

## 'Barmy Spring' a Feature of Climate Change

Despite differing opinions on the effects of global warming, it must be obvious to all that the spring of 2011 was one of the warmest and driest in the history of Chichester Harbour, writes *Duncan Paterson*. In April 2011 southern England's maximum temperatures were well above average, by as much as 6°C, and rainfall was less than 10% of that normally recorded.

Climate change is widely predicted to lead to hotter, drier less windy summers, warmer wetter winters, higher sea levels and an increase in extreme events, such as heat-waves, droughts and flooding. Whilst we certainly didn't have a mild winter, the predictions of hotter summers seemed to tie in with the heat wave in April. As for lighter winds, that is certainly not the experience of the sailing community this summer. Strong winds have even curtailed some of the Conservancy's trips to Stakes Island to conduct wildlife surveys.

Some of the impacts on our AONB are clear. Farmers have been struggling with their crops and yields have suffered given the lack of rainfall in the spring. Grass growth has also been reduced, which affects grazing. Wild plants developed early and, anecdotal evidence suggests, generally in record numbers with flowering and seeding all accelerated. One exception is the flowering Southern Marsh Orchids, which are down to 330 from 500 last year, which may relate to the particularly dry spring. Fortunately the harbour relies little on fresh water inflows but the increased abstraction of water from the Chichester Plain is likely to have an adverse effect on local pond life (see article in next issue by Ed Rowsell).

It is difficult to predict the longer term impact on the AONB's fauna and flora of these changes to our weather patterns but continued vigilance on our water usage seems an obvious precaution. In contrast to our warm spring, Icelandic blizzards continuing into May have curtailed the breeding for one of our popular winter visitors, the Black-tailed Godwits. This will have an adverse effect on numbers visiting the harbour in future winters.



## Early Progress on Harbour Sewage Problem

The Water Quality Working Group set up by members of the Conservancy and the Advisory Committee is now up and running, writes *Duncan Paterson*. The Friends strongly support this group's mandate of engaging with the Environment Agency and others to deal with the growing pressures on the Apuldram Waste Water Treatment Works.

2010 saw 60 days of screened but otherwise untreated discharges into the harbour from the works, down from 108 days in 2009. The drier conditions of 2011 have again helped, but the Water Quality Group will continue to press for a review of the real capabilities of Apuldram when there is heavy rain.

The rate of housing development in the area can only increase the pressure on the existing infrastructure which, unless enhanced, is bound to have an adverse impact on the Harbour, its users and the wildlife.

An initial meeting has been held with the Environment Agency, where their water quality specialists and those from Natural England were present. The next steps are to meet with Southern Water and to invite OFWAT to get involved. Local MPs will also be lobbied and the possibility of EU funding will be explored.

## Autumn Work Parties

Dates have been made for the Friends' work parties, from now until the end of December.

Activities include beach cleaning at Pilsley Island nature reserve; and coppicing at Salterns Copse.

In each case work starts at 10am - refreshments and tools provided by the Conservancy's Rangers.

To receive information on these work parties, contact Nicky Horter - [nicky@conservancy.co.uk](mailto:nicky@conservancy.co.uk).

## Another Record for Education Team

The Conservancy Education team led by Gary James is set to achieve a new record of delivering 9,374 student sessions this year. Each 'session' is made up of a half day per student. The team makes use of a wealth of environmental features in their courses. These include the freshwater environment at Fishbourne, the saltwater environment at Dell Quay and East Head, woodland at Salterns Copse and the man-made environment at Chichester Marina.

The Education Centre caters for a wide range of abilities and ages including primary school children, those with learning difficulties, right up to University level. Indeed a number of A-level students will be undertaking their practical exam in the AONB shortly.



Our Chairman writes:

## WE MUST INFLUENCE CORE PLANNING STRATEGY

I was recently very encouraged to receive a letter from the Day Care Officer at The Wrenford Centre, which provides facilities for adults with learning disabilities. He thanked the Friends for providing them with a solar boat trip around Chichester Harbour which and I quote 'they thoroughly enjoyed, was a real treat and for some a unique experience'.

This kind of day to day support provided by the Friends through the Conservancy is without question going to increase in its importance under the current Government's plans and directives and the current difficult economic climate. We need to do all that we can to help grow membership of the Friends and have our voice heard wherever needed.

The Government have put forward some important changes to the planning system that includes the requirement for local Councils to set their own new housing numbers in conjunction with their local community but within an overall policy direction for growth. It is also the Government's intention for development applications to favour the developer.

Chichester District Council has published a Core Strategy: Housing Numbers and Locations. Public consultation that will run until 23 September 2011 to help make these two key decisions. Within the 50 page document it gives the options, amongst many other things, of setting a target within the CDC Southern District, which lies south of the new National Park boundary, of 305 new homes per year across a total of five options up to 415 new homes per year (6225 over the period).

The document states that the district attracts high levels of in-migration with an increase of 11,000 residents between 1992 – 2008. They expect the trend to continue with the need therefore to increase housing development. There are very similar pressures on the Hampshire side of the harbour and AONB, in particular Havant.

I will complete the on-line consultative document <http://chichester-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/> putting my emphasis on the lowest new house build option given and the highest emphasis on preserving the existing character and environment of our rural district. I firmly believe that we should keep reminding our council representatives and officers that Chichester Harbour, the AONB and surrounding villages are a landscape of national importance, home to wildlife of international significance and an attractive rural environment that we should protect for future generations. I therefore encourage all our members to take advantage of this consultative process and help influence the Core Strategy that will be with us until 2028.

My best wishes for the Autumn, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our AGM. *Bernard Clarke*



## Our Harbour – Some Achievements in 2010/11

These statistics are taken from the Conservancy's latest management plan review:

Number of Friends' working parties: 44

Length of hedgerow planted in AONB: 780 metres

Area of woodland planted: 2.6 ha

Number of bags of litter collected by volunteers: 251

Southern Marsh orchid count at Fishbourne Meadows: 330



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# Newsletter



## A Good Summer for Seals

One of our members, Ken Charman, took this lovely photograph in August. He saw 17 seals and pups and he reports that they all seemed in good health.

## Come to the AGM

Our AGM will be held this year on Thursday 27 October, at 7.45pm. The venue as usual is Chichester Yacht Club, at Chichester Marina. This well attended event gives members the opportunity to get up to date information on the activities of the Friends and the Conservancy.

If you would like to book supper at the club beforehand, please ring the club on 01243 512918.



Interview with new Conservancy Director p3

## Conservancy Review Solar Panel Guidelines



As a result of the Government's recently introduced 'Feed In Tariff', which requires energy companies to buy electricity generated by solar panels at pre-determined prices, there has been a rash of organisations offering to install domestic solar panels.

The installation is often free of charge in return for a long lease on the householder's roof. The householder and the installer then share the revenue generated. Planning permission for solar panels is currently often not required even in a Conservation Area. Given the visual impact of this

development the Conservancy is reviewing and updating its Guidelines in consultation with local planning authorities and Natural England. The target date for completion is the end of 2011.

## More Social Events Planned for Friends



Friends at Emsworth Museum

Social events arranged exclusively for the Friends are proving extremely popular, writes *Val Evans*, our Membership Secretary

In April Diana Beale invited 30 Friends to visit Cobnor House & Estate and gave them an exclusive guided tour encompassing conservation, history and archaeology, all rounded off with refreshments in Diana's lovely house where interesting articles and historical items were laid out.

As this event was so popular, Diana has agreed to repeat the tour in early October, and by the time this Newsletter is delivered, all our Friends will already have received the invitation by email and no doubt it will be oversubscribed again.

The long awaited Stables development at Eames Farm on Thorney Island was officially opened in late May and on the 10th June a party was held there for the Friends. Louise Goldsmith, Leader of West Sussex County Council, thanked the Friends for their financial support which helped to make the dream of this Resource Centre become a reality and for their invaluable 'hands on' work around the harbour, plus their regular subscriptions which help to provide increasingly needed funds to support the Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the AONB. Friends were led on a guided walk around the adjoining land by a member of the Conservancy staff which all found extremely interesting.

In September two special opening afternoons were held at Emsworth Museum for Friends to view the Conservancy's 40th Anniversary exhibition. Chairman Bernard Clarke said 'seeing the exhibition makes you realise just how much has been achieved over the last 40 years to protect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and how many improvements have been made so we and future generations can enjoy it. The Friends are very proud to be associated with the ongoing work of the Conservancy.'

It is hoped to increase the number of Friends Only events in 2012 and information on these will be given in the January/February Newsletter. If any of you have ideas for special events that you would like the Committee to consider please email Val Evans: [friends@conservancy.co.uk](mailto:friends@conservancy.co.uk).

## Harbour Footpaths Surveyed

Whilst many of us are familiar with many of the 90km of footpaths within the AONB, it is interesting to note that there are 38km of footpaths in total around the harbour itself. A condition assessment of these latter paths has been completed and shows only 10% at high risk of inundation from the sea. The rest is judged to be at low to moderate risk.

One path that has been considerably improved is 400m of footpath at Rookwood, which has been repaired by a contractor and the result is well worth seeing. In the winter this was well-known locally as a virtually impassable quagmire. Another development has been a new permissive footpath opened between Itchenor car park and the foreshore, which is dedicated to the memory of John Davis provided by Itchenor Parish Council and the Itchenor Society.

The John Davis Memorial Path at Itchenor



## How we can build on the Conservancy's achievements so far

*The Conservancy's new Director, Siún Cranny, in her first interview, tells Ian McIntyre how she became passionately interested in conservation, and how she hopes all those with a stake in the AONB can work together to better protect our environment*

Siún Cranny brings an unusually wide range of experience to her new job as Director of Chichester Harbour Conservancy. Chief Executive of Sargeant Cancer Care for Children, director of a consultancy to improve the effectiveness of charities, joint founder of the successful 'On Deck' sailing and charter company, and ocean sailor.

She has only been based at the Conservancy's office in Itchenor since July, but is already developing ideas on how to build on what she sees as the Conservancy's remarkably successful past 40 years.

'Our objectives have been well thought through, and the harbour is efficiently run', she says. 'My role is to find ways of building on this and increasing the influence of the Conservancy among its many publics'.

Siún is very complimentary about the role of the Friends in working in a variety of ways to protect and improve the environment of the harbour, and wider Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. She would like to see the Conservancy, the Friends, the Chichester Harbour Trust and other stakeholders working even more closely together to ensure the security of the AONB for future generations.



The Friends provided practical help to the Conservancy by taking part in 44 working parties round the AONB in 2010/11

She points out that although the Conservancy does have statutory authority, it also has an important advisory role and seeks to influence local government, the business world and the wider public on issues such as planning, water pollution, and habitat protection.

She believes that by working more closely together on mutually agreed issues, the Conservancy and its part-



Paul Coniella

ners can achieve more 'leverage' - and be a more effective voice.

Another aim is to engage younger people in the work of the Conservancy and its partners. Thousands of schoolchildren have been introduced to the harbour through the education service. It is this next generation that will inherit the legacy of the harbour, she says.

'We are very fortunate that the older generation willingly get involved with practical conservation and other activities. The age groups in between cycle, sail, walk and otherwise enjoy their leisure hours in the AONB. Maybe we can engage them more deeply in what the harbour's legacy really means'.

Siún's interest in the environment grew as a result of her time spent travelling the oceans with her husband Graham, and son Ben (now 11). Visiting the Galapagos Islands, they became involved with the Darwin Foundation and learnt about the importance of protecting this and other fragile environments, and the challenges of balancing the needs of modern life with the need to protect. 'It became a goal to become involved in more depth in conservation work. I felt passionate about it', she told me. When she heard about the new post at the Conservancy on one of her visits back to the UK, she knew this was a job she would very much like to do.

As it happens, Siún already knew her way around the harbour's waters from visits here by sea aboard 'On Deck' sail training boats - getting the timing right when crossing the bar at the harbour entrance, and taking the crew to another bar - the Ship Inn, when they berthed at Itchenor. She fondly remembers our late Harbour Master John Davis from these visits. 'For sailing school skippers, he was a legend even then'.

Now she, with her family, are planning to set up home in Sussex, and are looking forward to their new life here - 'it's a privilege to be able to live and work here', she says.

## Harbour Trust Nears its 10th Anniversary

As the Chichester Harbour Trust looks forward to its 10th anniversary next year it is as busy as ever both seeking out opportunities to acquire sensitive sites around the harbour and looking after the 130 acres of land already within its care.

In the last few months considerable progress has been made at Maybush Copse, Chidham. The laying of a protective membrane and topsoil over a large portion of the 8-acre site has been completed together with footpaths, a new kissing gate and sections of perimeter fencing. The majority of the 4,000 saplings that were planted last winter have benefited from the damp summer and as soon as the grassed areas have established themselves the site will be opened to the public.

It has been a long and eventful journey since the Copse was first put on the market in May 2008 but thanks to the determination and generosity of the local community, supported by the Conservancy and Trust - together with practical help from Friends' working parties - the project is now coming to fruition.

Another slow-moving acquisition is the transfer to the Trust by West Sussex County Council of eight acres of meadow at Fishbourne. This is an ecologically important area of the harbour (See Ed Rowsell's article in the Spring 2010 Newsletter) and is already successfully managed by the Conservancy.

However, it was agreed in 2009 that a 'buffer zone' in the care of the Trust should be established to protect the harbour from any large-scale housing development in the Stockbridge area. It was also agreed that, as a first step, to underline the County Council's intent, the Fishbourne Meadows should be transferred to the Trust. The land will continue to be managed by the Conservancy but we hope that the granting of a lease to the Trust will be completed this autumn.

For further details of the Trust's work contact James Davis, the Administrator, on 01243 777632 or [admin@chichesterharbourtrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@chichesterharbourtrust.org.uk)

## Can You Help at Beaky's Wildlife Walk?

The Education team are asking whether any members of the Friends could spare a couple of hours every two weeks or so to help keep Beaky's Wildlife area at Dell Quay tidy for visiting groups.

The Rangers do a significant amount of work there, but more help is needed. The work would mainly consist of cutting back overgrown plants. Tools and gloves are provided.

If you can help, please phone the Education Centre on 01243 789173.

## More Improvement Work for Salterns Copse

The path that the Friends rebuilt last year through Salterns Copse (between Chichester Marina and Dell Quay) has greatly improved access to this beautiful part of the Harbour. However, this quiet spot was not always thus. In 1943 the area was cleared and felled to make space for an airfield. After the war the area was replanted and as a result many of the trees are of a similar age and size.

In order to manage the woodland it is proposed to conduct a second session of thinning out the poorer specimens to favour the better quality trees and to increase ground light levels for new growth. The Friends have agreed to allocate £1,200 for this work. In keeping with Salterns Copse's tranquillity it is hoped to remove the felled timber using horses.

## Friends Fund More Catamaran Trips



Solar Heritage trip in June 2011 for the Wrenford Centre (a Chichester Adult special needs facility)

The Conservancy's solar powered catamaran continues to be in demand. So far 10 special trips have been undertaken with financial backing from the Friends. Given the demand, we have agreed to allocate another £750 of funding on top of the £2,000 already granted, which will enable an additional three or four trips to be made this year.

Participants include primary schools, senior citizens and those with special needs. It's a great way for people to see the harbour and especially for those who would not usually get the chance. For children the funding also enables them to make a field trip to East Head to add to the excitement and interest of the day.

## CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

The Rudkin Room at Emsworth Museum is hosting the Conservancy's Celebration of 40 years of existence this September. The Friends have agreed to contribute £200 towards the cost of the displays for what should be a fascinating exhibition. The exhibition is open Saturday and Sundays throughout the month.