

Cobnor Charities Offer Outdoor Adventure for Young and Old

Members who walk the Cobnor peninsula will be familiar with two organisations based there which provide sailing and adventures afloat, mainly for young people. Both, like us, are charities relying on public support, and we thought readers would be interested to know of plans they have to improve their facilities.

Christian Youth Enterprises Sailing Centre (CYE), was created in 1985 to offer young people active challenges through outdoor adventure and learning. 'We want children and young people to experience the fun and excitement of physical activity and quality water-sports; to discover new adventures and develop skills and interests that can last a lifetime,' says Norman Doney, their Executive Director.

After 24 years, the CYE board of trustees have recognised that the accommodation ship Gerald Daniel must be replaced. They are constructing a vessel that will allow them to continue the support, challenge and development of thousands of young people each year.

The new ship will provide a cost effective way to preserve the valuable residential experience and allow them to create a fresh and exhilarating range of opportunities and facilities to meet the requirements of the vulnerable, disadvantaged and those with special educational needs.

Next door, Cobnor Activities Centre is also planning a major re-development programme.

Founded over 50 years ago, the Centre's original aim was to introduce youngsters to sailing, with many going on to sail with the clubs around Chichester Harbour. What may not be known is that the Centre's success has seen it expand into offering a multitude of outdoor courses both water and land based, with the aim of helping young people to improve their physical fitness, develop social awareness, better understand the environment and learn new personal skills.

The Centre now runs over 30,000 residential and day sessions each year. It also operates the Chairboat, offering those with limited mobility the opportunity to go out on the water free of charge with much greater ease.

Some of the Centre's present residential buildings desperately need upgrading and refurbishing. They have ambitious plans to erect a new two-storey building to provide changing rooms, additional classrooms and a caretaker flat. The proposals are estimated to cost £650,000. They have already raised £300,000.

In today's world, where there is a greater need than ever for young people to have access to outdoor and physical activities, Cobnor Activity Centre stands as a beacon of excellence and really needs the public's support.

Further details: CYE www.cye.org.uk 01243 573375
Cobnor Activities Centre www.cobnor.com 01243 572791

PRIZES FOR BEST HARBOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

There's another chance this summer for keen photographers to enter the annual Chichester Harbour Photo Competition. There are cash prizes, and the best entries will be on show in the area in the autumn. The competition, now in its third year, and regularly attracting over 100 entries, is sponsored by the Friends.

Full details are available on the homepage at www.conservancy.co.uk or call the Harbour Office on 01243 512301.

FRIENDS' CLOTHING OFFER

Attractive sweatshirts, T-shirts, pullovers and other good things to wear complete with the new Friends logo can be ordered from our supplier, the Snappy Crab Clothing Co. See enclosed leaflet.

HARBOUR WILDFOWLERS MERGE

Three wildfowling organisations in the harbour have decided to merge. The Chichester, Emsworth and Pagham wildfowling have become the Southern Wildfowling and Wetlands Management Association. They will continue to be represented on the FOCH Committee.



Bryn Jones



The much-praised Harbour Education Service will be saying farewell this summer to the man who has master minded its development over the last eight years – John Tierney. Although retiring, John won't be saying farewell to the harbour which he enjoys exploring on foot and afloat.

Under John's leadership, the number of annual student sessions has increased from 700 to 8,500. And in this time, many imaginative ways have been developed of educating children of all ages about the harbour - from puppet shows to pond dipping adventures.

The Friends have provided support particularly by funding the purchase of equipment from laptops and portable GPS devices, to binoculars and even a portable bird song player.

John's team get their message across to local schools in a variety of ways. They organise field trips in the AONB for schools; they take roadshows to schools as part of their 'out-reach' programme; they have an online Learning Zone and there is an activity programme involving children and adults organised by Judi Darley. Altogether, nine teachers now work for the Education Service.

One theme running throughout is that you can learn while having fun. The harbour jug band is very popular (sea shanties with a message), as are the sea chests packed with marine-related projects loaned to primary schools.

John's involvement with the Education Service came about by chance. His special skill was teaching disturbed children, but following the closure of his school, he was paddling his kayak past Dell Quay one day when he noticed the Education Centre at work. Back ashore, he rang the Conservancy to find out more and was speedily recruited to be an Education Assistant. Before long, he was asked to take on the management and development of a service which the Conservancy realised was filling a real educational need.

John will be retiring with the Education Service in good heart. The Centre at Dell Quay has just been expanded to give dedicated space on the first floor for the teaching staff. And, as usual, more new projects are being developed – new interactive trails for wheelchair visitors to the harbour, and research into historic sites - such as the wreck of the Stuka dive bomber that crashed during the war, and the Roman tilery sites, both near Dell Quay.

The possibilities are endless, and John is sad to be leaving, but he has his kayak and a small sailing boat moored at Dell Quay to keep him busy for years in the harbour he loves.
Ian McIntyre

Our Chairman Writes...

Going into Battle!

Recent developments, like the proposed residential application for the Burnes Shipyard at Bosham, show how the environment of the Harbour AONB is under threat.

That threat is a real one. It underlines the importance of the influence the Friends can bring to bear. Clearly a large membership gives the Friends more clout and a better chance of success. And how important it is that we support the Harbour Trust in its work of protecting land around the harbour in perpetuity from damaging development.

When we go into battle as we have done recently to help influence the outcome of the defence of East Head and now to join in the defeat of the Burnes Shipyard proposed development, numbers matter, quoting a large membership means our views have to be taken seriously.

Additionally, the Friends allow you all, not just the local people most affected, to join action wherever the threat, in the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. You may think an AONB is sacrosanct – wrong! Pressures from the surrounding dense population, government targets and changes to planning regulations means our AONB is vulnerable and its protection requires a determined vigilance. A greater understanding of the harbour's fragility is needed if its beauty is to be preserved.

Our 21st Anniversary challenge, 'Recruit One More', has not yet brought the response we had hoped for. There is still time! Have YOU recruited one more? If you care for the harbour, persuade more to join. They need take no further action than join, our fee is modest, work parties are already well attended and if there is an issue to fight, your committee will take the appropriate action.

Martin Rhodes OBE

	
Friends of Chichester Harbour c/o Harbour Office Itchenor, Chichester PO20 7AW 01243 512301 www.friendsch.org	
Chairman: Martin Rhodes OBE 023 9246 3319 mrhodes@supanet.com	Editor: Ian McIntyre churchersfarmhouse@tiscali.co.uk
Secretary: Chris Punnett chris@conservancy.co.uk	Design & Production: Ali Beckett allie@conservancy.co.uk
Treasurer: Richard Evans riche@btclick.com	Illustrations: Roger Smith Registered Charity: 1051162
Membership Secretary: Valerie Evans, vals@btconnect.com	



HIGH-TECH RESEARCH TO TRACK HARBOUR SEALS

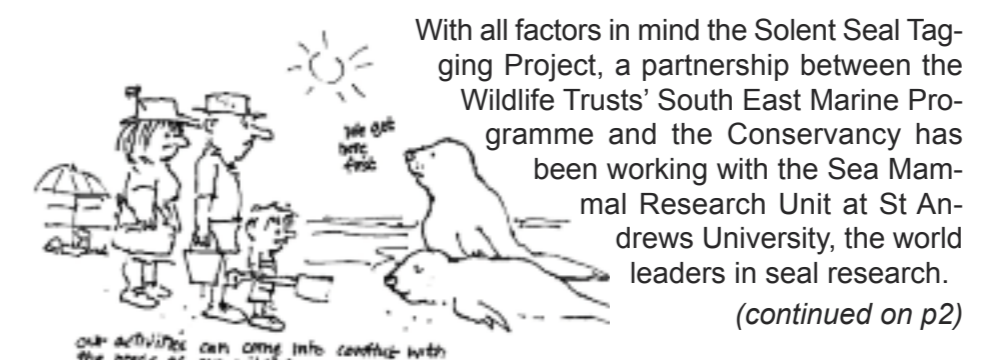
The secret lives of the 20 or so Harbour Seals often seen in Chichester Harbour has been revealed following some very interesting research over the past six months, writes Ed Rowsell, the Conservancy's Conservation Officer.

Five Harbour Seals were fitted with high-tech tracking devices, so their every move could be analysed. The Friends have helped fund this ground-breaking project. The 'tags' employ GPS satellite technology to record the location of the seals, while other sensors record behaviour such as diving and hauling-out.

When the animals haul themselves out of the water to bask and rest, the tags automatically dial the project office in Scotland to relay the latest information on where they have travelled, how deep they have dived in search of food, and other factors.

Already the information received from the 'tags' has highlighted some really interesting behaviour. The seals use Solent harbours, such as Portsmouth, Langstone and Chichester and have ventured further afield to the Isle of Wight and past Selsey Bill.

While the Solent Harbour Seal population is apparently stable, alarming declines are being noted in numbers around the UK, up to 50% in some areas, and with our shores being home to approximately 40% of the global population of these intriguing marine mammals (also known as Common Seals), it is generally agreed we need to increase our monitoring to get a better understanding of what may be contributing to these declines.



With all factors in mind the Solent Seal Tagging Project, a partnership between the Wildlife Trusts' South East Marine Programme and the Conservancy has been working with the Sea Mammal Research Unit at St Andrews University, the world leaders in seal research.

(continued on p2)

Friends' Fight Bosham Development

Burhill Golf and Leisure, the owners of the derelict Burnes Shipyard at Bosham, recently applied for planning approval to build 22 dwellings with associated car parking. The development included a terrace of 5 three storey properties facing the harbour.

The Friends wrote objecting most strongly to the proposal, backing the Harbour Conservancy and Bosham Parish Council's detailed objections. Many local residents lodged their objections with the planners.

The proposals were of an urban design, more appropriate for the middle of Chichester and in stark contrast, adjacent to the church, to its rural surroundings. It challenged many aspects of existing guidelines, advisory and statutory, issued by competent authorities for development in this area.

The application has been refused but Burhill are an experienced and successful developer and are unlikely to let this initial foray deter them on this valuable site.

GENEROUS LEGACY

Legacies are a very important source of income for charities like ours, and we are most grateful to the late Mrs Linda Inch of Chichester for her bequest of £10,000.

THANK YOU, SUSAN!

The Friends are very grateful for the help given to us by Susan Stewart-Fitzroy, our recently retired Membership Secretary. Susan succeeded Anne de Potier some five years ago, when the Friends took over responsibility for membership from the Conservancy, and managed the data base with great efficiency.

FURTHER ACQUISITIONS BY HARBOUR TRUST TO PROTECT HARBOUR LANDSCAPE

Last summer the Trust bid for an 8-acre site at Chidham where the trees form an important part of the harbour landscape. The process has been tortuous but after nearly 10 months and a tremendous fundraising effort by local people, it now looks as if we're going to be successful, writes James Davis, Trust Administrator.

'If we do achieve the purchase it will be of huge benefit not only to the landscape but also to the local community who will gain a valuable public open space for everyone to enjoy.'

Meanwhile, during the autumn the Trust made its first acquisition on the Hampshire side of the harbour, buying the freehold of an area of grassland plus some inter-tidal mud on the Hayling shore. The plot is not, in itself, of great landscape value but by protecting it from likely development they have retained a magnificent vista across the water for nearby residents and prevented any deterioration of the view of that shoreline from the wider harbour.

Our aim for 2009 is to finalise an agreement in principle with West Sussex County Council to establish a 'buffer zone' in the care of the Trust at Apuldram in order to protect the harbour from intrusive development following the proposed building of a Stockbridge relief road, part of the A27 improvement plan.



Cot Lane at Chidham is one of the sites the Trust is working towards acquiring

Seals (continued)

The tags will continue sending us data, until the animals moult in July/August when they drop off, giving us an excellent window into the seals' behaviour. A full analysis of the data will enable us to identify the key areas for the seals in the Solent, allowing us to seek to have them protected if required. This should also help to ensure the Solent seals do not show the declines demonstrated in other parts of the country.

Whether on the water or enjoying the coast, our activities can sometimes come in conflict with the needs of our wildlife, such as seals. Always try not to disturb wildlife, you are likely to get a more rewarding insight into the animals behaviour if you keep your distance. A code of conduct has been developed see www.hwt.org.uk/pages/seal-project.html.

This project has been possible with the generous support of Natural England's Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Friends of Chichester Harbour, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Sita Trust.

Uncertainties about the extent or timing of the development make it difficult to draft a meaningful agreement. However, there is a determination on the part of both the County Council and the Trust to establish the principle of proper protection for the Harbour AONB in this area, so negotiations are continuing.

We are also investigating the possibility of acquiring the old mill pond at Bosham, now completely clogged and overgrown, so in need of a great deal of restoration.

On the financial front, the Trust is clawing its way slowly towards its target of £1m in the bank. Once we achieve that target not only will we have the clout to act decisively when the need arises but, even with rates as low as they are, will be able to cover a good deal of the administration costs from the interest earned.

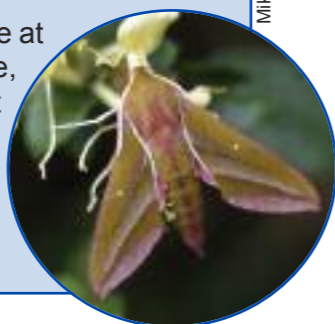
The Trustees are extremely grateful to those members of the Friends who also support the Trust, especially those who provide practical help through the work parties on Trust land. We hope we can maintain the momentum built up over the past few years and continue to work with the Conservancy and Friends to look after the Harbour both now and for future generations.

SPECIAL CHANCE TO JOIN THE NATIONAL MOTH WATCH

Do you like moths? Fascinating creatures of the night (and sometimes daytime as well) which are some of the less well known harbour species.

There's a chance to discover more in September, when an exclusive moth trapping event for the Friends is being held on Saturday 19th at Hayling Island as part of National Moth night, when across the country observers will try to learn all they can about our moth population.

The Hayling Island event will be at Sandy Point Nature Reserve, will start at 8pm, and last about an hour and a half. Dress warmly, wear stout boots and bring a torch! More details from Judi on 01243 512301.



Mike Perry

Protecting the Fragile Harbour Environment

By Alison Fowler, AONB Manager

Each year the Conservancy's Environment Team carries out a wealth of projects within Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). During 2008-09 the Project Budget stood at around £170,000 which was made up from grant monies from Natural England, precept funding from Hampshire County Council and West Sussex County Council plus valued support from the Friends of Chichester Harbour.

Although the AONB is relatively small in the world of protected landscapes at just 74km² it receives over 1.5 million visitors a year, has a population of around 8,300 people and over 10,000 boats. It is a special place, much prized by residents and visitors alike but it is facing considerable pressures from more housing and more people. Our main aim is to conserve and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the AONB, its habitats and species, its village and landscape character and to ensure that people use and enjoy the area and learn something whilst they are here. However, the Conservancy cannot hope to achieve this alone. Partnership working is crucial both in terms of support and funding.



First – the Management Plan

The work of the Environment Team, and of the Conservancy as a whole is guided and driven by the Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan. We have recently carried out a five year review of the Plan on behalf of Hampshire County Council, West Sussex County Council, Havant Borough Council and Chichester District Council. The new document will



Fishbourne Meadows - start of the clearance and fencing work

guide the management of the Harbour and AONB for the next five years by not only the Conservancy but its key partners too, including the Friends. The Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan 2009-14 can be downloaded by visiting www.conservancy.co.uk then going to About Us and then Management Plan.

Within the Plan there are a whole series of practical projects, and the Friends get involved through the provision of funds as well as regular work parties. Here are examples of recent projects.

The Dell Quay footpath The AONB is well-served by an extensive network of public footpaths; many of which run right along the water's edge on sea defences or banks. Whilst this offers wonderful views and walking experiences, it does mean that these paths are often under threat from sea level rise and coastal erosion. The Conservancy has recently completed an ambitious project to improve the coastal public footpath running north from Dell Quay. The programme of works were funded by the Conservancy in partnership with the Friends of Chichester Harbour, West Sussex County Council, and Natural England. The funding contribution from the Friends was generously donated by a member to support footpath improvement projects in the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Previously, the public footpath was narrow and uneven, making access for walkers difficult, particularly those with mobility problems. In many areas the footpath was at risk of undercutting and collapse from coastal erosion. The works lasted six weeks and meant the footpath had to be temporarily closed to walkers, but was open in time for the Easter Bank Holiday. The works were carried out by B&M Plant Hire to a very high standard.

Nicky Horter, Countryside Officer for Chichester



Ruth - a regular volunteer helping with tree maintenance



Fishbourne Meadows

Harbour Conservancy, says 'we are delighted to have been able to provide a fantastic new path surface and to secure this special route for both local people and visitors for years to come'.

Planting 6,000 trees The AONB's landscape is characterised by large expanses of farmland dissected with hedgerows with a scattering of small copses and woodlands. Hedgerows have gradually been lost over time as farming operations have changed and field sizes have enlarged. The hedgerows not only help define the landscape character of the AONB but they also provide valuable wildlife habitats and corridors.

The Conservancy's woodland and hedgerow planting scheme which is supported by the Friends has had another successful year. During the winter planting season of 2008/09, nearly 6,000 saplings were planted within the AONB. Almost all of these went into hedgerows; creating new hedgerows, replacing lost ones, and gapping up holes in existing ones. Of these young trees, almost half were planted with the help of volunteers from the Friends, creating nearly a kilometre of new hedge within the AONB. Trees were planted during five sessions, each at different farms at Cobnor, Ellanore, Hayling Island and Bosham.

Replacement fencing at Fishbourne Meadows This project is nearing completion, so that the site can be successfully grazed by cattle during the sum-

mer months. The existing fence had become very overgrown and was in a poor state of repair, meaning that sometimes some of the more inquisitive cows managed to break free. The fencing works have been kindly supported by the Friends. The site is not only an important wildflower meadow, complete with orchids, but is also a well used and a much enjoyed open space in Fishbourne. Part of the site is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) as beneath the grass lies the remnants of Fishbourne Roman Palace. Great care has to be taken when the refencing works commence later in the spring to make sure the ground surface is not damaged and works are done in accordance with a licence from English Heritage.

The cattle, once back on the site, are not only important conservation tools in their own right they are also part of the Three Harbours Beef scheme; a local farmer co-operative which is supported by the Conservancy to supply traditional beef cattle raised on coastal grazing marsh direct to the public.



Louise Goldsmith, CHC Chairman and Nicky Horter on the improved Dell Quay path

Friends Powerpoint Presentation

Bernard Clarke, a member of the executive Committee, has produced a Powerpoint presentation about the harbour, and the ways in which the Friends help to conserve it for future generations.

The first showing was to a meeting at Chichester Yacht Club in March, and it is now available for showing to audiences round the harbour. We are grateful to Alison Fowler and Ali Beckett for their help in preparing it.

Please contact Bernard on bernardclarke50@aol.com if you know of an organisation that would be interested in seeing it.

New Ranger Appointed

Following the departure of David Molloy earlier this year, Keith Rathbone has joined the Conservancy as a Countryside Ranger, and is getting to know members through the regular work parties.



Keith was a seasonal patrol assistant with the Conservancy, so already has a good understanding of the harbour and its conservation needs.

Fifth Harbour Walks Festival

Hundreds of walkers, not a few of them being members of the Friends, were due to take part in this year's Festival of Harbour Walks, from May 11-14. Each walk takes in some of the best harbour views and villages, in both Langstone and Chichester Harbours.

If you are one of this year's walkers, please write an account of your experiences for us, or send a photograph, to the editor (see back page).

Help us to Deliver the Message!

The Friends need more volunteers to deliver copies of the thrice yearly Newsletter to addresses round the harbour. It's not an onerous task – in most cases, there are 20 to 30 to be delivered to the area where you live, but it does save us literally hundreds of pounds in postage.

We also need someone to organise the distribution system and keep it up to date.

If you think you could help, please contact our Hon secretary Val Evans (address on back page).

