

## Mick's Musings

### A Hard Wrexite?

As I write this, we are just hours away from that seemingly life changing Brexit vote in the House of Commons.

Looking back at the previous two and a half years of media bombardment, I just wish that the TV and press would have left the politicians alone to get on with it, which would have spared us the daily Brexit pummelling we received via tomorrow's chip papers and the idiot's lantern in the corner.

You will recall that a certain Mr Cameron, probably realising he had got in over his head, decided to do a quick side step and leave the Brexit problem with the next incumbent, a certain Mrs T May.

She has had two years of playing deal or no deal (I knew Noel Edmonds would get in on this somewhere!) with the EU, without any semblance of anything concrete, leaving us all with a feeling of being in permanent limbo.

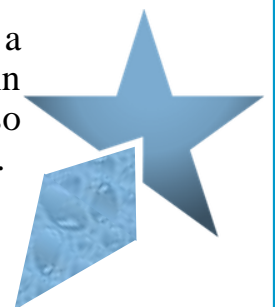
Does this, in a waterways sense, sound familiar? Well it does to me ... in a parallel sort of way.

You will also recall a certain British Waterways, realising they had got in over their heads with the total revamp of Britain's waterway system, also managed a smart disappearing manoeuvre, leaving their legacy of unfinished projects and unfulfilled promises, to be mopped up by the present-day Canal and River Trust.

They too have had years playing the same deal or not game, asking whether the EA (not EU) would transfer over their waterways for more safe keeping (or in our case restoration), but although recent noises have been encouraging, we, MOWS and lots of others, are still in limbo.

Whichever way the Commons vote goes, it should bring blessed relief to a long-suffering population, whilst those of us with other fish to fry, remain in stasis praying for some sort of decision on the future of our waterway, so we can all, Brexiteers or waterway pioneers, get on with what we do best.

*Mick Clowes*



# Update on The Oakham Canal Green Corridor

MOWS, and our partners at the Oakham Angling Society and Sustainable Land Trust, have now held two project meetings with Rutland County Council to progress our ideas for the Green Corridor. The Council continue to be fully supportive of our plans, but this is a long-term project with many challenges ahead. We have, however, reached the important step of going public with our ideas and gaining further support.

For those of you unfamiliar with the concept, let me provide a few details:

The Green Corridor will run initially from the north of Oakham town centre to the Oakham Enterprise Park (formerly Oakham Prison) and be based upon the remains of the Oakham Canal. The project aims to:

- Improve the existing wetland habitats
- Manage the existing woodlands
- Create new accessible rights of way and woodland walks
- Improve the existing angling facilities

Effectively we are looking to create a 2 mile-long linear park with the remains of the Oakham Canal at its heart. Our vision is for extensive community engagement in the project – a facility for the people with the people involved in its creation.

**If you wish to add your support to this project or want to find out more, please get in touch by calling me on 07870 238688 or emailing [pdadford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pdadford@yahoo.co.uk).**

*Paul Dadford*



## Free Guided Walks 2019

Paul Dadford is offering the following guided walks in 2019:

For the seasoned walker ...



### Wreake Valley Way

- Explore the Wreake Valley and learn about the former Melton Mowbray Navigation between Melton and Syston
- Operates on request in May, June and September
- Walks depart at 09:00 from the Boat Inn, opposite Melton Borough Council Offices, and are approx. 16 miles (shorter options are also available)
- Allow 8-9 hours for the full walk, including time for a lunch stop

For the less ambitious ...

### Oakham Canal Trail

- Learn about the history of the Oakham canal ... and its possible future on this short walk north of Oakham
- Operates on request in July and August (weather permitting)
- Walks depart at 10:00 and 13:00 from Oakham Church Street Car Park and are approx. 5 miles
- Allow 2½ - 3 hours, including time for a refreshment stop at The Potting Shed café

### Please note:

- Walks operate on request and are subject to availability. Simply chose a suitable date and call 07870 238688 or email [pdadford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pdadford@yahoo.co.uk) to book
- Walks are weather permitting
- Walks are FREE, although donations to the Melton & Oakham Waterways Society are welcome
- Well-behaved dogs on leads by arrangement only
- Junior walkers welcome on the Oakham Canal Trail only. The route is unsuitable for pushchairs
- Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Walks can be muddy after wet weather!



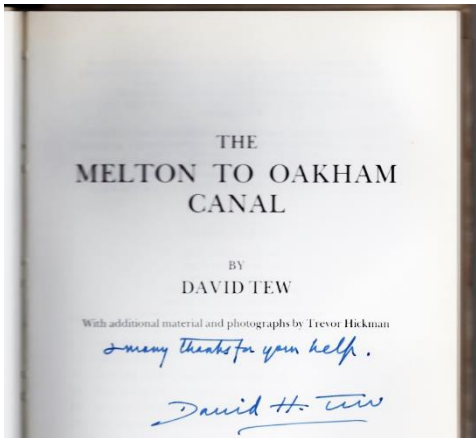
## We're Batty About Bat Boxes

One of our society members, Peter Swift, has made six bat boxes, in readiness for the boat dock area. This was one of the conditions for planning consent. Many thanks to Peter. We're sure the bats will love their new homes ...



## 'The Melton to Oakham Canal' by David Tew

Returning to the subject we featured in our Winter 2015/16 newsletter, regarding Les Hales's photo collection, I discovered from his son, John, that he was also instrumental in helping David Tew write his book "The Melton to Oakham Canal".



*Pictured left is a scan of the first page signed by Mr Tew, thanking Les for his help.*

I am happy to say I am now the owner of this book thanks to the generosity of ex-work mate John, who came to see me just after new year.

## Join Amazon Smile

**amazon smile**  
You shop. Amazon gives.

Help us every time you shop Amazon.

Apparently, we're a nation of online shoppers. We need to support local shops, of course - and I'm sure most of us do - but we like to shop around online for better deals (... who doesn't love a bargain?).

During our latest online 'shopping expedition' (I was looking for a laminator), we joined "Amazon Smile". We had been made aware of this by an article in one of the waterway magazines. We added the society to the list of charities, so MOWS will now get .05% of the profits each time we buy through the scheme. It's easy to sign up. If you're already an Amazon customer, you will just need to change from the normal way you sign in by joining Amazon Smile and change your password, but once you're in, everything else is just the same.

Sign up next time you visit Amazon and help the society.



## Membership Subscriptions

For all members who do not usually pay by Standing Order, you will have also received your membership subscription renewal forms along with your newsletter.

Renewals are due by 1st February and we would appreciate your remittance by this date.

**Full members: £10.00 (over 21 years); £5.00 (18-21 years); Additional members (at same address): £5.00; Single Life Membership: £150.00; Joint Life Membership: £225.00**

**If you have had any change of contact details, ie, postal address, e-mail address, etc, please let me know.**

*forget me not*

## Future Restoration Project?

We are seeking members views on one of these three projects:

- Eye Kettleby Lock
- Syston Lock
- Purchase of a trip boat

Let us know which would get your vote ... and why. Look out for further information on Facebook and the website.

## Syston Planning Application

The amended planning application at the Former Isolation Hospital and Toll House Site, Meadow Lane, Syston, Leics LE7 1NR, was granted conditionally on 19 December 2018 by Charnwood Borough Council. The planning application number is P/18/0915/2.



# Annual General Meeting 2018

Our AGM was held on Saturday 17 November at The Sysonby Knoll (Best Western) Hotel, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray.

The chairman's report for the year included:

- Melton distributor road
- New Grove School area
- Boats and boat dock – planning application and grants
- Social media - Facebook
- Tool appeal

He also gave a summary from committee member, Paul Dadford, who was unable to attend. Paul has been meeting with Rutland County Council regarding his project for an Oakham Canal Green Corridor (see page 2 for update). Last year Paul recruited Footpath Rangers, who have mapped the locations of all the gates, stiles and way-markers along the Wreak Valley Way and intends to produce a more detailed guide. He is also planning another series of guided walks this year (also see page 2 for further details).

The Treasurer's report showed a small profit overall, despite subscriptions/donations being down on last year and a loss on merchandise. This was balanced by expenses being lower. Last year these were higher due to the dock planning application.

Committee numbers stayed the same, with the re-election of three members who wished to remain on the committee. There was one resignation during the year from Hugh Butler, but this was filled by co-opted society member and volunteer, Jerry Filor, who was voted on to the committee.

There was a brief open discussion and at the end of the meeting the chairman intended to show a film made by The Canal & River Trust, entitled "Water Adds Value". There were a few technical problems, but eventually most of the audience were able to see it ... if not hear it! If you weren't there (or even if you were), you can look at this via YouTube – well worth a look-see.

Refreshments were available after the meeting, when most people stayed and chatted.

A copy of the minutes is available on our website.

## Mole & Badger Go to School ...

At the recent work party, we took 'Mole' and 'Badger' to their new (albeit temporary) home at the rear of Grove School. This spot is hardly recognisable now we have landscaped the area, with the grass just beginning to grow in the bank adjacent the landing stage. Well done to our volunteers! Just need that container painting ... definitely a summer job!!



## Society Contacts:

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