



Mick's Musings

Not Gone ... Just Forgotten?

In writing this, I have yet to decide whether this heading refers to our society ... or waterway.

I remember several years ago, that an eminent local MP declared himself "flabbergasted" to discover that there was a navigable waterway running right through the heart of Leicester.

So, I ask myself, was this a genuine lack of knowledge from this Oxbridge educated man, or was it that well-known medical condition "selective amnesia" seemingly prevalent in the so-called movers and shakers of this country.

Now this raises the question how many other times had he, or for that matter any other public figure, "accidentally on purpose" suffered memory fade when it came to important issues that they would rather be swept under the carpet?

Had there been a multi-million-pound scheme to enhance and improve the aforementioned waterway, I'm sure he would have been one of the first on board, bursting with soundbites, and facts and figures, probably researched and provided by one of his advisors.

Contrast this with the present mayor of that fair city, Sir Peter Soulsby, who, love him or hate him, as an ex boat owner, genuinely has the local waterways much at heart. This affection comes across when listening to what he says, and in the many waterway improvements he and his team have brought about.

In other parts of the county (no names, no pack drill) this love, or knowledge, of their waterway seems not to exist and the powers that be (save for one or two) revert to the earlier mentioned selective amnesia mode.

That is, of course, until the excrement hits the air moving device, and we have yet another of our one in a hundred-year floods and then everyone knows where the waterway is, as fingers start to be pointed. It seems sad to me that it takes something catastrophic to happen before people become aware of what is right under their noses. Knowing it was the bottom of Burton Street, here in Melton that bore the brunt of those tumultuous floods, maybe the siting of the new council offices may yet provide the wake-up call we all crave.

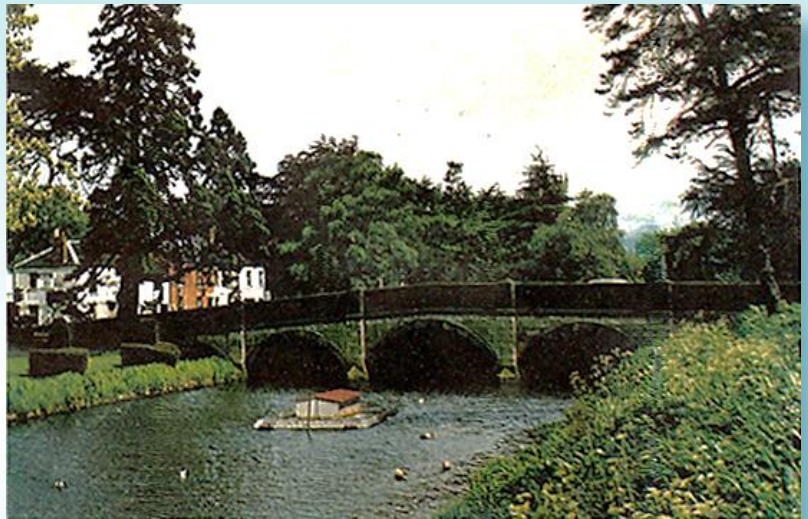
Mick

Mick Clowes

Photos from the Archives

Duck Des Res?

Probably most of our older Melton residents can remember the duck house. We think this photo must have been taken late 60s to early 70s. We are reliably informed that it was built on an old lock gate (possibly Eye Kettleby), which could have made a pair with the one we recently recovered from the canal section. This gate now resides in the park with its other half in the field at Sysonby.



The river looks idyllic. On the other hand, it can cause some mayhem ...

Floods ... What Floods?

We believe this photo was taken in 1908.

Boating on the river certainly took on a whole new meaning ... especially when it meant rowing up Burton Street!



Have We Got MOWS News For You

We were pleased to see that our recent efforts have not gone unnoticed. This is an excerpt from 'Aegre', which is the East Midlands journal of the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), and would be seen by a few thousand people.

Aegre 153 - March 2019 Page 13

The one thing that I wish I could have reported about is our branch campaigning successes. Regrettably, not a lot to report here. At the moment, we don't seem to have the resources to undertake any meaningful campaigning, which is frustrating and disappointing. In this respect, the vigorous campaigning and restoration efforts of the Melton and Oakham Waterways Society, of which the IWA Leicestershire Branch is now a corporate member, should be noted.

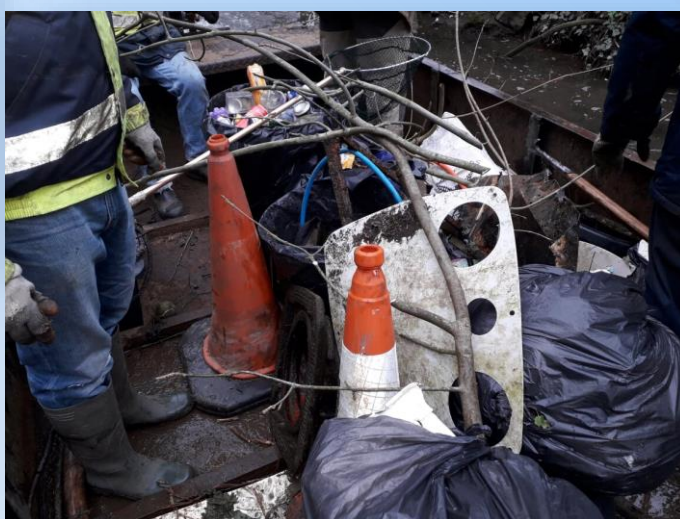
Work Parties and The Great British Spring Clean

Over several Winter work parties, the volunteers have been cutting back many self-set saplings and tidying up the bank of the canal section.

As can be seen below, there was certainly a lot of clearing up to do. The photo top right shows how ship-shape the bank looks now.



The photo on bottom right shows some of the rubbish we collected from the river on Sunday 7th April in aid of The Great British Spring Clean. Our other good deed for the day was retrieving a football for a happy young chappie and a grateful mum.



Badger's Set(t) to Stay Dry

One of our volunteers, Stuart Lock, came up with this ingenious idea and design for keeping Badger dry. It not only does the job extremely well, but is made from recycled materials, was straightforward to put together and is easy to take off and put on.



Well done Stuart (*above right*) – many thanks from me and the committee. It makes the volunteers job easier too!

Mick

Melton Distributor Road - Update

Despite local authorities being duty-bound by law to make provision for canal routes with the likelihood of restoration in their development plans, no facility has been made for the line of the Oakham Canal at the new river crossing adjacent Roundabout 5 of the scheme. It appears that this area is the main sticking point to the whole plan due to the close proximity of the overhead power lines.

In their recent update, LCC have put forward five alternatives (A-E) for the river crossing. Options C and E appear to be the favoured ones. Option C entails re-aligning the road route 50m or so towards Melton, thereby missing the low point of the power cables. Option E involves moving the proposed bridge 100m further down the carriageway towards the railway line, where it would again miss the dip in the power lines. This will require altering the course of the River Eye into a new position to run under the bridge. Both alternatives leave the Oakham Canal line truncated. However, as the road is being built, the option is there to construct a tunnel through the embankment, to include a footpath/bridleway alongside provision for the canal line.

You can view this latest development by logging on to the LCC Planning Portal and '**Search planning applications**'. When on Planning Portal, type in '2018/Reg3Ma/0182/LCC' and click '**Search**'. When the next page appears, click on this number (in green), scroll through the list of headings (in green) until you encounter '**01. ES Volume III, Appendix 3.1, River Eye Options Appraisal Report**', pages 8-12, Options A-E.

The society will make its own representations, but the more objections they receive that mention the effect on the canal route, the better. You can do this online. We have until 24th April to respond and try to save the Oakham Canal for future generations to enjoy.

Welcome to new members ...

Stephen Akhurst, Jamie Mulvany, Tricia Mulvany

Membership Subscription Renewals

There are still a few members whose 2019 subscription is still outstanding. If you are one of these, you will have received a reminder along with your newsletter. We would be grateful if you could send your remittance as soon as possible please, either by cheque or by bank transfer.

Thank you to those who have renewed their memberships. A special thank you to those who also donated a little extra with their subscription ... much appreciated.

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