

Mick's Musings

Urban Myths

As a small child, I was always encouraged to “eat my crusts” because it would apparently make my hair go curly. Well, I can now debunk this theory, as entering my 70th year, my hair (save for a mad period in the mid-eighties when I went for a Kevin Keegan style “poodle perm”) remains as straight as pump water. This may have been a ruse in post war austerity Britain to encourage kids not to be picky, and leave food that was still on ration.

Likewise, eating carrots doesn't help you see in the dark. There are many benefits to munching on this root vegetable, but night vision is not one of them. Again, this myth may have been perpetuated during wartime to stop the rank and file dreaming of roast beef (of which there wasn't a lot about) and turning their mind to eating several of their five a day veg (which, due to “digging for victory”, we had tons of).

So, what has this diatribe got to do with MOWS? Well, each of the above examples is born out of a need to persuade a large slice of the population to take a certain action. So, if urban myths are attributed to our waterways society, it therefore follows that there is a need for action of some sort.

Take for example, the idea that many of the locals have that we are the official body to report to, for any problems river-wise. Not only that, but they also expect that the aforesaid problems get sorted out pronto! Not wishing to do the Environment Agency out of a job, we always try to help out where we can, but the weight of enquiries from the public and sometimes the local authorities including local councillors, shows me that people are ill-informed about our actual mission and that clearly there is a need for a local problem response team.

In a similar vein, why do many of our Facebook members think that MOWS just exists on one page of the internet, rather than a *bona fide* living breathing entity with a committee, officers and many, many paid up members? It sounds like their desire for a “proper society” has been met, but they just don't know about it yet.

As we enter our 25th year as a “proper society” let's use (and I quote) “Education, Education, Education” to dispel these urban myths and properly inform our potential members and volunteers about the real reason that MOWS was established in the first place.

Mick

Mick Clowes

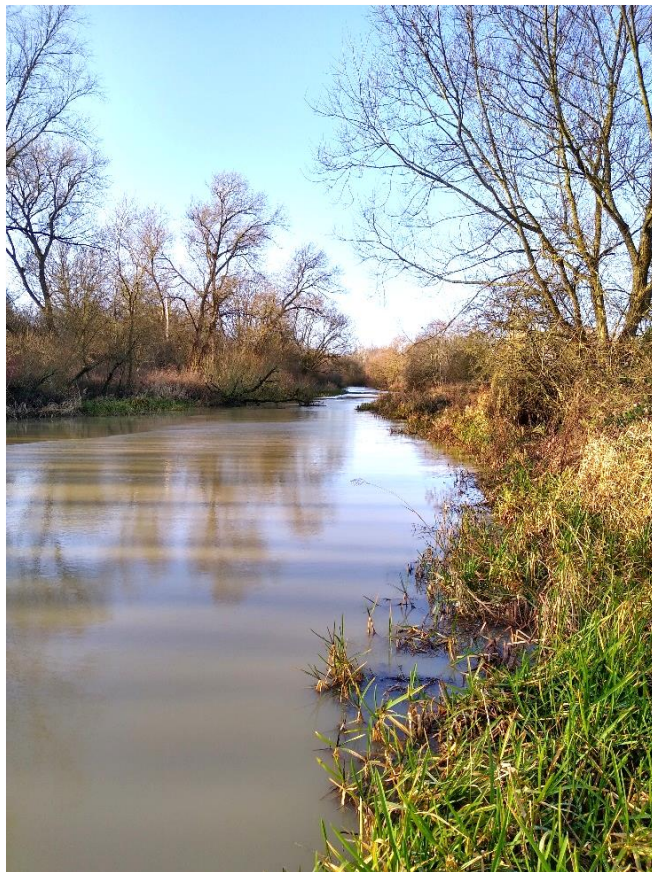


Footpath Rangers Christmas Walk ...

... or should that be paddle?



All is serene on the River Eye, but ...



Brooksby Lock had plenty of water



The view of an angry river from Brooksby road bridge



New Committee Member

We welcome Jane Martin to our committee. Jane has been a society member for a couple of years, along with husband John, and is an active member of our work party volunteer group. She has kindly written the following about her decision to join us.

I moved to Melton Mowbray in 2018, having returned from France. We liked everything about this town, walking along the rivers and thinking of using our kayak on the river too. Whilst walking along the river I would always comment on how much nicer it would be if the banks were clearer.

My husband would go out on Sundays to his motorbike group, so I thought I needed something to do. I saw the MOWS on Facebook and it really appealed to me, to do some volunteering with them. The first time I went we did lots of chopping down along the riverbanks, and everyone was really welcoming, giving advice and lots of anecdotes.

Unfortunately, COVID hit and the work parties stopped. But when they re-started, we began working at Thrussington Mill. I believe photos of this were shared on Facebook.

Last November I went to the AGM and was asked if I would like to be on the committee, which I happily agreed to.

MOWS is a great society to be part of, and volunteering is extremely worthwhile. So, if you haven't volunteered yet, please come down and join us. The more the merrier and the quicker we can get the Melton Ring cleared for boats.

Besides Jane, and those of the committee listed on page 4, our other committee member is Jono Hewitt. So, there are currently six committee members in total, but we would welcome more, as this is only half the number we used to have. Please seriously consider joining our committee.

Merchandise

We are considering expanding our society's merchandise range and would like some input from our members as to what sort of items they would like to see ... and, of course, purchase.



We've had some suggestions of clothing, eg. tee-shirts and fleeces (which we had a few years ago, see above) and perhaps hoodies, caps/beanie hats ... or face masks? ... hmm, probably not.



Seriously though, if you do have any suggestions for merchandise, we would love to hear from you.

AGM Report

The 2021 Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 13 November at the Sysonby Knoll Hotel in Melton.

We were happy to see that many new members (plus a few potential members) attended the meeting, along with several of our seasoned members (one couple even travelled from Stoke-on-Trent!).

After the usual business items, we had a couple of video presentations. The first of these got everyone talking and was entitled 'How Water Adds Value'. The second was a drone film of the navigation from the Three-Way Bridge (where the junction of the navigation meets with the River Soar) to the Gate Hangs Well pub on the outskirts of Syston.

Light refreshments were available, after which there was much discussion by our members and committee.

Grants

During the long days of lockdown our thoughts have turned to projects for the future, once we were allowed to return to some sort of normality.

One idea which we have long championed is the idea of a trip boat to run afternoon and evening cruises up to Eye Kettleby lock, and around the Melton ring. With our friends from Melton BID, we have put together and submitted a business plan, which we hope may bear fruit in the near future. We now also have the support of our local MP, Alicia Kearns, to add weight to any funding applications, so for now we have to sit tight and wait to see what happens.

Other projects we have in mind are to replace and add extra signage boards within Melton itself as well as working with Thrussington Parish Council to erect an interpretation board alongside the lock chamber there to explain the history and subsequent restoration of the lock and its surrounds.

In case anyone is still wondering who said ...

“ ‘Tis due to pigeons which alight on Nelson’s hat that make it white. ”

It was Spike Milligan.



Membership Renewals

If you pay your society membership subscription yearly, but do not have a Standing Order set up at your bank, you will be getting, or will have already received, a reminder about your membership renewal before 1st February from our Membership Secretary, Gary Jesionowski.

We would be very grateful if you would please renew this as soon as you receive your reminder.

Thank you.

Welcome to new members ...

Sue Booton
Arnold Brewer
Rob Bindloss
Carol Grabham
Geof Malone
Elaine Stone
Shirley Swanwick
Barry & Debbie Williams

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: lorrieforman1@gmail.com

**Membership
Secretary &
Social Media:** Gary Jesionowski
Tel: 07894 453 897
e-mail: gary.jesionowski@outlook.com

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

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

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