

Mick's Musings

It Might Sound Corny ... But it's True

Sunday last, our work party was graced with two new volunteers, Jake and Nigel. This meant that instead of concentrating on just one activity we could now split into three groups and cover a lot more of the outstanding tasks. Group 1 took 'Mole' upstream and improved the turning circle of the winding hole by removing silt and assorted metal debris from the depths. One interesting item we recovered was a linear fishing net with its accompanying cradle ... not something you would expect to see on an urban waterway in England.

Group 2 were able to circumnavigate the Melton Ring for a litter pick and the third group was able to continue the fitout of the brand-new work boat, 'Toad'. Also, new volunteer, Nigel, was able to trim the compound ... save for one small area when the trimmer line ran out.

Not a bad day's work for one of our regular twice-monthly get togethers. However, the point I am trying to make is that we would never have achieved half as much without those two new volunteers. So, imagine what we could achieve with a few more?

The old adage may be corny, but it's true – many hands do make light work.

So, I appeal to all those who are able-bodied enough to come and help. Please come and give it a go sometime. I know from what I read on Facebook that the majority of people wish us well in our restoration ambitions, but this could all happen in a shorter timescale if more people would be willing to spend a day getting some mild exercise out in the fresh air and a bit of dirt under their fingernails once a fortnight.

**Our scheduled work party days are the
1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.**

I hope to see you soon out on the river -
moustaches optional!



Mick



New Boat ... New Outboard

Our new workboat 'Toad' (or should that be towed?) was launched recently when a large group met at the slipway adjacent the compound. Once in the water Stuart poled it down to its new mooring where over the following weeks a new top was fitted (again made by Stuart) and various racks and shelves for our equipment were installed.



It is envisioned that this boat will become a working platform for future projects, leaving her sister boat 'Badger' to become something of a floating skip to take foilage, etc, when cutting back trees and bushes.

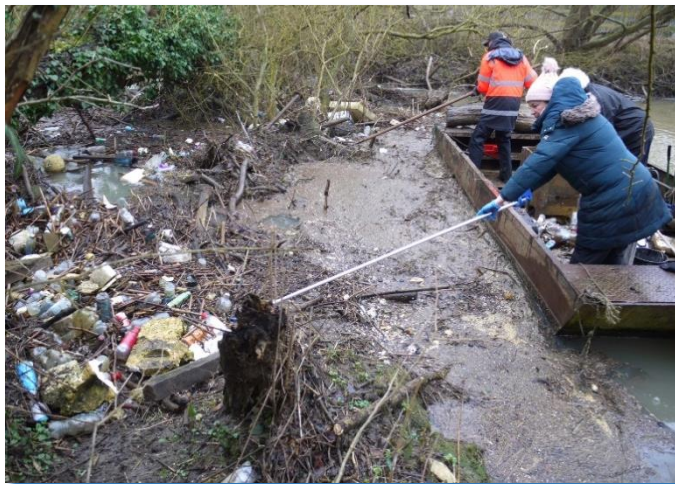
The new vessel will be adorned with the Severn Trent logo as they were the company that provided the sponsorship allowing us to get the boat built to our specifications and fit it with a brand-new 6hp Honda outboard. The picture on the right shows Stuart with the logo whilst receiving the new engine from the manager at Farndon Marina.

Sadly, within a few days the new boat was stolen from the compound, but soon recovered, due to the diligence of householders around the waterway who alerted us to the theft. She was back in the compound and double secured within a short time. The engine was not at risk as it was still locked up awaiting sea (river) trials.



Network Scouts Help Out

A recent work party saw a group of scouts from all over the country coming together to lend a helping hand with some of the outstanding MOWS jobs. Splitting into three groups, the first two went down to Eye Kettleby Lock, where a fallen tree had blocked the weir and caused a massive build-up of rubbish and debris. Those remaining in the boat tackled the blockage from the water, whilst the rest built and stoked a massive bonfire inside the lock chamber to dispose of the boat-borne rubbish.



The photographs show the before and after views. We, at MOWS, extend our thanks to all the scouts and their leaders involved and we look forward to similar collaborations in the future.

Meanwhile, back at the boat compound and under Jerry's and Geof's supervision, the third group spent several hours rubbing down the hulls of our rowing boat hire fleet and then giving them a coat of bright blue anti-fouling paint.



Security Cameras

The two new security cameras continue to work well, with one alerting us to the theft of boat 'Toad' and the second showing the proximity of a group of Melton youths on and around the rowing boat launching pontoon. One clever chap took a large stick to the camera and forced it to face the ground. The police now have the footage and believe they know who this culprit is. Due to these two incidents, they have included the boat compound and pontoon in their patrols around the town.

Vole Survey

There are two main conditions to be satisfied before the EA will allow us to commence our silt removal operations. One of them, the Water Framework Directive remains to be done, but I can report that happily the Vole survey revealed that none of Melton's water voles' population reside in the areas we desire to do the work.

The next thing is to get the Water Framework Directive completed and then we can instruct our contractors to commence work.



Reminder:

If you haven't yet paid your yearly subscription, could you please do so before the end of June.

Thank you.

Melton Library Showcases the MMN

The MOWS exhibition concerning the history of the Melton Mowbray Navigation has opened at Melton Library after being staged for a couple of months at the Carnegie Museum.

MOWS was set up 28 years ago to work for the restoration of the Navigation which brought horse-drawn cargo barges into the centre of the town, carrying goods from all around the country.

The display at the library is part of a £20,000 project over 18 months to tell more people about the Navigation. It is being funded by a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Fund also provides for contractors to clear Eye Kettleby Lock, which is probably best done in early autumn and that, despite the efforts of MOWS work parties and the scouts, requires regular attention to keep the undergrowth in check.

It describes how the Navigation company was set up by an Act of Parliament during England's age of canal building mania in the 1700's. It operated from 1797 to 1897, but much evidence of its existence can still be seen today, right from the junction with the Grand Union Canal at Syston to the Boat Inn in the town, which was where the barge crews obtained sustenance at the end of their journey.

The exhibition at the library will run for the next couple of months. Other parts of the project later this year will include talks by historian Brian Fare, organised walks along parts of the Navigation and information boards along the route.

Still Wanted

Although we haven't yet had any response to our previous appeal for Footpath Rangers, we thought we may have some more luck with a second appeal now that Spring and the warmer weather is here. So, at the risk of repeating ourselves, here goes.

Do you regularly walk along our waterways? If the answer is yes, then you could be one of the people we are looking for. All we ask is that you report poor footpaths, excessive rubbish, broken stiles or gates and encroaching trees or vegetation anywhere between Melton and Syston. Even if your walk is only once a month, it would be enough to give us an idea of what is happening along the navigation line.

Thank You ...

To the Melton
'Trumpton'
Firefighters
for their recent
donation of
£250 to the
MOWS cause.



Society Contacts:

Chair: Sharon Butcher
e-mail: sharonbrown987@icloud.com

**Secretary:
(Acting)** Jerry Filor
e-mail: jfilor@talktalk.net

**Treasurer &
Membership
Secretary** Diana Patterson
e-mail: dj.patterson@btopenworld.com

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

Follow us on ...



facebook



Instagram