Welcome to our Twelfth LWP Newsletter

Many thanks to those of you who returned the questionnaire that was in the last newsletter – a very satisfactory 15.3% response. We welcome the feedback and couldn’t disagree with any of the things that you said we could do better (many of them already on my guilt list) and delighted that this newsletter was one of the things that you all seem to like.

See page 15 for a bit of a summary of your comments. For this issue we have taken on board the much-repeated comment that it would be nice to have advance warning of openings rather than just reading about them afterwards. So read on for some imminent deadlines on Southrey, Four Mile Bar footbridge and a Tennyson Trail. We have also added in 4 extra pages to this newsletter – also as requested.

We would like to welcome over 600 new readers to this newsletter – this last quarter has seen the biggest increase to our database yet – and if you are not on it, do fill in the coupon on page 12.

Mary Powell

Bridge Over the Welland

Delighted to be able to announce that the new Four Mile Bar footbridge was completed in the very early New Year. The reach of the River Welland available to larger craft has been limited by the former Four Mile Bar Bridge, which had the lowest air draught on the river at 1.6m. Our objective was to raise the bridge to a minimum of 3m and to provide a shallow gradient access for the less able bodied to be able to cross the bridge.
The old structure, which was constructed in the 1950’s, had 4 spans each supported on 2 pre-cast driven piles. It was just 1.12m wide and had steep approach ramps. A through-girder bridge option was considered but rejected due to problems with dealing with significant wind forces. Raising the existing bridge and a lifting bridge were both considered and rejected as both provided a shorter design life, higher risks and higher whole-life costs. The new Four Mile Bar is a single span, half-through steel Warren truss bridge. Its foundations are reinforced concrete abutments on reinforced concrete pile foundations. It is 45m long with a vertical curve with a minimum width of 2m and a maximum height of 3.5m at mid span. There is minimum headroom of 3m above 3.2m AOD water levels over the central 20m width of channel. The maximum slope of the approach ramps and the bridge itself is 1 in 12.

I visited the bridge on a cold but glorious January day, the Welland couldn’t have looked bluer and the new bridge couldn’t have looked smarter so all credit to lan Booth (Engineer for Structures) and Dave Walton (Senior Project Leader) who have managed this project and have achieved the build in just 12 months from our bid being approved. Also thanks to the local community for their forbearance during construction. A celebration to mark the bridge will take place on the afternoon of April 18 to which you are very welcome to attend. The Welland Bank/Cradge Bank Road is a single track with passing places and parking is just not possible here so can I suggest that you join us at Ye Olde Bridge, Fen Bridge, at Crowland for some refreshments and we will be arranging trips to the bridge with the assistance of the Spalding Water Taxis. There is a footpath that runs along the right hand bank from Spalding to The Olde Bridge, see plan, with a connecting path to Cowbit if you are approaching on foot.

In addition water taxis will be leaving Spalding late morning for the 1.5 hour journey to Crowland. On a strictly first come, first served basis there are 36 places on the boats - if you want to book onto this journey please ring or email Dilys on 01522 550615 dilys.britt@lincolnshire.gov.uk - but be aware of the length of the journey and that it could be cold. You could do the journey both ways or we can arrange to take you back to Spalding on wheels.

Whether you plan to travel from Spalding on the water taxi or not, it would be very helpful if we knew if you are attending - just so we know how many cups of tea to brew!

MP

Try Canoeing?
We will also be running Canoeing Taster Sessions 2 – 4 pm Wednesday 18 April at Fen Bridge, Crowland. No age restrictions and people with disabilities are welcome. Don’t forget a change of warm dry clothes and a towel. All equipment and training will be provided free of charge. Again, please ring or email Dilys to book a place.
Boston Lock Link – Waterways IV

All our funding is in place now for the above. At the time of writing, Environment Agency Project Manager Jim Anderson is awaiting some final technical studies, which will decide the precise location of the lock, how it will operate and how boat traffic will be managed. All the indications are that the new lock will be combined with one of the existing sluices at the outfall of the South Forty Foot Drain. I can’t tell you how fraught this project has been in the last six months and it’s at times like this that our partnership approach really shows its worth. All credit to Jim and his team for working against the clock on this one.

We will have more detail on this major project that will connect the River Witham into the South Forty Foot Drain creating phase 1 of the Fens Waterways Link, in the next newsletter.

MP

Fiskerton Fen - Rat of the year

Last year saw the official opening of a new visitor attraction at Fiskerton Fen. A fine early summers day saw a boat load of visitors join up with a party of school children at the opening ceremony. Like us the children had all waited patiently for access to this new site during all the improvements and as part of their project work had all designed and made a simple clay tile that was displayed on site, and very good they looked too.

It therefore came as a huge shock to learn that several months later someone had vandalised the cabinet and had stolen all the tiles. It takes some believing that somebody took the time to unscrew all the fixings only to get at some simple clay tiles the local children had made for the site.

Aside from this disappointment the site goes from strength to strength with the water level looking healthy at the moment. With the generally mild winter and low rainfall in this part of the country the site will need all the water reserve it can retain to see it through the summer. If you are passing please call in and see what wildlife you can spot, hopefully not too many ‘Rats!’

Nick Bromidge
Environment Agency

LATEST NEWS

Path between Woodhall Spa and Horncastle

Last June at a meeting organised by local people of Horncastle and Woodhall Spa, the former railway line between the two towns was discussed. Parts of it are used as a path known as the Spa Trail and the reason that they called the meeting was that the path has become badly degraded in parts and difficult to use.

Funded by the County Council we have just commissioned a feasibility study looking at this route and how it can connect through to Water Rail Way at Kirkstead. Transport Initiatives has been appointed and will be working on it February – April.

At this point I have no idea of any funding that could take us to a next stage, but part of the LWP’s success has always been to get itself into a state of readiness so that we can take advantage when funding opportunities do appear. It has always been the intention of the LWP to look at spur routes off Water Rail Way adding to its flexibility for users – so will keep you posted.

MP
New Bridge for Sleaford

In the centre of Sleaford there is a narrow pedestrian bridge which crosses the River Slea by Riverside Green and provides a way through to Eastgate car park. The bridge is flat and low meaning that, when the Slea is fully restored to navigation, boats will be unable to pass up the river to moor near the Hub or to reach the wider part of the navigation to turn round for the journey back down to Chapel Hill. In the shorter term, the bridge also makes passage impossible for smaller boats which could otherwise use the section of the water.

A replacement bridge has been considered by Sleaford Navigation Trust for some time and we are delighted to be able to say that we have secured a grant of up to £50,000 from landfill tax funding agency WREN, along with another £4,000 from the Inland Waterways Association, towards the project. The LWP’s Waterways II will provide the remainder of the funding.

The design for the new bridge will be based on a Dutch lifting style. Lincolnshire County Council’s David Cragg came up with an innovative outline drawing for a curved bridge which has been adapted from a more conventional design to satisfy Environment Agency concerns that a central support in the river, as originally proposed, might cause a bottleneck and flood risk.

Instead, a suspended middle section will rise to allow boats to come up the river and moor by Eastgate Green or turn around. Mr Cragg said: “It is certainly the first bridge like it in the county. We could have gone for one single span but it would have made it quite high when raised and more weight would be needed to counterbalance it.”

An immediate benefit to the people of Sleaford will be that the replacement will be a far more user friendly bridge. It will be much wider than the present one and easier for people with wheelchairs and pushchairs to cross. As part of the evidence contributing to the successful bid, Sleaford Millennium Volunteers undertook a survey of the number of people using the bridge and asked them their views on the ease of use of the present structure. Judging from the response, the new dimensions will be much appreciated.

A contractor has now been selected following tendering and we hope that work will soon begin.

Chris Hayes
Slea Navigation Trust
Water Rail Way

The section of Water Rail Way between Bardney and Southrey was completed at Christmas. At the present time the arrangements for connecting this new bit to the Bardney to Lincoln section are not entirely satisfactory. The map below details how to connect between the two sections of path. In the future it is hoped that the path would continue alongside the river but the presence of the sugar beet factory currently makes this impossible. However situations change and we will always be looking to improve the connectivity of Water Rail Way.

There will be a celebration of the path reaching Southrey on the afternoon of 12 April. Join us for light refreshments at the Riverside Inn at Southrey and as we will still be in the school holidays an Easter Egg hunt for the children seems appropriate.

MP

Southrey to Kirkstead Bridge

The construction of the next phase of the path from Southrey started in early January and is going well, helped by the (mainly) good weather. As this is quite a long section of over 6 kms, we expect to take until the summer to complete the path.

Earlier ecological surveys found great crested newts close to the path, in an area of old borrow pits just south of Stixwould, so we have applied to Natural England for a licence to carry out the path construction in this area. Once the licence is granted, the works have to be undertaken in a certain way and at specified times, under the strict supervision of a trained herpetologist. If you see carpet tiles lying on the grassed areas, this is all part of moving and protecting any great crested newts actually on the line of the path. More details in the next newsletter.

Nicola Jones
Sustrans

Bardney to Southrey

Following the path from Lincoln and Washingborough, you turn left onto Station Road, opposite the sugar beet factory, towards the village. The "summer route" will turn right after a couple of hundred metres and follow the bridleway towards Southrey Wood. At the wood, you’ll turn right again along a ditch, to Bardney Manor pumping station and the new ramp up to the railway line. The bridleway and track can be muddy in winter, so the "all weather" route will follow Station Road into the centre of Bardney along the already-signed "Route 1", and then follow the road to Southrey past the post office. The path can then be joined again at the end of Ferry Road.
Habitat Highways Revisited

In our November 2005 edition we reported on the success of the large nestboxes that have been installed on trees along the Water Rail Way to encourage kestrels, tawny owls and barn owls.

Here Colin Shawyer of the Wildlife Conservation Partnership reports on monitoring undertaken in 2006:

As part of the planned programme of work by Sustrans to create the Water Rail Way alongside the River Witham, three phases of nestbox installation have now been completed. The last Phase being undertaken in March 2006.

As we anticipated, 2006 was not going to be a good year for breeding owls in the UK. The field vole abundance (the Barn Owl’s favourite prey) was in the low phase of its three-year cycle. The cold, wet weather in late winter and early spring not only prevented the recovery of the already depleted population of voles but also delayed growth of new grass on which the field vole itself relies for food. Lack of grass inhibits breeding in voles and consequently in Barn Owls too. Many pairs were unable to achieve breeding condition and those that did struggled to rear many young. Tawny Owls and Kestrels also had a difficult year.

Because a number of Barn Owl pairs laid their eggs a month or two later than the normal time of late April/early May, we decided to undertake the monitoring of the 22 nestboxes during August. Our inspections revealed that five of the boxes had been used by Barn Owls for roosting, one was occupied by a male Barn Owl and it was thought there had been a possible unsuccessful attempt at breeding earlier in the year. One other had four abandoned Barn Owl eggs. One of the four Tawny Owl boxes had been used by a Tawny for roosting and Kestrels had roosted in two of the Kestrel boxes.

Overall the nestboxes achieved 45% occupancy success for target species which is very encouraging considering that the last phase of nestbox installation was only completed a few months prior to the breeding season.

Because these regular three-year ups and downs of the vole population have been recorded for almost 100 years, we were able to predict that 2006 would be a poor breeding year for Barn Owls. We can also predict that 2009 will be the next poor year and consequently that 2007 and 2008 will be better ones. Indications so far this year are that the vole population is already recovering which bodes well for the coming season.

Note: All birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Barn Owls are further protected from disturbance by special penalties making it unlawful to approach occupied nest sites.

If you are not already on the LWP mailing list and would like to receive it direct three times a year, please send your details to us.

Return to: Lincolnshire County Council, Economic Regeneration, Beech House, Waterside South, Lincoln LN5 7JH or dilys.britt@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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Lincolnshire Waterways Investigates Historic Buildings

The Lincolnshire Waterways Heritage Regeneration Study has begun in partnership with the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire. The project, funded by Lincolnshire County Council and English Heritage, aims to find and record all types of built heritage within the river corridors of Lincolnshire. This includes all types of historic buildings, bridges, locks and other built features of historic interest.

The first stage of the project is currently being carried out by Heritage Lincolnshire, and is a pilot study of a section of the River Witham from Bardney Bridge south to Chapel Hill – a distance of around 20km. Staff are busy finding out what information is currently available on the built heritage in this area as well as travelling around the area looking for hidden gems. Brief descriptions of each feature of interest will be loaded into a database, which will be linked to a digital map, so that all information can be easily accessed in the future.

The aim of the first stage is to produce a plan for a full survey of all of the county’s waterways, and this plan will also set out how information is to be collected and recorded. It is likely that there will be opportunities for volunteer involvement during this stage of the project and information found will be made widely available.

The heritage of the county of Lincolnshire, and of its waterways, is extremely rich and varied, and it makes an important contribution to the character of the place. The aim of this project is therefore to ensure that potential heritage opportunities for the regeneration of Lincolnshire’s waterways are identified and explored.

Liz Bates
Heritage Trust

River Glen Slipway

As I write we are about to start work at Surfleet with our project to install a brand new custom designed slipway and canoe portage facility. Work is being set up to commence just after Easter and we estimate the work will take approximately two months to complete. All being well the facility will be available to registered boat owners on the Glen for the main summer season this year.

Nick Bromidge
Environment Agency

Lincoln Linear Moorings

Proposals for improvements costing £250k to British Waterways Lincoln visitor moorings were unveiled at the Fossdyke & Witham user group held in November 2006. The proposals are funded through the LWP to enhance the amenity facilities for both visiting and permanently moored boaters and make visiting Lincoln a welcoming experience. Existing boaters on British Waterways Lincoln moorings, who may not have attended the user group meeting have each been written to and there is a plan showing details of the proposals on display at the Lincoln office.

The proposals include a new amenity facilities building, and plans to improve access to the moorings near the student accommodation by replacing existing steps with a ramp suitable for use by disabled and less able persons. Safety improvements to separate the operational yard working from the public access area including some lighting to enhance the moorings will be a general benefit for everyone.

Ground investigations have already been undertaken and the project is now progressing through the tender and detailed design stage which should enable works on site to commence in April or May for completion by the autumn.

John Nuttall
British Waterways

Brayford Pool, Lincoln
Stixwould Ferry Remembered

If you wanted to cross the Witham at Stixwould today, unless by chance you had a boat with you, you would face a lengthy cycle ride or drive to get to Blankney Fen on the opposite bank. Until the 1960s you could have hailed the ferry boat to take you across in a fraction of the time.

Mrs Emily Martin was one of the last ferry boat attendants here. Her husband railway signalman Les Martin was in charge of the Stixwould signal box and they lived in the station house. The pay was just over £4 for a seven day week beginning at 8 a.m. and finishing at 8.15 p.m.

In the very early 1900s the ferry crossing, which was close to the railway station, was described in the Lincoln Gazette as ‘one of the busiest parts of the parish’. But during Mrs Martin’s time, regular daily passengers dwindled to just one - postwoman Mrs Phyllis Spence of Horsington who crossed every day with her bicycle except Sunday to deliver mail to Blankney Fen and Tanvats. During the fishing season though, the ferry was also used by anglers who came in their hundreds from Sheffield and other parts of South Yorkshire on the special trains laid on for them.

The ferry also carried cars, but drivers had to negotiate the steep angle between the bank and the ferry’s wooden platform as they drove on. Talking to a Lincolnshire Standard reporter in 1964, just before the Martins left Stixwould for a new job at Boultham Junction and a home in Lincoln, Mr Martin recalled the following incident:

“One driver was so anxious soon after we took it over that he didn’t give me time to hold the winding handle to keep the boat tight to the bank. He went on the ferry with his front wheels, but the back end dropped into the water. Luckily for him there happened to be a gang of men tarring this road and they pulled him out”

Lorraine Heyes

We will be featuring other railway stations, ferry crossings and fishing along the Witham and the Fossdyke in future newsletters - if you have any special memories, stories or photos we would like to hear from you. Contact Lorraine Heyes at Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership, c/o Lincolnshire Tourism, Beech House, Waterside South, Lincoln LN5 7JH or email Lorraine@lincolnshiretourism.com.
When this edition goes to print the angling closed season will be upon us. The coarse fishing season draws to a close in mid March each year. This means that no fishing is allowed on our rivers, streams and drains from 15 March to 15 June inclusive. This is to allow fish undisturbed breeding and spawning from early spring to mid summer and ensures that fish stocks in our waters are protected.

The close season is not enforced on most commercial still waters as they are discrete water bodies with managed fish stocks and can impose whatever restrictions they feel are needed to protect their stocks.

For those anglers who are missing their river fishing, and those of you who might have wondered about the underwater world of our many rivers and drains, this edition is dedicated to the largely unseen world of our local fish. Have you ever wondered what sort of fish you might find in our waters and what they might look like? Here are a few of our most popular species.

### Bream
- Body deep and laterally compressed. Dark brownish grey on the back, yellow silver hues on the belly.
- Shoal fish.
- Can grow to 50cm long and weigh in excess of 10lbs.
- A long-lived species - up to 20 years.
- Young bream are known as skimmers.
- Spawn May to July among weeds in shallow water.
- Food includes snails, invertebrates and larvae living on the river bed.
- Traditionally targeted during the summer months, but can be caught during the winter especially on rivers.
- Like slow flowing rivers and still waters.
- Best fishing areas include the Fossdyke, Ancholme, the Witham between Lincoln and Bardney, especially around Kirkstead & Tattershall Bridge in the cooler months. Also lower sections of the Great and Long Eau & the Bain.

### Perch
- Green grey to light olive green on the sides, underside a lighter cream colour. Distinctive dark striped markings run vertically down its sides. Pectoral and pelvic fins (under the fish) have reddish hues. 2 dorsal fins (back) one spikey and one soft.
- Juveniles shoal; older, larger fish are more solitary.
- Can grow up to around 35 cm long and weigh over 4lbs.
- Average age 8-12 years.
- Spawns April to June among plants in shallow water.
- Eats invertebrates, insects and larvae; adults target insects and other fish.
- Fished for all year round although the bigger specimens are caught pre-spawning when full of eggs.
- Likes slow flowing rivers and still waters
- Best areas to fish include the South Forty Foot, Stonebridge and West Fen Drainage Systems, the middle reaches of the Witham and the River Bain.

### Pike
- Mottled olive green / brown to pale green on the sides, underside creamy colour sometimes with pale spots. Sleek, streamlined body with large head and mouth full of razor sharp teeth.
- A top predator fish – dorsal and anal fins are found to the rear of the fish to aid bursts of speed when chasing prey.
- Can grow up to around 120 cm long and weigh over 30lbs.
- Average age 10 - 15 years.
- Spawn February to May in shallow weedy margins of rivers and lakes.
- Young feed mainly on insects/invertebrates. Adults feed almost entirely on other fish and occasionally small mammals, water birds and frogs.
- Likes slow flowing, weedy rivers and still waters.
- Traditionally a winter species due to the weed and cover dying back promoting the necessity to ‘seek’ prey out rather than using ambushing techniques. However summer lure fishing is popular.
- Best areas to target pike include the Ancholme around Scabcroft; the Witham from Lincoln to Bardney; the lower sections of the Great and Long Eau. The Bain; Steeping & Wainfleet relief Channel; the South Forty Foot, Stonebridge & West Fen Catchwater systems and the drains around the Spalding, Holbeach and Deeping area are all very popular.
The REEL project is donating some fishing platforms that will be installed on the pond at the Lincolnshire Showground. Coaching sessions will be available during this year’s Show on June 21 and 22 – come and have a go!

If you are at the Lincolnshire Show do come and say hello. Mary and Dily will be on the Tastes of Lincolnshire stand within the Food Court.

Roach

A relatively small, streamlined fish with silver grey scales. The eye is orange-red in colour. The pelvic and anal fins are red.

A shoal fish.

Can grow up to around 35cm long and weigh over 2lbs.

Average age 4 - 8 years.

Feed on aquatic plants and a variety of invertebrates.

Spawn May to June in shallow standing or slow flowing water.

Common in slow flowing rivers, canals and still waters.

Targeted all year, but winter fishing on the rivers is a popular time for this species.

Lincolnshire is a very good area for the roach angler. Best areas include the Lynn, Steeping & Wainfleet Relief Channel; the Louth Canal; Freshney, Fossdyke; Till; Welland Spalding town centre and the fenland drains around Spalding & Holbeach. Roach can be found along the entire Witham, specimen roach weighing up to 2lbs can be found on the upper Witham and the Delph & Sincil Drain are also popular areas for roach.

Tench

Most usual colouring deep olive green back and sides with a paler underside. Deep body with rounded fins. Small pair of barbels (short, fleshy skin projections) on the mouth.

Mostly solitary but occasionally in small groups.

Can grow up to around 60 cm long and weigh over 10lbs.

Average age 10 - 20 years.

Spawn May to July in shallow weedy areas.

Feeds on invertebrates especially molluscs.

Likes slow flowing rivers and shallow still waters with dense weed.

Traditionally a summer species associated with misty darns and lily pads.

Best areas for Tench include the middle Witham; Lower Long and Great Eau & the river Bain. The Welland below the Deepings is good for Tench as is the lower Glen.

Amanda Jenkins
Environment Agency
The new facility block at Brandy Wharf should be complete by Easter. Progress has been frustratingly slow, but we’ve got a great team on the job now and are back on track. The slipway that we put in on the Ancholme at Brandy Wharf has proved popular since it opened in April. As part of the monitoring that we do to keep our funders happy, we had had some good feedback from users – one of whom received a Tastes of Lincolnshire hamper as a reward. Well done to Mr & Mrs Dancer of Elsham.

It probably looks like nothing is happening for the proposed new moorings at Chapel Hill on the Witham. However, in mid January I went down to see them taking shape in Alan Foreman’s yard. Alan, who runs Chapel Hill Caravan Park has built the moorings himself to a high spec – his friends tell him ‘over engineered’ – but built to last sounds good to me. There are now 25 platforms and 50 ballast tanks all stacked up ready to go in and Alan needs to wait for some better weather to get the piling done.

Both Alan and Godfrey Thacker from Brandy Wharf have had the difficulty of project managing the work whilst running busy tourist businesses – making progress in the summer months very difficult, but feel that we are on the home stretch now with both these projects.

Still unclear as to whether we will be able to make a last bid for some Objective 2 EU funding. But if the opportunity comes we have plans for extensions to existing moorings and some new visitor moorings throughout the network.

MP

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# Grantham on Water

Over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, a major waterway Festival will be taking place on the Grantham Canal. ‘Grantham on Water’ will be promoted by the Inland Waterways Association – whose 60 years of campaigning has led to the re-opening of over 500 miles of derelict inland waterways – and the Grantham Canal Restoration Society … and based at Woolsthorpe-by-Belvoir.

‘Grantham on Water’ is designed to re-launch the ‘forgotten’ waterway – which closed over 75 years ago – to the national ‘waterway fraternity’ and especially to the people of Grantham and the East Midlands – many of whom are totally unaware of its existence! Trailboats – effectively half-length narrow boats, which can be towed behind a 4x4 – are expected to attend from as far afield as Devon and Scotland and to access the Canal at its Denton slipway. It is hoped to enable as many people as possible to travel on the restored Canal during the weekend.

In addition to boats, the Festival will have community and trade stands, displays of traditional canal crafts, ‘Wild over Waterways’ activities for children, Real Ale at the Rutland Arms, catering by local farmers and cooks, performances by musicians and a travelling theatre group … and much, much more. Admission to the Festival will be free – but it is hoped visitors will support fund raising for further waterway restoration.

The 33-mile, British Waterways-owned Grantham Canal is being conserved and sensitively restored by the Grantham Canal Partnership, to be a country park for all who love nature – anglers, bird watchers, cyclists and joggers, just as much as boaters. Its towpath, through the beautiful Vale of Belvoir, is already one of the finest long-distance footpaths in the region and, as more people use it and its nearby pubs and guesthouses, the restoration contributes to the regeneration of canal-side communities.

Thanks to a major recent grant from the East Midlands Development Agency, a further 2 miles of the Canal – from Denton right up to the A1 – are currently being restored, making 4 1/2 delightful miles available for ‘Grantham on Water’.

There’s lots to celebrate, so make a note of the dates, 26th-28th May, and times, 10 am to 6 pm … and follow the ‘Belvoir Castle’ signs to the ‘Park & Ride’ car park, from which a shuttle bus service will run you to the Festival.

Dave Carnell, Chairman
Lincolnshire Branch IWA
A ‘Star’ goes to School

A recent and exciting example of BW’s considered dispersal of its heritage workboats is NB Corvus – a stalwart of the East Midlands’ maintenance fleet for no less than 60 years.

Corvus finished work at Lincoln in Spring 2006 and was later offered, on long-term loan, to the Grantham Canal Partnership (GCP).

The plan was hatched for Corvus to be transferred to St. Hugh’s College, Grantham – a secondary school, less than ½ mile from the site of the original Grantham Canal Basin. There she is to be conserved, restored and developed, for future use on the Grantham Canal as a floating study centre, meeting room and exhibition.

Early on 28th November, Corvus moved under her own power to Newark Marina, where she was lifted off the River Trent and onto a stretched articulated lorry, for the journey down the A1 to Grantham. There, not only did Corvus sail through the town centre but she was welcomed to Grantham by the Mayor, and other civic dignitaries. After an hour of ‘illicit’ parking, she then moved off to the College, where hundreds of curious pupils watched in awe as the 70-foot vessel was lifted high over the fence and onto the railway sleepers, that will be her home for the next year or two.

St. Hugh’s is keen to use the Grantham Canal in a wide range of studies – from history, geography and engineering to photography, textiles and tourism – and the plan is for the refurbishment of Corvus to be conducted by the students, with guidance from staff and a small team of adult volunteers. If you could help with knowledge and advice … or if you have photographs or information about Corvus’ history … please get in touch.

The Partnership and St. Hugh’s gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of Newark Marina, Prestons of Potto, Chris Allsop Crane Hire and Heras Readyfence Services – as well as British Waterways – that has made the project possible.

Peter Stone
Secretary of the GCP
Peter.r.stone@ntlworld.com
0115 9232046

Corvus being lifted into position at St Hugh’s College, Grantham
The Lincoln Red Cow sculptures by Sally Matthews on Water Rail Way between Washingtonborough and Five Mile Bridge have proved popular, so much so that we have asked Sally to look at Lincoln Longwool sheep and she is investigating whether their dreadlock curls are feasible. The bizarre things I find myself writing!

Bearing in mind that we like to stick with local themes and that 2009 is the bi-centenary of the Lincolnshire born poet Tennyson we have a new project developing. The plan is that Water Rail Way will have a series of works, which feature a Tennyson quote.

The quote could appear in some practical form such as on a bench, seat or signpost, be on a feature such as a plaque or monument or be entirely free form.

The LWP is interested in commissioning not just from artists but also craftspeople such as monumental masons, wood workers and blacksmiths. There is a brief, available from me and if you, or anyone you know, might be interested the closing date for submitting a proposal is 26 April.

Many thanks to the local Tennyson Society for their work in extracting a list of quotes on watery, nature or Lincolnshire themes or ones that would be just plain inspiring when you’re out for a walk or ride. Wickedly we wanted to include the Charge of the Light Brigade, but regretfully decided that ‘into the valley of death rode the six hundred’ might not hit the right note as you set off on your family cycle ride!

If you haven’t yet seen the Lincoln Red Cow sculptures they are on the section of Water Rail Way between Five Mile Bridge and Washingborough – about 0.5 miles walk from Five Mile Bridge. Approach Five Mile Bridge from Washingborough to Bardney road, turning down the single track Five Mile Lane with a small car park at the end.

“I am part of all that I have met”

Alfred, Lord Tennyson 1809 – 1892
Your Feedback

Thanks again to so many of you who returned your questionnaire – it’s good to see that if you haven’t been out to visit finished projects yet that it is definitely top of your ‘to do’ list and you’ll be out there this summer.

It’s possible to group your comments into some broad areas, so here goes:-

Things We Do Well

○ Keeping Everyone Informed – including older people who can’t get out and about so well and former residents of Lincolnshire who love being kept informed of progress.

○ The Newsletter – it’s welcoming, enjoyable, great photography, enthusiastic and not stuffy. Many of you felt that it whetted the appetite to get out and take a look.

○ Making a Difference – a Lincolnshire asset that was being made more accessible, the partnership works and we “get things done.” There were some very enjoyable and rewarding projects that people wanted to visit or see.

Two comments jumped out at me “think how great it will be when all the work is completed...” and “...just don’t stop...” I must say I can’t see us stopping and that the work will keep rolling forward, gaining momentum and that further projects will emerge as we demonstrate the value of existing ones.

Things We Could Do Better

○ Promotion – many comments here about improving the circulation and distribution of newsletters – many came across it by chance. Advertise events, openings and new facilities much more widely. Improve public awareness. Hold workshops at least once a year.

○ More Maps – but not at the expense of photos! Some would like the newsletter to be bigger and more often. Areas that could then be covered including flora and fauna, waterway heritage, accommodation and places to eat, section for children, readers letters.

○ Less planning and consultation and more doing.

○ Accessibility – a big category covering public transport, provision and availability of parking, disabled access. Even when we’d got the above in place we aren’t publicising that it is available.

○ Look after all users and all parts of the county.

Some fair comment here, at one point the LWP held back on promotion as it seemed that all our projects were under construction and we’d nothing finished. We have now, so need to ratchet up a gear here. Similarly we need some print that details access points, disabled access, parking and public transport.

We upped the print run of Newsletter 10 and again for 11 due to demand. We have always found it a squeeze fitting everything in without compromising on the pictures, so it makes sense to add in extra pages. We have added in 4 pages for this newsletter so we do listen to what you say.

We held a draw out of all the questionnaires returned and the winner of the Tastes of Lincolnshire hamper is Mr Alan Oliver of Langworth.

MP

News Just In...

Lincoln BIG
Cycle to work event

On the 27 April Lincoln Business Improvement Group with Dale & Co., Solicitors are sponsoring a Cycle to Work event to encourage use of the city’s cycle routes and promote the benefits of cycling to the city centre.

Groups will assemble at Skellingthorpe, Washingborough and The Plough on Newark Road to cycle to the Courtyard by Marriott hotel for breakfast at 8.30, which is being provided free of charge to those who pre-register and cycle to work on that day.

For more information and/or to register contact Diane King at Lincoln BIG on 01522 545233 or email at Diane.King@membership@lincolnbig.co.uk
And finally on a personal note

Can I thank the many readers who have sent in congratulatory messages on my MBE. It seems somewhat unfair to me, to have such a fascinating and enjoyable job – and to receive ‘bouquets’ as well.

It doesn’t seem five minutes ago, but possibly 2000 or 2001 when a group of us sat in a rather grotty room at Lincoln Castle discussing this Waterway idea. None of us knew each other, so we were all rather wary and I remember thinking “whoa - this project is just way too big.” Someone told me that Tim Smit who masterminded the Eden Project, worked up the idea on one side of A4 paper and sold it to the funders from that. I duly wrote my own one pager and from that moment was completely hooked on Lincolnshire Waterways. It wouldn’t have happened without our partnership and the brilliant way we’ve worked together, offering mutual support and encouragement, particularly Nick and John, both of whom are incredibly reliable and industrious and who fortunately manage to curb my wilder ideas.

January is usually a very dull month, but not for me in 2007!

MP

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Have Your Say

City of Lincoln Council is undertaking a web based Leisure Strategy questionnaire. Your views on walking, cycling, sport and water based leisure activities are sought. Take part on www.lincoln.gov.uk and follow the Leisure Strategy Questionnaire link. For more information contact Pauline Ward 01522 873460.

STOP PRESS!!

Next Lincolnshire Waterways Workshop to be held at the Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa – 4 June (two sessions).

Some of you may have attended the last workshop we held, back in April 2005 and will remember that we do make you work quite hard! We are still in the planning stages, but there will be a presentation about the latest on Boston Lock Link by EA. We’d also like a steer from you as to what we should be looking to do post 2008 – we are beginning to get an idea of the new funding streams that could be available to us. The themes are rather different to the ones we’ve been used to – so it is a case of seeing how we can fit what we want to do with how we might obtain the funds – tricky stuff.

There will be further workshops later in the year in the Boston area focusing very much on Lock Link, so if you can’t make 4 June there will be others coming along.

The Haven, Boston