

## Mick's Musings

### Last of the Melton Wine?

Anyone who has watched TV in the last 50 years will be well aware of the comedy series, set in Yorkshire, where elderly men congregate together to reminisce about their youth, whilst causing mayhem by not acting their age. Their adventures, under the guidance of a supercilious self-appointed leader, suck in lots of unsuspecting members of the public and chaos ensues. I refer of course to the BBC gem "Last of the Summer Wine" – you may know the series, but do you know where the original idea came from?



Well, I have a theory. Rumour has it that the writer, Roy Clarke (who loved a pork pie), made a sojourn to its spiritual home of Melton Mowbray and was crossing the Lady Wilton Bridge when his interest was piqued watching several old men "messaging about on the river". After stocking up on pies, he returned to Yorkshire, sat down with a blank sheet of paper and used his observations in Melton to inspire his writing of the now legendary series. That's how it happened ... allegedly!

So, who were this boatload of buffoons and who else did they involve in their mad schemes? Well, data protection, common decency and not wanting to get my eyes blacked are all good reasons for shielding their identity, but we now know they were all MOWS members. But, of course, no names, no pack drill as they say, so all participants will be nameless.

Let's start with the character of Foggy who regarded himself as a cut above everyone else and masterminded all the escapades whilst dishing out the orders. Any ideas? What about Compo, who wears silly hats and has pockets full of rubbish. Remind you of anyone? And so, to Cleggy the calm voice of reason, who occasionally has a quiet dig at everyone! What about Eli, with his bottle bottom glasses, who is always falling over, does this ring a bell with anyone in the MOWS ranks? Auntie Wainwright, Wesley Pegden and wife Edie, Nora Batty, Barry and Glenda. We are all in there somewhere, myself included, and it is good to have a laugh occasionally at our own expense.

However, this now poses a serious question, are we the last of the summer wine? Where are the shoots of youth coming through the ranks? The conspiring old contemptibles of tomorrow?

MOWS urgently needs the volunteers of our society's tomorrow, so sign up someone extra (and younger) today!

Mick

Mick Clowes

## The Boats Are Back In Town! (... with apologies to Thin Lizzy)



*View of the floating dock and boats from Lady Wilton Bridge*

So, the wait is nearly over! Two years in the planning and suddenly the dream of returning rowing boats back into the town centre is nearly a reality. I say **returning** because over 100 years ago there was Hyman's Boat House at 7 Asfordby Road (pictured right, we think around 1920).



Our hard working team of volunteers has overcome a myriad of problems, both physical and legal to once again give the people of Melton and beyond the chance to “mess about on the river”.

Discussions have been held, leases granted, boats and equipment purchased, and a fully floating dock and approach steps constructed. The old bowls club changing room has been given a new lease of life and repurposed as the hire office and last weekend saw an official tryout for the whole operation, which ironed out a few teething troubles.

**The date of the official launch (pun intended) date is imminent.  
Please keep checking our Facebook page, website and local press for details.**

## The Boats Are Back In Town! (... cont'd)

On our tryout day, the first boats were launched into the water ... until all 7 were afloat.

Four were towed line astern by the work boat 'Badger'. A separate rowing boat towing a further 2, all arriving at the floating dock safely.



Despite fears about towing such a long train, they all lined up like a family of ducks out for a swim.

*Four boats arriving at the floating dock*

*The remaining 3 boats being rowed and towed (below)*



*New steps and gangplank*



## New Boat Hire Office

As you can see, a newly refurbished rowing boat hire office is in place. Our lease included the old bowls club changing room, which was in dire need of refurbishment. One of our volunteers, Hilary, took the job on and has brought about a fantastic transformation. She's painted walls, ceiling, beams and floor, plus cupboards – we had to be careful none of us stood still for very long! On Sunday she was busy planting up the containers, so these should be in full bloom in a few weeks' time.

A few finishing touches need to be added, such as signage and instructions for hirers, etc.



**We would also like some more volunteers to staff the ticket office. If you have a few hours to spare and would like to help out in this capacity, please contact anyone listed on our Society Contacts.**

## Break-In at the Boat Compound

Those of you who follow our Facebook page will know that we had a break-in just after the previous newsletter went out. The 'Melton Times' covered the story and due to this publicity, many local residents and MOWS members contacted us with offers of help – both with labour and financially.

There was a lot of damage and destruction, but nothing was taken. Table supports had been thrown in the river. Muddy footprints covered tables and chairs and they even bent a scaffolding pole! Help came from a local cleaning company, Oak Tree Domestic Services, so many thanks to Sarah for help sprucing up the muddy chairs.

With some financial help from one of our lady members, we purchased a CCTV system and so now we can view the boat compound 24/7. We would like to thank everyone who offered their help – whatever shape or form it came in – it was very much appreciated.

If you know anyone who already follows us on Facebook, why not ask them to consider becoming a full-time member of the society? Single membership is £15 for the year and £10 for each additional family member.

*Welcome* to new members ...

Brian Fare  
Tony Norris  
Tiffany Jones

## Society Contacts:

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