



Where our money goes - No 1

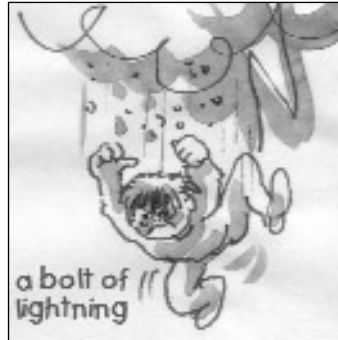
Having Fun and Learning About the Harbour Environment



Down at Dell Quay, overlooking the sparkling water and mudflats, is a building that's been described by an envious visitor as the classroom with the best view in the country. It is, of course, the Conservancy's Education Centre - the focal point of an ambitious plan to influence, educate and entertain thousands of school children in West Sussex, Hampshire and beyond.

Entertain? John Tierney, the Conservancy's energetic Education and Community Officer, explains that there has been a national drive this year to set environmental education in the context of a more creative and diverse curriculum. Environmental teaching can and should be part of geography, history, music teaching - 'I'm working on a way of linking it to maths too', says John with a smile.

John and his team of five part time teachers, who organise field trips in the AONB and visits to schools, have created an 'Air, Sea Rescue' music and drama workshop to match the national curriculum theme of 'weather'. To appreciate how good this is, you really have to see it - with children acting as canoeists, helicopter pilots, sunbeams, and bolts of lightning. There's music, too, from a 'harbour jug band', using tea chests, pots, whistles and other home made instruments.



a bolt of lightning

John was invited to stage his presentation recently at a conference for 90 head teachers and governors of rural schools. It was voted the best - and most enjoyable - activity of the day.

The Friends have donated £2500 to the Centre in the past two years, and these funds have helped to pay for the construction of the road show, and another fun activity for primary schools, an environmental puppet road show. This brings together many aspects of life in the harbour to educate (and amuse) children - from ragworms and seals to trees and beaches.

Trial field trips and school visits have been arranged with a number of schools for children with special needs. There is disabled access (and a toilet for the disabled) at Dell Quay, and plans for wheelchair access and even all-terrain wheelchairs so the less mobile can still enjoy pond dipping and other activities.

Older children also have fun but in a different way - studying marine life, taking part in harbour walks, or getting afloat in the Harbour Water Tours craft 'Wingate'. If the Lottery Fund bid is successful, one of the first purchases is likely to be a futuristic floating classroom, solar powered. This time the Friends' contribution is a practical one: 40 lifejackets, already in use by children and adults watching the harbour birds from afloat.

At times, especially in the summer, the Centre's resources are stretched close to the limit. In the last year, the number of student 'sessions' (half days per student) has increased from 3584 to 4605. John Davis, the Harbour Master, told the Friends' Annual Meeting that the Centre was becoming a model for other environmental education initiatives round the country.

Meanwhile, down at Dell Quay, there is a sense of optimism and excitement at the prospect of developing more innovative, and entertaining, ways of involving children in learning about the harbour environment. To paraphrase the mobile phone slogan, the future is bright; but in this case the future is green.

Can you help? If you are adept with needle and thread, the Education Centre need marine creatures, from ragworms to seagulls, to be made as glove puppets and other accessories for the four puppet theatres they have built. Please contact John Tierney on 01243 512301.



Illustrations by Roger Smith

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Countryside Agency/ T Heathcote

Winter is here and there are many young Brent Geese in the Harbour.

Welcome to New Chairman, David Rolph

The Friends have a new Chairman - David Rolph, elected at the AGM on 16th October. David, who lives in Itchenor, is a keen sailor and actively involved with several harbour organisations, including the RNLI Manhood branch, the Itchenor Society and Itchenor Sailing Club. He will be our representative on the Harbour Trust.

David takes over from John Willetts, who served for four years. There was much praise at the meeting for his leadership of the charity as it grew in influence and size, easily achieving his target of 2000 members.

There were thanks too for the contributions of Val Barns, Secretary, who has now left the area, and Margaret Lees, Newsletter editor, who has served on the committee for 10 years. New elections to the committee were Mrs Anne George, Secretary; Allan Stewart-Fitzroy, Treasurer; Susan Stewart-Fitzroy and Peter Henshaw, committee members.

In his report on the past year, John Willetts said the charity had again made significant donations totalling £13,500 to the Harbour Conservancy, enabling it to carry out projects which it would not otherwise have been able to tackle. In addition, Friends' working parties had helped to improve the harbour's amenities by tree planting and coppicing, litter clearance, stream management and other tasks.

Harbour Trust Sets £1m Target

The Chichester Harbour Trust had raised some £100,000 in its first year, plus pledges of further support, and had a target of £1 million, Sir Jeremy Thomas, the Trust's Chairman, told the Friends' Annual Meeting.

The Trust had set out its criteria for the types of property it wished to purchase to achieve its objective of promoting the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural beauty and wildlife of the area, for the public benefit. Trustees would look out for degraded land, land under threat from inappropriate development, and harbourside buildings of particular interest.

Sir Jeremy said that the Trust had concluded that it should operate flexibly, working with other conservation groups and landowners, and becoming a catalyst to support harbour conservation. A plot of land inside the AONB had already been donated to the Trust, and further projects were being negotiated.

John Davis, the Harbour Master, brought members up to date on the progress of the Harbour Management Plan for 2004-9, which had been produced with the help of several organisations, including the Friends, who were partners in the protection and management of the harbour. He also summarised developments on the Harbour's £1.8m Heritage Lottery Fund bid, the results of which were expected by the end of the year.

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marine creature glove puppets

Wildfowlers Work for Conservation Too



From its formation in 1956 the Chichester Harbour Wildfowlers Association's aims have been to maintain a proper conservation of all wildlife habitats, including the management of wetlands, under the Association's jurisdiction whilst providing and maintaining legitimate wildfowl shooting for members and encouraging sportsmanship and best practice.

Wildfowling is the legal pursuit of specified ducks, geese and waders on the foreshore and marsh during the prescribed season. Traditionally wildfowling is a solitary occupation practiced in sometimes very arduous conditions governed mainly by the tides and the winds.

Within the harbour area, the Association manages in the order of 39 miles of foreshore, of which large proportions are maintained as refuge areas.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 permits the taking of nine species of duck, four species of geese and three species of wader. The principal species of interest to the wildfowler in Chichester Harbour are Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and Teal (*Anas crecca*). These are principally migratory duck which breed in the tundra regions of Northern Europe and which migrate in large numbers every autumn to spend the winter in Western Europe and Great Britain

The membership of the Association is drawn from a wide range of ages and occupations. Prospective members are screened by the Committee prior to undertaking a probationary year when they must be accompanied onto the marsh by an experienced wildfowler.

The Association recognises that the harbour is subject to increasing pressures. With this in mind members are encouraged to become involved with any venture which aims to increase knowledge of the Harbour's wildlife and ecology. Projects involving, for example, pond clearance and reclamation, are actively supported. On a broader front the Chichester Harbour Wildfowlers contribute to the nation-wide duck wing survey conducted by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation.

CHWA embarked on its first long-term wetland management project in 1965 and has progressively extended its program since then. It is CHWA policy that none of its inland conservation areas are shot over. In the past the approach to conservation was mainly through the rearing and release of species of interest to the wildfowler. Over the years, conservation awareness has altered and it is now understood that the defence and maintenance of habitat is a more pressing priority and the Association has adapted and changed its approach in line with this new thinking.

Working with local land owners and the Chichester Harbour Conservancy, regular maintenance is carried out by the Association at Peter Pond in Emsworth, the Fishbourne Mill Pond and on the Fishbourne Sea Wall. Fishbourne reed beds are cut by the association on a rotational basis to provide a variety of habitats and encourage new reed growth. This year, in cooperation with the Chichester Harbour Conservancy, a large area of public footpath has been repaired and replaced at Cutmill. This has involved the laying of over twenty tons of stone to rebuild and repair the seawall and a further twenty tons of scalplings to level and improve the public footpath. Also within the Association's shooting boundaries is found Nutbourne Local Nature Reserve, the formation of which was instigated in part by the wildfowlers. The reserve includes an extensive refuge area which is used by a significant proportion of our wintering population of Dark-Bellied Brent Geese (*Branta bernicla bernicla*).

If you would like to join CHWA as a shooting member or as an Associate member please contact the membership secretary Mr. Geoff Harris on 01903 773923.

Fishbourne reed beds are cut to provide a variety of habitats and to encourage new reed growth.



Opening Soon - The Grain Warehouse, Dell Quay



A semi-derelict historic building on Dell Quay has been thoroughly renovated with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Most of the upper floor will be used in conjunction with Dell Quay Sailing Club and can be booked for community use including local events, meetings, receptions and displays. We also intend to organise public exhibition days.

The building and its sensitive restoration provide an important historic link to the Harbour's commercial past and demonstrate how the role of the Harbour has changed from commercial to recreational use.

Anyone wishing to use the building should contact Robert Perry on 01243 512301.



News from the Harbour Office

The start of the colder months is signalled for me by the return of the Brent Geese and the fishermen. The geese arrive in the harbour looking for warmer weather and food and the fishermen come to seek shelter from their usual moorings off Selsey.

The Harbour Office may look quieter from the outside at this time of year but for most of us it is actually a hive of centrally heated activity! That is except for the workshop staff for whom it is business as usual outdoors. As boats leave their moorings for the winter, it is an opportunity for the workshop to start on the annual cycle of maintenance. Of the 600 maintained Conservancy moorings, about a quarter have their chains replaced each year. Navigation lights also have to be replaced and maintained, with a 99.9% availability record we have a lot to live up to!

For most staff it is time to write reports and look back on a busy summer. The report from the Harbour Patrol always makes interesting reading and shows the huge range of incidents they get involved with. There is the usual list of vessels aground due to navigation errors but there are also reports of abandoned motorcycles, injured swans and oil spills as well as helping out people who get stuck in the mud, go missing or fall overboard.

The Harbour News is coming along well and will be ready for distribution in January. The Draft Management Plan was published in August for consultation. Philip and Alison are busily amending the plan to incorporate the received comments where possible. The final version will be ready 1 April 2004.

The end of summer is marked for us with a staff day out. A brisk walk over the Downs is followed by a pub lunch. It is a great chance to chat with each other and also to appreciate another area which is as beautiful as our own harbour.

Ali Beckett

Subscription Renewals

Annual subscriptions are due in January, and a form is enclosed. (If you are a life member you should not have received one - we are sorry if you did). Please complete the Gift Aid section if possible, and if you have not already done so. This year we are asking whether you pay harbour dues - this is in order to be able to identify members who already receive mailings from the Chichester Harbour Conservancy.

People sometimes ask if the subscription which is sent can be treated as one for several years hence; sadly we do not have any way of recording this, so you will inevitably receive reminders every January. We expect you wish we operated Direct Debits; unfortunately as a small charity run entirely by volunteers we do not have the resources to provide this facility. (The only way to avoid making annual payments is to become a life member!)

COOL HARBOUR

An unusual sight on one of the hottest evenings of the year, last August: 40 or 50 cruising yachts emerging from harbour marinas to anchor in the main channels near the harbour entrance. A cool sea breeze through open hatches carried the promise of a good night's sleep - better prospect than a hot and airless bedroom at home.



Diary Dates



January sees the return of the annual envelope stuffing parties at Dell Quay, when volunteers assist harbour staff preparing the mailings to boat owners. Envelopes need invoices and various additional items such as *Harbour News* and the *Scale of Charges* put into them. As there are about 10,000 any help would be very welcome. There will be morning and afternoon sessions during the week beginning 19 January. Please phone Hazel Blood on 01243 512301 to book, or for more information. Thank you very much.

Here are the details of the forthcoming work parties. Please come and help if you can – it's sociable and no harder than active gardening. Just wear old clothes and bring tough gloves – plus food and drink for an elevenses break! If you are unsure of the meeting place or have any other questions please contact Anne de Potier or Alison Fowler at the Harbour Office.

Tuesday 6 January - Cutting Reeds at Thorney Deeps to improve growth and hence its value to nesting birds. You will need wellies, and waterproof gloves! Meet at 1000 on the corner of Thorney Road and Thornham Lane. The site is along a private track through double metal gates - not Marina Farm. Morning only (probably finishing by 1200 – it's quite energetic, so we do it 'little and often')

Thursday 22 January - Clearing Brambles from the trackside fence, northwest Thorney. The brambles are covering fence posts used by rare bees to nest in! We need to thin them so that the bees have access and are not shaded. If there is time we will also do some preparation for the hedge planting which is taking place next month. Meet at 1000 on the corner of Thorney Road and Thornham Lane. The site is along a private track through double metal gates - not Marina Farm. Bring thornproof gloves, and shears if possible please. Morning only.

Wednesday 28 January - Cutting Reeds at Thorney Deeps. Our last visit this year. For details see 6 January.

Tuesday 3 February - Coppicing beside the wheelchair footpath at Itchenor. The bushes are encroaching on the path, so they need to be cut back, this also improves them for wildlife, as more light will be let in and they will form a glade for butterflies etc. Meet at 1000 outside the Harbour Office, Itchenor. Bring thorn proof gloves! Morning only.

Thursday 12 February - Hedge Planting, northwest Thorney. The existing hedge is gappy and an inadequate screen for nearby buildings, so we will be planting hawthorn and blackthorn to improve it. Meet at 1000 on the corner of Thorney Road and Thornham Lane. The site is along a private track through double metal gates - not Marina Farm. Please bring a spade if possible. Morning only.

Wednesday 18 February - 'POT LUCK!' This is like a fallback meeting but for work unknown at the time of preparing this calendar. Contact Anne de Potier or Alison Fowler at the Harbour Office before 0915 to find out what is happening. Morning only.

Wednesday 3 March - Stream Clearing, west of Maisemore Gardens, Emsworth. This is to ensure there are no obstructions to the flow of this stream which runs between the houses and an area of woodland. You will need wellies and waterproof/prickleproof gloves. Meet at 1000 at the far (western) end of Warblington Road, Emsworth. Morning only.

Thursday 11 March - Lazydogging at Fishbourne. Yes, it's time again to tackle the docks while the ground is still soft. The 'lazydog' is a large fork with an attached lever to make extracting the plants easy. Meet at 1000 at Fishbourne Church carpark. Morning only.

Tuesday 16 March - General Fallback Morning for unfinished or unpredicted jobs. Contact Anne de Potier or Alison Fowler at the Harbour Office before 0915 to find out what is happening.