

*Ship weather vane sails high against skyline*

# Museum curator's last wish granted

**A** LEGACY of Spalding's shipping past is visible in the town - to those who look above roof height as they walk around!

An attractive three masted square rigged ship weather vane, from the old Ship warehouse in Double Street, is now sailing against the sky on top of Spalding Gentlemen's Society museum in Broad Street.

The weather vane has been in the possession of the society for about 30 years since it was presented to the museum by the late Harold Kingston when the warehouse was demolished.

The Ship warehouse had been occupied for many years by Messrs Hallam and Blackburn, wholesale and family grocers, wine, spirit and provision merchants.

The curator at the time, Robert Whiston, who went on to become president of the society, said he would like to see the vane on the roof of the museum.

Sadly, he died in 1995 before seeing his wish fulfilled, but his widow, Mrs Madge Whiston of Pinchbeck, was invited to view the weather vane in its new position.

Honorary secretary Don Archer said: "Mr Whiston wanted it put there so the whole community would have sight of it."

There were difficulties about getting it up there, because it needed planning



▲ GATHERED to see the new weather vane: back (from left) - treasurer Geoff Buck, assistant treasurer David Short, lanternist Mike Elsdon, Geoff Sharman, Paul Beard, lecture secretary Peter Sivil, assistant curator Bill Belsham, secretary Don Archer, assistant curator Tom Royce, Herbert Walker; front - Mrs Madge Whiston, Mrs Dorothy Bratley, Eric Bratley, curator of birds Derek Frost, president and curator Norman Leveritt. (MC1909/32)

permission and listed building consent so we had to go to the Department of the Environment.

"Only a few days after he passed away we got the final permission to go ahead.

"We wanted his wishes to be carried out and all feel very satisfied that it is up there.

"So many of these things get demolished, thrown away or put on a tip, and it is good that sometimes people think of saving these things."

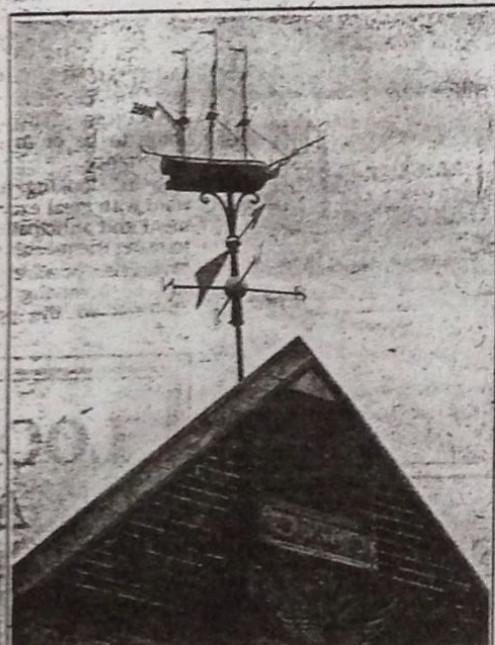
Well-known Spalding builder and society member R G Sharman and his team expertly restored the copper weather vane and fixed it on the roof.

Society president and curator Norman

Leveritt said the museum contacted the National Maritime Museum in 1981 and sent photographs of the vane to try to find out more about it.

They replied that it was unlikely to be a representation of an actual ship and suggested it was probably a local coppersmith, with no specialist knowledge, who had been commissioned to produce a weather vane "emblematic of the sea going trade".

The vane showed a merchant ship of the late 18th or early 19th century, the Maritime Museum reported, crafted unusually without sails set to catch the wind.



● LEFT: The three masted square rigged ship weather vane in its new position. (MC1909/37)

● RIGHT: The weather vane before restoration, taken from a photograph in Spalding - An Industrial History, by Neil R Wright. (MC1850/4)

