

A FEAST OF ORCHIDS AT FISHBOURNE

Members' efforts have resulted in another increase in the number of Southern Marsh Orchids at Fishbourne Meadows, writes *Anne de Potier*. In mid-June, 74 were counted in the far west of the site, where volunteers have been working to clear away the large Hemlock Water Dropwort plants, which get in the way of the orchids.

The number of orchids is nearly twice last year's total, which in turn was double the previous year's count. Well done to everyone, and many thanks. The grand total of orchids for the whole area was 643.

The poor Spring weather caused a few wildlife delays - the office House Martins did not arrive until the end of May - but it doesn't take long for things to catch up. As the sunshine of June continued, the first young Shelduck were seen off Chidham. These days we do not have the large seabird colonies that were so familiar 20 years ago. But we do see many terns plunging from the sky as they fish - they breed in Langstone Harbour. This year an Oystercatcher has been breeding in bare ground near the new sea bank at West Chidham - much more safely than on an island.

Even before midsummer, migratory waders such as Curlew could be seen in the harbour. By the end of July, there should be well over 1,000. They assemble on the Stakes Islands off Chidham at high tide, so look out for them if you are sailing past. And, as summer progresses, find time to take a walk along the shore and admire the saltmarsh - it comes into its own in August and September.



170 ACRE FARM LEASED TO HARBOUR TRUST

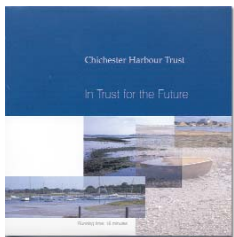
The transfer of the 170-acre Eames Farm, North Thorney to the Chichester Harbour Trust has now been formally approved by West Sussex County Council. The farm will pass to the Trust on a 999-year lease and will be managed by the Conservancy.

At The Dell at Chidham clearance by Friends working parties and local residents is beginning to pay dividends. The ground cover is growing back, trees planted by local schoolchildren are thriving and it is becoming clear to everyone what an attractive site this will be as a result of some careful and sympathetic management.

A further acquisition is in prospect, this time at Itchenor: a plot of land behind Itchenor village hall - about 0.5 acres - is being offered to the Trust by the owner and we expect to have further news of that later in the year.

Meanwhile the search for further financial support continues. The Trust needs funds, both to build up enough capital to acquire land around the harbour and also to look after the land once it is within their care.

The Trust has produced a short DVD explaining the threats to Chichester Harbour and how the Trust can help. If you would like to receive a FREE copy, please contact the Trust Administrator who will be delighted to send you one.



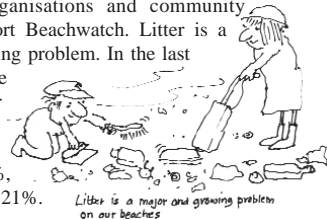
Chichester Harbour Trust
PO Box 327
Chichester PO19 1ZN
Telephone: 01243 777632

BEACHWATCH CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT LITTER PROBLEM

As part of the Marine Conservation Society's annual beachwatch event, the Conservancy are organising a survey and beach cleaning event at Cobnor and West Chidham on Saturday 16 September.

A Friends' working party will be there to help. If you can join in, please contact Nicky Horter at the Conservancy office on 01243 512301.

The Solent Forum, to which we are affiliated, is encouraging organisations and community groups to support Beachwatch. Litter is a major and growing problem. In the last 12 years, the density of litter found on the nation's beaches has risen by 90%, and plastics by 121%.



Contact

Chairman: David Rolph
01243 512729
home@davidrolph.gov-plus.net

Secretary: Penny Wilson
01243 512735
penny@sundown.fsbusiness.co.uk

Treasurer: Allan Stewart-Fitzroy
02392 486663
stewartfitzroy@onetel.com

Editor: Ian McIntyre
01243 378629
churchersfamhouse@iscali.co.uk

Design & Production: Ali Beckett
01243 512301

Illustrations: Roger Smith



HARBOUR OFFICE
Itchenor
Chichester PO20 7AW
T: 01243 512301
E: friends@conservancy.co.uk
W: www.conservancy.co.uk



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SOUTHERN WATER TACKLE HARBOUR WEED PROBLEM

There is good news for members concerned by the ever-increasing amounts of weed and algae clogging the harbour's waters: Southern Water have begun a multi-million pound upgrading of the three sewage works which discharge into the harbour, to remove nitrogen from the treated effluent.

Nitrogen acts as a fertiliser and encourages the growth of weed and toxic blue-green algae. Until now, the equipment at the works has not been capable of removing it.

John Cannon, Principal Process Scientist for Hampshire at Southern Water, told FOCH News that once the upgrading had been completed, discharges would also be UV treated to reduce bacteria to a very low level. 'Water being discharged to the harbour in future will be very clean and virtually nitrogen free', he said.

Work has started on the big Apuldrum plant, which handles all Chichester's waste. The smaller Bosham and Thornham plants are also being upgraded. The work is currently ahead of schedule of the planned completion date, March 2008.

EEC legislation has compelled water companies to take action to improve the quality of sewage works discharges.

Although a very welcome move, Southern Water's action will not totally solve the weed growth problem. Large quantities of nitrates leach into the harbour as a result of fertiliser use by farmers, and a considerable amount is brought in from the Solent each year on the tide.

WHO STOLE OUR TREES?



It now seems unlikely that anyone will be arrested following the theft in early Spring of some 400 saplings from a field in Bosham.

They had been planted in land off Old Park Lane by volunteers from the Friends and a group from the Chichester Conservation Volunteers. In fact, the thieves took the stakes and rabbit guards, as well as the hawthorn, blackthorn, and hazel saplings. To add insult to injury, they returned a few nights later and helped themselves to a few hundred more. In all, 160 metres of carefully laid hedge were removed.

Alison Fowler, then the AONB Officer, said: 'the trees had been planted to improve the landscape and the enjoyment of walkers who use this busy path. We are all saddened that our hard work has been destroyed, and also at the fact that there are people out there who would do such a thing'.

She added that replanting would have to wait for almost another year, because it was a job that had to be done in the winter months to give the saplings a chance to get established.

TERROR LAUNCH

Friends who plan to visit the Emsworth Food Festival in September may like to know that the restored oyster boat *Terror* is due to be launched at Emsworth Quay at 11.45am on Friday 8 September.



Terror is the only surviving Victorian working boat in the harbour. She has been restored over the past two years at Dolphin Quay boatyard in Emsworth, thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

INSIDE: How Your Money Helps Conservation in the Harbour - pages 2/3

How Your Money Helps Conservation in the Harbour

Thanks to a steadily growing membership, and generous donations, we have been able to support the Conservancy's Heritage Lottery Fund programme with £36,000 over the past three years. A further £15,000 was donated by the Friends last year to fund non-HLF projects around the harbour.

All this is due to members' support, for which we are very grateful. On these pages, we illustrate just a few of the projects which have been made possible with help from the Friends.

TREE AND HEDGE PLANTING

Over 10,000 saplings have been planted over the past three years, many of them by Friends working parties. That is the equivalent of 2.5km of hedgerow.

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

We helped to fund a year-long study of the underwater characteristics of the harbour - channel shapes and characteristics, and the identification of specific objects. The archaeological potential was assessed so that core samples could be taken this summer.

DELL QUAY GRAINSTORE

This lovely old building has been restored, to demonstrate its historic use and to provide a much-needed community facility in this part of the AONB - as well as upgraded facilities for Dell Quay Sailing Club.



Inside the newly restored Grainstore at Dell Quay

Volunteers and funding from the Friends made the archaeology projects possible



WHEELCHAIR PATHS

An extra 3km of access has been provided for those with physical disabilities. The new paths are at Cobnor, Prinsted, and North Common on Hayling Island.

CITY - COAST CYCLE ROUTE

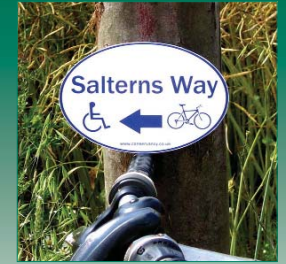
The Salterns Way Chichester to West Wittering cycle route is already proving very popular both for recreational rides and commuting. It is 16kms long, of which 11km are on off-road tracks.

INFORMATION BOARDS

We have helped the Conservancy to up-date and replace many of the interpretation boards around the AONB. It is important that the public are able to identify conservation issues at the harbour's most important sites.

FLOATING CLASSROOM

Over 6,250 children and adults went aboard the solar powered classroom vessel in its first two years. It has helped to highlight the concept of low impact, sustainable use of the AONB.



Clockwise from above: new interpretation board, Salterns Way cycle and wheelchair route, children from Chernobyl enjoy a Solar Heritage trip, new wheelchair path at Prinsted



Confessions of a Harbour Volunteer



Dozens of working parties take place each year, and growing numbers of our members seem to enjoy the 'hands on' conservation experience. There are always Conservancy staff on hand to provide working equipment, advice, and coffee!

Jeremy and Pat Carroll are among the most regular volunteers, so we asked them for their thoughts on this aspect of the Friends' support for the harbour.

Jeremy writes: 'we both enjoy the harbour, sail round it in our dinghy, and often walk along parts of the shoreline. Helping the Conservancy with the routine jobs is a good reason to stop doing other work, have a break, move out into the fresh air and take some gentle exercise for a couple of hours.

The task may be somewhere not normally open to the public, or that we haven't previously visited, and so we see another aspect of the harbour.

The other volunteers are an interesting group of people, with a wide range of backgrounds and

'it's fun and .. good for the waistline!'

The Conservancy organisers always show their appreciation of the work done by the Friends, and never put any pressure on them.

When the task is completed or time runs out, it is satisfying to have been part of a team that has perhaps planted several hundred young trees, cleared an area of copse, or any of many other tasks where the difference is immediately obvious.

In short, it's fun, companionable, satisfying, and good for both the waistline and the environment.'

Pat adds: 'having lived most of my life near the harbour, I want to leave it as beautiful, or better, than when I first knew it'.

experience. The discussions over the half time coffee break can be entertaining, enlightening, or both. It's an opportunity to meet new people one would not normally encounter.

Help Needed

Do you live in the Bosham Hoe area? A volunteer is needed to take over distribution of this Newsletter four times a year from David Burne, who is standing down after helping out for many years. Please contact Anne de Potier at the Conservancy.

Also we need volunteers to help man our stand at the Emsworth Food Festival on 8 September.

Live Cargo!

A harbour boat owner was startled to find a bird's nest with five chicks in it lodged in the mainsail of the boat. He made the discovery as he neared the harbour entrance and tried to raise his sail.

He called up the Harbour Patrol and handed over the chicks, which were taken to the Brent Lodge Bird Sanctuary. Sadly, as they were very young, none of them survived.

There must be something appealing about harbour boats as surrogate nests. Your hon. Editor put his hand in the cockpit locker of his boat one day last Spring, only to find six duck eggs nestling on a bed of down. There was no sign of either parents, and as the age of the eggs was unknown, they were discarded overboard.

AGM Notice

Thursday 12 Oct at Chichester Yacht Club. Supper can be booked at 6.30pm, with the meeting starting at 7.45pm.

Our speaker will be Julie Satchell, of the Hants and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology. More details in our next Newsletter.

The Chairman Writes ...

We have joined the Solent Protection Society (SPS), as we believe their aims coincide with ours in many ways. For example, recently the Society has made progress on the following concerns:

- a 'basic understanding' about the use of double hull crude oil tankers in the Solent
- a proposal for a West Solent Marine National Park
- concern about a wind energy project on the Isle of Wight
- the SOLFIRE project for emergency planning in the Solent

Although none of these affect our harbour directly, anything that happens in the Solent may well influence our environment and habitats. The SPS have given both financial and moral support to the Conservancy and the Friends over the past few years. If members would like more details of the Society's activities, see www.solentprotection.org.

Those of you who attended the AGM last October will remember Professor Mike Clark's talk on 'coming to terms with environmental change'. Mike is the Chairman of the Solent Forum and we have developed links with his organisation. For more details, see www.solentforum.hants.org.uk

David Rolph