

The Newsletter of the Sleaford and District Civic Trust



The River Slea - Courtesy of Andy Hubbert, Sleaford Standard

Editor's comments

Welcome to our Winter issue of the Civic Trust Newsletter. I just couldn't resist using some editorial licence to include two wonderfully seasonal photographs of our town, reproduced above with the kind permission of Andy Hubbert (Sleaford Standard) and, below, John Parry (Trust Committee member). My plan is to use seasonal photographs for the cover of our newsletters from now on.

I've now settled into my new role as Editor and sincerely hope that the newsletter provides you with both an enjoyable and interesting read. In spite of varying restrictions throughout the year, there's been a considerable amount of activity to report on and I would like to thank all of our contributors for their efforts in keeping us well informed.

As always, if you have any feedback or suggestions for future content, please contact us by e-mail (sleafordct@gmail.com) or write to us at the Town Hall address shown on the last page.

Finally, I would like to thank you, our readers, for your support of the Civic Trust and I take this opportunity to say Happy Christmas to you all with our best wishes for New Year.

Editor: Paul Hart



Sleaford Railway Station - Courtesy of John Parry, Civic Trust Committee

Chairman's Update

With the relaxation of Covid restrictions allowing us out more, the Civic Trust committee are now meeting together at the Church Rooms and we are back at some events. We are being very careful to comply with current Covid Rules at all gatherings including ensuring we have tested prior to the event and making sure the area is safe for everyone.

The Civic Trust 2020 Building Awards have been presented, with a plaque for the Mosque at the Islamic Centre and a framed letter of Commendation to Wilcox Homes for the new build housing in Handley Street. More on this later in the Newsletter.

Late in November, the Committee met for a Lunch at the Solo Club where we dined and exchanged ideas for Trust activities over the next 12 months...one of which being the re-use of the three old Sleaford Signs commissioned by the Trust in the 1980's. Our current thinking is that two of the signs should be sited at the Museum site in Handley Gardens and the third should be located in the Market Square. We have other "possible" projects which we highlighted at the Members Christmas get together and we'll present our proposals in the New Year.

With the careful resumption of Town Matters, NKDC hosted a discussion at the New life Centre on the 16th November to discuss the development of the Town and the Civic Trust were much involved in the proposals.

At Last! we can now report that the Bristol Water Fountain is again accessible to the rear and the back plate can now be read again. At the time of writing NKDC is being chased to remove the “Out of Order” paper lying in the bowl and strengthen the water flow.

The Gregson Project has been completed to great acclaim from the schools and the funding completion paperwork has been delivered to NKDC. Harriott will cover this in more detail.

You may be aware that the NKDC has started a Lottery to raise funds for local groups. The Civic Trust has been approved as a suitable Group and now each of us is invited to buy a ticket each week online via their website. Dependent upon how many people buy tickets and select the Trust as their chosen charity, we will receive monies back. So please ask your friends to go to nklottery.co.uk and buy a ticket. You need not be a Trust member to join in.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and the very best for the New Year.

Chairman: David Marriage

The Sleaford Castle Project

I am sure that there are people in Sleaford who know that the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group (SCHG) was set up in 2018 to “do something about the Castle” but, because there is still not a lot to see on Castle Field, we wish to reassure readers that we have not given up on the Project and gone back to our day jobs.

Most readers will be aware that there have been two geophysical surveys on the site over the past couple of years; one of these, a comprehensive resistivity and ground penetrating radar survey, provided very good and somewhat unexpected results of the underground picture. To a degree, the results have raised more questions than answers and the SCHG has set up a dedicated history/archaeology working group to concentrate on these aspects of the Castle Project. The working group is being led by Doreen Bamford and has, as its members, the archaeologists Paul Cope-Faulkner and Dale Trimble and historians Simon Pawley and Doug Plowman. Their enthusiastic work has resulted in the decision to carry out two further investigations.

First, we have commissioned an augering survey, which is just waiting for final permission to go ahead from Historic England. It will involve boring a series of holes across the presumed moats and possible fishpond on the west of the field. Results should allow us to understand how this area of fenland in the 12th century may have influenced the design of the castle and the interaction with the water courses. Also, we are in the process of making a bid through Heritage Lincolnshire to the Castle Studies Trust for a grant to support a geophysical survey of the adjoining Kesteven and Sleaford High School playing field. The playing field would have been part of the Castle’s grounds stretching towards the town but translations of the extremely sparse documentation available are ambiguous as to its use. Options include an area for the Castle’s orchard or use as adjoining pasture; there is also the possibility of a road linking the castle with the town, perhaps leading to a gate on the eastern side of the bailey. If funding is forthcoming, we intend that the students are involved as much as possible. Both

investigations should provide valuable information on the overall site before we can consider embarking on our principal archaeological aim - which is to conduct community excavations.

However, the Castle Project has a much wider aim than just archaeological survey and research. We want to be able to show people what the castle looked like before demolition and to display all aspects of this vital part of Sleaford's history. At the same time, we are seeking to improve public access and facilities on the site to encourage families to come and enjoy this wonderful, 'hidden' area in the midst of our town. Having such a fine, public recreational area will bring a new asset to the town. With this in mind, we are pleased that the owners of Castle Field, Sleaford Town Council, have very recently approved in principle the proposed plans of the SCHG and we look forward to having the Project accepted into the developing Sleaford Neighbourhood Plan.

In the interim, although there is not a lot of stonework sticking out of the ground, one can still enjoy the grass-covered mounds that have been there for the past several hundreds of years. On the back of the noticeboard on Castle Field there is an aerial photograph of the site, overdrawn with some of the results of the recent geophysical survey to give you a rough guide to Sleaford Castle. We promise – we are still working on the Project!

Garry Titmus, Sleaford Castle Heritage Group

News from the Sleaford Museum

In the River Lea with William Alvey Year 6



A joint outreach project supporting geographical and historical field work was undertaken by the Willam Alvey Primary School and Sleaford Museum. A fieldwork session designed by Mrs Natalie Mason, the School History Coordinator and supported by Doreen and Mark Bamford from the Museum, saw all of the Y6 children undertake a river study on a section of the New Sleas adjacent to Cogglesford Mill. The work focussed on the measurement of velocity at a number of cross-sections east of the Mill, in an area where access to the river was easiest and safest. The children's attitude to the work and their diligence in carrying out the measurements was a credit to the staff and the school.

Sleaford Castle

The Sleaford Museum hosted a pop-up exhibition, presented by the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group, during the period of the Lincolnshire Heritage Open Days from Friday 10th to Monday 19th September. The aim was to inform the Sleaford public about the latest research findings and plans for future work. The visitor numbers were most encouraging and many interesting and useful discussions were prompted.

A date for your diary - on Tuesday 29th March 2022, the Sleaford Museum will present an illustrated talk by Mark Bamford entitled "The Life and Times of Sleaford Castle" in which the latest findings will be discussed, but also the national events that the Castle stood witness to over its 450-year life. The talk will start at 7pm in the St Denys Church Rooms.

Mark Bamford, Sleaford Museum

Thoughts from our Secretary – on Lincolnshire Weather Lore

Topically for this issue, our Secretary has been delving into Lincolnshire Weather Lore, and provides us with some interesting insights....

Have you heard of 'February Fill Dyke'? and did you know that March was often referred to as 'March Muck 'em out' as it was considered a good time for cleaning up outside?

It seems that each month was regarded as having its own accepted weather pattern so here's a few more 'gud owd Linkershire saayins':

- A January Spring is no fine thing.
- So long as the sunbeams come on Bridget's Feast Day, the snow will come before May Day (The feast of St Bridget is on 1 February).
- If February gives much snow, a fine summer it doth foreshow.

There are a few sayings referring to Candlemas Day (2 February). Apparently the weather on that day was regarded as a very important omen:

- If the sun does shine on Candlemas Day, saddle your horse and go buy hay.
- If Candlemas day be fair and bright, Winter will have another flight.
- If Candlemas Day be wind and rain, Winter is gone and won't come again.

And here's a few more words of wisdom:

- If snails come out in February, they'll stay at home in March.
- March damp and warm will do farmers much harm.
- On St Benedict's Day - 21 March - 'Where the wind is at noon, there it'll remain for three months afterwards.

I'm not sure that I like the thought of a lot of snow in February, but I guess if it's going to give us a fine summer, I might just be able to cope. I think the lesser of the two evils for me is the wind and rain on Candlemas Day as it means Winter won't come again - and I really hate snow!

As for saddling up my horse to go buy hay if the sun shines on Candlemas Day, I'll be definitely giving that one a miss!!

Hope you've enjoyed reading some of our 'Linkershire' weather lore. I'm sure some of the sayings may be known to a few of our Members and if anyone knows how any of these sayings came about, I would love to hear from you.

Faith Hopkins, Secretary

The Civic Trust Awards

The Civic Trust Annual Awards recognise the best new development and building restoration projects in the town with Civic Trust Plaques and Certificates of Commendation.

The 2020 Civic Trust Annual Awards were held on Tuesday 23rd November and presented as follows:

- A Civic Trust Award Plaque was awarded to the **Sleaford Islamic Centre** on Station Road
- A Certificate of Commendation awarded to **Wilcox Homes** for their **Handley Street** development.

Sleaford Islamic Centre

You may remember this unsightly area which greeted visitors to Sleaford as they got off the train. The original disused warehouse, with land, was bought in 2013 by the Community with the aim of creating a space for the growing and diverse Muslim community. After seven years of tremendous effort and support from the local community and beyond, the main building works were completed in the summer of 2020.



The Sleaford Islamic Centre is the only Masjid (or Mosque) in Sleaford. The centre offers a wide range of activities including religious services, educational activities for children and other welfare projects. It is a registered charity and has been built entirely from donations, transforming a rundown and dilapidated area of the town into a building of great beauty and purpose.

The award was presented to the Dr Saleem Ajumal (Centre Chairman), Shereem Ajumal (Treasurer) and other committee members. The Trust would like to thank the Centre representatives for their time, the guided tour and their wonderful hospitality.

The Handley Street Development

Trading as Wilcox Homes, JCO Developments has been building homes in Lincolnshire for the past 20 years and have acquired an enviable reputation for build quality and customer service. The Handley Street development has created six stylish and attractive town houses in this town centre location.

The development was the vision of both Robert Wilcox and their architect Malcolm Curt. Wilcox Homes took the view that the old office block in Handley Street was becoming an unsightly building in the town centre. They knew that they could improve the street appearance, as well as providing affordable homes.

When the Civic Trust approached them, they were somewhat surprised, saying “We’re delighted to get a call from Sleaford Civic Trust informing us that our hard work and attention to detail had been noticed not only by our clients - but by the general public too”. The Certificate of Commendation was presented by David Marriage to (from left) Malcolm Curt of DBL Architectural Designs, Robert Wilcox (Managing Director), Will Elkington (Sales Director) and Stephanie Wilcox.



Sleaford Civic Trust Mess of the Year Award

The Sleaford Civic Trust Award for the 2021 Mess of the Year goes to the Old Post Office on Southgate close to the Handley Memorial. The Trust understands that the Owners are very much aware of the state of the building and are actively working to improve the appearance for 2022.

The Gregson Project - nearing the end

The Gregson Project has been an amazing experience, from the first slight worries of 'Would I ever be able to put together and lead such a project?', my complete inexperience with putting together bids for fund raising, and getting local schools involved. And how would I raise the interest locally in a man I had never met but whose character and enthusiasm underpins the Civic Trust of which I also haplessly found myself Vice Chair?

I should not have been worried, as fabulous people aided me with the unfamiliar steps, helped me put together the forms and figures needed, and letters of support for the major part of the money to be applied for from the REP Community Fund run by NKDC.



Successful in that application, I already knew that we would need to raise further funds, especially as we were asked by the REP grant to perhaps look at schools and community involvement and to include some biodiversity (difficult with a stone sculpture!). We settled on the idea of cowslip planting to complement those already growing across the road in Lollycocks. The challenge was on, to actually get the seeds to germinate.... given a singular lack of success by 4 gardeners!

Undeterred, I suggested that we go for 'plugs' - plants which might be more successful and would speed up the results on the Green. Harry's family lived on Kingston Terrace and played on the Green so we decided to contact his daughter Kate so that they could become involved in this celebration and re-dedication of the memorial bench. The family decided they would like to fund the brickwork which partially surrounds the bench, and members of the Civic Trust have also been very generous with their own contributions arising from our July newsletter appeal.

The final amazing contribution has been from The William Alvey School, who suggested a non-uniform day and indeed a Gregson Day ! What fun was had by this energetic school. Recently, every child planted a cowslip plant on the Green and a smaller Year 1 group from Church Lane visited and planted a further 100 plants making 1,000 altogether. Watch this space next Spring and hopefully they will have become established.

The children dressed up as artists, teachers, and conservationists, a donation also going towards the project and planting. Thanks to all the school and families for their support.

Kate, Harriott and Mark went into The Alvey School and printed hand cut lino blocks of cowslip flowers and the sign for Gregson Green so that each child could take a print home. Mark gave some lovely talks to the year groups about the River Slea and clean water, and how, had it not been for Harry, the river bed might have been turned in to a road.

I wholeheartedly thank Mark Bamford, from the Museum, for his unfailing support of the Civic Trust and the partnership he has established between us.



So now the project is nearing the end, but we have the flowers to look forward to, and a safe bench to sit on and to reflect on this special man who gave so much to our town.

Thank you, Harry.

Harriott Brand: Project leader

An update on the Sleaford Civic Trust Website

You may remember that we advertised our new website earlier this year (address: <https://sleafordcivictrust.co.uk>) - I hope you've had a chance to have a look at it.

Here are two screenshot images showing some of our most recent content...



The intention of the new website was to make information about the work of the Civic Trust as accurate and up to date as possible, wide-ranging, easy to access and interesting to read about. It was also important to have space to retain information about the history of the organisation and former projects it has undertaken, as well as an archive of newsletters over the years. I am currently working to update some of the project sections to show how these projects have developed over time.

In any new website, the most essential jobs are ensuring that all sections are initially populated and that any teething problems are sorted out as quickly as possible. The Gallery is now the only section which is not yet populated, as it is undergoing some structural changes to enable me to use it to its best effect.

The current phase is a developmental one, building content to widen the scope and to ensure good coverage of recent, ongoing and future events. If you have any comments, positive or negative, or ideas to broaden the scope of the website, please do pass them on; we'd love to hear from you.

Doreen Bamford, Website Editor

Future events

Tuesday 29th March 2022

The Sleaford Museum illustrated talk by Mark Bamford entitled "The Life and Times of Sleaford Castle"

Blast from the Past



SLEAFORD & DISTRICT CIVIC TRUST SOCIAL ACTIVITIES 1986

A WELL-BALANCED PROGRAMME FOR MEMBERS
TO NOTE IN THEIR DIARIES. 1985 WAS SUCCESSFUL IN ATTRACTING
MORE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS. WE HOPE FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT

ISSUE
No 8








ENVIRONMENT WEEK
A CIVIC TRUST STALL WILL BE POSITIONED BY THE MILL
ON SATURDAY MAY 11th. COFFEE AND BISCUITS WILL BE SERVED.
A 'TIDY THE TOWN' CAMPAIGN IS ENVIAGED DURING THIS WEEK.
(3rd-11th)

HULL and THE HUMBER BRIDGE TICKETS £4
OAP £3
COACH LEAVING MARKET PLACE AT 8.30 a.m.
WE ARE PERSEVERING TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO VISIT THIS
INTERESTING CITY AND TO TAKE AN OPTIONAL TOUR OF FEATURES
RESTORED AND IMPROVED IN THE CONSERVATION AREA. A MEMBER
OF THE PLANNING DEPT. WILL BE AVAILABLE TO TAKE US ROUND -(OR YOU CAN
HAVE THE WHOLE DAY FOR SHOPPING). COFFEE NEAR HUMBER BRIDGE.

ROCKINGHAM Castle, Northants. 2 MILES N. of CORBY NEW TOWN
ORIGINALLY BY WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR WITH TUDOR THE DOMINANT STYLE.
USED IN TV SERIES "THE SWORD DIVIDED" GARDENS WILD AND
FORMAL IN 12 ACRES WITH WIDE VIEWS OVER 5 COUNTIES.
TEAS AVAILABLE. Leave by cars, MARKET PLACE 1.30 pm.

FOLK SUPPER at the MANOR HOUSE, SOUTH RAUCEBY
by kind permission of Miss H.E. Vidal
7 pm - 9 p.m.
TICKETS £3 include a glass of wine. IN AID OF MONEY'S MILL

MATLOCK and WIRKSWORTH, Derbyshire. THIS SMALL TOWN OF OVER
6000 LIES 14 MILES NORTH OF DERBY. A PROJECT WAS LAUNCHED IN
1978 TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OF THE TOWN.
IN 1982 THE TOWN & THE CIVIC TRUST WON A EUROPA NOSTRA MEDAL
FOR ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION. A DECAYING TOWN HAS SUCCEEDED
IN REPAIRING & IMPROVING ITS FABRIC, ECONOMY AND MORALE.
Leave MARKET PLACE 8.30 a.m. probably by bus at £4 a ticket (OAP £3)

SKEGNESS NATURE RESERVE, GIBRALTAR POINT
FIELD STATION RUN BY LINCOLNSHIRE AND SOUTH HUMBERSIDE
TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION. GUIDED TOUR BY THE TRUST.
LEAVE MARKET PLACE BY CARS 1.30 p.m.

THE GEORGIAN GROUP
A MEMBER OF THE GROUP WILL BE OUR GUEST SPEAKER
TO GIVE A TALK ON THEIR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.
NORTHGATE METHODIST SCHOOLROOM 7.30 p.m.
COFFEE AND BISCUITS AVAILABLE.

Sat. 10th
MAY

SATURDAY
MAY
17th

SUNDAY
22nd
JUNE

FRIDAY
evening
JULY
4th

SATURDAY
JULY
19th

SUNDAY
SEPT
21st

THURSDAY
evening
OCTOBER

Corporate Members

We thank our Corporate Members for their continuing support in 2021.



CARRE
HERITAGE



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