flannery , Heritage Tourism and Marketing Assistant, Heart of Lincs, North Kesteven District Council

www.heartoflincs.com

Firstly a great big thank you to Sleaford Navigation Trust for your help and support, and doing such a great job.

Since reopening in November 2021 we've welcomed over 4,000 visitors to Cogglesford and feedback has been fantastic. We've been a bit overwhelmed with how much affection people have shown for the mill, especially those who have grown up in Sleaford and have fond memories of using it as a playground in their youth while the building was derelict!



Staff and volunteers have been turning the wheel every week, delighting visitors of all ages.

We're working with RH Displays to create a

Photos: D Scott

maintenance plan to keep the wheel in tip-top condition and ensure the machinery is working smoothly and effectively.

We've also begun to offer Milling Experience sessions, where

people can be trained in the milling process and enjoy grinding their own bags of wholemeal and white flour. We've expanded the children's area with some dressing up clothes, games and a new interactive display which gives some child-friendly facts as well as a video and interactives to help explain the process to younger visitors.

On Monday 26th September we held a very special milling day – Cope Seeds & Grain in Sleaford contacted the mill to see whether we could team up to provide flour bags to the Sleaford Community Larder. Cope Seeds kindly provided grain free-of-charge, which we will then donate to the cause to help families struggling with rising bills over the winter period.

Cogglesford Watermill is open Fridays, Saturday, Sunday and Monday 12pm-4pm, and milling days are held on the second Sunday of every month. Milling Experience dates can be booked by contacting the mill directly: cogglesfordwatermill@n-kesteven.gov.uk



Tales from afar...

Having missed our usual hire-boat holiday for two years, Gavin and I were back afloat in July, this time in Lancashire, our second visit to the county's waterways but our first to the Lancaster Canal itself.

We found synchronicity... the Act of Parliament which enabled the Lancaster's construction was passed in the same year as ours, 1792, and its design and construction involved some of the big names in the age of canals – John Rennie is credited with much of the work.



As we have the Witham providing a link to the Wash and the rest of the world, so the Lancaster has its Glasson Branch, and now the Millennium Ribble Link, connecting it to the Lune and Ribble estuaries, respectively.

Sadly both links are no go areas for hireboats... maybe one day, we'll go back with our own!

The Lancaster is a contour canal, with amazing aqueducts and a couple of swing



bridges, but there are no locks on the main line, which is very different to the Slea. We understand that their restoration work started in 1963 and there are currently around 42 miles of navigable waterway between Preston and Tewitfield. Like the Sleaford Navigation, the Lancaster Canal Trust has a long list of future projects and hopes eventually to re-connect with Kendal, the original northern terminus.

Words and Photos: D Scott



Setting off from Bilborrow, a week gave us time to visit both Tewitfield and Preston, earning the chance to buy our very own LCT plaque which one day will join our various SNT plaques on the afore-mentioned own boat... We also walked down the Glasson Branch to visit the Dock, spent some time on the beach at Hest Bank on Morecambe Bay and explored on foot a few of the upper locks on the Ribble Link.

New Corporate Member

We are delighted to welcome the Sleaford Riverbank Trust as a corporate member of SNT. The Riverbank Trust is newly established and run by keen supporters of the Navigation and has already submitted a planning application with proposals to improve the Cut at the Carre Street end of the Top Pound. We look forward to a long and fruitful working relationship between our two organisations

Helping us remember the hotter, drier days of Summer 2022...





Work Party at Haverholme July 2022



Photos: S Hayes



Riverlight 2022 was so well received that plans are already in place for the 2023 event.

The date and more information will be published once decisions have been made.

Ideas and volunteers always welcome, contact info@hub-sleaford.org.uk

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

North Kesteven has submitted an application covering a wide range of proposed projects to benefit Sleaford including some directly relating to the Navigation. As we go to press, we are keeping all our fingers and toes crossed and hope to let you have more news by the time of our next edition.



South Kyme May 2022

Mel, Pat and Sue were among the boaters who made the trek to South Kyme for this year's Boat Gathering. As we write, the nation's plans for the May Bank Holiday 2023 are still to be confirmed. How lovely would it be to be

Photo: D Scott

part of an event in the village's Coronation Hall on the weekend of the new King's Coronation?



Photo: Mel Sowerby

Rob Saul and Dave Collin clearing fallen branches and overhanging vegetation on the Top Pound towpath in Sleaford in September

Useful websites:

Sleaford Navigation Trust	www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk
Navigation House	www.navigationhouse.co.uk
Cogglesford Watermill	www.cogglesfordwatermill.co.uk
TourismNK	www.heartoflincs.com
Sleaford Town Council	www.sleaford.gov.uk
North Kesteven District Council	www.n-kesteven.gov.uk
Lincolnshire County Council	www.lincolnshire.gov.uk
Inland Waterways Association	www.waterways.org.uk
Canal & River Trust	www.canalrivertrust.org.uk
Environment Agency	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Blue Green Corridor	www.withamsleablebluegreencorridor.co.uk

Also follow us on facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Sleaford-Navigation-Trust-632143133547859>

And Twitter

@SleafordNavigationTrust

The River Sleas Clean Up volunteers continue their work parties - for more details of the events please see their facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/river.slea/ The next one is scheduled for Sunday 20th November at 10.00 - meet at the Hub.

A selection of plaques is now available to order online through our website www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk

Membership Subscriptions - Action Required Please

A reminder please, that the subscriptions are now as follows.

- **Individual (£10), Senior Citizen (£8), Under 18 (£8)**
- **Family (£15), Life (£120), Corporate (£20min)**

Please update your standing orders accordingly, if you haven't already done so. Many thanks to those who already have.

The membership application form with the latest information about subscriptions is also available on our website for potential members.

Signing up to receive this newsletter by email means that you would receive it in full colour and the photographs work much better that way. Active hyperlinks will also take you directly the more information .Contact secretary@sleafordnavigation.co.uk

Places to Visit

Navigation House

Opening Times: Friday to Monday 10.00 am to 2.00 pm

Cogglesford Watermill

Opening Times: Friday to Monday 12.00 noon to 4.00 pm

and regular Milling Days on the second Sunday of each month

See www.heartoflincs.com for more details and up to date information on events , etc.

Committee Contacts

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Director	Rob Saul

Membership

Membership Secretary	Jenny Osborne, Bank House, Ruskington Fen, Billingham, Lincoln, LN4 4DS Tel: 01526 832256
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SNT Work Parties go on throughout the year, usually on the second Sunday of the month. Contact Mel Sowerby (01522 856810 or sowerbys@ntlworld.com) for details of upcoming dates

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.