

Mick's Musings

Passing the 1000 Facebook members mark is a spectacular milestone for the society (see page 4).

Everyone who contributes to this internet page has a different point of view and something relevant, but again different, to say. This diversity of thought, with an overall bias towards our dream of a restored waterway, is great to see, and to know that we now have many more brains to pick, in the field of restoration or bio diversity bodes well for the future.



However, whenever applying for grants, or dealing with public bodies it seems that they place great stead in how many full society members we have, as this is an indication of how popular we are to the general public, as opposed to the hundreds more interested parties on Facebook.

If only we could persuade just a small percentage of the Facebook members to step up to full membership the figures would stack up so well in the eyes of those whose approbation we seek, to make further progress.

So, in making your plans for 2021, why not make a resolution to introduce a new full member to the society? Facebook will still be there for chat and lively debate, and you can belong to both, but solid society members are what are needed for us to make good progress this coming year and in the future.

Mick

Mick Clowes

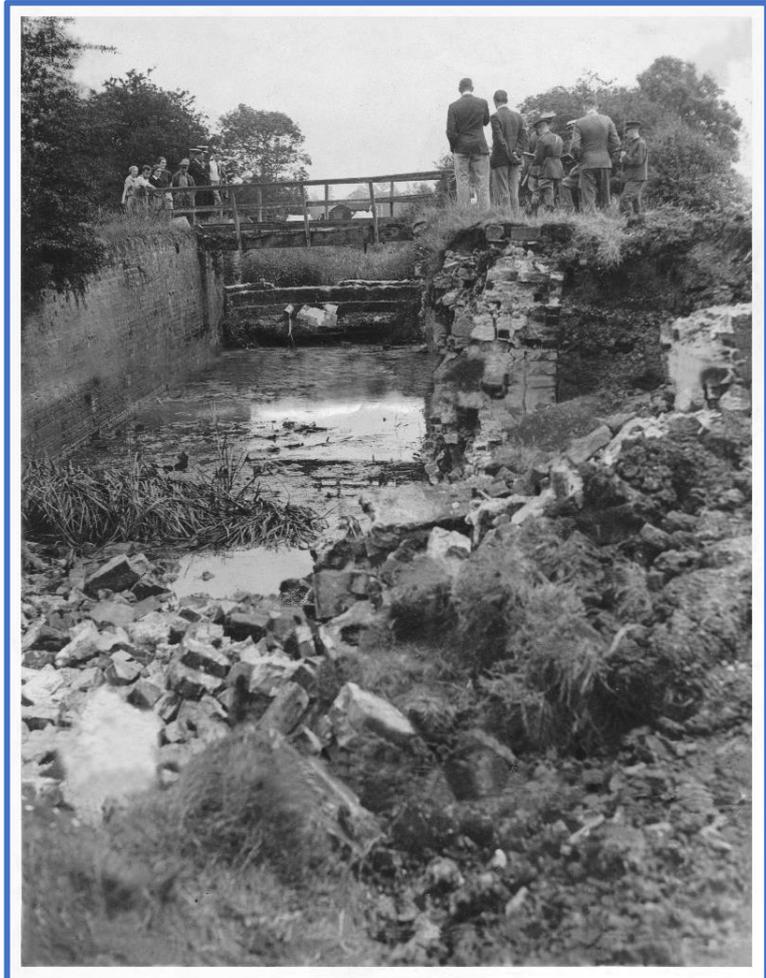
Thrussington Lock – Old and New

Work parties at Thrussington have been curtailed temporarily – mainly due to Covid restrictions, but also floods and, of course, the Christmas/New Year period. We hope to go back and continue work there over the forthcoming months.

At the time of compiling our previous newsletter, we were unable to print the photograph, although it has since been posted on our Facebook page. This shows the lock in June 1938 after the Royal Engineers have just used the downstream portion of the towpath side wall for explosives practice. Unfortunately, the upstream portion was next for the same fate.

The man leaning on the bridge rail, in the white shirt, is believed to be the father of the photograph owner. The land owner is thought to be the man wearing the flat cap and muffler.

Photograph shown with kind permission of Reach PLC.



These two photographs below show before and after the river levels rose. Despite there not being a lock wall on the left, it makes a good job of retaining the water.



Wet and dry?



Richard Booth and Ellis Homewood

Linda and I were saddened to learn that within six weeks we have lost two great personal friends and society founding members, Richard Booth and Ellis Homewood.

We all first met when attending the inaugural meeting of the society 24 years ago, at Sysonby Knoll Hotel which was owned by Richard, and later became our headquarters, and boat moorings for many years.

Down those years, we found the pair to be a source of both inspiration and fun, with the two friends playing off each other, with their wry sense of humour, but behind all the smiles was a drive and enthusiasm for the restoration, which has certainly spurred me on, when times have been difficult.

Richard became our first Secretary and through the hotel knew most of the “movers and shakers” in the local area. This was a great advantage to the committee (of which Ellis was also a member) in those early days.

They were both regular attendees at the work parties, and despite their age showed most of the younger element how to do it. What a lot of people are not aware of is that between meetings and work parties, they worked tirelessly behind the scenes to promote the society and raise funds with Richard seeing to all the bits and pieces that we had missed.



The Three Musketeers! Ellis (left) and Richard (right) flank Mike Loxton, in happier times

As time went on, they both took a less active part in the society, but it was nice to know they were always there in the background and available for a chat or to exchange some good local knowledge. When Richard met Elizabeth, he also stepped back from hotel matters, passing them on to Jenny, who with husband Gavin shares Richard’s desire to help the society whenever possible.

Personally, I have lost two great friends, but the society has lost two stalwarts who, and I have no hesitation in saying this, have through their sheer hard work and dogged determination put us in the great position we are in today.

Speaking to everyone after Richard’s funeral I pledged to do my utmost to make their dream of getting visitors by boat back into Melton, come true, and I am sure you all think in the same way.

Our thoughts are with Elizabeth, Rosemary and the two families at this sad time.

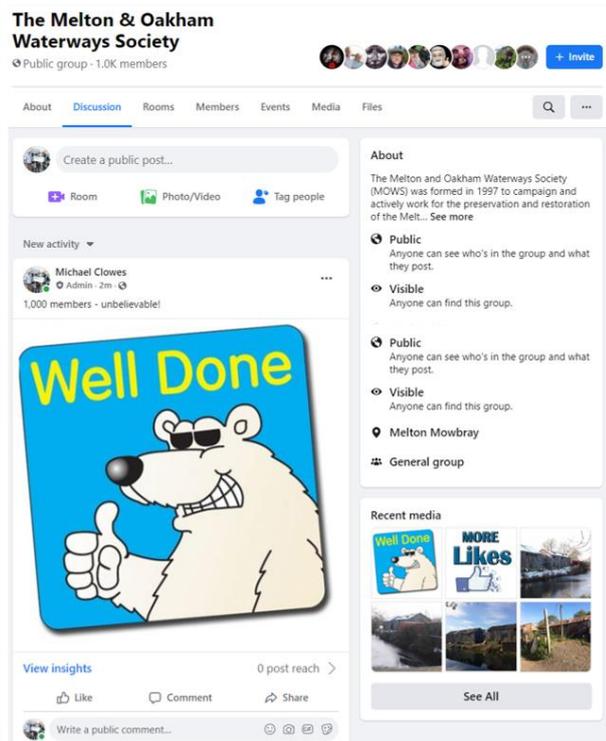
Council Presentation

The society has been invited to give a presentation to specific members of the council and other interested parties concerning the local aspect of our restoration plans.

Melton has a new Head of Tourism, Kirsty Campbell, and this is an appropriate time to introduce ourselves. Our future plans would, by default, need to include leisure and tourism within Melton itself. With the recent announcement that the Town Estate have considered a small rowing boat/pedalo hire fleet, this could tie in very well with any leisure activities on the waterway that others may put forward.

Facebook Members Tops 1.0K

Our Facebook page reached the 1000-member milestone just prior to the end of the year.



Ratcliffe Boat House

This well-known landmark at Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake is now in a sorry state. The society know little about it but are guessing that, as a structure that may pre-date the navigation, it will have a listed status. We are making attempts to find out: (a) more of its history, and (b) who actually owns it. It would be a shame if it is allowed to disappear forever. If anyone can shed any light, we would be interested to know.



Still on the lookout for ...



Membership Secretary
Fundraiser (does not need to be a committee role)

Subscription Renewal Reminder



For members who usually pay by cheque or bank transfer, you will have received your membership subscription renewal forms along with this newsletter. Renewals are due by 1 February and we would appreciate your remittance by this date. *Many thanks.*

Welcome to new members ...

Zena Cooter
Lynne Ford
Anne Frost
Ian Montgomery - Life member
Andrew Nicholls
Mark Orridge
Gordon Sobey
John Taylor - Life member

Society Contacts:

Chairman: Michael Clowes
Tel: 01509 414140
e-mail: lindandmick@btinternet.com

Secretary (Acting): Jerry Filor
Tel: 01664 566614
e-mail: jfilor@talktalk.net

Treasurer: Lorrie Forman
Tel: 01664 500034
e-mail: lorrieforman@1@gmail.com

Membership Secretary: Position to be filled.

Newsletters: Linda Hulme
Tel: 01509 414140
e-mail: lindaahulme@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.meltonwaterways.org.uk>



Follow us on Facebook