



Registered Charity No 1078752

MOWS Newsletter

Winter 2010/11

Mick's Musings

The old adage "To be forewarned, is to be forearmed" isn't heard much these days. Although this expression is more akin to my parents' generation than my own, the meaning - to have prior knowledge of an occurrence so as to be able to prepare for that eventuality - is as relevant today as it ever was.

But what if, turning the maxim on its head you were "forearmed" but no-one ever "forewarned" you? How confusing would that be?

Take for example, the proposed rebuilding of Junction Bridge at Syston. A regular topic on these pages (showing how long this saga has been ongoing) the project shows little sign of coming to fruition ... yet. But, as the new year beckons, the spotlight on Melton hopefully will be turned, just briefly, south-westerly as things bridge-wise should start to materialise. 2011 has long been earmarked for Junction Bridge - but when in 2011? January 1st? December 31st? Or any of the 363 days in between? It would be nice to know ... to be "forewarned".

This society has done its homework and is, I believe, already "forearmed". We know what style of bridge is needed. We know how it should look. We know what building materials will be appropriate. We know the air-draft required for boats. But the one thing we don't know is when all this is going to be decided.

Government guidelines state that any restoration group having plans with a reasonable chance of eventual success should be a statutory consultee in any planning matters affecting that waterway. My concern is that as we are based in Melton, planners in Charnwood, some 15 miles away, may not see the bigger picture and forget us when preliminary talks are taking place. I am sure you would wish the society to be a consultee, as opposed to an objector, taking part in discussions right from the outset rather than being handed a "fait accompli" final planning application with only days to respond.

So, in wishing you all a Happy Christmas, can I also urge you to be vigilant and "keep 'em peeled" for any information on the bridge project, no matter how tenuous. It is imperative that we are "forewarned" to ensure it will be a very happy new year for our waterway.

Mick Clowes
Chairman

Introducing "New" Mole

By early November all major work on the new "Mole" was complete, such that a work party was arranged to apply some fresh bitumastic prior to her launch.

Arrangements were made to attend a training day acquainting everyone with the necessary skills to operate all the systems on the new boat. The training day was held on Friday 19 November and 7 members now hold certificates in the safe operation of the craft. The day consisted of several hours of "classroom" work, with the afternoon session being a hands-on familiarisation with the controls, whilst still in the workshop at Bardon.



Richard Booth tries out our new 'toy' at the Bardon workshop's training day.

Subsequently, thanks to our friends at The Loughborough Land Rover Club, the boat was transported to Melton for "sea trials" and launched via the slipway. Due to the weather conditions, the slipway was indeed "slippy", but was no match for the Land Rover team, who used one vehicle with the trailer, coupled to a second stationary vehicle via a winch.

First impressions as the boat floated free was that Richard Booth had yet again got his calculations spot-on in that the draft was increased by some 250mm as planned and appeared to float dead level - a nice stable platform from which to work. On her first run it became obvious that a change of propeller was needed, but on mooring up and deploying the hydraulic arms and feet, everything else worked well, with the bucket functioning absolutely correctly.

Many thanks to Greg and his team at Truck Hydraulic Services at Bardon for going the extra mile to make our ideas work so well.

Subscriptions Increase Approved at AGM

It was proposed, agreed and approved at our AGM that the society's yearly subscription will be increased from next year. This is the first time we have increased our subscription since the society first formed in 1997, so we do feel this decision is justified. As from 1 February 2011, the annual subscriptions will be:

Full members (21 and over)	£7.00
(18 - 21)	£5.00
Additional members at the same address	£5.00
Family members under 18*	Free
Life membership	£150.00
Corporate	POA

* Children of members living at home and in full time education will be included in their parents' membership and are welcome to participate in any of our activities.

Bankers' Orders

Forms have been sent out by the Treasurer asking members, where appropriate, to authorise amendments to their existing orders. We do hope that all those affected will agree to do this and, if you have not already done so, the return of your form as soon as possible, would be much appreciated.

2010 AGM

The society's 13th AGM took place on 13 November 2010. A well-attended meeting saw the approval of the previous year's minutes, the Treasurer's report, four returning committee members and the first increase in subscriptions since the society was formed. The chairman reported on the past year's activities where he talked about steady progress towards our objectives. The Treasurer, Hugh Butler, officially announced his retirement from the post and the chairman thanked him for his hard work in the past.

A lively open discussion then took place on many topics, followed by Any Other Business of which there was little due to most things being covered in the previous discussion. Following a short break, our guest speaker, John Evans, entertained us with many an anecdote based on his years "messing about in boats". His talk, "A Miscellany of Memories" was wonderfully well-received and he may find his retirement peppered with requests for similar talks elsewhere!

The whole meeting was very upbeat and many positives have been drawn, showing that the society is continuing to move in the right direction.

Historic Bridge Saved

Some of you may have seen this article with the headline "**Historic bridge saved thanks to villagers**" in the Melton Times in September 2010. Society member, Dennis Marshall-Hasdell, was appointed by Warner and Partners, who are the riparian landowners on both sides of the river at the 300 year old, grade 2 listed, Waterhouse Bridge at Hoby.



Mr Hasdell said "We are thrilled Natural England has been able to grant aid for the full repair and restoration of this beautiful bridge as part of our higher level stewardship scheme."

Waterhouse Bridge was built in the late 1700s by William Jessop to provide access for agricultural machinery.

The Natural England historic environment adviser for the East Midlands, Elaine Willett, said: "This project is unusual because the landowners helped to enlist the support of specialised volunteers to undertake the work, thus engaging the community and helping us to deliver incredible value for money."

Dates For Your Diary ...

SUNDAY 3 APRIL 2011

It is anticipated that the official launch of the new river clearance vessel, "Mole", will be held on the above date. See website for further details.

SATURDAY 30 APRIL AND SUNDAY 1 MAY 2011

Loughborough Canal and Boat Festival.

SATURDAY 4 JUNE AND SUNDAY 5 JUNE 2011

Leicester Riverside Festival.

SATURDAY 25 AND SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2011

Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally.

New Treasurer and Membership Secretary for 2011

Since the AGM, one of our committee members has volunteered to take on the role of Treasurer. Ron Francis, who has been a member for several years and now has moved onto the committee, will become the society Treasurer when Hugh steps down from the role next year. Membership duties will be taken on by Linda Hulme. These two roles have been approved by the committee.

Welcome To New Members ...

Peter Samways
Margaret Samways

Work Party Dates - 2011

Joint Work Party with Oakham School on Saturday 19 March 2011 at 10.30am: On the Oakham canal, at the area known locally as 'Springfield'. Please see website for directions or ring Ron Francis on 01664 564028. Hard hats, bibs and tools will be provided, but please wear stout shoes/boots and protective gloves.

The Committee wish everyone a Very

Merry.

Christmas

... and a Happy New Year

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