



# MOWS Newsletter

Spring 2013

Registered Charity No 1078752

## Mick's Musings

The long and winding road is, as we all know, the title of a famous Beatles song, but it also describes beautifully our Melton and Oakham waterways. The total length end to end is some 30 odd miles, and Wreak (later corrupted to Wreake) is the old Norse word for winding. So a long and winding road it is, with, as recent events have shown, something new happening all along its length from Syston to Oakham.

The recent rebuilding of Syston junction bridge (see page 2) heralds a myriad of opportunities that I am sure will be realised in the fullness of time. This will put the restoration 'on the map' and provide us with a fitting front door as well as extensive facilities for those visiting the area.

Meanwhile, back at t'other end, Ron Francis regularly pulls together Oakham end volunteers to work along the canal at the Springfield or Rocks by Rail sites, making people aware of the waterway and enhancing the natural and built environment. Ron also regularly walks the canal line and talks to landowners about possibilities for future work.

Melton is roughly the centre of our network and, as the area of greatest population, receives our best attention. The planned staging of a trailboat rally (see page 3) to tie in with the revamped Melton Days will get us better noticed whilst the untiring work of our river clearance vessel crews ensures that the ring of river and canal around the town is slowly brought back to life.

Small pockets of inspiration pop up everywhere - being officially recognised by the Grand Union/Soar partnership was a nice surprise, as were the offers of help from locals in Oakham and Scouts in Melton. The opportunity to take tea at Teigh (see page 2) doesn't happen every day either and the number of walkers seen brandishing our walk leaflets is encouraging too. The changing attitude of most landowners to encompass the waterway's opportunities, rather than turn their backs, is heartening, so, yes, it seems things are happening everywhere and yes, it is a long and winding road. But if that seems a problem, then what a lovely problem to have.

I, for one, am not fazed by the challenges ahead and I believe if we, as a waterways society, take a holistic view of the whole length then we have nothing but good times to look forward to in the future.

Have a great summer, wherever you are.

Mick Clowes  
Chairman

# Official Opening of 'The Three Way Bridge'

The Wreake End Footbridge (Junction Bridge) was formally opened on Thursday 21 February. After a competition amongst pupils at Cossington C of E Primary School, the name chosen was 'The Three Way Bridge' suggested by Winnie Morris. The ceremony was hosted by Lesley Pendleton, County Council Lead Member for Environment and Transport, helped by Winnie and James Lowe, Sustrans Area Manager, who feature in the photograph below (courtesy of LCC).



## Tea at Teigh Anyone?

During the summer months, the society are proposing to visit the Old Rectory at Teigh, where we shall have afternoon tea and a short walk to the Oakham Canal as it leaves Rutland and enters Leicestershire. Anyone wishing to come along, please contact Ron Francis on 01664 564028. Some of you may recognise the Rectory as the location used by the BBC in their 1995 adaption of 'Pride and Prejudice'.



# IWA Trailboat Rally 2015

The society is close to putting in an application for hosting the above event. 2015 may seem a long way off, but we need to know that we have the necessary resources in place well in advance of that date. The parent organisation (The Inland Waterways Association) stipulate what we have to provide in terms of waterspace, slipway, moorings and ablutions (for the boat owners), and car parking, stall spaces and viewing areas (for the public). Most of these criteria already exist, due to the work of MOWS volunteers in previous years, and agreement has been reached, albeit verbally at this early juncture, on the various local permissions that are required to stage such an event.

IWA are keen that, if possible, the rally could be 'hung on' a larger event to give attendees something extra to participate in. Here in Melton we are fortunate that Melton day has not only been revived, but expanded to two days and is held at exactly the time of year that the IWA prefer.

So, with the majority of obstacles overcome, the remaining thing to assure our providers about is that we can staff the event. We do not anticipate that we would need droves of people - just a meet and greet posse to aid the trail boaters on their arrival and some to organise the traditional Saturday night barbeque and perhaps put up a couple of tents. To this end we are sending out letters to many major organisations in and around the Melton area, but in the meantime if you feel you as a MOWS supporter, could commit NOW to give a few hours help in two years time, please let us know. We need to have this facet securely in place to progress our application.

## The Syston Hub

We may have some exciting news in the coming months regarding development of the area around the Syston junction and further up the Wreake. We have been in talks with the owners of the land which incorporates the area where the old toll house and isolation hospital used to stand. Watch this space for further developments.

## Spring Clean Up On The Oakham Canal

The work party on Sunday 19.May will be at the Rocks by Rail site on the Ashwell-Cottesmore road. Full details are on the web site and it is hoped that as many work party members as possible will join us on what should be a most enjoyable day. Start time 10.15am ... stay as long as you like.



## Dates For Your Diary ...

### *SATURDAY 4 AND SUNDAY 5 MAY 2013*

*Loughborough Canal and Boat Festival. [www.loughboroughcanalfestival.co.uk](http://www.loughboroughcanalfestival.co.uk)*

### *SATURDAY 18 AND SUNDAY 19 MAY 2013*

*Moira Canal Festival, Moira Furnace, NW Leicestershire, D12 6AT.*

*Entrance: Adults £5, Children £2.50, free parking and programme.*

### *SUNDAY 26 AND MONDAY 27 MAY 2013*

*Melton Days, Egerton Park.*

### *SATURDAY 29 AND SUNDAY 30 JUNE 2013*

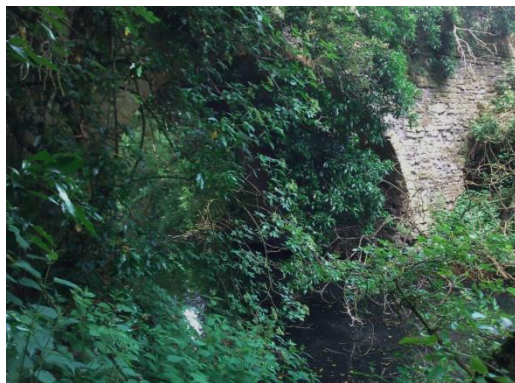
*Braunston Historic Narrowboat Rally.*

### *SUNDAY 7 JULY 2013*

*Melton Mowbray Country Fair, Town Estates Parks, 10am to 5pm.*

## Mystery Photo

Committee member, Ron Francis took this photo on the Oakham canal last year and wonders if anyone recognises where it was taken.



... Did Simon and Garfunkel sing about this?

## Messing About On The River ...

(1) A few months ago we were anticipating having a 'Try Out Mole Day' for would-be volunteers. Due to the weather and high river levels this has not been possible, but we will endeavour to get this day organised once the weather has improved.

(2) Chairman, Mick Clowes, presented his illustrated talk at the Warwickshire Branch of the Inland Waterways Society on a very cold and snowy Wednesday evening in February.

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