



## Mick's Musings

### Every Cloud ...

The recent break-in and theft of two of our rowing boats has sharpened our thinking recently and has forced us to beef up security at the boat compound. The boats are back, thankfully undamaged, and now securely tethered together. We thank the members of the public who alerted us to what was happening and pinpointed their location. Sadly, by the time the authorities arrived, the three suspects had been joined by others and as there was no positive identification, no specific persons could be blamed.

A black day for MOWS you might think, but I don't see it that way.

I prefer to put a positive spin on the incident and like to think that instead of kids "just being kids", and doing something because they were bored, they may just have realised that we have miles of stunning waterway, some smashing boats and nice sunny summer days – so what's not to like? OK, so the boats didn't belong to them and they were trespassing to get to them, but the ethos of the whole event has made me realise that if *they* had a desire to go "messaging about in boats" then there is good reason to expect that large numbers of the local population may also want to do the same. But why limit the scope to locals because with good publicity, this could be the one of the gems in the Melton tourist portfolio?

As you will read later, the pontoons (to get people safely on and off the boats) are soon to be in position and hopefully, followed by the renovation of the old bowls changing room, which will become the ticket office/equipment store for the boating operation.

... So, be positive, every cloud (or break-in) has a silver lining!

Mick

Mick Clowes



# Melton on the Waterways (World) Map!

Fame at last Jerry! Just in case anyone didn't see the article in The Melton Times, here it is in the August edition of Waterways World.

## Melton Mowbray garden decorated with inspiration from WW

For several years a stylised 'canal barge' flower bed has been one of the main features of the gardens outside the council's offices in Melton Mowbray.

The site is close to the old town wharf of the Melton Mowbray Navigation, and the sculpture was created as a tribute to the waterway by apprentices of local furniture factory JELD-WEN which closed last year.

This year the local Melton in Bloom group decided to redecorate it to commemorate the late Queen. A boatman's cabin was added, the whole thing was painted a mourning black and it was named *Elizabeth*. The group then called on Jerry Filor, secretary of the Melton & Oakham Waterways Society, to decorate it with something characterful and appropriate.

Jerry told us that he scanned old copies of *WW* for ideas, and



Jerry Filor with his handiwork, inspired by Aunt Betty Abbott.

settled on a Waterlines page from August 2022. Here, Tony Gregory and Hugh Burman showed their examples of the art of Aunt Betty, a member of the family of classic boat-builder Holt Abbott ('Hire-boat pioneer', *WW* May 2022).

It was Jerry's first attempt at the distinctive style, and he has made a fine effort



Melton in Bloom volunteers plant up around *Elizabeth*.

indeed, while subtly adjusting the roses into a patriotic red, white and blue. Volunteers for Melton in Bloom then moved in to plant a cargo of flowers.

Jerry adds that MOWS has recently cleared a large area of land close to a former lock at Eye Kettleby on the Melton Navigation with the help of the local Wombles group and



Examples of the work of Aunt Betty, from the August 2022 issue of *WW*.

members of Melton Aurora Rotary Society. This should make restoration work on the lock considerably easier.

MOWS has also bought seven rowing boats and a 12-seat trip-boat, and hopes to soon have these operational around the town parks, publicising the restoration and generating income.

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waterwaysworld.com

## 'Mole' Training

At the beginning of July, Mick Clowes held a 'training day' using "Mole", our river clearance vessel.

A few of our new volunteers, plus a couple of our longstanding ones found the experience and safety training very useful.

During the 4-hour course, he gave them a demonstration of its uses and then supervised them individually to manoeuvre the arm and bucket.

A very comprehensive 6-page instruction manual was provided.

There may be future training sessions – please let us know if you are interested.

### GUIDE TO MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF RIVER CLEARANCE VESSEL "MOLE"



Melton & Oakham  
Waterways Society  
Registered Charity No. 1078712

## We're Buoyant about our New pontoons!

MOWS exciting project to bring back boats to the river took a big step forward with the launching of the pontoons which will form the landing stage at the hire base behind the cafe in Wilton Park.

The two pontoons previously saw service at a marina on Lake Windermere and have been bought by MOWS for use on the River Eye.

The launch on Sunday 16 July was made possible by Rob Sheridan (of Frisby Lakes Paddlesports)\* and his tele-handler which made easy work of getting the pontoons into the water. So, a big 'thank you' to Rob for his help to get the pontoons/landing stages into the river.



They were then towed to a temporary location at the MOWS boat compound, where they have been linked together. Work will now commence on weed clearance and some dredging when it will be possible to tow the pontoons to the new Wilton Park location.

With both the rowing boats and trip boat nearly ready for service, we're hoping that the coming weeks will see rapid progress in the project which will enable everyone to enjoy Melton's fabulous waterways in the future.

Thank you also to our volunteers who came to help – particularly so early on a Sunday morning!

***Glynn Cartwright***

*\* A little-known fact: Rob owns over 2 miles of the riverbank. He and his workforce have been responsible for planting over 7,000 saplings and hedge bushes. Well done Rob and team.*

## Lease Finalised on Boat Hire Base

MOWS has now officially taken over the riverside land which will be used as the hire base for its new “fleet” – 7 rowing boats (which we are hoping to launch by the August Bank Holiday) and a 30ft narrowboat fitted out as a trip boat.

The plot of land in Wilton Park has been leased to the society on a long-term basis at favourable terms by the Melton Mowbray Town Estate. Established in 1594, the Town Estate is a charity which was set up for the “benefit of the town’s citizens” and looks after parks, the market and other local recreational facilities. The “feoffees” – the ancient title given to members of the board who run the Estate – recognised that the introduction of the boats would be a significant addition to Melton’s attractions both for residents and visitors.

The land has previously been used as a dump by the park gardeners and work is now underway to clear it and create gentle pathways down to the river where the new pontoons will be placed to become a landing stage.

Also included in the lease is an old hut which was once the clubhouse for the Melton Bowls Club when the lawns in front were bowling greens. It is in a sorry state but is now being given a new lease of life by a MOWS work party to use as a ticket office and store for oars, lifejackets and other items required for the boat hire.

The signing of the lease in June was the culmination of several months of discussion with both the Town Estate and Melton Borough Council and we have been assured of total support from both bodies in future. The Wilton Park base, alongside a beautiful stretch of river and close to the town centre will be an ideal location from which to operate the boats. *Geof Malone*

## MMN Walks Book

We have just received delivery of our third print run of **The Melton Navigation Walks Book**. The new distributors are: The Grange Garden Centre Caravan Site at Asfordby Hill and the MMTE at Sysonby Acres.

## Can You Help?

We are in need of some pallets. If anyone has any, could they please donate via any society contact (opposite).

Thank you.



**Reminder:**  
Have you paid your subs yet?



## Society Contacts:

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