



Mick's Musings

"Publicity can be terrible, but only if you don't have any" - Jane Russell

I am often told, that despite our best efforts to the contrary, not enough people - and particularly the **right** people, know about the society or it's good deeds. I find this incredible given the amount of time that is spent in promotion work - however it seems to be true.

This was brought home to me when attending the Grantham Canal Discovery Day with the MOWS stand last Sunday (see photo page 2). Not only were a certain proportion of the public unaware that the Society existed, but many were completely in the dark about the fact that Melton or Oakham had a working waterway in the past!

So, once I was convinced of this omission, I set about thinking how we could better get the MOWS message out there to the unknowing. What would put the Society in the limelight?

Richard Branson said "Publicity is absolutely critical. A good PR story is infinitely more effective than a front-page ad".

So, having tried the conventional (hence the stall at Grantham) maybe it's time to think outside the box?

Imagine the BBC 6 o'clock news running a headline about a group of "nutters" who had chained themselves Pankhurst-esque to the railings at Buck House (whilst, of course making sure they were wearing the MOWS logoed Hi-viz).

OR ...

What about making magician and all-round weirdo, David Blaine an honorary member and then asking him to sit in his Perspex box for a month suspended from Wilton Bridge?

BUT ...

It will probably end up with us doing a "Calendar Girls" type saucy photo shoot featuring our work party volunteers in action, with strategically placed equipment to hide their modesty! Now, where did I put that boat pole?

Mick
Mick Clowes

Oakham End and Walking Update

Our proposals for the creation of a Green (leisure) Corridor, based on the remains of the Oakham Canal north of Oakham, are beginning to gain some support within Rutland County and Oakham Town Councils. There is still a long way to go, most notably in securing the support of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, as well as some of the local landowners and their tenants. Then there is the small issue of actually making it happen!



If we can, we will have helped to create a major new leisure space for the local community and helped to preserve the canal remains for future generations. The project will include the creation and maintenance of a range of diverse wildlife habitats, as well as providing interpretation about the canal's history.

The summer guided walks of the Oakham and Melton were quite badly affected by the weather, which meant that we were generally restricted to walks of between 5 and 9 miles from Oakham. The 5-mile Saturday morning walks, which included a stop at the Rutland Cake Company near Ashwell, proved very popular and raised over £100 in donations to the Society. The new Oakham Canal Trail leaflet covering this section is now available to download from the website if you fancy giving it a go unaided. Next year I hope to run a more regular programme of short walks from Oakham as well as along the Wreake Valley Way, speaking of which ...

Our plans to reinvigorate the Wreake Valley Way, by providing better way-marking and producing a more comprehensive guide, continue apace. I am currently speaking to Parish Councils along the Wreake Valley in order to gain their support for the project, to identify local historians who can help us produce the new guide, and to recruit "Wreake Valley Way Footpath Rangers" who can be our eyes and ears on the route, identifying and reporting footpath maintenance issues. If you are interested in becoming a Ranger, take a look at our poster on page 3 and give me a call!

Paul Dadford

Grantham Discovery Day

We attended the Grantham Canal Discovery Day on Sunday 8 October.

We had a lot of interest and several society members came to say hello.

Unfortunately, a winning ticket in the duck race eluded us this year!



Society Secretary, Dave Andow, at our stand

Wreake Valley Way Footpath Rangers



The Melton & Oakham Waterways Society is looking for local volunteers to become Footpath Rangers along the Wreake Valley Way, a heritage and environment trail between Melton Mowbray and Cossington Meadow near Syston.

Our Rangers take regular walks along short sections of the route in their local area. They look out for and report maintenance issues, and help us publicise the trail in their communities. It's a great way to stay fit and enjoy the countryside!

Being a Ranger can be fitted in at any time to suit other commitments. There are no fixed hours - do what you can when you can. We will give you plenty of support and provide all the equipment and training you need.

If you are interested in getting involved, call Paul Dadford on 07870 238688

Distributor Road Update

Anyone in the Melton area will be well aware by now of the proposals for a new distributor road to the east of the town.

This has been much in the news recently, and walking or driving through Melton at present, makes one aware of the need to re-route much of the through traffic away from the town centre. I do not think anyone would disagree with this sentiment, but the plans for the line of this new thoroughfare and particularly Roundabout 5 gives the Society some cause for concern.

The Oakham Canal at this point would be obliterated and with it goes any chance of utilising the route for other things. Restoration, I know, seems a far, far away prospect, but more modestly in the near future the line could provide a safe, car-free walking and cycling route between Melton and Oakham.

Paul Dadford has already made great strides (pun intended) in this direction (see page 2), by talking to Rutland County and Oakham Town Councils and their joint proposals could be extended towards Melton, but not if the canal line doesn't exist anymore!

We, as a society, have responded to the road plans asking if the necessary bridge over the infant River Eye here could be extended to include the canal line and thus protect it for future use. Our letter has produced a positive reply and a meeting with the Senior Engineer on the project has been arranged to discuss what can be done.

Many thanks to the members who have individually responded, as this may have been instrumental in bringing this about.

Annual General Meeting 2017

Our AGM will be held on Saturday 11 November at The Sysonby Knoll Hotel on Asfordby Road in Melton. The meeting will start at 10.30am, but as it will be the 11th of the 11th, we will have a minute's silence at 11.00am for Remembrance Day. For further details, please see the official AGM Notice with this newsletter.

Welcome To New Members ...

John and Jill Bird
Julia Morris Webster

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