

## **SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST NEWSLETTER No 13 APRIL 2003**

### **Editorial**

This will be the last newsletter with ourselves as editors. It is not that we have not enjoyed producing the newsletters or do not consider them worthwhile but everything to do with time and the competing calls upon it by other duties for the Trust, for other interests and those connected with earning a living. In our editorial for the January issue we spoke about the need for more active participation from the membership and the exciting future just around the corner for our navigation. It is important that developments are reported as fully and accurately as possible to our members and others and for that reason we need someone to take over this job as their main contribution. There is much that can be done but most importantly it will be good to see newsletters produced on time something than we have not been able to achieve.

We are sorry that in order to meet the deadlines required for the AGM notices it has not been possible to produce this newsletter in the usual format.

Dave and Izzie Turner

### **Purchase of Part of the Navigation**

The Trust has completed negotiations for the purchase of approximately three quarters of a mile of the navigation from its head at Carre Street in Sleaford to Bonemill Lock. The purchase includes the river bed and banks and sections of the towpath as well as a strip of land currently home to a row of poplar trees. The land is being bought from the Dowager Marchioness of Bristol whose family were once lords of the manor of Sleaford. The Lords Bristol once owned the whole town of Sleaford but we understand that this is the last of their holding in the town. Negotiations for the purchase have been underway for several years but have been delayed by the loss of the original deeds and arguments between the Bristol side solicitors, former and current. Several grants have been received towards the £8000 needed to cover the purchase and solicitors fees and over half has been raised but there is now an urgent need for the balance.

Dave Turner

### **March Work Party**

Enough of us turned out this time to enable work to proceed at Haverholme and at Bottom Lock. I was at Haverholme with Norman and new volunteers Martin and Chris finishing off the brickwork to the revetment at the by-wash outfall. I can assure everyone that bricklaying at a 45 degree angle whilst trying to balance on slippery bricks also at a 45 degree angle is no easy matter! At least that job is now completed.

At Bottom Lock the usual spring works of grass cutting and weir board replacement were completed along with a rebuilding of the downstream landing stage. A check on the operation of the lock revealed that one of the bottom gates paddles rods has come adrift from the paddle but it was not possible to repair it due to the depth of the lock. We are now looking for a friendly diver as the lock is not equipped with stop plank groves so it is not possible to lower the water level to do the work in the dry.

We have for some time been looking into the installation of an upstream landing stage but this has been delayed by current Environment Agency requirements to use only the floating type. It is anticipated that with the help of an anonymous benefactor this may be achieved in the next few months.

Dave Turner

### **Lincolnshire Waterways Project Update**

Money has now been released by the County Council for an implementation study of restoration of the Sleaford Navigation and a meeting was held to determine the content of the brief for the study so that it could go forward for tendering. The Environment Agency, one of the key partners in the Project, is responsible for this brief, together with Tim Summers, a representative of Atkins Water, who is drawing up the detail.

Inland Waterways Association and Sleaford Navigation Trust were invited to send a representative to the meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup> at the Environment Agency Offices in Lincoln and David Carnell and I duly attended. Richard Topham represented British Waterways and Jane Wells was there on behalf of NKDC. I think it fair to say that we were slightly surprised at the number of attendees representing the Environment Agency, I counted fourteen or fifteen! At times it did feel as if we were under attack and that the concept of restoration was seen as detrimental by some. Many EA representatives were not really aware of the amount of work and planning that had already gone on, but the eventual outcome was positive and the first draft of the brief should be available shortly. Atkins Water are experienced in the field of restoration and the initial response from Tim Summers indicated that the project was certainly viable.

There are obviously issues which may cause problems but in comparison with many other canal and navigation restorations we really have very few real problems and the area has a great deal of benefit to gain from a restored Sleaford Navigation. It is vital though that the study is undertaken with some speed as there are expiry dates to the availability of funding.

Chris Hayes

## **AINA Risk Assessment Workshop**

In March I travelled to the BBC training centre at Wood Norton near Evesham to attend a workshop on Risk Assessments in connection with the users of our navigation. AINA is the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities and as well as representing the various navigation authorities in their dealings with government and the E U etc. encourages them to work together. The conference was a response to a tightening of the requirements to effectively manage safety for all classes of users.

Following the opening address by AINA chairman and ex BW Chief Executive Dave Fletcher, Mike Barratt, Chief Engineer - Safety and Standards at BW set the scene on the basic reasons why we should address user safety. He was followed by Jackie Lewis, Principal Lawyer at BW who developed the legal angle before Peter Wade, Safety Advisor - User Safety and also of BW gave us the view from nearer to the coal face.

The next speaker Mario Redhead of Towry Law Safety Services is retained by the Lower Avon Navigation Trust and his report on the work he does for that organisation was related to site visits arranged for the afternoon. He was at pains to stress, as were many of the other speakers, that most of the problems he found on the navigation and changes he recommended did not cost the Trust vast sums of money. I for one found it very interesting that during his annual inspection he thought it necessary to personally operate all of the lock gates and paddles on the navigation to ensure they were not so difficult to operate that injury might result.

The last main speaker of the day was Fred Moughton of the National Trust. NT operate the river Wey Navigation and he described how their standard systems were used to report and investigate incidents on the river. They use statistics gathered from reported incidents to identify areas of concern for possible action but many such as slipping on wet grass were outside the control of the navigation Authority. One of the main themes of the day was to use common sense when undertaking risk assessments.

Dave Turner

## **Northern Canals Association, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2003. Cromford**

Northern Canals Association is an informal group consisting of representatives from Canal Trusts and Societies located, logically enough, in the north of England! Meetings are held four times a year at different locations around the system and a presentation in the morning is followed by a walk around the area of the canal with the opportunity to see sites and familiarise oneself with the area.

March's meeting was at Ironville, Derbyshire, not far from Langley Mill, and showed yet again how the climate for restoration has changed with the passage of time. The "Friends of the Cromford Canal" have only been in existence for a year yet great progress has been made in the campaign towards restoration. The group originated in a subcommittee of the ECP & DA and have now achieved a growing membership, have a magazine and a website and have now taken their place in the number of canals actively working towards a full restoration. If you recall there was an article by Dave Turner in the last newsletter about the Working Party on the Cromford at Ironville in which members of Sleaford Navigation Trust and Lincolnshire Inland Waterways Association took part.

Looking at some of the problems facing the Friends of the Cromford Canal should lighten the heart of Sleaford Navigation Trust members! What have we got to worry about in comparison with, a collapsed tunnel 3,000 yards long, an elevated section now no longer in water and bought by the local house-owners for gardens, planning permission in place for a house on an aqueduct and very vocal and active opposition from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust? Yet, very properly, the FCC leaflet invites comparison with the "impossible" restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the difficulties overcome by those restoring the Chesterfield Canal.

The engineers for the Cromford Canal were William Jessop and his assistants, Benjamin Outram and Thomas Dadford. Jessop was the engineer on the construction of the Sleaford Navigation and it gives some indication of the extent of waterway construction and the workload undertaken at the time to realise that both the Sleaford Navigation and the Cromford Canal opened in 1794. The Cromford should have been opened in 1792 and a stone was suitably carved in anticipation, but the collapse of the Leawood Aqueduct delayed the opening. In a practice starkly in contrast to those of today, Jessop, blaming himself and the purity of the lime used in the aqueduct for the failure, paid for repairs out of his own pocket!

The FCC have now the support of the Duke of Devonshire as Patron and are planning a Cromford Canal Festival for 2004. They were even hoping to have a special beer created for the event, a "Leggers Beer". (A promotional photo showed a smiling John Baylis pulling a pint!) Tasters of this beverage were not, sadly, available at the meeting.

An excellent illustrated walkers' guide to the Cromford Canal is available at £3.50 ISBN 0-9544482-0-0 and the website address is [www.cromfordcanal.org.uk](http://www.cromfordcanal.org.uk)

The next Northern Canals Association meeting will be on June 29<sup>th</sup> and is being hosted by SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST at the Sleaford Sports Partnership, David Williams Pavilion (Sleaford Rugby Club).

## **SNT Newsletter**

You will have seen from the editorial that this is the last issue of the newsletter that Dave and Izzie Turner will produce. I should like to thank them on behalf of the directors of the SNT and the readership for all their hard work. They have produced informative, professional newsletters which have been much appreciated by all. Thank you.

As Dave and Izzie have said, there is a real need for the newsletter to continue and anyone who feels they may be able to help with this task should feel no hesitation in approaching me or Dave and Izzie.

Chris Hayes

## **SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST** **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the second Annual General Meeting of the Sleaford Navigation Trust will be held at the Sleaford Sports Partnership, Sleaford, on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2003, starting at 7.30 p.m. for the purpose of transacting the following business.

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive the Directors Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002.
3. To receive the Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003.
4. To re-appoint Robt. Page Kirk Cree Jepson of Nottingham as the Company's Auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.
5. Election of Directors.
6. To transact any other business that may be deemed appropriate by the Chairman.

After the meeting there will be a talk by Caroline Kileavey, the local British Waterways Manager, about 'The Life of a Waterways Manager.'

## **SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST**

### **Minutes of the 2002 Annual General Meeting**

#### **Apologies:**

Miss R J Hayes, Mr D J Hayes, Mrs P Taylor, Mr R Mills, Mrs B MacKay, Mr & Mrs Sowerby, Mr & Mrs Kimpson, Mr & Mrs D Carnell, Mrs Y Pullen.

#### **Minutes of the last AGM:**

The minutes were proposed as a true record, proposed by Mr D Pullen, seconded by Mr N Osborne.

#### **Directors Report:**

It was recorded that the report had been circulated. Mrs Hayes summarised the report, which was noted as being the fifth annual report, and current progress. The report was proposed by Mr N Osborne, seconded by Mr B Alexander.

#### **Accounts and Auditors Report:**

The accounts and report were presented to the meeting. The accounts were proposed by Mr A Waugh, seconded by Mr B Alexander.

#### **Election of Directors:**

The Directors standing for re-election were proposed en-bloc, they were elected unanimously.

#### **Any Other Business:**

Mrs Hayes expressed her thanks to Mrs Taylor for her work with the Sales Company, Dave & Isobel Turner for producing the newsletter and to Jenny Osborne for looking after the Trust membership details.

Concern was expressed that no Auditors were appointed but Mr Turner pointed out that, as the financial turnover of the Trust was low it was not necessary to have the accounts audited, only an examination of the accounts was deemed to be sufficient.

#### **Close:**

There being no other business the meeting closed.