



Registered Charity No 1078752

# MOWS Newsletter

Autumn 2012

## Mick's Musings

Regular readers of this august publication will know that the front page is normally reserved for me to have one of my rants about pollution, uncooperative official bodies or the state of certain footpaths. But not this time (I must be losing my touch). I've switched off my campaigning mode and thought it was about time to give ourselves a pat on the back.

On our twice monthly Sunday waterway clearance sessions, I have nothing but praise for those who drag themselves out of a warm and comfortable bed to attend in all weathers. Recently, those volunteers have, through a mixture of hard work and sheer perseverance, metaphorically and physically turned the corner, by reaching the rear of Melton swimming baths, where the next move is a left turn and next stop is Wilton Bridge!

If the weather is fine we can be guaranteed a good audience of inquisitive passers-by, mums and toddlers who have been to the swings, the Melton youth sector (who seem to show more interest than many) and anyone out and about enjoying the sunshine. Much comment is passed, most of which is lost in the noise of the 3 cylinder engine in the Mole, but bankside helpers report that it's all positive, which is a good start.

I am proud of what we (yes, I count myself in this) have achieved so far, and hope the work we are doing inspires the next generation of restorers to come forward and see what they can do. To this end, we are planning to have a "Try Out The Mole" day where any of our members or their families can have a go under supervision. Date to be published in next edition.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games, along with Bradley Wiggins Tour de France win, have had such a profound effect on the nation's psyche, that millions have taken up a new sport. Dayglo vests abound and we can't move for the abundance of cyclists and runners now to be seen almost everywhere. Amazing, truly amazing!

The knock-on effect really has to be seen to be believed, particularly with the youngsters, and it's a shame that waterway restoration isn't classed as an Olympic sport!

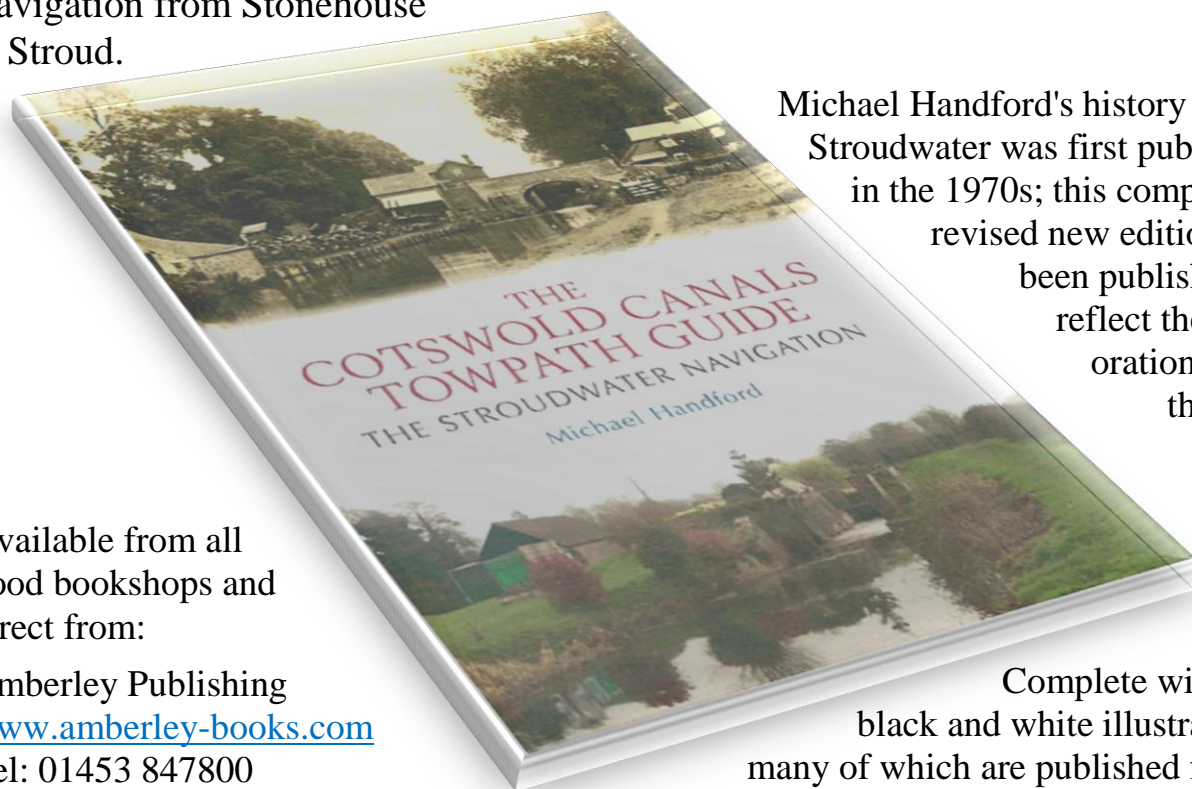
Hmm ... what am I saying? I feel another campaign coming on!!

Mick Clowes  
Chairman

## MOWS Committee Member Has New Book Published

The Stroudwater Navigation was a canal linking Stroud to the Severn Estuary near Gloucester. At Wallbridge, near Stroud, it connected to the Thames & Severn Canal to form a link between the River Thames and River Severn. It passed through a total of 13 locks and was 8 miles in length. The canal was opened in 1779 and operated until it was formally abandoned in 1954.

In 2001, the Cotswold Canals Partnership was formed to restore the Stroudwater Navigation from Stonehouse to Stroud.



Michael Handford's history of the Stroudwater was first published in the 1970s; this completely revised new edition has been published to reflect the restoration work that has taken place since then.

Available from all good bookshops and direct from:

Amberley Publishing  
[www.amberley-books.com](http://www.amberley-books.com)  
Tel: 01453 847800  
Paperback £12.99  
978-1-84868-843-8

Complete with 100 black and white illustrations, many of which are published for the first time, this book will bring the restoration story up to date.

## Possible Syston Hub?

The author of the above publication is a busy man. As well as being a MOWS Committee member, Mike Handford also serves on the Soar/Grand Union Partnership. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, towpath improvements are proposed for the area around the soon-to-be rebuilt Junction Bridge. This should give Mike enough ammunition to press for an additional "hub" to be centred here. This may mean that the area could qualify for various grants, extending the scope of our immediate restoration plans.

## Can You Dig It?

We are going to hold a boat "try out" day on our "Mole" river clearance vessel, somewhere in the Egerton park area. Providing you are a MOWS member, yourself or members of your family, including the kids, can come aboard and, under supervision, "pull a few levers" and see how it all works.

A date will be published in the next newsletter.



## MOWS Dries Up?

The society is in the process of producing a Melton/waterways-themed tea towel. Teamed up with one of our MOWS tee-shirts, this could solve your Christmas present dilemma!

## "The Case of the Disappearing Footpath" - Update

In the last newsletter, "Mick's Musings" highlighted the poor state of the footpath from Junction Bridge to "The Gate Hangs Well". With the extensive improvements being carried out to the Grand Union towpath on the other side of the bridge, we felt it was a good time to get Leics County Hall Rights of Way Officers to look at the path. A report has been produced and as we are all agreed that something must be done, despite tightening purse strings, expect some work to be carried out in the future. Ideally, the path which was the old Melton Mowbray Navigation towpath, will be put back as close to its original position as possible.

## Rocks By Rail - Work Party and Open Day



A work party at 'Rocks By Rail' was held on Sunday 9 September. Two committee members, Hugh Butler and Ron Francis and two members of our society, Ian and Fiona Knapp, volunteered to help at the site. Ron said, "When I first checked the site earlier this year the whole area was covered with weeds to eye-height. I have worked there on successive Sundays and occasional week-days and side chopped them with a spade and only very recently have managed to light bonfires. Only now are we managing to get the site *'back on track'*."

The following Sunday there was an open day, which Ron attended and was able to put up an display board on behalf of MOWS.





MOWS



ENTERPRISES

Presents ...

## "Messing About On The River"

An Illustrated, Light-Hearted  
Look at the Work of the

## Melton & Oakham Waterways Society

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012  
at 7.30pm**

**The United Reformed Church School Room,  
Chapel Street, Melton Mowbray**

[Parking opposite]

*A free event, but a donation to the Society would be appreciated*

## 2012 AGM

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday 10 November at Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray.

Proceedings will commence at 10.30am, with tea and coffee available on entry and light refreshments after the meeting.

This year's guest speaker will be Lynne Berry OBE, who is the Deputy Chair of the newly formed Canal & River Trust.

All welcome.

## Historic Conundrums

1. Does anyone know the whereabouts of the original minutes of the Melton Mowbray Navigation Company or where they are kept?
2. Does anyone have historical knowledge of the concrete underwater structure/water gate at the rear of the swimming baths?

If you could shed any light on either of these topics, please ring any of the society contacts.

## STOP PRESS !



After years of campaigning and negotiation, MOWS is proud to announce that work commenced on the new Junction Bridge during the last week of September. Why don't you go and see for yourself!

## Society Contacts:

**Chairman:** Michael Clowes, 14 White Street, Quorn, Leics LE12 8EB

Tel: 01509 414140

e-mail: [lindandmick@btinternet.com](mailto:lindandmick@btinternet.com)

**Secretary:** Richard Booth, Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray LE13 0HP

Tel: 01664 503330

e-mail: [richard.b.booth@btconnect.com](mailto:richard.b.booth@btconnect.com)

**Treasurer:** Ron Francis, 10 Wyfordby Close, Melton Mowbray, Leics LE13 1HL

Tel: 01664 564028

e-mail: [ronsie353@hotmail.com](mailto:ronsie353@hotmail.com)

**Newsletters/Website:** Linda Hulme, 14 White Street, Quorn, Leics LE12 8EB

Tel: 01509 414140

e-mail: [lindandmick@btinternet.com](mailto:lindandmick@btinternet.com)

**General Enquiries:**

[eyeway1@btinternet.com](mailto:eyeway1@btinternet.com)

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