

## STREAMWATCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Members interested in maintaining the quality of the six freshwater streams that flow into the harbour are being encouraged to join the Streamwatch Project.

Every month for the past year, the streams have been tested for water quality. Gillian Edom who organises the project at the Conservancy says: 'it gives local schoolchildren the opportunity to be taken out and to learn something about water quality testing and the many creatures that live in the streams'.

'The children have had a lot of fun, while at the same time collecting serious data that is soon to be published on the Conservancy's educational website'.

However, most schools do not send pupils to the harbour during the winter. Testing still has to take place, though, and volunteers from the Friends are particularly welcome, to maintain the impetus of the project.

The next 'Streamwatch' will be on 26 and 27 September, with further outings in subsequent months. One of the challenges will be to monitor the effect of the generally dry summer, which saw some streams virtually dry up.

If you would like to help with this project, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, please contact Gillian at gillian@conservancy.co.uk or leave a message at the Harbour office (01243 512301).



### NEW RECRUIT

Nigel Roper, Operations Manager of the RNLI's Hayling Island lifeboat station, has joined the Friends' Committee.

He has served with the RNLI for over 30 years.

## Editorial PLEASE JOIN US AT THE AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Chichester Yacht Club on Thursday 13th October at 7.45pm. The Club has kindly agreed that members attending will be able to have supper in the dining room before the meeting from 6.30 pm; if you would like to take advantage of this please let Penny Wilson know by telephone or e-mail.

Our speaker this year will be Professor Mike Clark who is the director of the Geodata Institute, Southampton University and also Chairman of the Solent Forum. His power-point presentation will be entitled 'Coming to Terms with Environmental Change'. Also Philip Couchman will update members on East Head.

On the agenda of the AGM you will find two items for which the Executive Committee would like your support.

- First, we are now fully funding the administration of the Friends, which of course includes the ever-increasing cost of postage. The annual subscription has been £2 since 1995 (for the previous 8 years it was £1) and we wish it to be raised to £5 from 1 January 2006. Also we want to raise the subscription for life membership from £100 to £150 for a couple.
- Second, our constitution, which was written 10 years ago, limits the number of members of the Executive Committee. At the AGM I plan to give details of the modifications we'd like to introduce and to ask for your approval to increase the number of committee members. We think this would enable us to cope with a rising membership, give us more flexibility and the capacity to attend more events.

The AGM provides a good opportunity to meet other Friends socially and to get up to date on all the issues concerning us. I shall look forward to seeing you then.

David Rolph, Chairman

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### Conservancy Cash for New Projects

This summer the Conservancy has launched a 'Sustainable Development Fund', with £100,000 available to finance community-based projects within the AONB.

Philip Couchman, Environmental Manager, says the money is provided to our AONB and others in the country through the Countryside Agency. It is designed to encourage a wide range of initiatives, which will help to improve the AONB now and in the future.

'The money could be used to part fund a Village Design Statement, or to help a farmer to grow and promote local produce', Philip says.

The Friends welcome the move, which has the potential to encourage a wide range of new and worthwhile initiatives. The money will support projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the AONB. It aims to develop and test new methods of achieving a more sustainable way of life in this area of great beauty and diversity.

Other examples of projects which could be eligible for funding include the conservation of the natural, historic and built environment; recycling projects; community youth initiatives; or the encouragement of traditional rural skills and crafts.

Any organisation or individual can apply, but the project needs to show a clear benefit to the wider community. Grants will normally be between £1000 and £10,000, and can provide up to 75% of the cost of the project.

An information pack and application form is available from the Conservancy.



### CONGRATULATIONS, JOHN!

On behalf of members, our Chairman has written to Lt Col John Davis, the Harbour Master, to congratulate him on the award of the OBE.

John's energy, flair and leadership skills have made the Chichester Harbour AONB one of the most successful in the country.

Congratulations from us all.



Ron Spencer

### HELP WANTED WITH TERROR PROJECT

Are there any members out there with camcorders who would be prepared to take occasional videos of a fascinating project under way in Emsworth?

The project is the restoration of the *Terror*, the last surviving Victorian oyster boat. Robert Perry, project officer at the Conservancy, would very much like to have video sequences of the important stages in the *Terror's* restoration. These are likely to be assembled into an introductory video which visitors can see before they go aboard the restored vessel.

Restoration is almost half completed, and the launch date will coincide with the Emsworth Food Festival in September 2006. Later, volunteers will be sought to make or lend appropriate Victorian costumes.

Please contact Robert Perry at the Conservancy office if you can help.

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# A Tale of Breached Sea Defences, New Sand Dunes and a Convenient Hole

To intervene or not to intervene - that is the question, and a difficult one, which frequently faces the Conservancy and their advisors.

The problem is that Chichester Harbour is a naturally evolving sea and landscape. The daily tides and winter storms create change all the time: some harmless, some beneficial, and some which can cause a serious threat, writes *Ian McIntyre*

In the past 12 months, we have seen two examples of significant change - one of which called for urgent intervention, and one which didn't.

When the shifting sandbanks at the harbour entrance threatened to turn East Head into an island, the Conservancy and other organisations involved in the management of the harbour decided that action was necessary. Thousands of tons of sand and gravel were moved from the northern tip of East Head to build up the breaches at the hinge as a temporary measure. The Friends actively supported this move, as did virtually all harbour users. The aerial view shows East Head at the end of July shortly after the work was completed.

Over at Pilsey sands on the southern tip of Thorney Island, natural forces are at work to change the landscape there. There has been what the Conservancy describes as a 'dramatic increase' in the size of the dunes. This is almost certainly a beneficial development - one low area of sand is almost enclosed, as a result of which new saltmarsh vegetation is becoming established. No intervention necessary here.

Sometimes the changes are minor - such as an increase in the amount of shingle on the sea shore west of Emsworth, near Conigar Point. One theory is that this is the redistribution of material imported some years ago for coast protection work. Quite why shingle, a heavier substance than mud, should move to the part of the harbour furthest from the position where it was placed is a mystery, one of many which the Conservancy monitor through a regular programme of surveillance.

For some time the Conservancy have been concerned at the practice of dumping the large quantities of mud dredged from the approach channels to the harbour's marinas out at sea. This removes material which can be useful in conserving inter-tidal habitats.

The latest Wildlife and Ecological Review published by the Conservancy reports on a successful project last year to identify and use a disposal site within the harbour.

First, consultants were employed to identify potential sites, and then to provide a detailed assessment of the preferred site - Treloar Hole, the aptly named area of deep water in the harbour entrance off the lifeboat station. A yacht's echo sounder quickly identifies a change from the four to five metres depth in the approaches to the harbour, to the 15 metre plus depth of Treloar Hole, caused by the tides surging in and out through the narrowest part of the harbour entrance.

## Vote for East Head

The National Trust are running a competition to find the nation's favourite coastal site. You can vote for East Head by calling 0901 29 34443 or text 'trust 05' to 84222. Calls cost £1 with funds going to Neptune Coastline Campaign.

In a trial scheme last year, 4,500 cubic metres of silt dredged from the Chichester Marina area were deposited in the Hole. Subsequent monitoring showed this had mainly dispersed into the margins of the main channels.

Conclusion: the Treloar Hole is a good location for what the experts call 'beneficial placement' of dredged silt. There is enough depth to cope with all the dredged material the harbour is likely to produce, and by disposing of it inside the harbour, inter-tidal habitats will benefit.

So - complex decisions to manage the continually changing harbour. The Friends support this work by funding research projects, and by providing volunteers to help with research and practical conservation work. Anne de Potier, the Conservation Officer, is always keen to hear from anyone prepared to help. 'I remain hopeful that more people will get involved', she says, 'and that the value of the harbour's wildlife will be appreciated and supported by the whole harbour community'.

## CYCLE AND WHEELCHAIR PATHS OPEN

With an estimated million visitors to the harbour every year, improving access without damaging the landscape has to be one of the Conservancy's top priorities.

This summer, a section of the shoreline at Prinsted has been upgraded so wheelchairs can use it. This is one of three projects to improve access for those with physical disabilities.

The Chichester to West Wittering cycle and wheelchair path, named the Salterns Way, is due to be completed this autumn. It will provide a 16.5 kilometre scenic route through the AONB avoiding the busy main roads.

On the Itchenor section, the top layer of grass has been removed, to be replaced by hard matting planted with grass seed. As the grass grows, the cycle route surface will look similar to a normal path, but will provide a firm and even base for cycles and wheelchairs.

Over the years, the Friends have contributed funds to help pay for much footpath improvement and repair work around the harbour.



Opening of the new wheelchair path at Prinsted



Cyclists on a section of the Salterns Way, which should be completed by Autumn 2005

## Wildlife report: 600 ORCHIDS FLOURISH!



D.Rees

What a summer! Cold, hot, wet, dry, windy, still - the plants, birds and other wildlife have a lot to cope with. However, we can and do give them some help, writes *Anne de Potier*.

At Fishbourne Meadows, for example, Southern Marsh Orchids have benefited from hours of work by Friends removing Hemlock, Water Dropwort and other big invasive plants. In the west of the meadows two years ago there were no flowering plants, last year there were 22, and this year there were 42. In total in the meadows there were over 600 - a great reward for all the work.

However, we can't influence everything. No gulls or terns nested in the harbour - a very different state of affairs compared with ten years ago. High tides, erosion and disturbance by predators are the main problems. The good bird news is the recent establishment of Buzzards and Little Egrets in the area - something we would not have thought possible ten years ago.

We are fortunate in having the help of experts in studying 'difficult' wildlife. This year an entomologist travelled from Kent to search for a nationally rare beetle called *Anysodactylus poeciloides* - and he found one! It likes small brackish pools in wet grassland, and Thorney Island was just the place.



If you would like to see and learn about harbour wildlife come on one of the organised walks. Details in the Programme of Guided Walks & Activities.