



MOWS Newsletter

Spring 2014

Registered Charity No 1078752

Mick's Musings

This year sees the centenary of the outbreak of World War I and I cannot quantify the debt of gratitude we owe to those brave souls who fought to preserve our freedom. My Grandfather fought at Passchendaele amongst other places and, as I have become older, I appreciate more why he was reluctant to speak about the things he witnessed.

Back at home, the waterways of this country also played their part in the war effort ferrying materials between the various factories and taking the finished munitions to the seaports for shipping abroad.

During the Second World War extra precautions had to be taken to ensure (via many stop gates) that valuable time and water were not lost should a breach occur, due to enemy bombing. With the men away at the front, many women volunteered to man the boats and keep the watery arteries of this country open, supplying vital parts and materials to build ships, boats, planes and weapons.

Once trained, these ladies worked the long hours needed to keep the factories supplied, however the 'IW' (inland waterways) armband they wore with pride led to some derisory remarks about 'Idle Women'. On the contrary, most worked over and above their stipulated hours and I for one, remembering, the aching limbs resulting from long hours of lock operation, take my hat off to them.

We also have a debt of gratitude to those pioneers, the original canal builders, many of whom lost their lives digging tunnels or shoring up embankments providing us ultimately with the leisure facility most of us take for granted today.

Yes, looking back historically we have a lot of thank-yous to bestow particularly to those who paid the ultimate price. But, when cruising down some idyllic stretch of canal, let's not forget either those who planned, built, maintained and worked these waterways during peacetime and in war.

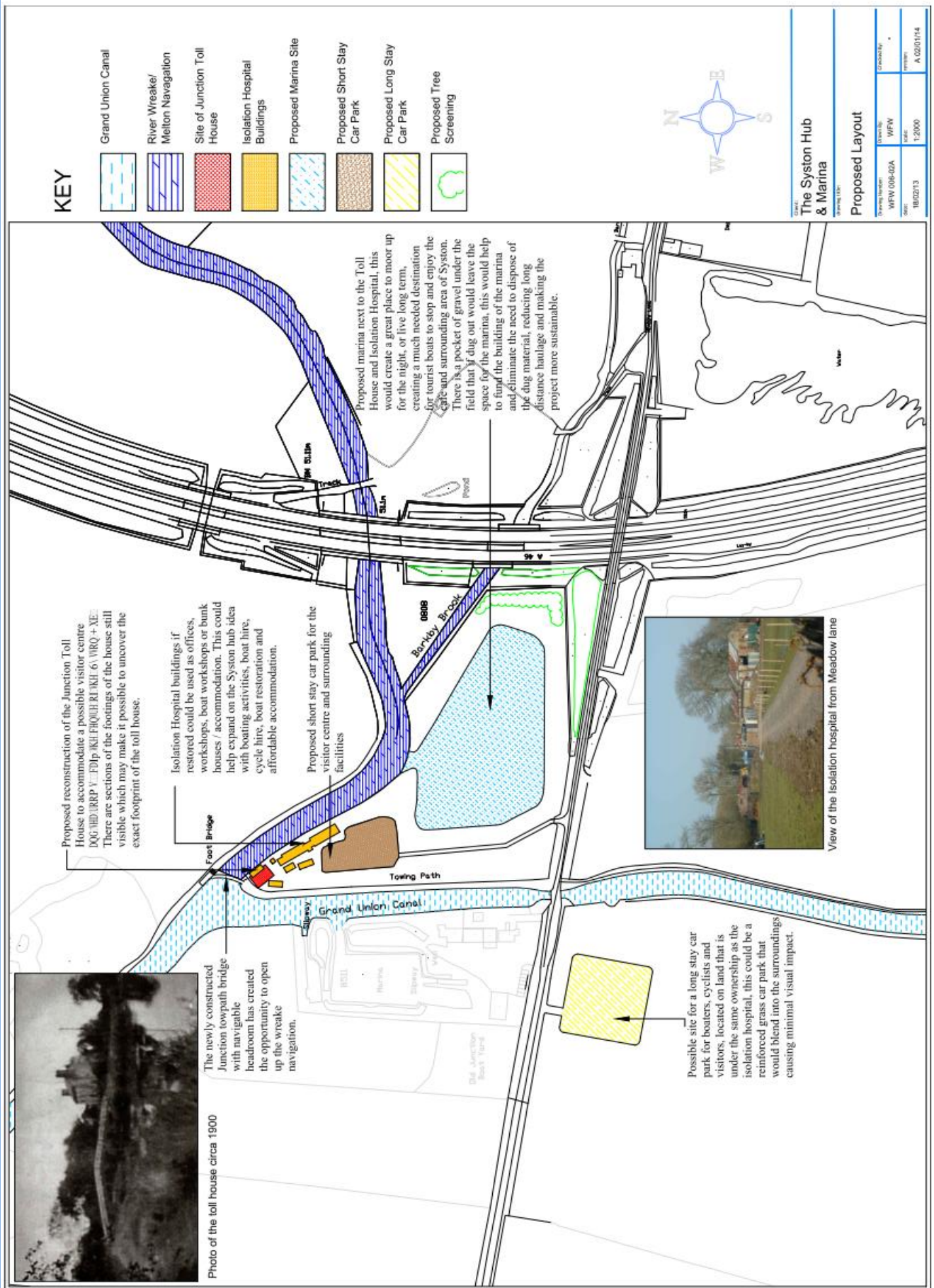
We have an awful lot to be grateful for ...

Mick

Mick Clowes

PS: Is it me, or are politicians smiling more and becoming more waterways savvy? Hang on a minute though ... silly me, isn't there an election coming up next year?

Proposed Long Term Plan for Syston Junction



The Syston Hub & Marina

Project Number: WFW 006-00A
 Date: 18/02/13
 Scale: 1:2000
 Drawing: A 02/01/14

Biffa To The Rescue

Following the recent theft of the outboard motor from one of our workboats, members of the Society were overjoyed to learn that Biffa Waste Management had offered to bear the majority of the cost of a new motor.

The swift response of the company means that the workboat 'Badger', which is used for cutting back trees and rubbish clearance, was only out of action for a short time. MOWS Chairman, Mick Clowes (seen in the photograph accepting the cheque for £500 from Francis Drew, Business Manager for Melton, on Thursday 27 February, along with Dave Andow and the new Honda outboard), said that the generous gesture would ensure that their river enhancement plans could continue at full pace, by making it possible to operate both boats ('Mole' and 'Badger') together.



The recent appeal for members/volunteers placed in the Melton Times successfully resulted in several new volunteers, but new recruits are always welcome.

IWA Restoration Committee in Town

IWA Restoration committee met recently at Sysonby Knoll Hotel in Melton. After concluding their morning business and lunch, three members of MOWS gave a presentation of our future plans. After a Q&A session, they were taken to see our workboats, slipway and the site of the proposed boathouse for 'Mole'. We enquired about assistance from the Waterways Recovery Group and their planned new excavator, in the building of Mole's new home.

Their annual conference takes place in Birmingham on 10 May, at which funding will be one of the main topics.

Winter Work Parties

A few months ago, our Secretary, Richard Booth, thought that the Society was in need of a recruitment drive for work party volunteers. There was an excellent response from the article in The Melton Times and we now have around 10 new members/volunteers.

Subsequently, most of the work parties since then, we have been able to use both 'Badger' and the river clearance vessel 'Mole'. A few of the new 'lads' have taken to using 'Mole' like a duck to water (if you'll excuse the pun) and much progress has been made ... watch this space.

Volunteers Ahoy!

We are intending to attend a few outdoor events again this year and are looking for a few volunteers to help us on our stalls/stands. It doesn't have to mean a full day or even half a day - just a few hours would be great! The events we are attending include: Loughborough Canal & Boat Festival - Sat/Sun 3/4 May; Melton Country Fair - Sunday 29 June; Braunston Historic Boat Rally - Sat/Sun 28/29 June; Rempstone Steam Rally - Sat/Sun 12/13 July. If you are free and wish to help out, please contact either myself or any member of the committee. We would love to see you!

IWA Warwickshire Branch Visit to Melton

Members of the Inland Waterways Association, Warwickshire Branch, came to the area on Sunday 6 April to take a look at the waterways in Melton and explore the town.

We met them at the Leicester Road Sportsground and, after a cuppa at the cafe, started by walking the short distance to the Wilton Bridge. The photo leaflet we had provided proved invaluable revealing the building and subsequent widening of the bridge and the use of the Horsewash.

Crossing the road we entered Egerton Park to look at the canal and bridge, otter holt, the Asfordby Road rainwater outfall (a subject of much discussion regarding pollution) arriving at the slipway to show our visitors the proposed site for our 'Mole Hole'.

Skirting the river we saw the impressive Egerton Lodge and exited the park whence we had come. Re-crossing the busy road and following the canal course we arrived at the swimming baths, where we had arranged for 'Mole' to be working. Our visitors were suitably impressed as no other waterways society owns such a machine which makes us somewhat unique. After pointing out the spiling work on the park side and, after explaining about the remains of the 'Watergate', we looked at Play Close and moved on down Mucky Lane to finish at the site of the old basin.



Our guests then had the option to visit the town (using a town trail map that we provided) or retrace their footsteps back to our starting point.

Welcome To New Members ...

David Brown	Shaun Marshall
Lou Catling	Alec Newton
Jeremy Filor	Mark Percival & Margaret Morrogh
Geoff Harris	Gavin Simpson
John Herlihy	Brian Willetts

An Apology

We apologise to any members, who are not contactable by e-mail and who may have missed out on recent work parties. Please ring 01509 414140 prior to the 1st and 3rd Sunday work parties for details. Once a midweek co-ordinator has been found we will publish their contact details also.

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