



Mick's Musings

"... You can't please all of the people all of the time" – John Lydgate

They always say write about what you know. Well I know this: there's nowt so queer as folk.

Let me expand ...

You may recall our recent work party exploits saw us recover a sunken boat, to the delight of all the adjacent householders. This was reported in our last newsletter and even made the Melton Times (hooray, fame at last!). Our jubilation at lifting this leviathan from the depths was short lived however, as where we had left the boat for disposal apparently ruined the outlook of people living in the mobile home park opposite, who were not slow to inform us of this fact. This banter became regular and a feature of our trips into Melton and resulted in us cutting the boat up, prematurely, just for a quiet life!

Now, you wouldn't have minded if the "view" we were blighting was of somewhere stunning – the Taj Mahal perhaps or maybe a patchwork quilt of fields in the Yorkshire Dales? But no, the vista from the other bank that they were so keen to preserve was of ... the Egerton Park compost heap! Personally, I think the boat improved things, but then there's no accounting for taste.

Similarly, we have a regular diatribe with someone who accosts us every time we cruise past his property. He "requires" us to cut down a large bush which is seemingly ruining his life. The fact that this is just one of a whole line of similar bushes, and that we cannot cut anything until our self-imposed September "end of nesting season" deadline has passed, are entirely lost on him. He wrongly assumes, I think, that we are the EA or some such formal body. The whole thing came to a head when, a few Sundays ago, saw the usual tirade from the riverbank as we passed by. Stopping Badger we paddled over to reveal the source of his chagrin – the bush blocked the signal to his satellite dish! Unbelievable! Not bothered about flooding, ecology or pollution as long as he can get the footy on Sky Sports 2.

As I said ... nowt so queer as folk.

Mick

Mick Clowes

Work Party News

Work continues apace at Wilton Bridge and looking as if a further 3-4 sessions should see the job completed. But recently both Mole and Badger have been hindered by exceptionally thick weed growth en route from Sysonby to the town. Consequently, to allow the weed to die back (*oh, for a good frost!*), we decided that our next work party would be at t'other end - Syston.



So, on Sunday 6 September we walked from The Gate Hangs Well pub to the 'front door' at the Three Way Bridge, tidying up the footpath as we went.



Upon arriving at the bridge, we were surprised to see that work had already begun to clear the ground adjacent the old tin sheds, where the landowner has plans to rebuild the tollhouse, develop the site, and to include some of our plans for the Syston Hub”.

And, as one of our committee commented:
"Perhaps they could carry on clearing until they reach Melton!"

Couldn't agree more ...

Boat Dock Plans Back On Track ... ish

The plans to relocate our two work boats "Badger" and "Mole" are moving closer to fruition with the commissioning of an Eco Survey in the area of the proposed "Mole Hole" (our nickname for the boathouse).

The survey looks at plants and wildlife on the bank and waterborne species in greater detail. Otters, water voles and crayfish fall under the spotlight and if any evidence is found, then the Society will have to employ mitigation strategies to ensure they remain untouched.

The work began in mid-August but as we go to press, no results are yet in, although the Ecologist is due to visit Melton Borough Council to ascertain exactly what information they require.

East and West Partnership Meetings

The invitations to the inaugural partnership meetings are almost ready to be sent out to Parish, Borough and County Councils as well as movers and shakers around Melton and along the line down to Syston. Also anyone the society deems to be an important contact will be invited. We anticipate the meetings will take place around the end of October at the earliest. A report will follow in the next newsletter.

New Treasurer

We are pleased to announce that Jan Dadford has joined our happy band on MOWS Committee and is now our new Treasurer.

Oakham End Update

Springfield Section

We are making steady progress with Rutland County Council towards our goal of developing a long term maintenance strategy for the Springfield section at Oakham. The next steps are to consider whether the previously planned silt removal is still a viable option and to decide how best to involve local residents in the project. It would be great if we can start some positive improvements here in the spring of 2016.

Canalside Public Access

All the landowners of the canal between Oakham and Rocks by Rail have now been contacted about our wish to increase public access and conserve the canal remains. Initial reactions have been mixed, but we will continue to campaign for a continuous canal side path between these two locations. We are now beginning to extend our ownership survey further north.

Rocks by Rail

A change of General Manager at Rocks by Rail has stalled our ongoing dialogue. We hope to pick up our discussions on the following long term mutual objectives soon:

- Provision of a footbridge over the canal.
- Improving the relationship with the local landowner to clear the vegetation from the canal so that it is in water more often and increases the habitat diversity.
- Clearing part of the original towpath to the south of the site.
- Providing interpretation signage.

This is one location where we can actually get relatively unhindered access to the canal and I hope we can get a work party back here in the not too distant future!

Oakham Canal Trail

Our draft Oakham Canal Trail leaflet is being “road tested” by Doug Hamilton-Cox who plans to walk the trail between 22-25 September as part of his Help for Heroes canal walks. If you would like to support Doug by making a donation, please go to www.dougwalking.co.uk.

Oakham Museum

We are in early discussions with Rutland County Museum about organising a temporary exhibition on the Oakham canal and its importance to the town in 2015/6. It would be fantastic to have a volunteer to work with me on this and to look at the large collection of material which we could potentially borrow from the Leicestershire Record Office.

If you would like to get involved in these or our future Oakham Canal projects, please contact Paul at pdadford@yahoo.co.uk.

Trail Boats is a-Comin'?

An open invitation has been sent out to members of the Wilderness Trail Boat Club to try out our slipway and cruise the waterway in and around Melton. This invite should go in their winter newsletter, so don't be surprised if next spring you see one or two boats bobbing along the ring or down to Eye Kettleby lock!

Walks and Talks ...

Walk For Heroes

The Society was contacted by Doug Hamilton-Cox, who intends to walk the waterways of the UK for the 'Help For Heroes' charity and wanted to know if any members would be interested in joining him walk the Melton Navigation.

If anyone is interested in joining or sponsoring Doug, his website is:
<http://www.dougwalking.co.uk/>.

HELP for
HEROES



Talks for England ... er sorry, MOWS

Chairman Mick did a presentation for Scalford WI on Wednesday 2 September. He will also be doing a presentation at Stamford next year for the local U3A ... obviously his fame is spreading far and wide!!!

Events Attended

The Society attended several events during the summer, but the outstanding ones were the Braunston Boat Gathering over the weekend of 27 and 28 June, Melton Day on Sunday 28 June and Rempstone Steam Rally on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 July. We will also be attending the Grantham Canal's Discovery Day event in October (see below).

Sheltering from a wet start on Melton Day



Grantham Canal - Discovery Day

The Grantham Canal Society are holding the above event on Sunday 11 October. Looks like there's plenty to see and do and we will be in attendance. Check it out ...
<http://www.granthamcanal.org/temp/>.



2015 AGM

The date for this year's AGM has been arranged for Saturday 14 November. To be held at Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Asfordby Road, Melton, commencing at 10.30am. More information and the AGM Notice will be sent out at the beginning of October.

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