



# SLEAFORD NAVIGATION NEWS

## AUTUMN 1994



### Editors Note

Unfortunately this edition of the newsletter is smaller than those recent editions. The reason for this is that time is finite. With the launch of the feasibility study looming ever closer attentions must be directed towards preparing for that event. The future restoration of the Slea depends on making a good impression to our sponsors.

### Dates for your diary

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November, the society will be holding a Social evening at the Hume Arms in South Kyme. The highlight of the evening will be a short talk by Brian Palmer, from the Grantham Canal, on the "pie in the sky" Sleaford to Grantham canal link. In other words a little something that we could consider in our bored moments when we have reached Sleaford! The evening will start at 8.00 p.m. and bar food will be available. Do try and come, we are considering trying to hold a few more socials and it would be a pleasant opportunity to meet friends, old and new.

On the Sunday after the social, 27<sup>th</sup> November, there will be a work party at Cobblers Lock to finish off work at the lock and to tidy up the site. The society will provide pies and a cup of tea. People of all abilities are most welcome. The last two were great successes, so if you need to blow the cobwebs out after the social, let Dave Pullen know if you are coming (Tel. 0673-862278) so that we can arrange catering.

### Membership

Jenny Osborne has joined the membership team and has taken responsibility for keeping our records up to date. She tells me that there appears to be a lot of members who have not renewed membership for 94/95. **HAVE YOU?** If in doubt, please give Jenny a ring and check.

Your membership fees are a lifeline to the Society so that other funds can go towards the restoration work. Jenny's telephone number is 0526-832256.

The membership team have designed a new membership leaflet, and have also put together an information pack for new members. This pack contains details of the committee, a brief history of the navigation and of the Society. There may be existing members who would like to have a copy, this can be obtained from Steve Hayes, telephone 0522-689460, providing you have renewed, of course!

The membership leaflet will be printed and distributed around the county.

### Sleaford Navigation Cup

Benjamin Handley, father of the man who is commemorated by the monument in Southgate, Sleaford, was one of the proprietors of the original bank in Sleaford of Peacock, Handley, Kirton and Co. Ltd. This was in the building now occupied by Lloyds in Sleaford. He was one of the driving forces behind the business community as it attempted on several occasions to obtain a navigation act for Sleaford and the district. These attempts, as we know, came to fruition in 1794 with the opening of the waterway. On the day of the opening Benjamin Handley was presented with a silver cup as a token of gratitude.

This cup disappeared from view for many years, only to reappear, in South Africa, with a member of the family, Mrs Graham. Unfortunately, Mrs Graham died earlier this year but her daughter and son, having brought the cup back to this country have now offered it to the society. We have gladly accepted and are now exploring the possibilities for displaying the cup in the area. We hope to have the cup formally presented to us in January and consider that this is a fitting end to our bi-centenary celebrations in 1994.

## The Feasibility Study

Binnies have now finished their report covering the feasibility of restoration of the last five miles of the navigation into Sleaford. The society has received the final copy of their findings which are being studied by the society's engineers. The initial impression is good, with restoration into Sleaford a definite possibility. The main problem would appear to be leakage of water through the bed of the navigation, the water supply being adequate in all but the most extreme conditions. This should be good news to landowners along the route. A presentation to the sponsors of the report and to the press is being planned for Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December in Sleaford.

## Impressive

Slide talks continue to be given by the Society. Lionel Rudkin gave one recently in Nocton, and to all accounts impressed the ladies! There is no more to say except that if you want your ladies impressing, or any other group, book us, or Lionel, in for a talk.

## Work Parties

Those members who missed the work party at the end of September at Cobblers Lock missed a real treat! In total about twenty members and friends turned, of all ages and abilities and a great deal of work was accomplished by the end of the day. What was especially good about the day was the number of new faces who turned out to help us, their help was very welcome. I ask myself could it have been the promise of haute cuisine that lured them, rather than having to endure their own soggy sandwiches?

The compound was emptied, tidied and then restocked. A great deal of rubbish was burnt, mainly by the junior members, which included tree branches, bits of scrap timber and generally anything that was burnable, lying around and not wanted. Some of the older members moved a coping stone across the lock chamber bridge, ready to be put in place at a future date. There was a great deal of discussion as to whether the bridge would support the weight and if it did not how many people would end up in the water. Finally there was some back filling done behind the lower wing walls so that we would be ready to put the coping stones back into place at a later date.

The October work party built on the success of the previous one, although there were not quite so many members present other assistance arrived in the shape of a JCB. This enabled us to reset the remaining coping stones onto the lower wing walls, with comparatively little effort, the wonders of modern

technology! The scaffolding was then removed from the wing wall and the stop planks removed, with the aid of a 'volunteer' who just happened to have a dry suit. Thanks for your help Dave! The pile of old bricks was picked over to recover any whole ones, a boring job, but at 50p a brick, a very necessary one. It was pointed out that two bricks equalled selling a book of raffle tickets! Finally, the JCB 'landscaped' the site for us which now looks very neat and tidy.

Many thanks to the catering staff for the day, Chris and Barbara for the hot pies which were, on reflection, better than my rather cindery sausages at the previous work party. It was my own fault really, I should have turned them more often!

## Junior Members

Some of the junior members have said that they want to become more involved with the society. The committee would be interested to hear from anyone who has any suggestions as to what they might do. More to the point are there any members or member who might be interested in overseeing the junior members, a potential youth leader perhaps?

If anyone has any ideas could they please pass them onto Steve Hayes (Tel 0522-689460) and they will be discussed at a committee meeting.

## Christmas Gifts

The time of year is nearly here when nobody can think what to buy for their loved one. Help, however, is at hand. Gentlemen, the 'Sleaford Navigation Mugs' have, after great demand, been rerun. What better way could there be to surprise the wife with on Christmas Morning, than with a mug of steaming tea in your favourite society colours?

Ladies, something to keep your man warm while he chops those Yuletide Logs, why not one of those warm, stylish, Sleaford Navigation Sweatshirts? Hurry now while stocks last, phone Pat Taylor (Tel 0522-790652).

## Boat Gathering

The 1995 boat gathering will be held at South Kyme over the weekend of 27th and 28th of May next year. This is intended to be a lower key affair than the one this year. However, 1996 promises to be a more grand affair. After considering a number of sites around the region, the Lincolnshire and South Humberside branch of the IWA has chosen the Slea to hold its 50th Anniversary celebrations. This was, mainly, after seeing the success of our own bi-centenary celebrations.