



Registered Charity No 1078752

MOWS Newsletter

Autumn 2011

Mick's Musings

Prime Minister David Cameron advocates building "The Big Society", but I've got news for him - it's already here!

When you look at the voluntary organisations in this country, millions of people staff that Big Society every week. Think about it - the last time you went anywhere did you actually notice these people? But they are out there doing a vital job day in and day out. From the WRVS manning hospital shops to a friendly voice on the end of the Samaritans help line, from student groups tidying senior citizens gardens to blood donors saving lives, we are all out and about somewhere. We and (hopefully) the Government both realise that without these volunteers, the country would grind to a halt.

So why does that same government (via its local authorities) do its damndest to put as many obstacles in the way of the voluntary sector? This is not a political rant, as successive governments (of whichever party) have seemingly ignored volunteers whilst still claiming to give help. But some of the "red tape" hurdles devised for us to jump beggar belief.

Locally, this bites as hard as anywhere. When MOWS volunteers plan some project to benefit the local community Mr Jobsworth pokes his nose in asap, pointing to his Health and Safety at Work poster accompanied by many sudden intakes of breath and much sucking of teeth.

Now, I'm not suggesting for one minute that people go off and attempt projects without appropriate training, nor that they should start work without donning the correct protective clothing and safety talks and good advice are always there to be listened to. But, why oh why do I get the feeling that there must be an office in every town hall and government department dedicated to stifling the good intentions of volunteers?

Recently this raised its head when MOWS offered to take over, repair and re-water Eye Kettleby Lock. The chamber was in reasonable condition, but had stood alone, empty and unloved for many, many years. But as soon as our society mentioned restoration, myriad alarm bells must have started ringing in the aforementioned offices, no doubt causing a spike in the national grid! Suddenly people who have little interest in the subject were asking so many questions and putting up so many defences that eventually the chamber was in filled and fenced to ensure nobody could get near it, let alone get hurt!

For "Big Society", read "Big Disheartened Society" ... and getting smaller by the minute.

Mick Clowes
Chairman

River Clearance Vessel "Mole" Gets Stuck In

Over the last few months, our new river clearance vessel has been put through its paces.

"Mole" has been used on several occasions to clear silt, weed and any other unwanted obstacles from the river - including some surplus bricks supposedly deposited by a local householder's none-too-discerning builder.



Two society members, Adrian Mann and Dennis Stace, have been out on the boat for a training session with a couple of qualified members and hope to come along and help when they can. Anyone else who would like to have a go, please contact any committee member. This is not purely a male preserve and it would be nice if any lady members would like to try their hand.

The photographs show a recent dredging expedition downstream of the road water outfall on the river side of Egerton Park.

The boat is proving to be a great asset to the society and will, in time, help to ensure a silt and weed-free waterway.



New Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Hugh Butler, has now put his abacus away and will be giving his final Treasurer's Report at the AGM in November.

Ron Francis has now taken over from Hugh, so please contact him regarding any membership changes. Ron's contact details can be found on page 4 of this newsletter.

Our grateful thanks go to Hugh for the tremendous amount of work and hours he has put in over the years.

On Track at Cottesmore



On Monday 10 October 2011, Mike Loxton, Hugh Butler and Ron Francis went to the Rocks By Rail/canal site at Cottesmore. They were later joined by a master and three pupils from Oakham School. A trustee from Rocks By Rail also helped.



Soil was removed from the canal bed on the Ashwell Road side and bushes were trimmed on the Barrow side.

Although good progress was made, the culvert and bushes require attention. More excavation is also required to complete the work on the Ashwell Road side.

MOWS members enjoyed a well-earned lunch in a guards van!

2011 AGM Date Announced

This year's AGM will be on Saturday 26 November. For further details please see the attached AGM Notice and also 'Date For Your Diary' on page 4.

New Website



Our website was originally set up as part of 'This Is Leicestershire' run by the Leicester Mercury's Beehive initiative, but on 1 October this closed down. Our new site is: <http://www.meltonwaterways.co.uk>. (You may have to type this in on your internet explorer as Google does not recognise this yet!). Don't forget to add it to your Favourites!

We hope you find this just as informative as the old website. You can check for work party dates and, as always, we are grateful for photographs, articles and ideas for improvement.

MOWS Merchandise



Perfect for that exclusive Christmas (or birthday) present ... and why not team up a tee-shirt or a fleece with a MOWS Membership.

PRICE LIST

Tee-shirts in orange and light blue:
Members - £9.00 each, 2 for £17.00
Non-members - £9.95, 2 for £19.00

Polo shirts in heather grey and royal blue:
Members - £12.00 each, 2 for £23.00
Non-members - £12.95, 2 for £25.00

Fleeces in bottle green:
Members - £16.00 each, 2 for £31.00
Non-members - £16.95, 2 for £33.00

All the above are available in
S, M, L, XL, XXL & XXXL.
Other colours by special order.



To order, please e-mail lindandmick@btinternet.com or telephone 01509 414140.



Date For Your Diary ...

SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2011

MOWS AGM: At Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray,

Leics LE13 OHP. Commences at 10.30am. The guest speaker will be

John Plumb. Light refreshments available. Everyone welcome.

Forthcoming Work Party Dates



Work parties will be held on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month. Starting on **6 November** with a litter pick around the Melton Ring. Anyone wishing to participate to meet at the rear of Wilton Road car park at 10.00am.

The next one will be **20 November**, location to be decided. Further information and dates will be posted on the website or you can contact a committee member for further details.

Find Out What's Involved at Work Parties

We would welcome more members (non-members also welcome) to come along and get involved. You can do as little or as much as you are capable of. If you are curious as to what we do on our work parties, you could come to see at first hand before committing any of your time.

Work party dates will be listed on the website, but you can register your interest with Hugh Butler or any member of the committee and be added to our new database if you wish (see **Work Party Database**).

MOWS Talk to Melton's Aurora Rotary Club

Following a presentation on MOWS' activities given to the new Melton Aurora Rotary Club, great interest was expressed in our efforts to clear and restore the use of the river and canal, particularly in the centre of Melton. We look forward to working with volunteers from Aurora at future working parties.

Welcome To New Member ...

John Dodwell

Work Party Database

The society is going to compile a database of anyone (member or non-member) who wishes to get involved in any of our work parties, so we can then contact you before that date. If you wish to find out more or to be put on the database, please contact Hugh Butler, tel: 01664 434549, e-mail: 2butlers@tiscali.co.uk.

Society Contacts:

Chairman: Michael Clowes,
14 White Street, Quorn, Leics LE12 8EB
Tel: 01509 414140
e-mail: lindandmick@btinternet.com

Secretary: Richard Booth, Sysonby
Knoll Hotel, Asfordby Road, Melton
Mowbray LE13 OHP
Tel: 01664 503330
e-mail: richard.b.booth@btconnect.com

Treasurer: Ron Francis,
10 Wyfordby Close, Melton Mowbray,
Leics LE13 1HL
Tel: 01664 564028
e-mail: ronsie353@hotmail.com

Newsletters/Website: Linda Hulme,
14 White Street, Quorn, Leics LE12 8EB
Tel: 01509 414140
e-mail: lindandmick@btinternet.com

General Enquiries:
eyeway1@btinternet.com

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