

Mick's Musings

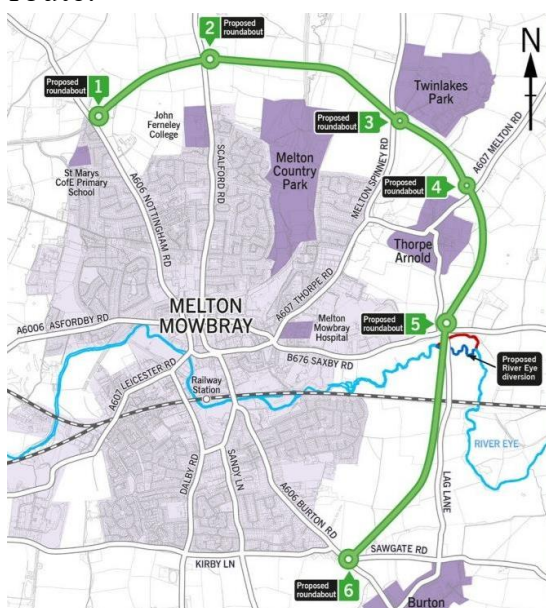
Road to Nowhere

One of the pleasures in my life, is to climb aboard my motorcycle, and head off into the wild blue yonder, only relying on signposts (and occasionally the sat nav) to get me back home.



On a recent foray out into the Fens I returned via Melton and intersected with the new Melton Mowbray Distributor Road, which I had never been on, and so decided to do an "end to end" run. Wow! Well built, great sight lines, smooth tarmac, and, most importantly for a biker like me – no traffic! Needing to cross the town to get home, I immediately discovered that the missing traffic was where it has always been, clogging up the streets of Melton.

It seems to me that without the extra links and extension to the road, the MMDR remains something of a white elephant. It seems a shame that the line of the Oakham Canal has now been buried in the name of so-called progress and has thwarted our plans to make a traffic-free footpath and bridleway between Melton and Oakham along the old canal route.



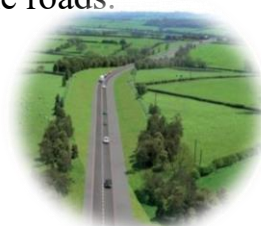
The original plans for this road go back, I believe, to 1923, so who knows how long before the money is found to build the missing bits and make this road the useful route it was originally meant to be?

Had the Oakham and Melton Navigations been allowed to survive, and a small percentage of the road funding been used on their restoration and upkeep, we could now possibly see non-essential goods, such as recycling materials, building products and timber being carried by boat instead of by lorry and taking thousands of tons off the roads.

MMDR = progress – discuss.

Mick

As always, the opinions expressed here are personal and do not reflect the views of anyone else



Work Parties

Recent work parties have seen the container (our sole safe receptacle) being emptied to give us more room to work and give easy access to equipment, which will be spread over a number of new containers. We already have two plastic containers, which usually house a pair of wheelie bins and Stuart is in the throes of constructing a small shed like container for bigger items. The clear-out has unearthed some gems that have not seen the light of day for many years, as we have never had sufficient light (until now) to see what is stored in the pitch black interior. We expect the container to be cleared to a workable level within a couple of work parties.

A further work party, down at Eye Kettleby Lock, revealed that someone had “recycled” the picnic table, which we had dragged from the river some weeks before, by pitching it off the lock bridge and back into the watery depths (see photo). I sometimes wonder why we bother! But, of course, we do.



Eye Kettleby Lock – Feasibility Study

The early results from our survey (see page 4) tell us that the number one priority for members and interested parties is the full restoration of the Melton Navigation. This, of course, has always been our main thrust and any benefits that spin off from that work are an added bonus.

So, finally things are getting more serious (or should that be interesting?) as funding has become available to do a full feasibility study on the restoration of Eye Kettleby Lock.

A grant provider has generously allowed us to redirect remainder funds to the new project and we have engaged with experienced waterways people at The Rothern Group, who will do an initial survey to tell us whether the original structure is sound enough for repair or (in an extreme case) a complete rebuild will be necessary.

This is pencilled in for October and will cost in excess of £3,000 and will require our full co-operation, as we will have to clear certain sections of the lock structure of undergrowth etc, so that tests can be carried out.

When all pieces of the puzzle are in place we will be looking to seek all the permissions required and apply for, what will be, by a country mile, the largest grant we have ever had. Exciting times ahead!

Bathing

The authorities are constantly alerting the general public about the dangers of swimming in rivers and canals. Sadly, this hot summer has seen its fair share of fatalities as cold shock, entanglement with underwater obstructions, and deep water have taken their toll.

However, 142 years ago nobody cared a jot about health and safety, as the Police were more concerned with potty-mouthed youths or the local flasher, as reported in the local paper ...

Melton Mowbray Times

Sunday 6th July 1884

MELTON MOWBRAY LOCAL BOARD:

ATTENTION WAS CALLED TO THE SERIOUS NUISANCE CREATED BY THE UNRESTRICTED BATHING IN THE CANAL. A NUMBER OF YOUTHS WERE CONTINUALLY ON THE PUBLIC FOOT-PATH IN A NAKED STATE, TO THE GREAT ANNOYANCE OF THE PASSERS-BY. THE LANGUAGE USE WAS OFTEN DISGUSTING. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE POLICE BE INSTRUCTED TO PROSECUTE ANY PERSON MAKING USE OF BAD LANGUAGE OR IMPROPERLY EXPOSING HIMSELF!.

MOWS New Space-age Washing Machine?

The boffins at MOWS towers are always on the go, and are not happy unless they are building something. Hence, our new space-age washing machine (pictured) which we have found will clean your new shirt whiter than white (even if it was red in the first place). It is the early development stages and we have found one or two design flaws which may need to be sorted out. Yes, that shirt may be clean, but it could end up in several pieces, but on the plus side the smaller bits will be easier to iron!

Dave (in the picture) looks like he is phoning the patent office before somebody steals our idea.

And now the real explanation ...

The water-cooling circuit on the outboard became blocked and after unblocking it we needed to ensure it was running properly in a test environment. Hence, the barrel of clean water, which proved all was OK.



STOP PRESS!

We have just heard from the Public Rights of Way Sustainable Travel Team at Leicestershire County Council, that we can install an interpretation board on the footpath bordering The Three Way Bridge. This is a long-standing objective of the society to publicise the start of the Melton Navigation, where it meets the Grand Union Canal.



MOWS Survey & QR Code

Thank you to those who have already completed our survey. For anyone who hasn't yet completed this, please consider doing so. We're reviewing our membership and volunteering to help make the Melton & Oakham Waterways Society stronger, more active and better able to deliver our long-term ambitions.

Whether you're a current member, volunteer, former member or simply support what we do, we'd really value your views.

The survey takes around **3–5 minutes** to complete and your feedback will directly influence future membership benefits, volunteering opportunities and how we communicate with our supporters.

Please scan the QR code or visit the link below to take part:

<https://bit.ly/4buYP6h>

Thank you for helping shape the future of MOWS.



Footpath Rangers Walk

Ash Howe, one of the MOWS Footpath Rangers, recently led a walk using the Gate Hangs Well pub as the starting point. The original intention was to go from there to the Three-Way Bridge, but a change of heart saw the six set off towards Ratcliffe Meadow Lock (possibly to collect golf balls?).

Sadly, the extreme heat produced a request to return to the pub and the jaunt was terminated at the half-way point. However, it is our intention to organise further walks, all along the Navigation, in the future.

Membership Renewals – Reminder

Just another reminder about renewing your membership if you have not already done so. If you do not have a Standing Order, you can pay by Bank Transfer - our bank details are: Account No. 41280783, Sort code 40-32-14.

New Treasurer Wanted

Do you have a little time to spare?

We are looking for a new society Treasurer.

If you think you may like to help the society and volunteer for this role, but wish to know more, please contact one of the committee members listed opposite. Training could be given should you be interested.

Welcome ...

To our newest member:

Andrea Fiford

Society Contacts:

Chair: Sharon Butcher
e-mail: sharonbrown987@icloud.com

Secretary: Jerry Filor
(Acting) e-mail: jfilor@talktalk.net

Treasurer: Diana Patterson
e-mail: dj.patterson@btopenworld.com

Website: <http://www.meltonwaterways.org.uk>

Follow us on ...

