BOTTOM LOCK....AND BEYOND

The restoration of Kyme Lower Lock (Bottom Lock) has opened up six miles of waterway above the lock making eight miles of the Sleaford Navigation now navigable from Chapel Hill to Cobblers Lock near Anwick. Because of the connection with the River Witham at Chapel Hill this effectively brings the Slea into the cruising network of the national waterways system.

Narrowboat style craft should be able to cruise the restored length although some dredging may be needed especially towards Cobblers Lock. Certainly dredging will be required just below that lock where the Old River Slea flows in and has built up a large bank of silt. This will make a good turning point for full length (70') craft. The towpath is in reasonable condition along this length although gets very overgrown during the year. Styles could be placed at various points where barbed wire and fences cross the path. Fingers posts could also be placed at various access points to encourage walkers to use the towpath more. Tourist interpretation boards could also be considered.

SOUTH KYME

The village is obviously the main beneficiary of this first stage of restoration. A turning point for full length boats needs to be provided through the village with, ideally, a widened area just before the village for the shorter craft which cannot get under the bridges. Many of the local boats (Lincoln and Boston) are cruiser style and therefore relatively high. They will want to come to the village but only if they can turn round. A Hotel Boat has already shown interest in bringing the village into it's itinary and many of it's passengers would be overseas tourists. The turning point is therefore important and this is being persued by North Kesteven District Council.

A supply of drinking water would be desirable at some stage, and also a slipway somewhere near the village. These facilities could of course be provided if a small Marina ever comes to be built. This would help with job creation in the area.

With the history of the village, the possibilities offered by the Kyme Tower and the general prettyness of the waterway here, there does seem to be potential to be developed for South Kyme.

Between South Kyme and Cobblers Lock there are several bridges that are a limit to headroom. Only the bridge at Halfpenny Hatch appears to be a major problem and this is more because of the angle of approach of the road rather than the physical problem of liftin the bridge. the footbridge in South Kyme (with the pipe carrying the electricity supply) and the farm service bridges should not present too great a problem, especially if the Community Programme could be used.

COBBLERS LOCK

Restoration of this lock would allow boats to cruise up to Anwick and into the Haverholme Park Area. Extra footpaths and picnic areas have already been added in the park by North Kesteven District Council. With dredging, boats should be able to turn just below the Haverholme Lock.

Cobblers Lock is of brick construction and would need stripping back and rebuilding. It would, again, seem an ideal project for Community Enterprise Agency if money can be found to sponsor it. There are no bridges limiting headroom between the lock and Haverholme, but some dredging would be needed as it seems that the banks have slipped in over the years, restricting the width of the waterway.

We hope the above gives food for thought. There is obviously great potential with relatively minor physical problems. We hope that support will come from the Parish and Town Councils along with the District and County Council to develop this amenity for the community. There is little doubt that this will create tourism and jobs within the area.