



Registered Charity No 1078752

MOWS Newsletter

Summer 2012

Mick's Musings

As your chairman, I would be failing in my duty if I did not make you aware of developments within the remit of the society. Now MOWS is well known for our work in putting together various walks around and along the Melton Mowbray Navigation (hope I'm not being too previous here) and the Oakham Canal. These well documented ambles (Walk Leaflets 1 & 2 still available) use existing footpaths along with a sprinkling of permissive paths and the odd diversion. All well and good you may think, but what happens when a path or two becomes downtrodden (*good word to use - Ed*) beyond safe use or mysteriously moves its position?

Well, as watchdogs of all that goes on local footpaths wise, your stalwart committee gets stuck in and tries to put things right. Take, for example "The Case of the Disappearing Footpath" at Syston.

We are all aware that the rebuilding of Junction Bridge (or Wreake End Footbridge) to give its official listing, takes place in September, and I hope you all can be there to celebrate one of the society's major triumphs - details later. However, have you ever tried to walk there on the footpath from the Gate Hangs Well pub at Lewin Bridge? The initial stage means taking your life in your hands as you struggle over the Armco barrier before the next juggernaut rumbles past, but your exertions are rewarded with an immediate oasis of calm as you descend to the riverside. Beyond this, however, in the woods things take a decided turn for the worse - pun intended - as the footpath, once the navigation's towpath, takes torturous twists and turns, along with several changes of contour to avoid the dense undergrowth and many fallen trees. The section beyond the Midland railway bridge is not too bad, skirting as it does, several ploughed fields. After this though the path is not for the faint-hearted or those without ropes and crampons, as the conditions underfoot resemble the Somme battlefield at its worst.

So, without further ado, the society contacted County Hall to see what could be done. At the same time the society looked into grants from that same location to (it appears) financially assist them with the work they should be doing in the first place! Wouldn't it be nice to see a rebuilt bridge AND a lovely refurbished foot/towpath all the way past the first lock site and down to the pub?

Keep your eye on this one it could run and run - but be assured we will!

Mick Clowes
Chairman

Wreake End Footbridge AKA Junction Bridge

We are reliably informed that the rebuilding of the Wreake End Footbridge (or Junction Bridge) at Syston will be started by September.

This got us thinking as to how the bridge might have looked when it was first built. Obviously, we do not have any photographs from that time, but we do have one from circa 1900 which shows the toll house on the right.



We would imagine that in its early years it was always a wooden structure. The present day bridge is



wholly constructed of concrete (see photo on left) - a material popular in the 60/70s and this was the time it was last updated. Note that the structure was completely flat with no navigable headroom.

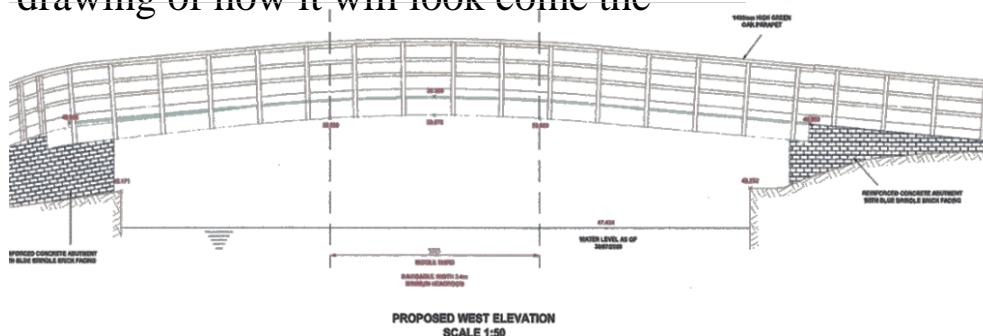
It seemed that British Waterways may have been thinking about

replacing it in the late 90s and the drawing on the right shows how it could have looked. Whether there would have been navigable headroom we are unsure.



To the future now, and this is the LCC drawing of how it will look come the

latter part of this year, complete with approx 2.5 metres navigable headroom.



MOWS Committee Member Now On Soar/GU Partnership

Committee member (and ex-chairman), Mike Handford, is now our MOWS representative on the Soar/Grand Union Partnership.

This organisation brings together a group of like-minded people to try and attract funding for the general betterment of the River Soar and Grand Union Navigation, but more specifically, the "hubs" along the route. These at Loughborough, Barrow-upon-Soar, Watermead, Belgrave, Leicester, Aylestone and Kilby Bridge are, in themselves, good choices as they are sited in centres of population and boating importance. However, we have long campaigned for the area around Junction Bridge (being the Melton Mowbray Navigation's "front door") to be included in this list. With the rebuilding of Junction Bridge and the refurbishing of the connected footpath (see Mick's Musings) this strengthens our case for inclusion.

Mike's experience and intimate knowledge of the waterways system (and how the management and financial system) work will mean that via his strong forthright presence on this committee the work of MOWS will not go unnoticed.

Tea at Teigh Anyone?

On Sunday 16 September the society are proposing to walk part of the Oakham Canal ending at the Old Rectory, Teigh. Anyone wishing to take part please contact Ron Francis on 01664 564028 by the w/e 17 August. Participants can start at Oakham, Rutland Garden Centre or Rocks by Rail, meeting for afternoon tea at Teigh.

Update On Outfall

In the last issue of the newsletter (Spring 2012), the chairman spoke about the sewage content of the rainwater outfall in the Asfordby Road area. Since then, the society has been in contact with Severn Trent who are endeavouring to find the source. Although unsure, evidence points towards the cattle market as they have found straw in the effluent. This has yet to be proved but samples are being taken so we shall see what ensues. Had MOWS not intervened, this issue may have troubled residents indefinitely.



MOWS Talk and Slide Show

If you belong to a club or society that are on the lookout for a guest speaker, then our chairman or secretary would be willing to give a talk and slide show presentation on one of two different society themes.

If you would like further information, please contact Mick Clowes on 01509 414140 or Richard Booth on 01664 503330.



Braunston Historic Boat Gathering

The society attended the above event which was held over the weekend 23-24 June.

Visitors expressed interest in our work, especially the 'New Mole' river clearance vessel and hopefully several new members can be gained from our attendance.

Bloomin' Boat

Local members may have seen this boat on Burton Street in Melton. It was designed for Melton in Bloom and made by staff from Jeld-Wen in Melton Mowbray.

A local husband and wife team of calligraphers painted the panels. The students from Knossington Grange School prepared the bed and will be planting wild flowers, and they will look after it.



Two coats of special protective paint were applied by volunteers and the paint was kindly donated by The Melton & Oakham Waterways Society.

The boat is now serenely at rest in what would have been the basin of the Melton Navigation.



Bric-a-brac Stall

On Saturday 26 May the society had a stall in Melton Market. Some of our 'collectibles' and 'antiquities' were snapped up very quickly. The weather was sunny and dry ... thank goodness! Besides spreading the word, by the end of the day we had made approx £120.

Welcome To New Members ...

Peter Daniel Ian Jackson - *life member*
Gloria Daniel

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