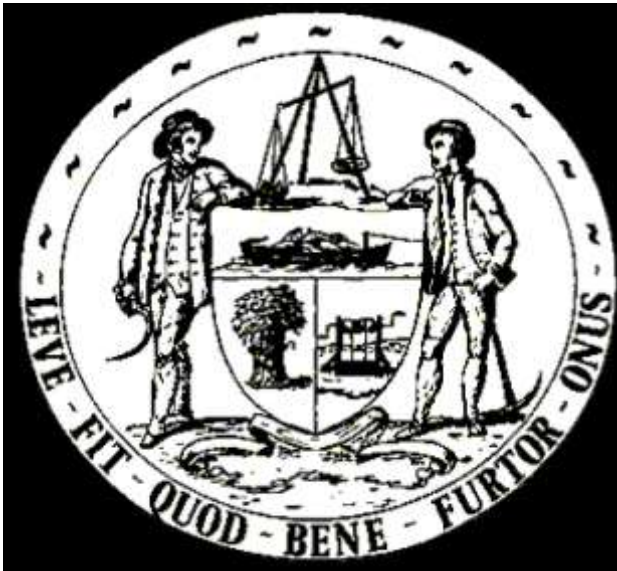


# SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST



38

Winter 2012-13

## The Sleaford Navigation Trust: -

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

... has a Registered Office at 10 Chelmer Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 8TH

... is registered as a Charity (No. 1060234)

... has a web page: [www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk](http://www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk)

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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.

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## Newsletters

To request an email version contact:

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## Articles

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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 38!

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. New Year resolutions made by certain members have brought a flurry of historic information this time, for your enjoyment

We always welcome your contributions (words and photographs) to make the newsletter informative and interesting for our readers. The deadline for the next issue, Spring 2013, will be 1st April

Debbie Scott

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Don't forget SNT Work Parties go on throughout the year, usually on the second Sunday of the month. Contact Mel Sowerby (01522 856810 or sowerbys@ntlworld.com) for details of upcoming dates and activities. See page 6 for an update on recent activity

# **SLEAFORD NAVIGATION TRUST ONLINE**

## **WWW.SLEAFORDNAVIGATION.CO.UK**

There is always a list of things that you feel you ought to do but for a variety of reasons never quite seem to get round to doing. An update of the Trust Web Site was just one of those tasks that I felt that I should look at but never quite had the time.

The original site was designed by Dave Hayes as long ago as 2004 when he had the opportunity just after he left university. Unfortunately for me, though, he used a computer program called 'Flash' which I'm not familiar with so the web site had to stay as it was until I had acquired a new skill. When I eventually got round to the redesign of the web site it actually entailed me starting completely from scratch with a different program altogether.

From the start I felt that I wanted to include as great a range of information about the Navigation as possible and the way to manage this was to divide that wealth of material into different sections. I have to admit though that not all of the parts were completed to my satisfaction when I felt that the time had come to go live with the site.

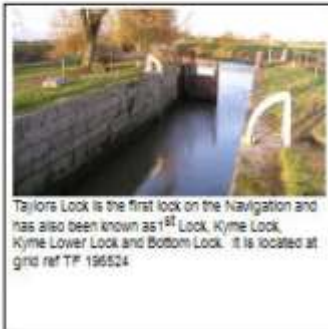
We have always said that, as a Trust, we want to restore the Sleas for the benefit of a wide variety of users and this led to the inclusion of a section on the web site called 'Visit the Sleas'. It's the intention, eventually, to add a section to assist boaters and those people who like to canoe the Sleas but the first section that I completed was that for walkers. It was a lucky chance that, some years ago, Mary Powell from the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, commissioned Hugh Marrows to produce a series of walks near the Sleas for publication. In total ten walks were detailed and the Trust was delighted to be given them on a CDROM. So far we have included one in the newsletter but have added six of the walks onto the site and more will follow as time permits.

One of the other new sections on the web site came about partly because I was given a few old newsletters and thought that they should be available for members to see as an important part of the

history of the Sleaford Navigation Society. In addition the Trust has long wanted a way in which members could be able to



The map below shows the Sleaford Navigation and places beside the Navigation. You can click on places and on the locks to find more information.



Tailors Lock is the first lock on the Navigation and has also been known as 1<sup>st</sup> Lock, Kyme Lock, Kyme Lower Lock and Bottom Lock. It is located at grid ref TF 196524.



download current newsletters, complete with photographs in colour, in a secure, electronic and paperless manner. I am pleased to say that there is now a members' section on the web site where I am gradually building up an archive of newsletters. The members' section is password protected so if any members would like access to newsletters online could they please get in touch with me, Steve Hayes, at the following email address [secretary@sleafordnavigation.co.uk](mailto:secretary@sleafordnavigation.co.uk) . As soon as I have verified

their membership they will receive an email containing a password and a verification link to allow them to log on to the relevant pages.

I am still short of several newsletters, especially from the early years of the Sleaford Navigation Society, I'm sure that there is somebody out there who has hung onto those old copies. If you are that person I would be delighted if you could get in touch with me at the email address above or phone 01522 689460. We can then cross reference to identify the missing editions so that we can avoid duplications. I promise that if you were to lend me your treasured copies of newsletters I would scan them and return them to you in the same excellent condition. Please get in touch!

The history of the Navigation is a long and interesting one and I felt that the history section on the old web site had scope for further development. It's my intention to work on this section next as I now have much of the information that I need. It's just a case of sitting down and collating it in a logical manner. Easily said, but I'm sure it will probably take longer than I am imagining at the moment!

I also want to be able to advertising Pat Taylor's excellent sales stall on the web but that is an aspiration that is still, as they say, work in progress.

In the meantime please check out [www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk](http://www.sleafordnavigation.co.uk) I hope to update the web site as and when I can with more old newsletters and news on the blog page. Don't forget as well if you want electronic access, just email me to let me know.

Steve Hayes

# WORK PARTY REPORT

The last three work parties have seen members working at Haverholme doing repairs to the footbridge, a result of some damage over the summer months. Measurements were also taken to establish the location of the bywash weir and size of piling required for the next stage of work there. The island was tidied and ivy and tree roots removed from the lock.

The work party in Sleaford in December was to establish how much fendering had been removed from the slipway and to replace it in the spring with a steel insert which is intended to make it more difficult to vandalise. Finding the right size of replacement fendering has been a problem but the search continues.

The plan was to drill holes to fit padlocks to the gate on the lift bridge in order to stop pedestrians trying to cross while it is in operation. This went well but a key had been snapped off in a previously fitted padlock and we could not get the padlock to open even after removing the barrel. This prevented us from lifting the bridge as we had intended. The padlock will be replaced at the same time as work is done on the slipway.

In January, Taylors Lock was the venue and two additional wooden bollards were put in for cruisers to tie to while operating the lock. The original posts are ideal for narrow boats but over the years it has been difficult for smaller craft to tie up to anything and some have used the plinth as a bollard.

The water levels are well down after all the measures to relieve the flooding over the past few months and there is still a lot of standing water in some of the fields. When the gates were checked it was found they would not close, this may be due to the low water level or a build up of silt and will need to be investigated further. There is clear evidence that water has been flushed through the lock with

the guillotine up and the gates tied back. The next work party will need to look at this in more detail and have some long handled aluminium tools to check the concrete sill. Stop planks and draining the lock will be a last resort so watch this space.

Measurements were also taken at Halfpenny Hatch to establish headroom for this bridge so it can be marked on the guillotine at Taylors Lock to allow boats to check if they can make it to Cobblers Lock. This will be continued when water levels settle down.

Thanks to all who have helped and I look forward to seeing you in 2013 at some of the planned work parties or activities in South Kyme.

Mel Sowerby.



Photo: Steve Hayes



# HOW BROWN WAS YOUR RIVER?

This piece is largely about rainfall, but in terms of maintaining navigation for next boating season especially, the amount of sediment in rivers through Autumn/Winter 2012/13 has been horrendous and leads to concerns for navigation. The Slea, which normally has very clear water, was very brown indicating very high levels of suspended sediment (silt). This causes problems at points where the water flow slows down and the silt drops to the bottom causing siltation and requiring dredging to maintain water depth and flow capacity. Canal and River Trust have already found problems with siltation at Stoke and Hazelford Locks on the River Trent and at the time of writing these locks are closed until the silt can be dredged out.

On the Slea at Taylors Lock we have a problem with silt inside the lock chamber preventing the lower doors from closing. We think that EA used the lock, (for the first time in many years) as an additional flood relief channel to reduce upstream water levels. The unloved upper guillotine gate at Taylors Lock was always intended for this purpose but is rarely required. The old landing stage below the lock had 6-8 inches of silt on it when the January work party visited the lock, indicating that the approach channel below the lock is probably more silted than usual.



The abnormally high sediment levels in all watercourses in autumn 2012 is due to 3 main factors:

**Extremely high ground water levels in the soil.** All soils have been close to or above “field capacity” since about April when the wet summer kicked in. This means that any additional rainfall flows through the soil very fast and washes small soil particles down into drainage systems. Silt and clay soils are most at risk, but fine sandy soils can also be affected. “Field Capacity” is a land drainage term which is simply the point at which the soil can hold no more water (similar to a saturated sponge). Flooded soils will contain more than field capacity.

**Un-planted land.** The extremely wet autumn has prevented farmers from sowing up to 25% of their arable land. This bare land is much more at risk from erosion by surface water under heavy rainfall. The risk of washing fine soil down through the soil profile into field drains is also much higher due to the lack of plant roots which help to maintain soil structure and reduce the speed at which water moves down through the soil profile. Furthermore much of the

land that has been planted has very disappointing crops on it with minimal or weak rooting systems.

**Abnormally high rainfall.** Since April 2012 there have been 4 months (April, June, November and December) where rainfall has been 2-3 times the normal average for the month. On top of this rainfall in all the other months has been close to or above average, so no drier months to give the soil time to drain. In particular, November and December rainfall has occurred in prolonged spells causing drains, dykes and rivers to run at or above full capacity which also causes erosion of banks and channels and thus sediment in the water.



### Rainfall data

Information on rainfall in our area is drawn from statistics kindly provided by Norman Osborne, SNT member who farms at Ruskington Fen. Norman has recorded monthly rainfall on his farm continuously for 41 years. Rainfall for the calendar year 2012 was 960mm (38in) compared to the 41 year average of 610mm (24in), an increase of 57%. Bearing in mind that January to March 2012 was abnormally DRY, this means that the rolling 12 months April 2012 – March 2013 could exceed 1000mm (40in). Rainfall in April 2012 at 170mm was 4 times the 41 year average.

Other interesting facts are that August is statistically the wettest month, (although not in 2012!), averaging 1.96mm/day, and February (yes February!) is 2<sup>nd</sup> driest month averaging just 1.28mm/day. Now just where did that old saying “February fill dyke” come from?

March is the driest month with 1.26 mm/day.

Lastly a little rant at the media; when rivers flood they rarely “burst their banks” as reported dramatically and continuously by the media. In virtually all cases the river or watercourse has overtopped the banks, or to use another phrase is “out of channel”. This may seem like semantics but to river or canal engineers this is a huge difference as a burst bank will require a costly engineering solution. Most river banks are able to cope with overtopping without damage. As a matter of fact it is canals that are more likely to “burst” a bank, evidenced by the not uncommon event of a canal “breach”. The most recent one at Dutton on the Trent & Mersey Canal will cost about £1.5m to repair. In view of the incredibly wet year with high water levels and saturated soils it is actually remarkable that there have not been any further breaches around the waterway system.

David Pullen      January 2013

**A Look Back...**as you can imagine, trawling through the SNT Archives has brought some interesting articles and photographs to light. Over the next few pages we take you back in time through the first three locks on the navigation, starting with the one we know now as Taylors Lock.

Among the papers in the Sleaford Navigation Society archive is this piece by Bill Hunt on the history of Bottom Lock, now Taylors Lock. A founder member of the society, Bill wrote his doctoral thesis on the history of the Sleaford Navigation. This article is published again with Bill's permission. The lock was re-opened to navigation on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November 1986 and the first to pass through the lock was Derek & Pat Taylor's boat, Wigford.

## **KYME LOWER LOCK**

This lock, also known as the 'Bottom' or 'First' lock, is known to have been the first one completed and ready for use within one year of the foundation of the Sleaford Navigation in 1792. It was constructed, as were all the others along the line of the navigation, to a design supplied by William Jessop and constructed by the partnership of John Dyson, John Langwith and Peter Tyler. The cost of building was £531.

The Sleaford Navigation locks were originally designed as 60 foot locks but due to proposed enlargement of the locks on the River Trent whilst they were under construction (1792-4),



the Sleaford managing committee decided to increase the length by an additional 10 feet to accommodate the increased size of vessel which would be capable of navigating the Trent. So, the locks as we see them today, measure 70 feet long by 15 feet wide. The Kyme Lower Lock always had a special and peculiar position with regards to the other re-

sponsibilities of the Navigation's managing committee and this resulted from its function as a control for drainage of the surrounding land, especially Holland Fen, as well as a navigation and water control.

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Holland Fen received most of its water, which was used for cattle rearing, from Kyme Eau by means of Holland Tunnel, a drainage tunnel laid through the south bank of the river above Kyme Lower Lock. It was essential that if this form of agriculture was to be successfully carried on once the Navigation was established there would have to be some control over the amount of river water which could be taken for agriculture to leave enough for vessels to sail in. On the other hand, water could not be kept exclusively in the river for boats if there was a pressing need for it on the land.

To this end a compromise was reached. The Navigation Company appointed the lock-keeper and paid him but he was, at all times, subject to the direction of the relevant Drainage Commissioners in keeping the level of water in Kyme Eau up stream of the lock high enough so that it could be run on to the Fen when it was required. The relevant



Drainage Commissioners in this case were those for the Witham 2<sup>nd</sup> District. The first lock-keeper appointed here was Hugh Mountain Fox who took up his post on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1793 and it was his responsibility, and that of all subsequent keepers here, to collect the tolls on goods passing onto the Witham from the Kyme Eau as well as operate the lock. For many decades after the opening of the Navigation this lock was called "Fox's Lock' even though he had been forced to relinquish his post due to ill-health in 1806.

It is doubtful whether Hugh Fox had any background of lock-keeping and this lack of expertise was continued with the next appointee, James Beeden of Sleaford, described as a "haymaker". Upon his acceptance of the post he had to pay the Committee £30

as a security for the money he would be handling. All tolls collected by him had to be paid over weekly to the Treasurer's second son, John Peacock who lived at South Kyme. (He later became Company Chairman, 1829-34) This was obviously to save Beeden a journey into Sleaford every week. For his services James Beeden received a wage of 10/6d a week.

How long James Beeden remained at Kyme Lower Lock is uncertain but, in 1827, the nature of the Navigation Company's control over the tolls collected there and along the whole of the Navigation changed. In return for allowing an individual to receive the money taken in tolls on the goods passing along the river instead of the Company taking it itself, that individual would pay an agreed sum to the Company. In this way the Company was assured of a regular income in spite of any fluctuations in trade which might occur. This was known as "farming the tolls" and the sum to be paid was arrived at by auctioning the tolls, usually for a 3-year period. The individual who took the tolls would appoint his own collector who would also act as lock-keeper. This is what happened at the Lower Lock.

The only major works which had to be made at this lock during the Navigation's history were undertaken in 1833 when the replacement of the staunch there was needed. This had been causing problems for some time as water from the river had been undermining the foundations, a problem which was accentuated by those foundations having originally been laid on what were described as "quicksands". Feeling themselves not wholly confident in their ability to do this work, the Committee called upon the Witham Drainage Commissioner's surveyor, Mr Lewin, to give his opinion as to the best method of construction. This communication was made through the Committee's representative, William Pickett, a carpenter by trade and also someone who could give, "all the practical information you may require and the person selected by the Committee to carry the work into execution,"

The repairs were completed by May, 1834 and cost £2,425. The new staunch was supplied by Howden and Son of Boston and can still be seen in position today.

From September 1<sup>st</sup> 1851 the Navigation Company once again took over the collection of tolls along the river and appointed William Favill as their collector/lock-keeper at the lock. He received £52 a year plus a bonus of 10% of everything taken in tolls over £1,500 a year.

Favill did not last long in the company's employment for, in December 1852, he gave notice of his intention to relinquish the post at which time the Company Clerk noted,



"...that his wife and family, with a considerable portion of his household furniture, have been moved from the lock house to Boston and that he is presently absent from his employment."

His post was eventually taken by Anthony Stennett, who later became the Navigation's surveyor.

Who the lock-keeper here was when the Navigation Company ceased to be is open to conjecture. However, the Sleaford Navigation (Abandonment) Act, 1878 settled the responsibility for this lock. The Navigation Company was to put it into good repair and it was then to be taken over by the Witham Drainage Commissioners but the expenses of care and management should be reimbursed to the Commissioners by the riparian owners of the river above the lock in proportion to the amount of use they made of it. If at any time the Commissioners could not obtain this payment or, if they considered it prudent, they were empowered to discontinue the use of the lock by removing the gates or filling in the lock pit.

**W. Hunt April 1978**

Photos: Steve Hayes

## Moving up river to COBBLERS LOCK.....



Photo from the archive

### Detective work!

New Year's resolutions have a habit of being broken well before February but this year Steve and I decided that we would make a determined effort to look through old correspondence and records relating to the early days of the Sleaford Navigation Society. Steve had already been researching old newsletters to make them available to members on the website so we decided to make a proper job of going through the boxes and files.

Among the papers was a photo of two young men standing on lock gates near a substantial house. Steve thought that the paddle gear looked very similar to that at Bottom Lock/Taylor's Lock but in the photo the side of the lock was partially built of brick with stone capping. Taylor's Lock is a stone construction and the positioning of the lock cottage there was very different so it clearly wasn't the lock shown.

A closer look shows that, although the lock gates look to be in a good state with the paddle gear apparently operational, a rough bridge, with every appearance of being a fixed structure, has been put across the lock and there is an untidy growth of vegetation around the house. Are we to assume that the lock is no longer in operation? This slight suggestion of neglect might indicate that the smartly dressed young men have been photographed



visiting the site rather than posing outside their home.

We consulted the committee members to ask for their thoughts and fascinating additional information emerged. Dave Carnell identified the lock as Cobblers Lock. He and Derek Taylor had found an old lock gate there in the 1970s with balance beams of the same shape. Another old photograph of Cobblers Lock also shows the unshaped tree trunk ends of the balance beams. Dave also explained that he and Derek had removed the paddle gear from the gate and used it as a pattern for the gear which was later fitted on the gates at Bottom Lock when it was restored. Very properly they had wanted to preserve the heritage of the design. Final confirmation came in a photo Dave supplied of a window frame which had been found in the bottom of Cobblers when the lock was dredged prior to rebuilding. The frame is of a very similar design to the ornate frames shown in the original photograph. Close examination reveals that it is slightly shorter than those shown but it may well have been from the back or side of the house.



Photo: Dave Carnell



So we now know it's Cobblers Lock but what we don't know is when it was taken or who the young men are. It would be wonderful if anyone seeing the newsletter was able to add any more information. Please let us know if you can.

Chris Hayes

### Update

As I said in the article, the photo had been circulated among members of the committee and also emailed to Martin Chapman, the founding Chairman of the Sleaford Navigation Society and first Chairman of Sleaford Navigation Trust. He supplied the following information which had come to him via John Gray from Derek Allenby whose firm had supplied timber for the original gates at Bottom Lock.

“Derek Allenby confirmed that the photo of Cobblers Lock was taken by his father, William Charles Allenby, in the mid 1930's. The two boys shown are Romulus and Remus Day in their mid teens. One of them went on to marry Derek's uncle's widow, his uncle was killed in WW2 so the marriage would be in 1940s. W C Allenby was a wheelwright who founded W C Allenby & Son in Anwick, Derek's brother Michael and his son Stephen still run the firm. They specialise in church restoration and intricate joinery, plus of course, being funeral directors. The Day boys were related to a former vicar of Anwick Parish. The Lock Keeper's cottage became a Gamekeeper's cottage for the estate before its loss in the 1950s.”

Thanks very much for the additional information.



## River Slea Future Projects: HAVERHOLME LOCK

As part of a forward planning exercise, a number of projects are being researched to enable us to be able to take advantage of any future funding options that may become available. One of these projects relates to the restoration of Haverholme Lock.

Research to establish the boundaries and ownership of the structures and related Rights of Way has produced some interesting and unusual information.

Those members familiar with the area will know how popular the foot-paths using the bridges to cross the lock and by-wash channels are and may have noticed an unusual metal structure at the lock side.

Haverholme Priory, Stables and Home Farm had their water supplied from the river via this metal structure, known as a ram pump which utilised the difference in water height between the head and tail of the lock to operate.



Photo: Dave Carnell



Details courtesy of Chris Page

With the help of an IWA member, Stuart Squires, I have learned the mechanism is a double acting water pump and was built in the late 1800's by Hydraulic engineer, Charles Hett, at his foundry in Brigg, North Lincolnshire. This was only one of a number of designs he developed to pump liquids, others being self regulating wind pumps, pelton wheels, iron water mill wheels, chain pumps, turbines and centrifugal pumps. His works were not confined to England but were sold across Europe, South America and the United States.

It is also known that a number of large country houses used waterways to supply coal to their

private gas works. Was this the case at Haverholme? More research s needed on this topic. Anyone having any knowledge of this is asked to contact me in order to discuss material for a future article.

During this research Stuart also produced a photograph of Haverholme Lock, taken in 1968, showing the roof which had been installed over the chamber by the estate owner, the Earl of Winchelsea, in 1915 to create a boathouse. This would have precluded the use of the lock for navigation beyond this point but is clear evidence of the use of the waterway below Haverholme.

Dave Carnell



Photo Supplied by Stuart Squires

## **New Members**

If you are thinking of joining please do get in touch or pick up a membership application form from events or Navigation House in Sleaford. If you are already a member and would like to upgrade to paying by Standing Order please contact Jenny Osborne on 01526 832256. The saving in postage for reminders and trips to the bank will be much appreciated by the Trust and helpers!

## Committee Contacts

Chairman	Chris Hayes 10 Chelmer Close , North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8TH Tel: 01522 689460
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Treasurer	Penny Carnell Conifer Cottage, Northend, Goxhill, South Humberside, DN19 7JX Tel: 01469 530138
Engineer	David Pullen Brinkburn House, Church Street, Scothern, Lincoln LN2 2UA Tel: 01673 862278
Director	John Line Tel: 07967 362141
Director / Newsletter Editor	Debbie Scott Tel: 01529 305755 / 07973 330765
Director	Susan Sowerby Tel: 01522 856810
Director / Sales	Pat Taylor Tel: 01522 790652
Director / LincsIWA Nominee	David Carnell Tel: 01469 530138
Director / Work Party Organiser	Mel Sowerby Tel: 01522 856810

## Non-Committee Contacts

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Sleaford Sports Partnership (SSP) Liaison	Norman Osborne Contact number as above

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

