

Mick's Musings

Technolo...gee!

Firstly, my condolences go to anyone who has been affected in any way by the Covid-19 pandemic.

My last front page highlighted the things that can happen almost by accident within society during an event such as lockdown, where some of these spinoffs can be, despite the ongoing frustration and sadness, a little fortuitous. However, for those of us who have managed to stay safe, the "at home" period has not been all beer and skittles particularly if you are part of a society like MOWS.

So, thank you to modern technology for enabling us to stay in contact until such time as we can get back to some sort of normality. I thought playing Tetris on my Game Boy was the height of technological wizardry when I was younger, but nowadays anything is possible. I chat on a Monday to one group and on Thursdays play in our virtual ukulele band, both via zoom, and I am very aware of what social media can do for a club or society like ourselves.

In this respect our Facebook page has been a revelation, and much like the virus, one person can affect several others, who in turn can each affect more-and so the word spreads. Our only recent committee recruit (see page 4) has pushed this forward to the extent that we now have nearly four times the amount of Facebook members as opposed to actual ones, but this has had the effect of getting some interested to a point where they want to become full members. What a great knock-on effect, and long may the trend continue.

Remember snail mail and landlines? Yes, so do I, and still use both, but much prefer knocking out an e-mail when I have to contact, say our volunteer workforce, about a work party for instance. Could you imagine how long 33 phone calls would take? So, although I have yet to fully embrace Twitter and Instagram, I am thankful that as the society, influenced by several new members enters a new era of development, so too technology can help us achieve our dreams.

Mick

Mick Clowes

Concern over Building Development

Over the last couple of months, several members of the society have been in contact expressing their concern over the housing development on land at Sysonby Grange. The developer appeared to be clearing the whole site, which included many mature trees and seemed to have created an artificial 'lagoon' by breaking through the existing riverbank. This prompted us to contact MBC Planning Office and the EA to ascertain the true facts. Subsequently, work seems to have come to a complete halt whilst investigations are taking place. We have received no further information as we go to press.

Digger of destruction!



Riverside trees felled

Melton lagoon perhaps?



Distributor Road News

Those of you who read the local paper will be aware that funding has been withdrawn for the southern section of the Melton distributor road. However, the threat to the line of the Oakham Canal at Roundabout 5 of the scheme remains, but be assured we will keep campaigning to seek a solution that is agreeable to all parties.

Eye Kettleby Lock-Down - But Not Out

Our efforts to be involved with the Eye Kettleby Lock site at the recent auction, came to naught as far as purchase or lease were concerned, as reported in our last issue. We also felt that the responsibility of maintaining the weir, bridge and footpaths were a step too far. But due to the perseverance of one of our committee members, MOWS will still have a say in how the area is developed in the future. After persistently lobbying the EA and selling agent he managed to get a condition put on to the sale agreement that will allow us freedom of access to restore the lock chamber and to use it for its intended purpose for the foreseeable future. A timely intervention indeed!

Bridge Repairs

Network Rail have been in touch with the society as they need to carry out repairs to the bridge adjacent Eye Kettleby Lock. We have advised them on minimum dimensions for width and headroom of the bridge arches to ensure that whatever they do, boats will still have safe passage underneath.



They were grateful for the information and we seemed to have struck up a rapport with them, which bodes well for any future dialogue.

Resumption of Work Parties

By the time you read this, we will have resumed our regular twice monthly Sunday work parties. The decision to do so was not taken lightly in view of the present Covid-19 pandemic situation. However, it was felt that after reviewing the Government's guidelines and providing suitable precautions were taken, we could start to get back to where we were when lockdown began. Both boats will need some tlc and the compound tidying up. Hopefully, as things ease, we can gradually expand our activities until we get back to our normal regime.

EMA Grant/Boat

Some of you with long memories may remember the trip boat 'Soliloquy', which operated out of Melton many years ago. The idea of emulating this was partially resurrected during the time we operated the 'Sysonby Water Rat' on Melton Day and other town celebrations.

Recently, the idea has been mooted again and, as such, we are being considered for funding from two separate sources. One is the East Midlands Airport Community Grant, which means, if successful, we could share a slice of £100,000. We cannot say too much about the second option as this is being kept under wraps at the moment.

What could be nicer than some refreshments in the park café before boarding our trip boat for a guided cruise up to Eye Kettleby Lock and back?

Free Guided Walks



Society member, Paul Dadford, is looking to run a series of socially distanced guided walks of the Oakham Canal or Melton Mowbray Navigation in August. Learn about the history of the canals and the Society's plans for the future. Contact Paul, pdadford@yahoo.co.uk, if you are interested with your preferred date(s), start location (Oakham or Melton) and ideal walk distance and he will schedule them based on demand.

Committee Crunch Time

There is a theory that small committees seem to achieve much more, but our present situation takes things to a ridiculously low level. We are now down to a committee of four members. Recent resignations of our Secretary and Treasurer, plus one other committee member has meant that these roles have had to be absorbed by the remainder. This is an untenable situation and without new blood may mean that, in the eyes of the Commissioners, who insist on a minimum of a voting quorum, we may lose our charitable status. This would be a massive blow to our future credibility in the eyes of others and we are desperate to ensure this does not happen. The roles we are in need of now are: **Society Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary.**

Although the above would be committee member roles, we are also looking for volunteers who could undertake: **Publicity, H&S, Events and Fundraising.** These do not need to be committee members.

If you think you would like to support the society in a more pro-active way or would like further information, please contact the chairman – details below.

Facebook Members

We may be down on committee members, but the number of our Facebook members has been steadily climbing, with a total to date of over 570!! If we could only convert some of these into actual members, the future of the society would look very healthy!

Welcome to new members ...

Jessica Biggs	Andy Ewart
Paul Garner	John Hewitt
James Male	Naomi Mitchell
William Musson	Mervyn Rawlings

Society Contacts:

Chairman: Michael Clowes
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Treasurer: Position to be filled.

Membership Secretary: Position to be filled.

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