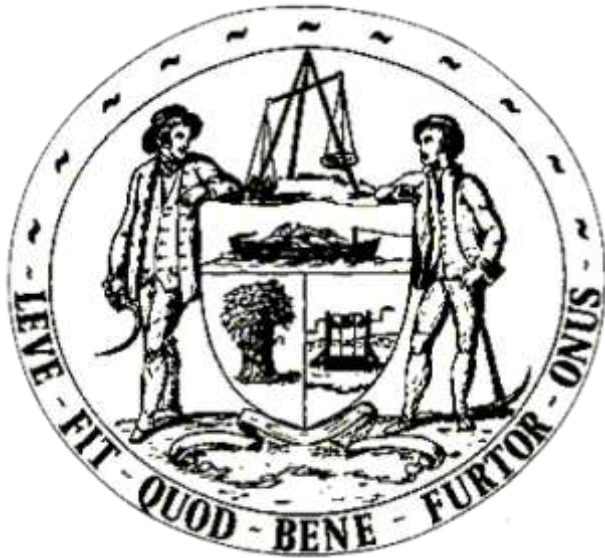


SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST



35

Winter 2011

The Sleaford Navigation Trust: -

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

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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.

Articles

Please send all articles to: sleaford.navigation@ntlworld.com or

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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

Editorial

Welcome to newsletter number 35!

As your new editor, I would like to echo our Chairman's thanks to David who has held the editorial reins for us for the last few years and kept the newsletter moving along.

I'm looking forward to receiving your contributions (words and photographs welcome) to make the newsletter informative and interesting as we go forward. The deadline for the next issue, Spring 2012, will be 15th March.

If you wish to receive an email copy of the newsletter, please email the address to the left. These are sent out at the same time as the postal versions, but also include colour photos. We will also be looking at different ways of distributing the newsletter and we welcome your views on this and any other navigation matter

Debbie Scott

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Chairman's Report

Chris Hayes

The weather is colder and thoughts start to turn to Christmas or, perhaps next **year's holiday and boating plans! Time again for reflection and consideration** of recent events and future plans.

There is a press release from British Waterways in the newsletter regarding the establishing of the new waterways charity. The Trust responded to the Defra consultation regarding the charity and the ramifications of the change have been the subject of much discussion and debate. While the Slea is not a BW waterway there are plans that the Environment Agency will join in the new **charity in 2015. By then it's hoped the structure will be established and** functioning effectively.

Volunteer involvement is an important part of that new charity status. Waterway societies and trusts have depended on volunteers for the entirety of their existence and amazing things have been achieved. People have given, and continue to give, their time and considerable effort to forward a cause they believe in. Those people, of all ages, will continue to come forward but the present economic climate has widened the nature of the volunteer. The numbers of young people unable to find work, many with qualifications but no work experience, may look to volunteering to provide them with evidence of skills and qualities that can help them to employment. I think this is an area where there can be mutual benefit. Charities can widen their volunteer base whilst helping young people to develop greater self esteem through **achievement and, hopefully, move on to valid employment. Let's hope it will** work that way.

The May boat gathering and festival in South Kyme were a brilliant success with literally thousands of people visiting South Kyme over the weekend. Numbers exceeded all expectations with queues of cars coming into the village. There are reports on different aspects of the event elsewhere in the newsletter.

You may have seen in the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership newsletter that Andy Jee has unfortunately been unable to work through ill health and that our Honorary Engineer, Dave Pullen, has been called upon to take his place on a temporary basis.

In this edition we welcome a new editor, Debbie Scott, and say goodbye to David Osborne who has filled the position with distinction. David has produced editions with a professionalism and skill for which we at the Trust are very grateful. We are sorry but fully understand that the other demands on his time have made it difficult for him to carry on being editor but would like to **say a big ‘thank you’ and wish him well.**

Welcome to Our New Members

Christopher John Talbot, D J & B Marriage, Nigel Allen, Graham Wright

If you are not already a member and would like to join please speak to us at an event, pick up a membership leaflet from Navigation House or Cogglesford Mill or contact us directly – see contacts list at the back of the newsletter.

New Name for Britain's New Waterways Charity

The transition trustees of the new charity being established to tend 2,000 miles of canals and rivers in England and Wales from April 2012 have today (6 October) announced that it will be called the Canal & River Trust (or Glandwr Cymru in Wales) and have unveiled its new symbol.

The decision has been taken following extensive public and internal consultation and market research into the replacement for the name and **symbol of “British Waterways.” They reflect the important step the** Government is taking in creating a new successor organisation to hold the waterways in trust for the nation in perpetuity. The change also offers an opportunity to attract the attention of, and to appeal to, the wider public.

Multi-award winning design agency Pentagram provided free design **consultancy to develop the new national charity’s name, symbol and imagery.** The worldwide agency has a long history with the waterways, creating the British Waterways symbol over 20 years ago. To make maximum impact at minimum cost, the Canal & River Trust will be working with waterway organisations to plan a phased change to signage on the waterways perhaps by **providing a ‘signing kit’ for local groups.**

Tony Hales, chairman of the transition trustees, said: “Our canals and rivers

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have been part of the fabric of the country’s landscape for 250 years and putting them in trust for the nation is the start of a new chapter in the renaissance of the waterways. People have told us that the waterways are important to them as a local haven, for themselves and for nature. Stepping onto a towpath is like entering a different world, where the stress of daily life can be escaped. The Canal & River Trust and our new symbol represent what our waterways mean to so many people.”

The Welsh name for the new charity, Glandwr Cymru, translates literally as **‘Waterside Wales’ and reflects a determination by transition trustees that the trust has a distinctly Welsh character and focus for its waterways in Wales.**

The Canal & River Trust is expected to launch in April 2012 and will hold 2,000 miles of canals and rivers in England and Wales, including the third largest **estate of listed structures, in trust for the nation. Britain’s waterways also provide a unique haven for wildlife, offering distinctive local tranquillity to some 13 million visitors every year.**

The “British Waterways” brand will stay alive in Scotland, where the waterways currently managed by British Waterways Scotland will be kept in the public sector and will not form part of the Canal & River Trust.



Canal & River Trust

News from the Festivals Part 1

South Kyme 2011—The Tough Times, aka Fight The Good Fight

Steve Hayes

The last Boat Gathering in South Kyme was, as many know, a rather splendid affair. The intention of the Parish Council was to have a variety of tents and stalls around South Kyme Tower which was to be opened for the first time in many years.

We were informed that we had ‘pole position’ in that the Trust gazebo was to be situated right by the door to the tower. John Line acted as transport manager for this event and picked the Trust trailer up from storage in Swinderby and took it to South Kyme ready for setup on the Saturday.

On arrival in the field John and I had a look around at all the larger tents **around the field and positioned the trailer so that we wouldn’t have to lift the** gazebo frame, canvas, pegs, etc. very far. The frame came out easily and the canvas roof went on without problem with the frame in a semi-folded state. The next part of the erection sequence is to stretch the frame out fully and then open the gazebo legs to their required height. It was at this point that the real problems became apparent. At 20m from the tower there was a nice gentle breeze, by the tower there was a howling gale with the tower acting as a sort of wind tunnel. We should have noticed this before deciding to put up the 6m x 3m gazebo which is the larger of our two gazebos. However, hindsight is a great thing and we were well into the task. We put all the usual tie downs in place, each one should take a ton of strain, assessed the situation and then put some more on with even larger pegs made from angle iron.

Next came the gazebo walls, no problem, we thought although I now know **what it feels to be ‘cling filmed’ in canvas. After almost two hours of work we** had nearly managed to get most of the walls in place but another serious problem was starting to show in that we had had to use so many tent pegs to hold the walls in place that we were running drastically short of them. During a discussion on the next stage of work we were increasingly starting to notice that the whole gazebo was starting to do a passable impersonation of a Harrier Vertical Take-off and Landing (VTOL) aircraft. We could see the VTO manifesting by stages but were getting very apprehensive about the L (landing) part of it. After some more rapid discussion we decided to undo all our work

and take the gazebo down again while we still had one!

OK, so the other side of the tower seemed more sheltered and we did have the **smaller 3m x 3m gazebo and it wasn't past lunch time yet so we decided to erect that one.** Two hours later, well it was smaller and we knew what we were doing this time, we had finished. Mind you it still had as many tie downs **in place as the larger gazebo, in addition to John's mega angle iron pegs and** some of his nifty ropework. We were taking NO chances this time!

On the Sunday, Pat set up her sales stall with the front of the gazebo open and **the wind still swirling. Still it was well tied down, wasn't it, no worries.** However, by early afternoon it became clear that all was not right. The frame **wasn't moving, thanks to John's pegs and rope, but the canvas was trying to** detach itself from the frame. We were going to have to take the tent down before it blew away but the next problem was that Pat was selling the stock **and doing a good trade. "Pat we are going to have to move before the gazebo goes." "Not just now, I'm not going, I'm doing well on the sales."**

I have to say that we did prevail in the end, Pat moved to a larger more secure tent and we managed to get the gazebo down without any damage. Thanks are due though to the members of the public who rallied round to hold the tent down and SNT members who transferred the stock and tables.

News from the Festivals Part 2

South Kyme 2011— Bigger & Better Than Ever.

Chris Hayes

The sun shone and the crowds came to the May Day celebration at South Kyme on the Sleaford Navigation. The boat gathering attracted twenty-two boats from around the inland waterways but this year the celebrations in the village were on a grander scale than ever before and Sunday saw thousands of visitors make their way to the field near the historic Kyme Tower. Access to the area was made possible by kind permission of Simon Lamyman and the tower provided a wonderful backdrop for the re-enactments of the Knights of Skirbeck, medieval tents and stalls and the demonstrations by the Northcote Heavy Horse Centre.

The display in the church of wedding dresses worn over the years by local brides proved very popular on this Royal Wedding weekend and costumes of a different kind were on show on the many entries for the best scarecrow

competition. I have to say that judging this is getting to be more and more difficult so I asked Sue Sowerby and Beth Cope for their help in making a decision. Finally we agreed that a very athletically posed cricketer with his **little yellow plastic friend “Out for a duck!” had to win first place but overall** the standard of entries was very high indeed and all were to be congratulated.

Over 200 yellow plastic ducks took part in a race on the river but they were in grave danger of falling foul of the one drawback of the weekend, high wind. Instead of going downstream as might be expected, the wind actually propelled them upstream.

The boaters’ church service this year was taken by Rev. Molly Langridge whose father Vivian Bird was the author of a well known waterway related book, “By Lock and Pound”. Molly’s lifelong love of waterways shone throughout the service and her reminiscences certainly made the packed congregation smile.

The whole weekend was packed with activity and the enthusiasm of the village and Parish Council was infectious. They very much want the Navigation Trust to be part of their celebrations and welcome the visiting boats and their crews to the village. Together we are now looking at ways of improving access to the **water for all users and considering the provision of a turning point or “winding hole” in the village to make South Kyme a viable weekend destination for boaters. Plans have already started for next year’s celebrations which will be on the weekend of the May Day Bank Holiday so watch this space! You could also check out the website www.skfest.co.uk for more details.**

News from the Festivals Part 3

IWA Burton on Trent 2011— All Lit Up In Burton.

Chris Hayes

Well it seemed like a good idea. At the committee meeting before the IWA National Festival at Burton on Trent someone suggested we ought to put an **entry into the illuminated boat parade. We’d got some solar powered flowers and butterflies between us so it wouldn’t be too much trouble ... The only problem was that those lights didn’t go far on the 55ft of Wigford and our effort was in danger of looking a bit pathetic.**

Not one to give up easily, Sue Sowerby remembered that they had friends not **too far away so got on the phone. It can’t be often that someone rings you on an evening in July and asks you if you aren’t doing anything could you go in the**

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roof, get out your Christmas lights and bring them to a towpath in Burton. Suffice to say they duly did, a generator was found and Wigford began to do a passable impression of Blackpool illuminations.

The theme of the parade was “Beer and Flowers” so we duly stood on the front deck waving Glow-stick flowers and raising a glass to the spectators on the towpath. On this occasion though, Mel did not touch a drop. It was dark, there was very little room between the moored boats but, to his credit, he steered through without so much as touching another boat.

No, we didn’t win but we were probably the noisiest boat there. Nevertheless, it was one of those occasions you look back on with affection. Those are the ones that remind you that volunteering has many benefits apart from those measured by achieving targets.

Weed

Dave Carnell

Due to the prolonged period of dry weather poor water quality has encouraged excessive weed lowering the oxygen levels, to the detriment of fish, and leisure users, ie fishermen, canoeing, rowing and boaters.

The residents of South Kyme, on the River Sleaf, had reported their concerns to the EA and requested a meeting in the village. This took place on the 22nd September when representatives of the IWA and Sleaford



South Kyme – Overhead Weeds

Photo: Dave Carnell

Navigation Trust were also present.

This excess of weed would, under normal flow conditions, be flushed down river to Boston Grand Sluice and then out on to the tide. With little flow the weed has built up, carpeting the width of the river and causing major problems to navigation.



South Kyme - Bottom Lock

Photo: Dave Carnell

Boston Rowing Club hold a national event, the Lincoln Boston Marathon, in mid September, and raised their concerns some weeks before about the danger of the event being cancelled. BW engaged contractors to clear the weed but such was the amount they were unable to provide clear water for rowing and sculling. This caused financial loss to the Rowing Club and Boston Borough area of a reported £75,000. There were fears that further losses will be incurred should the British Olympic rowers be unable to practise on the River Witham later this year and, to this end, meetings with BW and the EA are taking place.

In the meantime Internal Drainage Boards have presented photographs and details of the problem to Lord Henley, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and a senior official of Defra's Chemical Regulation Directorate. The



River Witham at Tattershall

Photo: Dave Carnell

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IDBs felt they had been able to communicate the serious implications of the situation and, while it is early days, some viable solution may be forthcoming.

There appears to be two types of growth causing the problem; Duckweed, is a floating weed that blankets the surface and reduces the water oxygen levels to the detriment of aquatic life. The second

type, known locally as Cott, is an algae that forms on the river bed eventually rising to the surface to join the Duckweed. In the past an aquatic herbicide, Diquat, was used but this is no longer readily available. The current practice is to remove the weed mechanically, placing it on the bank, subject to EA restrictions, or lifting it over the sluice gates into the tide. Further meetings are planned with both the EA and BW.

In October BW applied for permission to vacuum the weed off the river and dispose of it on the banks. The EA are proposing to install floating barriers across the adjacent water courses that are the main source of the weed into the Witham. As a final and extra precaution the idea of narrow boats being



Chapel Hill – Pointing doors

Photo: Dave Carnell



Weed clearing at Grand Sluice, Boston

Photo: Dave Carnell

moored at an angle to the bank at Langrick Bridge, to catch the weed, prior to it entering the Trials Course, was discussed.

“The River Trent” by Richard Stone - Book Review by David Pullen

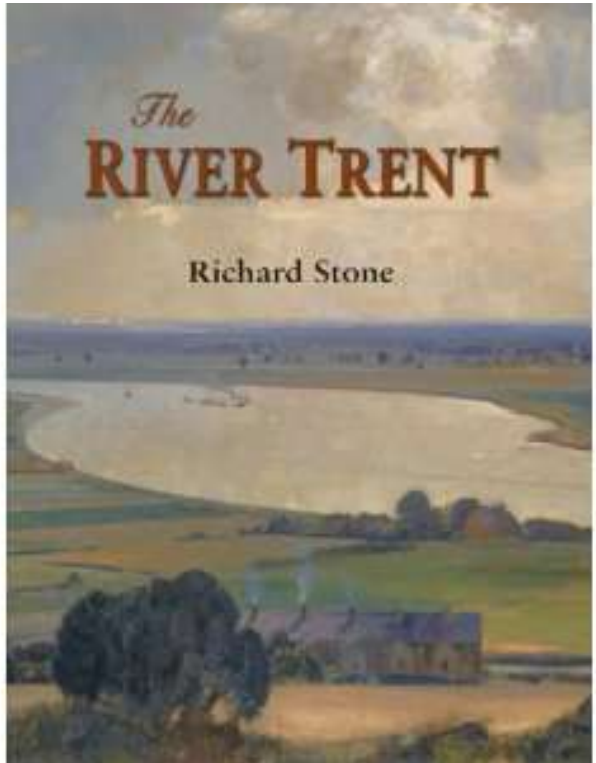
This book about the River Trent caught my eye on one of those tempting waterway book sales counters, probably an IWA one at a festival somewhere, and “**et voila**” it became a Christmas present!

If you're a regular boater in the East Midlands the Trent is inescapable as a route and love it or hate it you can't ignore it! So my reasoning was let's **get to know the “big river” a bit better!**

And indeed The Trent is a mighty river, only surpassed by the Severn in volume of water flow and a

massive 171 miles from its source to its mouth at Trent Falls.

What makes this book particularly worthwhile is that, being written by an historian rather than a geographer, it is packed with social and economic history linked to the river with even a bit of political history included. However in the first three chapters, which give an overview of the importance



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of the river, there is just enough geology and geography to set the context for the other fascinating facts. For example it falls by an average of 10ft/mile (no I'm not going to give that in metric, we all understand it the way it is!). The river can even be shown to have significant spiritual and religious heritage including ritual sites and Roman worship altars - so something for everyone there then! There is a chapter on commerce and this is where boaters will easily recognise the places and features which make up the modern navigable Trent.

The book traces the river geographically from the source way up in the Staffordshire moorlands, well away from the navigable part and even quite a way from the Trent & Mersey Canal. The source itself is not an area which many boaters will be interested in per se, but nevertheless very soon familiar place names such as the Six Towns of the Potteries and Trentham begin to feature.

Richard Stone is a native of Burton on Trent and still lives there so not surprisingly this section of the river's route is particularly detailed. Burton was originally the head of the Trent Navigation before the T&M canal and the breweries shifted the commercial centre of the town to the north west of the old town.

References to familiar places that are shared between the river and the canal such as Weston, Willington and Shardlow become more frequent as the river's route flattens out to meander through the its ever widening valley. The section on Nottingham is particularly interesting with many fine illustrations. Apparently in Tudor times Nottingham was known for its fine pavements, achieved by re-cycling river dredgings - now there's a thought! The historical importance of both Nottingham and Newark as strategic river crossings is very striking.

Downstream from Nottingham all boaters will be able to identify with the many historical gems this book unearths with the development of the navigation as a commercial venture and more lately as a mainly leisure route.

The book is packed throughout with over 150 illustrations and from Newark onwards many of these are sourced from Lincoln Central Library with some particularly fine images of the tidal sections and barges and keels around Gainsborough and Keadby.

Having steadily worked my way through this book I now feel much more in tune with the river and it has greatly enriched my cruises on both the Trent

and the T&M Canal. I can thoroughly recommend the book if you are interested in the heritage of this “mighty river”.

The River Trent. Richard Stone 2005 ISBN 1 86077 356 7

IWA Lincolnshire Branch AGM

The IWA Lincolnshire Branch 2012 AGM is on Monday 20th February at St. Mary-le-Wigford Church Hall, Lincoln at 7.45pm. The Hall is situated next to the Railway station. A speaker for the evening is being sought to bring us up to date with the imminent creation of the New Waterways Charity.

Work Party Progress

Mel Sowerby

Haverholme Lock was the venue for the September work party to continue work on the bywash. Strimmers were put to good use clearing the section nearest to the footbridge and lock walls for Nigel, Steve, Andrew, Ernest and David C to be able to clear all



the reeds down to the foundations. David Ball, a new member of the team, brought a strimmer and did a good job clearing the island and the upper section of the bywash. David P helped on this section taking out the saplings.

Haverholme

Photos by Steve Hayes

The next work party here will be to dig the footing to continue the walls and start to dig out the reeds above the old weir. Overgrown trees at the entrance to the bywash will be removed using the tirfor.

The October work party was held later in the month than usual to allow some of the members to attend the Grantham canal day.

The trust had been asked to help prepare for the Sa Fire project taking place in Sleaford at the end of the month. This required both banks to be strimmed from Eastgate car park down to Cogglesford Mill. A strimmer was **hired for the day and using this, together with the trust's strimmer, the north**



and myself were on public watch to signal when we needed to stop work until local people passed by on the adjacent footpath. To add to this **“traffic congestion” a large group** of runners were expected late morning who were doing the Steeple and Spires Run from Lincoln to Sleaford.

Work progressed well and all the locals were very friendly and pleased with the fact they can

again see that Sleaford does have a river.

Just before lunch I had a turn at strimming near Cogglesford and annoyed some wasps nesting in the bank. They had quite a sting but it is amazing what modern medicines can do to reduce the swelling.

After lunch two sections were done near the council offices footbridge and from Cogglesford Lock up to the first bend. Steve, Ernest, John and Nigel took it in turns to complete this and there was enough time to finish the whole section.



Many compliments were passed on by locals who were impressed with the help volunteers were doing to improve the river corridor in Sleaford.

Look forward to seeing you over the winter months.

Grantham's Lost Route to the Sea

Steve Hayes

In the history of canal building some canals were built and finished and some were started but not finished, many more did not even get past the planning or paper stage. This is the story of one of them.

For many years now I've given talks on the Slea and, occasionally, people have asked me back if either:-

They had forgotten that they had asked me previously.

They liked me and wanted a talk on something different.

If option '2' was the answer then as I couldn't do a talk on flowers or gardening I often talk about 'Lincolnshire Waterways'. At the end of the talk I usually put a slide in on the lines of "Well if we get bored then we could always build the following" and mention those additional, rather fanciful, ideas that we put into the IWAC survey on the readiness of individual waterways for restoration. Grand schemes are mentioned on the slide like the 'Witham - Ancholme Link' or the 'Louth - Horncastle Canal' and one that the Trust put into the survey the 'Sleaford - Grantham Link'.

A few years ago I had seen a roughly produced document with a hand drawn map of a plan for a canal link between Sleaford and Grantham. I have to say **that, at the time, I didn't really take much in about the details of the plans other than the date was in the early 1800's.**

Jump forward a few years and I happened to see on the Sleaford Museum's website a reference to the plans for the canal link. It stated that they could be found in the Lincoln Central Library, reference section.

The next problem was locating the plans. In theory a book with the title of **the length 'A plan for a junction canal between Grantham & Sleaford connecting the interior with the sea at Boston'** shouldn't have been hard to find. I'd seen it on the website and the librarian confirmed that the location was correct. **"No problem, it will be in the local history section under Sleaford, or possibly Grantham". I looked very carefully in the Sleaford and then the Grantham sections, nothing! I went back to see the librarian, he went back on the computer which confirmed that the plans hadn't been seen in at least five years. After he had looked and not found the book, I realised**

that things were serious when he told one of his colleagues that if she could find the plans he would buy her a drink. Fortunately he lost, but as the title **printed on the book was only “Grantham Canal”** I suppose that it was really **not surprising we couldn’t find it.**

The proposals devised by the firm of J Rofe & Son, Civil Engineers of Birmingham and London were quite brief and dated from 1833. The firm must have been busy in 1833 as they also received a silver medal from the Society **of Arts for their design for a ‘hydraulic blow-pipe’!**

The whole idea behind the scheme was to try and avoid using the Trent which, **according to Rofe was “rendered difficult and uncertain by frequent interruptions to the navigation of the Trent, occasioned by the alternate floods and deficiency of water”.** **Although by this time the Trent had been improved from Shardlow through to the new lock at Holme Pierrepont, completed in 1801, the river below Holme Lock to Newark must have been difficult to navigate.** Indeed Rofe stated that there were many months of the **year when the river was impassable.** **Another of Rofe’s motivations was to try and cut down the amount of transshipment of goods at both Shardlow and Gainsborough.** Additionally Rofe stated that the entrance to the Foss Dyke at **Torksey was both “difficult and uncertain”.**

Taking into account the routes that cargoes such as timber or other bulk materials had to travel from either Liverpool or Hull to reach the Midlands and the inaccessibility of the Port of Boston, it seemed logical to explore other options.

Rofe observed that the Grantham Canal headed east from Nottingham to Grantham and that, from Boston, the Witham and the Sleaford Navigation provided a good line westwards to Sleaford. He pointed out that there was only a distance of thirteen miles between the two ends of the respective canals. In his **report he noted that “connecting these two lines will effect a short and certain line of communication by which goods may be conveyed in the same bottoms, (without liability to interruption) from all the canals connected with the Grand Trunk to the Port of Boston”.**



Grantham: The approximate site of the proposed junction in Grantham, just to the east of the A1 bypass

Photo by Steve Hayes

Although it’s difficult to guess with any certainty a precise route for the canal, an examination of Rofe’s map in comparison to a modern OS map does give a

number of clues when looking at the contour lines. According to the plans, the length of the canal that Rofe proposed was sixteen miles. The route seems to have left the Grantham Canal just to the east of the current A1 road bypass to the town. At this point the canal is at an elevation of about 60m above sea level. It would then have headed approximately south for a short distance to



enable it to cross the valley on either a bridge or embankment over the Melton Mowbray road. The canal would then have taken a contour route to the south and then east of Grantham. The line followed the edge of the escarpment to the west of Harrowby until it reached a point just to the north-west of Londonthorpe.

It was here that the scheme, if built, would have started to run into difficulties. In his plans Rofe was at pains to point out that the route would **not “injure or annoy the residence of any landed proprietor”**. However, to follow the 60m contour, Rofe would have had to have taken the canal through not only the estate of Lord Brownlow in Belton Park but also that of Syston Hall just to the north of Belton. Rofe’s solution was a 2½ mile tunnel to bypass both estates, a costly compromise!

The route exited the tunnel just to the south west of Willoughby and at some stage would have locked down onto the 50m contour. The canal would then have continued to the south and east of Ancaster on the contour before reaching the village of Wilsford. At this point the canal line approximates to the route of the Sleaford to Grantham railway as the elevation drops from the 50m contour down to an elevation of about 13m where it would have joined with the top pound of the Sleaford Navigation. This would have been just

upstream of where the Old Slea diverts from the New Slea in Sleaford.

The position of any locks is also open to conjecture as none were shown on the map. With a difference in level between the summit level of the Grantham Canal and the top pound of the Sleaford Navigation in the order of 47m and, assuming each lock would have had a fall of about 2m, there would have been in the region of 24 locks, a heavy number of locks for a canal of only 16 miles. However, with an eye to possible water shortages,

Rofe states that “the lockage will

be all one way, therefore only one lock of water will be lost by each boat passing...” so his route obviously did not have a summit level. He also suggested that additional water savings could be made “by adopting an improved method of constructing the locks” unfortunately though he did not elaborate on how this would be achieved. It is reasonable to assume, however, that some use would have been made of side ponds as an aid to water saving, somewhat in the manner of the locks at Foxton. Could he even have considered an inclined plane as an alternative way of saving water? Imagine a flight of wide locks or an inclined plane by the side of the main Sleaford to Grantham road. What a tourist draw that would be now!

Rofe felt that his plan would have many benefits, traffic would have been increased on both the existing navigations with increased cargoes of corn, manure and stone from the quarries between Grantham and **Sleaford which “only want the means of transport to London, and other markets, to become in general demand...”** In addition he suggested that even Lincoln would have benefited from a more



Wilsford: Looking down the railway towards Sleaford. This would have been the route of the canal

Photo by Steve Hayes



Sleaford: An aerial view showing, approximately, where the junction was proposed

reliable increased trade.

Unfortunately competition from the railways posed a major threat. The **Grantham Canal owners agreed, in 1845, to sell the canal to the “Ambergate, Nottingham, Boston and Eastern Junction Railway” at such a time as their line** from Ambergate to Grantham was opened. The railway was completed in 1850 but the company never honoured the agreement to buy the canal until 1854 after much legal wrangling. The completion of the railway, by the same company, through to Sleaford in 1857 also signalled the beginning of the end for the Sleaford Navigation. The Company of the Proprietors of Sleaford Navigation ceased to operate in 1881.

Had the junction canal been built you can only feel that it would have been short-lived **at best with dubious returns for its shareholders. However, it’s** interesting to speculate on what might have been.

Doing Time?

Chris Hayes

Now it isn’t often that you are asked if you mind spending Saturday in a cell, in fact to be honest I suppose being put in one is not something you normally have an option about, but this request was rather different. A celebration of 1000 years of traditional crafts was being held on May 21st in Lincoln in the Cathedral, Castle grounds and the Castle Prison. The precise location on offer was a cell in the Male Prison, not normally open to visitors, and SNT were asked to represent the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership in promoting Lincolnshire Waterways while Penny Carnell demonstrated the finer points of canal art and displayed some beautifully painted examples of her work.

We duly arrived and unpacked display material etc. to set up stall in our cell. At this point Jess, who had been co-ordinating the event, popped her head round the door and asked if I wanted a bucket. I had a moment of slight panic and wondered if this was all part of the prison experience and we were going **to have to “slop out” but then realised that, with no tap water to hand, some** of the exhibitors had requested their own supply. With some relief, and hilarity, I refused her kind offer.

The day was fantastic and attended by approximately 7.000 people. The exhibitors attending had come from near and far and the range of skills was amazing. There were thatchers, woodworkers, smiths, stonemasons, weavers, spinners, potters .. the list was endless. The level of skills they demonstrated

too was fascinating. Particularly impressive was the intricate structure of some of the joinery pieces and the young age of so many of those taking part. It really is heartening to see such skills being practiced by men and women in their twenties and to see the obvious pride they have in what they have created. A group of apprentice stonemasons drawn from all over the country and beyond each worked on a section of a lancet window and the individual pieces were combined together as a finished window and displayed at the end of the day. What a perfect symbol of shared enthusiasm and working together!



Young stonemason at work

Photo by Steve Hayes

But meanwhile, back in the cell...we had a constant stream of visitors many of whom showed a great deal of interest in and enthusiasm for Lincolnshire waterways in general and Sleaford Navigation in particular. It was very warm outside but decidedly chilly in the cell and luckily we had enough volunteers to allow us a short spell of time out for good behaviour to get into the sunshine and warm up. Conditions in that prison must have been pretty unpleasant if you were there for more than a short time. In spite of that, when asked in a feedback questionnaire if we would be willing to take part in another such event we all **said yes. Perhaps next time we'll take thermals as well as SNT T-shirts!**

Letters to the Editor

Dear SNT

As building work commences on the Eco2 Power Station just outside Sleaford, I wonder if Sleaford Navigation Trust has any information, or assurances, that the water levels will not be adversely affected?

BJ, Sleaford

Dear BJ,

Our understanding is that the power station will have little impact on water level and no concerns, to our knowledge, have been expressed by the Environment Agency. They are very much aware of the effect of abstraction and are keen to monitor and regulate any reduction of water level.

SNT

Committee

Chairman	Chris Hayes 10 Chelmer Close , North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH Tel: 01522 689460
Secretary	Steve Hayes Contact as above
Treasurer	Penny Carnell Conifer Cottage, Northend, Goxhill, South Humberside, DN19 7JX Tel: 01469530138
Engineer	David Pullen Brinkburn House, Church Street, Scothern, Lincoln LN2 2UA Tel: 01673 862278
Director	John Line Tel: 07967362141
Ordinary Member Newsletter Editor	Debbie Scott Tel: 01529 305755 07973 330765
Ordinary Member	Susan Sowerby Tel: 01522 856810
Chairman, Sleaford Navigation (Sales) Ltd	Pat Taylor Tel: 01522 790652
Lincolnshire IWA Nominee	David Carnell

Non-Committee Contacts

Membership Secretary	Jenny Osborne, Bank House, Ruskington Fen, Billingham, Lincoln, LN4 4DS Tel: 01526 832256
Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP) Liaison	Norman Osborne Contact number as above
Work Party Organiser	Mel Sowerby Tel: 01522 856810

Dates for your diary:

The following activities are planned over the next few months, so please make a note of them and endeavour to support your Trust in any way you can. All Sleaford Sports Partnership Events will be held at the David Williams Pavilion, Sleaford Rugby Club, Ruskington Road, Sleaford, NG34 7SP.

Monday 20th February 2012 at 7.45pm.	The IWA Lincolnshire Branch 2012 AGM at St. Mary-le-Wigford Church Hall , Lincoln
Usually Second Sunday of the Month	SNT Work Parties. Contact Mel Sowerby (01522 856810 or sowerbys@ntlworld.com) for details.

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. Further details available from Norman on 01526 832256, or Barbara on 01529 303749

