
The Newsletter of the Sleaford and District Civic Trust

*The stunning mural on the end wall
of 10 Boston Road - Ed.*

Editor's comments

Welcome to our Spring newsletter ...and a special welcome to those members of Sleaford Museum who will be receiving this newsletter for the first time. 'Civic Matters' will now serve both the communities of Sleaford Civic Trust and Sleaford Museum.

For our cover page, I've selected an image of the new mural on the end wall of 10, Boston Road - home to Treeline Dental's new practice. Funded by NKDC (UK Shared Prosperity Fund), the business and the property owner, this mural depicts local heritage such as the Slea Navigation and Money's Mill and some local wildlife and flora. This beautiful artwork was created by Sheffield artist Peachzz.

In this issue we include articles from Dr. Simon Pawley on the Southgate Bridges, Garry Titmus on the latest news from the Sleaford Castle project and Nigel Ogden provides a 'taster' of the Kirk & Parry research which he will present at the Museum Talk in September.

We also have updates on the Blue Plaque project and the Civic Trust website ..and with the latest news from the Museum, I hope there's something for everyone to enjoy reading.

Editor: Paul Hart

Chair's update

Effects of a Unitary Authority - It is possible that many local properties and public areas might well be controlled by those based in Lincoln who will be responsible for the whole of Greater Lincolnshire. The Trust has been approached by the Town Council to assess areas where we can support the Town Council in identifying and transferring local town 'assets' and facilities to the Town Council to ensure better local protection and day to day management.

The Blue Plaque project - The latest plaque is positioned by the Sleas Bridge. At its unveiling, Dr. Simon Pawley shared just how important this river boundary and bridge were many years ago.

Handley Gardens and Handley Monument - The new layout of the Gardens has provided the town with a welcoming feel and a space to enjoy. The fresh look has also resulted in more visitors to the Museum. Some may know that, as part of the UKSPF funding, two new information boards have been installed providing visitors with a guide to the Heritage Trail and places of interest in the town. The gardens have been truly transformed!



Sleaford Castle - The big news this month is that the model of the Castle and the surrounding buildings has been finished. The very first display of the model, along with the book launch, was held in Navigation House. Garry will say more about this model and the new booklet on the Castle later in this newsletter.

Civic Trust Store - The combined Museum Store with a Civic Trust area is working very well. Having the ability of 24-hour access makes for much easier working. Much of NKDC's UKSPF items are to be held by the Civic Trust. All members are invited to have a look around the store by prior arrangement - please contact Mark Bamford.

AGM/Summer Social - This will be held on the 8th May in the St Denys' Church Rooms. We'll try to complete the formal proceedings quite quickly to allow time for a talk by John Dale on Sleaford's William Wright, songs by local folk duo Winter Wilson and a celebration of the latest Blue Plaque unveiling - *see special notices next in this newsletter.*

The Eastgate Carre Almshouses Chapel - A special visit for Civic Trust and Museum members only has been arranged for the 25th April – *see special notices next in this newsletter.*

RiverLight 2025 - "Winners of the Best Event/Festival in the Tourism Excellence Awards 2024-25 by Destination Lincolnshire and Discover Rutland, RiverLight 2025 will be the fourth edition of this celebration of Sleaford's rich culture and heritage."- *The Hub.* The Fringe events will run from Saturday, June 14th to Friday, June 20th with the Finale on Saturday, June 21st.

Heritage Open days 2025 - This year the Eastgate Almshouses Chapel will be opened on Saturday, September 13th. There will also be a talk on the Carre Family at St Deny's Church by Simon Pawley on September 20th. Admission to both events is free to the general public so please do come along.

David Marriage, Chair

Special Notice: Sleaford & District Civic Trust - 52nd AGM Notification

THE 52nd AGM & SUMMER SOCIAL

WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 8TH MAY 2025

IN ST DENYS CHURCH HALL SLEAFORD AT 14.00

THERE WILL BE A SHORT TALK BY JOHN DALE ON WILLIAM WRIGHT

**Followed by a special guest appearance of Winter Wilson who will
sing local songs.**

The social event will include the celebration of the unveiling of the

William Wright Blue Plaque.

Further details will be circulated to members shortly

Special Notice: The Carre Almshouse Chapel - A Special opening

**A SPECIAL OPENING OF
THE CARRE ALMSHOUSE CHAPEL, EASTGATE**

**ON FRIDAY 25TH APRIL 2025
FROM 13.00 - 16.00**

**SLEAFORD CIVIC TRUST HAS ARRANGED A SPECIAL OPENING
OF THE ALMSHOUSE CHAPEL WHICH WILL BE LIMITED TO CIVIC TRUST AND SLEAFORD MUSEUM
TRUST MEMBERS ONLY.**

**TO ENSURE THE OPENING RUNS SMOOTHLY
MEMBERS OF THE CIVIC TRUST COMMITTEE WILL BE
IN ATTENDANCE DURING THE THREE HOURS**

**Come and see this amazing little Chapel which is untouched by time, and hear some of the
history of the Almshouses.
No booking necessary**

***This special Chapel opening is with the kind consent of
the Sleaford Hospital Trustees***

Secretary's Ponderings

I'm sure that I must say this every year, but I don't think I've felt as cold as I have in the first weeks of January and February.

During one of the really cold, damp days I got to 'pondering' on how my Mum was able to wash and dry all the clothes for a family of nine every week without a washing machine and tumble dryer. I certainly didn't appreciate at the time what hard work it must have been for her. We had no running hot water in the house so, on wash day, my Dad had to fill the brick copper in the corner of the kitchen with cold water and light a fire under it to heat up the water. The copper was kept lit as copious amounts of hot water were needed.

The 'whites' were boiled up in the copper and then transferred to the dolly tub to be agitated with a 'posher', then the coloured clothes were dealt with. The shirt collars were all detachable and had to be put in a bowl of liquid starch during the washing process. Finally, after rinsing, the clothes were put through a mangle which had huge wooden rollers that squeezed all the water out. I remember being desperate to work the mangle but wasn't allowed until I was older as those rollers wouldn't have had any sympathy with little fingers that got too close!!

After all that heavy work, the clothes had to be hung outside on the washing line to dry. I seem to remember that if it was damp weather on wash day, the clothes had to be hung on a line across the living kitchen. It seems amazing now that the same day was allocated for wash day each week, regardless of the weather.

What incredibly back breaking work that must have been for a family of nine and even after all that, my Mum had to cook a meal for us all at teatime. A whole day doing the washing then a whole day doing the ironing with a flat iron heated on the black lead grate. No ironing board in those days - just a few thick covers on the kitchen table with a sheet on top.

However, my abiding memory of wash day is the wonderful smell of beautifully clean washing and I still hang washing out on the line to this day.

Sometimes it's good to look back and to think what we have now and to realise what we take for granted nowadays as normal living. We recently went on a visit to the Hemswell Antique Centre near Gainsborough and one of the things I saw for sale was a cast iron mangle, just like the one my Mum used. Needless to say, I wasn't tempted to buy it!!!!

Faith, Civic Trust Secretary

Town Plaques Project

On a rather grey and damp February 12th, our 4th Blue Plaque was unveiled to commemorate the Stone Bridge over the River Slea. The plaque is fixed to the riverside wall of the newly renovated betting shop at 12 Southgatethe wall being still in the process of final painting on the day!

Dr Simon Pawley provided a short and fascinating history of the bridge (see next article).



The Blue Plaque for the 'Stone Bridge'



Behind the builder's hoarding ...in the rain!

Faith, Blue Plaque Project Lead

The Southgate Bridges

The recent unveiling of the fourth Civic Trust blue plaque on the wall of the bookmakers near Costa in Southgate completes the work of identifying the location and original names of the two bridges that still carry the River Slea across Southgate.

Nobody knows how old these bridges are. We don't even know clearly whether the two courses of the River Slea that we see today are original or not. It appears likely that the southern one is artificial. The evidence suggests that until perhaps the thirteenth century there was another river course that ran across Southgate around the point where Nag's Head Passage opens onto Southgate. One possible interpretation is that this earlier watercourse was diverted when the castle was built in order to provide water for its moat, emerging as the Nine Foot river, which then crosses Southgate much further north. Until quite recent times, the Nine Foot had no proper name. The late eighteenth century plans for the Sleaford Navigation use expressions such as "the north stream" or "the stream running through the south bridge" to identify the two branches of the River Slea. The first known use of the name "The Nine Foot River" is in the mid-nineteenth century.

We have the name "The Stone Bridge" for the northern bridge in a document of 1524, which uses it as a way of locating what was then called the Malt Mill (later the Town Mill) nearby ("near the bridge called the stone brigg") but there is no suggestion that either the bridge or its name was new at that time. We have to wait until 1790 for the first known document naming the South Bridge but workmen repairing it in 1924 reported finding a date stone (now gone) from "more than 210 years ago" (ie 1713 or 1714) and, like the Stone Bridge, the first version of this bridge was undoubtedly built long before that.

We have two accounts of a date stone and a coat of arms on one of the two bridges, although both the writers who tell us about it neglect to say which bridge it was on. Writing in 1837, Revd. George Oliver noted that one of the bridges displayed the Carre family arms, quartered with those of the Bartram family, which tells us that it was probably seventeenth century in date. In an article published in the Sleaford Standard on 12th July 1930 an anonymous author (almost certainly Norman Snow, a local solicitor and antiquarian) says "*the Slea ... divides before it reaches Sleaford, necessitating two bridges in Southgate, one built in 1675, and bearing the arms of the Carre family, who are famous for their work for the town*".

Fortunately, although it is no longer visible, there is a way to tell which bridge this date stone was on. Because it belonged to Sleaford parish, the South Bridge was their responsibility when it needed repairing and in 1810, for example, Lord Bristol's estate steward complained to the parish authorities that it was decayed and needed urgent work. On the other hand, when the Stone Bridge needed repairing in 1808 the jurors at Lord Bristol's manor court issued an order "to cause the Earl of Bristol's Steward to amend and repair the Stone Bridge, situate near the White Bull, it being remarkably dangerous for Passengers." Lord Bristol had to repair this bridge because it had originally been built by the Carre family, his predecessors as the local lords of the manor, and not by the parish authorities. So the Carre coat of arms and the datestone were on the Stone Bridge and must have been the work of Sir Robert Carre (1637-1682).

In 1830, both the bridges were rebuilt as part of a large scale local project to install drainage in the town, the work being undertaken by Charles Kirk the elder. From photographs taken at various dates, it is clear that the distinctive stone pillars that originally marked both of the bridges as they pass over Southgate were part of this project (although not the railings, which are later).

Some of these pillars have since disappeared, although the two on the east side of the Stone Bridge are still visible. The top of a badly eroded earlier pillar (of unknown date) can also still be seen next to the South Bridge and an early twentieth century postcard of Southgate shows two such pillars in place in about 1910. Perhaps these were from the 1713 or 1714 bridge.



In the severe flooding of Sleaford in 1947, the railing foundation stones of the Stone Bridge were removed and the end sections of it were breached so that the flood water could pass over Southgate to relieve the pressure. Pedestrians had to pick their way across along a railway sleeper to get from one side to the other.



Simon Pawley

The transformation continues ...new 'faces' in town



*3, Southgate - Moore & Scrupps.
A beautiful full face-lift from
ground floor to chimney stack*



*12, Southgate -
The old Mark Jarvis Building.
A total renovation of this handsome
building including new wall
rendering and stone window
surrounds*



*10, Market Place
This Grade II listed building,
the remains of one of the
town's main coaching inns,
now proudly displays it's
heritage!*



*19 & 19A Market Place
Gurkha 19 & The Italian Connection
A new stone plaque to commemorate
Sleford's Corn Exchange*

Photos by Ed.

Sleaford Castle

It may have been mentioned before but the Sleaford Castle Project had its first roots in 2015 when representatives of NKDC and the Town Council, along with English Heritage, met to discuss “what could be done with the Castle Site”. From that meeting, 17 proposals were quickly drawn up, although that was soon reduced to 10 ‘do-able’ objectives – after all, early ideas such as re-building the castle stone-by-stone were probably just a little far-fetched!

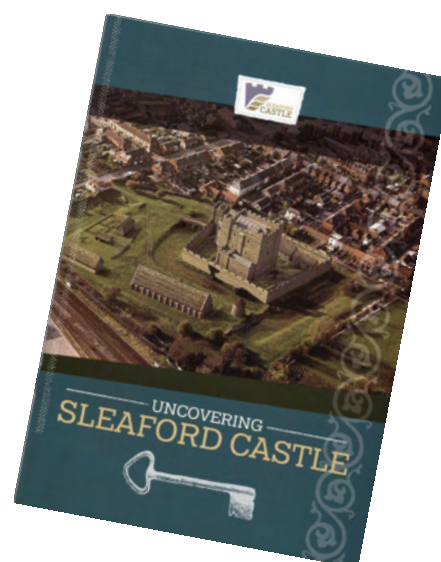
Three years later, the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group (originally named the Sleaford Castle Heritage Development Group) was established by the Civic Trust with the close involvement of the Town Council who own the castle and the site. With funds provided by the Town Council, we embarked on an extensive range of archaeological surveys and investigations conducted by Archaeological Project Services, based at Heritage Lincolnshire. This has been the first comprehensive and detailed investigation of the castle using modern techniques and methods.

Armed with the excellent results of the surveys and with the full backing of the Civic Trust, Sleaford Town Council and NKDC (supplemented with much appreciated financial support from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - UKSPF), the Group set out to define what the castle looked like and research how it would have fitted in with local life. We have been helped enormously by the excellent and innovative images and graphics produced by the dedicated work of Pighill Heritage Graphics from Donington.

Now, in 2025, on the 10th anniversary of the Project, we have reached a major milestone with the completion of another two of those ten-year-old objectives. These are 1) the publication of an attractive, comprehensive, informative and well-illustrated 28 page booklet, replacing the original folded A3 sheet leaflet produced about 25 years ago and 2) a well-researched and beautifully executed scale model of the castle as it may have appeared in the 12th century.

The text for the booklet has come almost solely from the enthusiastic and dedicated volunteer members of the SCHG Working Group. Modesty prevents us from naming or heaping too much praise on those who have produced and contributed to the booklet, but their contributions have been instrumental in ensuring that life in Sleaford is enriched just that little bit more. As well as describing the castle, its origins and life, the booklet also seeks to cover those aspects of local history that have the castle at their centre. The wonderful illustrations and graphic design have been completed by Pighill Heritage Graphics and supportive funding has been possible because of UKSPF.

Entitled “Uncovering Sleaford Castle”, the booklet was launched on March 6th and is on sale in the Sleaford Museum, Town Hall, Navigation House, Carre Gallery and possibly other heritage outlets. Priced at £4, all proceeds from sales will be banked by the Civic Trust to offset any future re-prints of the booklet. They make excellent gifts to Sleaford newcomers, family and friends and any others who might wonder about the history of that large, bumpy field to the west of the High School. Readers will be pleased to know that copies will be supplied free of charge to all local schools and accompanying these we will be providing tailored teaching packs.



The other objective, the scale model of Sleaford Castle, was also sourced using UKSPF, managed by NKDC and made by the very skilled Steve Guilari – known possibly to many of you on-line as the Bourne History Guy and perhaps from now on as Model Super Guy. The model is superb and as accurate as we can make it with our current knowledge. We doubt whether the quality of workmanship and the attention to detail can be bettered and the model will most certainly prove to be an eye-catching talking point for many years to come – it even has a little ‘time-capsule surprise’ built into it for a future generation to discover. During March, the model has been on display as part of the 'Uncovering Sleaford Castle' Exhibition in Navigation House and will move to Sleaford Town Museum at the beginning of April.



Other aspects of the Castle Project continue. In a few months, as the weather improves, the Town Council will be funding a mobility-friendly pathway all the way around Castle Fields and will also be erecting a range of excellent interpretation panels, written by the Working Group with graphic design and illustrations by Pighill. These will inform and entertain visitors. In the interim, plans are underway to provide a bridge from Nags Head Passage onto the site – but only when significant funds are available.

The Civic Trust’s Sleaford Castle Project is alive and well, thanks to the generosity and support of the Town Council, NKDC and the Civic Trust itself. But it would not be in existence if it were not for the vision and hard work of the members of the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group. The winners will be the people of Sleaford.

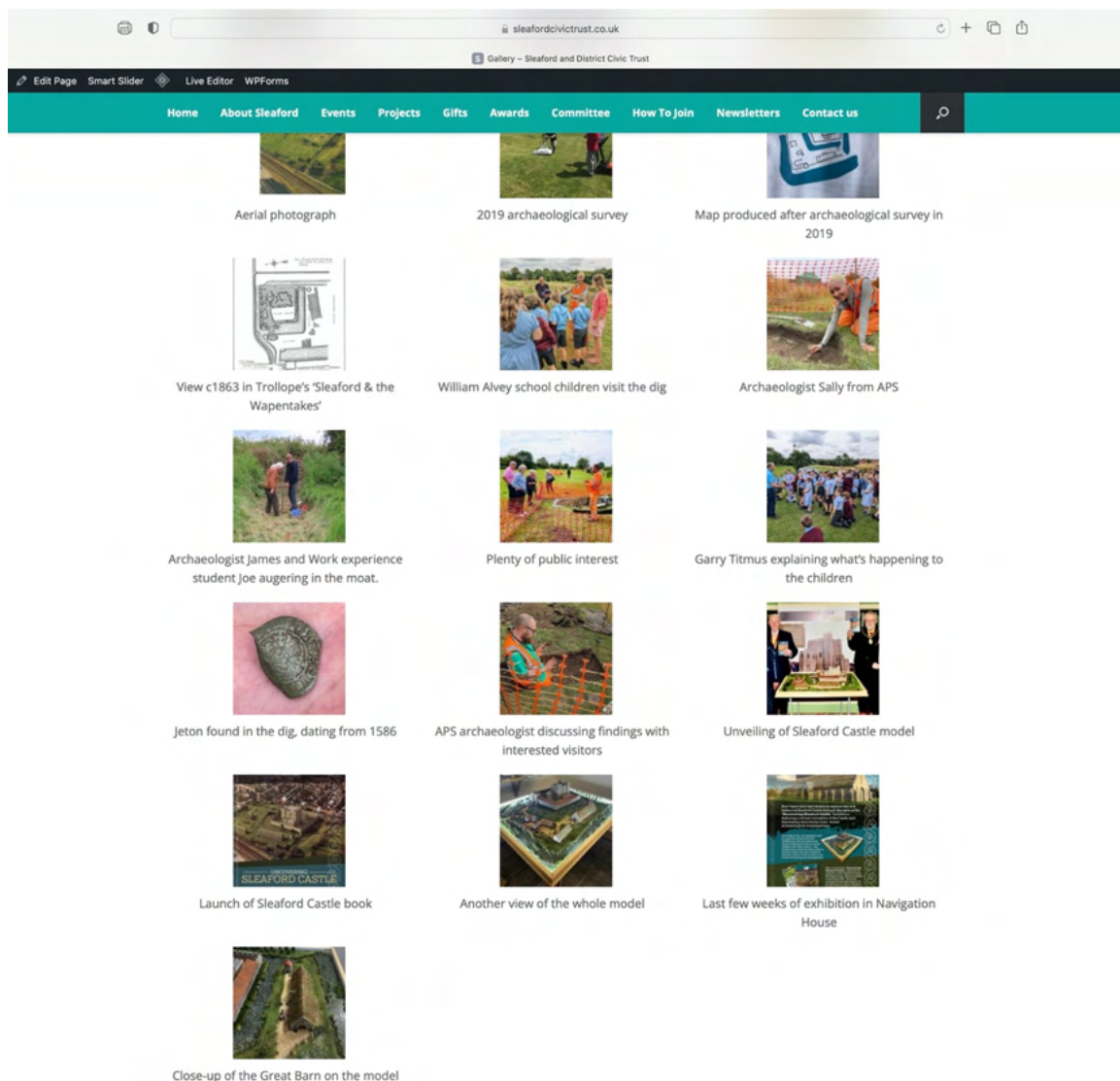
*Garry Titmus
Chair, Sleaford Castle Heritage Trust, (STC) Advisory Committee*

Sleaford Civic Trust Website

<https://sleafordcivictrust.co.uk>

I've just finished doing a bit of updating in the Gallery area of the website – the section entitled Sleaford Castle has had a few extra pictures added to show the launch of our new book, 'Uncovering Sleaford Castle'. The wonderful Castle model was unveiled at the same occasion so there are some photos to show that too, although the very best way to fully appreciate it (and to purchase the book too!) is to visit the Museum where the model will be transferred to in early April.

Click the 'Gallery' square on the home page of the website and you will be taken to the page you see below – just click on any of the photos to enlarge them and see them in more detail.



If there's anything else you'd like to see illustrated in our gallery or more generally on the website, please let me know at sleafordct@gmail.com FAO Doreen Bamford.

Doreen Bamford, Website Editor

Sleaford Museum

Museum Display

As the Museum woke after the Christmas/New Year hibernation, the excellent Christmas window was removed and some new artefacts which highlight 'Communication through the last 100 years' were displayed. A new donation of transistor radios from the 60s and 70s were a welcome addition and visitors are able to relive their memories of listening to Radio Caroline under the eiderdown!

The interior displays were also refreshed and some of the other exhibits were given a fresh look. All this whilst we wait for the transfer of some of the Sleaford Castle exhibition from Navigation House. This will feature the fantastic Castle model which will form the centrepiece of the window.

Museum Talk Programme 2025

Our Secretary, Evelyne Bryant, has put together another superb programme of talks for the 2025 season. In May, we welcome the ever-popular Dr Erik Grigg to present a talk on the 'Lost Kingdom of Lindsey' and in July we host Robert Turner who will speak on the little known but very influential Sleaford School of Art.

In September, we celebrate the men, the buildings and the legacy of Kirk and Parry, Builders of Sleaford. August marks the 200th birthday of Charles Kirk the younger and we will mount an exhibition on his contribution to the Town to preview the talk by Nigel Ogden. Each talk takes place on the last Tuesday of the respective months in the St Denys' Church Rooms, 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

The Museum AGM

Our 2025 Museum Trust AGM will be held on Tuesday, May 27th ...the same evening as our talk on 'The Lost Kingdom of Lindsey'.

RiverLight 2025 / North Kesteven Walking Festival

The finale of the RiverLight 2025 festival will take place on June 21st and the Museum will be using our new performance space at Monument Gardens to support the day with a programme of displays and activities.

The 'Fringe' period, which runs during the week leading up to the big day, coincides with the North Kesteven Walking Festival and part of the programme comprises three guided walks:

- Saturday, June 14th - Into Town from the East
- Wednesday, June 18th – Southgate
- Friday, June 20th - Market Place to Sleaford Castle

Each free walk starts from the Museum at 2pm/1400hrs. Booking is essential via the North Kesteven Walking Festival Website.

Mark Bamford, Chair, Sleaford Museum Trust

Charles Kirk

The architect and builder Charles Kirk was born on 10 March 1791 at Wigston Magna in Leicestershire. The Kirk family had long been connected with the building trade and Charles' father William was himself a surveyor and monumental mason.

Charles Kirk first came to Sleaford in 1829 to undertake the building of the new Town Hall and Court House and when the work was completed he decided to stay. In the years that followed, Kirk's building business and architectural practice flourished and he was involved in the construction and planning of many of Sleaford's new buildings of the period.

Many of Charles Kirk's later building projects were undertaken with Thomas Parry, who had begun his career as an articled clerk with Kirk's firm. The two men eventually went into partnership and became more closely connected in 1841, when Parry married Charles Kirk's daughter, Henrietta. Following Charles Kirk's death in 1847, his son Charles the Younger took over, building his own house (known as Mansion House) on Southgate in 1850. The building is now used by Sleaford Girls High School.

In partnership with his brother-in-law the business continued to prosper, establishing a countrywide reputation for their railway and civic buildings and church restorations.



Kirks Mansion House on Southgate - now part of the High School

This introduction to Charles Kirk forms part of my wider research project into Kirk & Parry. I will be presenting this research at the Museum Talk 'Kirk & Parry, Builders of Sleaford' on Tuesday, September 23rd.

Nigel Ogden, Museum Researcher

Future Events

Friday, April 25th	Eastgate Almshouse Chapel - see 'Special Notices'
Thursday, May 8th	Sleaford Civic Trust AGM/Summer Social - see 'Special Notices'
Tuesday, May 27th	'The Lost Kingdom of Lindsey' - presented by Dr Erik Grigg, History Department of Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln. The talk will be presented in St Denys' Church Rooms, off the Market Place in Sleaford, starting at 7.30pm and will last approximately an hour. Refreshments are available and there will be a raffle. This talk forms a part of the Museum Trust Annual General Meeting and admission will be free.
Saturday, June 14th - Friday, June 20th	2025 RiverLight Festival - Fringe events. "The theme this year is Circles, Cycles and the Summer Solstice, taking inspiration from the area's rural heritage, medieval water mills and local folklore. The creative team are planning walkabout acts, a make zone, workshops, music and dance performances, art exhibitions, installations and much more. The first confirmed act is Autin Dance Theatre's The Giant Wheel." - <i>The Hub</i>
Saturday, June 21st	2025 RiverLight Festival - FINALE. "The RiverLight Parade on Sat 21 June will involve local schools and groups taking part in artist-led costume-making and performance workshops." - <i>The Hub</i>
Tuesday, July 29th	'The Artist Mary Wedd and the Sleaford School of Art' , presented by Robert Turner, local historian. Presented in St Denys' Church Rooms, off the Market Place in Sleaford. The talk starts at 7.30pm and lasts approximately an hour. Refreshments are available and there is a raffle. £3 for non-members and £1 for members
Tuesday, Sept 23rd	'Kirk & Parry, Builders of Sleaford' . The men, the buildings, the legacy', presented by Nigel Ogden, Sleaford Museum researcher. Presented in St Denys' Church Rooms, off the Market Place in Sleaford. The talk starts at 7.30pm and lasts approximately an hour. Refreshments are available and there is a raffle. £3 for non-members and £1 for members

Corporate Members

We would like to thank our Corporate Members for their renewed support this year



CARRE
HERITAGE

DUNCAN
& TOPLIS

Blast from the Past

The Civic Trust Newsletter from 30 years ago....

Newsletter of SLEAFORD & DIST. CIVIC TRUST FEBRUARY 1995.

Reg. Charity No 502291.

SPEAKER :-
G.R. PACEY ESQ -
"The development
of WINDMILLS"
ILLUSTRATED WITH
COLOUR SLIDES

SDCT. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.
in GROUND FLOOR DINING HALL
CARRE'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL
NORTHGATE.

Ample parking in School forecourt
COME & RE-CHARGE YOUR CTEE'S BATTERIES.
COME WITH YOUR IDEAS & QUESTIONS.
(- OR JUST BE THERE!)

THURS.
23 Feb.
7.30pm.



Not quite $\frac{1}{4}$ of our members made this happy assembly at our Summer Supper last July.
At this time of great controversy over Sleaford's future shouldn't we feel the need to attract more than the $\frac{1}{8}$ of our members who attended the 1994 AGM?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF NEWSLETTER - Your Agenda for 1995 AGM.
Minutes of the 1994 AGM.
Full report of 1994 activities.
... and just a few CHALLENGES!