

SLEAFORD

NAVIGATION TRUST



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER - 1999

The Sleaford Navigation Trust

A non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No: 3294818.
Registered Office 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH
Registered as a Charity, No: 1060234.

Aims and Objectives

To stimulate public interest and appreciation of the history, structure and beauty of the waterway known as the Sleas or the Sleaford Navigation and to restore, improve, maintain and conserve and make it fully navigable. To restore associated buildings and structures and to promote the use of the Sleaford Navigation by all appropriate kinds of waterborne traffic and to promote the use of towpaths and adjoining footpaths.

Executive Committee

The members of the Executive Committee are the Directors of the Trust.

Chairman : Chris Hayes 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln
LN6 8TH. Tel. 01522 689460

Secretary : Steve Hayes Address and telephone as for Chris Hayes

Treasurer : David Turner Brownlows House, Brownlows Hill, Coddington,
Newark, Notts. NG24 2QA. Tel. 01636 708781

Engineer : David Pullen Brinkburn House, Church Street, Scothern,
Lincoln LN2 2UA. Tel. 01673 862278

Martin Chapman

Barbara MacKay

Susan Sowerby

Pat Taylor

David Carnell Nominee of Lincolnshire and South Humberside IWA

Non Committee Contacts

Membership Secretary : Jenny Osbourne Bank House, Ruskington Fen,
Billinghay, Lincoln LN4 4DS. Tel. 01526 832256

Editors for this issue: Isobel and David Turner, address above.

Extraordinary General Meeting and Social Meeting 1st October 1999

All members are urged to attend this meeting at 8.00 pm on Friday 1st October in the new Sleaford Sports Pavilion on East Road. The 'Official Business' will be short and painless leaving plenty of time for the social meeting afterwards!

The EGM is necessary to seek approval from the membership to delegate certain powers to the directors allowing the Executive Board to create Authorised Bodies. *Authorised Bodies are organisations with power to appoint a director to the board of directors of the Trust. To become an authorised body an organisation must be first approved by the members of the Trust at a general meeting. Currently the only authorised body is the Lincolnshire Branch of the Inland Waterways Association whose nominee Dave Carnell serves on the board.*

The following resolutions will be put before the meeting

- 1 'That this meeting delegate to the board of directors powers to appoint Authorised Bodies from the organisations approved at this meeting'.
- 2 'That the following organisations be approved for the directors to consider as Authorised Bodies:

British Waterways	Environment Agency
Lincolnshire County Council	Lincolnshire Training and Enterprise Council
North Kesteven District Council	Rural Development Agency
Sleaford Chamber of Commerce	Sleaford Town Council

New Members

Welcome to the following new members:

Alex and Maria Waugh (Life members)
P.R. Waterhouse
Bernice and Jim Heppal
Y. Green
K. Richardson
'Kildwick Smith Limited' (Corporate member)

Fina Points

Since the April newsletter £390 worth of points have been collected from garages in the Sleaford, Lincoln and Newark areas that hold cards to collect points for the Trust from customers who do not wish to collect for themselves. You can help too, even if your Fina garage does not have one of our cards, by simply requesting a card which you can either register in the name of SNT or simply not register at all. Steve Hayes will arrange for the points to be transferred to his master card from which Fina Charity Vouchers are 'bought' and eventually money appears in our bank account.

Scunthorpe Steelworks Steamtrain Open Weekend

20th June 1999

Social Outing report by Dave Carnell

Reading the last newsletter my curiosity was aroused by the invitation from Izzie and Dave Turner to book a place for this event.

Having worked on the site some forty four years ago, things had obviously changed from the hive of activity with large numbers of workers continually moving from one part of the works to other s in vehicles, cycles and on foot.

Arriving on a rare sunny afternoon we were greeted with the sight of a Sentinel steam lorry being put through it's paces, chugging along the road at a fair speed and chuffing out clouds of steam as it went - much to the delight of it's passengers and spectators of all ages.

At the entrance to the Conference Centre exhibitions Dave T provided us with details of the afternoon's events and a map of the site. Local model train societies had several set pieces and displays working, other stalls contained huge displays of equipment and models available from various model and hobby shops.

On our way to the platform for our rail tour we saw a huge steel ingot or billet coming out of a furnace. This white hot metal moved onto a bed of rollers and trundles off into the mill in a shower of sparks for rolling and profiling. All this happened and there was not a soul in sight. A contrast indeed to the hive of activity when I last saw such an event.

Waiting on the platform for our steam train we saw two faces from the 1970's working parties on various canal restorations, Mark and Ruth Tiddy. The first time of meeting being in 1974 on the Grantham Canal Harlaxton Cutting, clearing fallen trees from the canal.

The two coaches for our tour arrived, pulled by an Appleby and Frodingham Steelworks 0-6-0 loco of 1929 vintage and restored by it's present owner, normally in use on the Derwent Valley Light Railway.

Standing alongside was an ex-Polish steelworks engine "Hutnik" of 1954 vintage, imported by the steelworks railway preservation society and rebuilt by the Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society 1994 to 1997.

The hour long railtour was excellent, with a very full and detailed commentary on the works history and the many types or grades of steel made to specific orders for today's highly competitive market.

Much of the site I hardly recognised. Many large open areas where the clutter of old workshops and mills once stood and a complete lack of the traffic moving from one area to another. A sign of modern technology, even the diesel shunting engine was being operated by the driver standing at the trackside with a remote control panel. Other exhibits included another 0-4-0 Peckett locomotive in steam with two very large 'English Welsh and Scottish' mainline diesels on static display. One being the latest Canadian built Type 66 capable of hauling 3,000 tonne loads of freight. In this area, usually oil or steel products.

'Grant Rail', part owned by British Steel, displayed a diesel electric 0-4-0 used on the steelworks track maintenance and a very large track laying, tamping and gauging locomotive.

Yes, we enjoyed the day. If anyone is interested in the history and future of the railways or steel industry I would recommend a visit. Perhaps Dave T will publish dates of future events. If you really get hooked the A.F.R.P.S. can be contacted at PO Box 44, Brigg, North Lincs, LN20 8DW, Tel 01652 656661 and will provide training etc. for enthusiastic volunteers.

Sales and Publicity

There were 7 boats at the May gathering at South Kyme, the weather was kind and the people of the village were most welcoming.

Sleaford Water Weekend, 29th -31st May was a successful event - the Sleaford Navigation Trust won an award for the best charity stall at the market - well done! Thanks to all who helped man the stall.

The Sales Stand will be at Washingborough Charity Market on 18th September.

Working Party News

A working party at Bottom Lock has patched and blacked the bottom gates. The repairs have kept them going for this season but it is still planned to partially replank them over the winter. Despite this, total replacement will need to be considered in a few years.

A tree-removing work party may be held at Haverholme lock soon.

It is hoped to remove the compound at Cobbler's Lock on 19th September. Please ring Dave Pullen for confirmation. (phone no. on inside front cover)

Snippets

Dave Pullen had a very successful meeting with British Waterway's Caroline Killeavy (Waterway Manager, Rivers Trent and Witham) and Mick Wilson (Foreman) who were very interested in the Sleaford Navigation and it's future. British Waterways regard the Sleas as a key feature in their plans to attract greater numbers of boats onto the River Witham.

Having previously successfully persuaded NKDC not to demolish the Navigation Warehouse in Sleaford, it was reported to have virtually fallen down during renovations and has been taken down to ground level. The Trust has written to the Council pressing for it to be rebuilt with the same outward appearance as the original.

Sleaford Sports Partnership **by Barbara MacKay**

The Sleaford Sports Pavilion on East Road is now complete and open, giving the Trust an excellent base in Sleaford not only for meetings but also as a base and accommodation for visiting working parties when required. There are numerous changing rooms with showers and also a bar! The Grand Opening was on 31st August an event Jenny Osborne and myself will remember for a long time because we helped to barbecue approximately 650 sausages and burgers for the occasion! 'Media Day' the previous week also gave the Trust a lot of publicity and our display information is now in the library window for all Sleaford to see.

The Partnership will have an ongoing social programme:

Saturday 18th September - Quiz night.

Saturday 6th November - Bonfire, Fireworks and Barbecue

Saturday 11th December - Christmas dinner

Both the latter events will be family occasions and have a successful track record.

The Partnership is there for us to join in with and take advantage of, for further details contact one of the committee.

Voyage to New York **an East Anglian Escapade**

Reproduced from 'Erewash Outlook' by permission of the author, Val Roberts.

Part 2.

To the B1192 bridge. This is where the fun starts, Dane's forecabin passed, after removing the slide with some 10 thou' (0.01") clearance! The main cabin is rather higher - but Dane is a tanker boat - so Richard uncovered a hatch into the hold and filled 2 x 45 gallon drums with water from the canal. This did not give the desired effect so he proceeded to pump water into the hold to a depth of 14" at which point we were able to hand hauls the back cabin under the bridge. Now Dane has no electric charging system, just a battery for pumping the bilges. We had flattened said battery while filling the hold and were now rather deep in the water! We extracted the water by bucket as we went along.

Not many boats get through this bridge, and the channel beyond is very shallow and WEEDY. We carried on with great effort, two of us bowhauling from the bank, one bucketing and one "steering" with a shaft. Progress was such that we would have done well to have made Betinson's bridge in a week! Richard is nothing if not resourceful and several tractors had passed by on the adjacent road. When he espied one approaching in our direction he flagged it down, and after some negotiation he engaged it to tow us. This was brilliant for the first 10 yards but impossible to steer the vessel, which careered up the bank! After adjusting the towline and persuading the driver to moderate his speed a little, we were able to make progress. -This was

somewhat hampered by the fact that between the road and the drain was a row of telegraph poles - this was overcome by Mike running behind the tractor and disconnecting and reconnecting the towline at each one. We knew the going was to be much better after we turned into the Howbridge drain at Betinson's bridge. In great relief and jubilation we arrived at the bridge, thanked the tractor driver and paid him off. This proved to be somewhat premature and a great mistake. We spent the next 2½hrs trying to get the boat round the corner! she was stuck at the front, the back, and the inside of the turn, which is where we set out to dig out the hard sand. Around 6:40 Mike and I realised we were a long way from where we had left Saltaire. Promising to return au matin we set off along the depressing road which disappeared dead-straight out of sight. We arrived back at our bed and supper at 8:30. A LONG WALK.

Wednesday 31st May:- Filled with renewed optimism and breakfast, we cycled back to Betinson's bridge arriving at 8:30 after a 50 minute bike ride to find that Richard had been to the farm and engaged a second tractor; this was in the act of inching Dane round the corner by tugging at the bow and stern in turn. This was achieved without too much pain. Now released from our predicament we loaded our cycles onto Dane and proceeded in reverse under Betinson's bridge towards Hurn bridge. We had got about ¾ of the distance when we got to a bank slip which proved impassable. Aborting this mission we carried on now in a forward direction along the Howbridge drain.

Skirting New York we passed the corresponding B1192 road bridge with 4" more headroom than it's partner. On to Bunkers hill tunnel, where we tied immediately beyond, bow to left bank stern to the right, to look at the top of the tunnel and investigate the Old union inn, with it's adjacent signpost bearing the legend:- "New York". The next bridge is a spindly steel contraption, giving access to a cottage and having a headroom of 5' 5¼", which we just scraped through. The owner watched us silently, presumably out of concern for his bridge.

We forked right at the junction of Newham and West Fen drains - at what we have come to call Armco tube junction - to continue along Newham Drain to Connister Hall bridge No 2 where we jumped ship and cycled across to collect Saltaire. We took her round and up Newham Drain to meet up with Dane at Armco Tube junction. It was necessary to do this bit twice to ensure total cover from west to east. Passing by this tube it looks totally unnavigable, but once one has jiggled into a position of being in line with it, there is quite a lot of room - for the drains that is! Dane towed Saltaire backwards through and up Newham drain. We passed the bridges up here okay, several were nice brick arches. The going got shallower, more weedy and difficult towards the top. The drain ends abruptly in a tree, with a ditch passing the end of the water to form a T-junction. Quite a nice place to stop for dinner - no passing traffic. We set off back down at 8:00pm, Saltaire towing Dane initially on cross-straps but we got on better when we reverted to a long line. At Moorhouses junction with the Sandy Bank drain we attempted without success to wind Dane. After struggling for an hour it got dark so we went to bed.

Thursday 1st June: - We did not attempt the Sandy Bank drain although I understand it has now been dredged and is readily navigable. Towing Dane on a long line we

returned to Armco Tube junction, extricated ourselves and proceeded along the West Fen drain both going forwards! We passed by an unidentified drain as we were now running out of time. At Frithville junction we turned left up Medlam drain. This is deep and wide at first but gets narrower and shallower towards it's junction with the New Bolingbroke drain. As this arm is very short we both went up forwards and tied up at the end. We inspected what we took to be the former terminal basin, which has now been cut off by a farm track. We discovered a steam traction engine here which was in the process of being restored. We had no time on this occasion to walk to New Bolingbroke, where there is a pub and former railway station having many items of memorabilia. We reversed out and at the junction with much tugging by Saltaire we managed to wind Dane (being the slightly shorter boat) and proceeded further up Medlam drain towing Saltaire in reverse.

Within sight of the end further progress became impossible and we walked to the top where the Medlam drain meets, but never made a junction with, the West Fen Catchwater drain at Reveby bridge. We began the return trip at 3.00pm with Dane towing Saltaire with some difficulty to 1918 bridge where the drain gets wider. Here we breasted up in a bow-to-stern mode and made good progress. It was most peculiar to look out of Saltaire's cabin doors and see water passing the boat in the wrong direction.

At Frithville junction we got sorted out, and with both boats pointing forwards we had dinner on the run to Cowbridge lock. Ken and Mrs Barber came out to wave as we passed their cottage. After passing both boats separately up Cowbridge lock we set off along the Maud Foster drain at 8.00pm. The sound of Dane's bolinder engine brought many people to the end of the streets as we passed. At the end we peeped over the wall at the tidal River Witham, having seen a mast go by, we returned to tie abreast at the foot of the steps below Maud Foster windmill.

On Friday morning we returned to Cowbridge, having no time to explore the Stonebridge or the east and West Fen Catchwater drains. We consoled ourselves by walking down to the derelict East fen lock on the Cowbridge drain. Now it was heads down and a quick scoot back to Langley Mill for Sunday night.

Reading of the New Bolingbroke drain reminded us of our trip there with NB Bath (our full-length working boat) in company with a few other boats. The 'towpath telegraph' stretched quickly into the village and it seemed as if all the locals came down with cameras! Everyone was so welcoming and friendly - we were all invited to visit the comprehensive model railway which a local resident had running around his garden - and very good it was too!

Next time we will hear of Mike and Val's return visit in 1995.

Sponsorship

Thanks to our friend and legal advisor Terry Austin who has again provided some of the cover paper and envelopes for this newsletter.