



THE HARBOUR TRUST HAS PLANS FOR THORNEY ISLAND

The Chichester Harbour Trust would like to acquire the undeveloped part of Thorney Island if the Ministry of Defence decided to leave the site, Sir Jeremy Thomas, Chairman, told the Friends' AGM.

In the past year 'five beautiful sites' had been acquired. Chichester District Council had given the Trust a wood, the Dell at Chidham, for which the rent was, literally, one peppercorn a year! The wonderful habitat of the 170-acre Eames Farm on Thorney Island had been donated by West Sussex County Council.

All the properties had been donated, said Sir Jeremy, but the Trust could not rely on this process continuing indefinitely. This was why they were concentrating on building up funds. Legacies were a good way of securing the long-term viability of the Trust, which Sir Jeremy described as an extension of the Friends of Chichester Harbour. There was a lot of work to be done. 'We have a wish list of sites', he added.

Editorial: AGM Report

Members attending the AGM will have noticed that we have expanded the Committee, so that now we have representation from most points of the harbour. (By the way, I apologise for the inadequate seating arrangements at the annual meeting. We expect to have the usual meeting room back in operation next year.)

Also in 2006, we plan to visit more local shows with our stand, hoping to attract many new members. When the dates are known for next year, we will be asking for volunteers to help us man/woman the stand for a few hours.

Around the harbour in a clockwise direction, the Committee members are:

- **Hayling Island:** Nigel Roper - 01243 373665/07956 660166
 - **Northney:** Martin Rhodes - 02392 463319
 - **Havant/Warblington/Emsworth:** Alan and Susan Stewart-Fitzroy - 02392 486663
 - **Westbourne/Emsworth:** Ian McIntyre - 01243 378629
 - **Bosham:** Peter Cameron - 01243 573414
 - **Chichester:** Maarten White - 07737 097034
 - **Manhood peninsular:** David Rolph - 01243 512729
Penny Wilson - 01243 512735
Peter Henshaw - 01243 512207
 - **Pagham area:** Brian Field - 07973 256514
- David Rolph, Chairman

FROM A BAT DETECTOR TO COMPUTER SOFTWARE - WHERE OUR MONEY GOES

How do donations from the Friends benefit the harbour? More money was provided for Conservancy conservation and education work in 2004/5 than ever before, the Chairman reported to the AGM.



Most of the money we raise goes to support Conservancy projects in and around the AONB. Our biggest single contribution has been to promise three donations of £12,000 to support the 'Rhythms of the Tide' Heritage Lottery Fund projects. Lottery grants are always subject to other supporting funds being raised locally.

Projects included helping to buy an electronic bat detector for the Education Centre, a hydraulic wheelchair lift to help less able people to access the Solar boat, and the installation of traditional kissing gates at the Bosham ferry path and Apuldram.

As always, new hedges and trees were planted, but we also paid for transmitter tags so Greenshank could be radio tracked on their long migration north.

We part funded the purchase of interactive software so changes to habitats brought about by sea-level rise can be predicted. And our logo will be seen on the new Chichester to Witterings cycle path.

We also supported several of the surveys being done to improve knowledge of the harbour's wildlife and habitat.

Our Hon Treasurer, Alan Stewart-Fitzroy, commented in his report to the AGM that his priority is to persuade the committee to spend as much as we can as soon as we get it.



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We are grateful to the Countryside Agency for contributing to the cost of producing this newsletter.

COULD CHICHESTER HARBOUR BE JUST A MEMORY BY 3006?

What will Chichester Harbour be like in 1,000 years time? Professor Mike Clarke, Director of the Geodata Institute at Southampton University, startled members who attended the AGM in October by suggesting it just might be permanently under water.



In a lecture entitled 'Coming to Terms with Environmental Change', he foresaw the possibility that the massive West Antarctic ice cap could melt away, owing to global warming. If it all went, sea levels would rise 200 feet - so not just Chichester Harbour, but Portsmouth, Southampton, much of the New Forest and all but the southern hills of the Isle of Wight would be permanently under water.

There was no doubt that environmental change was happening, said Professor Clarke, who chairs the Solent Forum, which brings together 65 organisations and companies in the region.

Winters were getting colder and wetter (with a particularly cold forecast for this winter), and summers were unquestionably getting drier. Sea levels were already rising, and at the same time the land mass of England was gradually sinking.

The rise in levels was due to salt water expanding as it gets warmer, and because the polar ice caps were already melting, releasing more water into the world's oceans.

Cataclysmic events (such as the great storm of 1987), which used to occur perhaps once every 50 years, were increasing in frequency which

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EAST HEAD IS A WINNER!

East Head is one of the nation's favourite stretches of coast: it's official.

In a nationwide contest organised by the National Trust to find out which were the public's best-loved pieces of NT coastline, East Head came a creditable joint third: after the White Cliffs of Dover and the Gower Peninsular in Wales.

Further good news is that the replenished 'Hinge' has held up well to the first storms of winter. As many members who walk there will have seen, the standard route to the tip of East Head is now over the Hinge summit. Remarkably, the new feature looks as though it has been there for years, and marram grass is taking root on the slopes.



FRIENDS TO TAKE ON STREAM WATCH PROJECT



The Friends have agreed to offer to help the Conservancy to continue the Stream Watch water quality programme when Lottery funding ends in 2007.

It is hoped that members will volunteer to carry out the tests each month on six streams flowing into the harbour from the north. The rivers Ems and Lavant are tested regularly by the Environment Agency.

Judy Darley and Gillian Edom coordinate the project, one of 41 supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Using water quality testing kits, the project measures stream flow, biological oxygen demand, conductivity, and in particular nitrate and phosphate concentrations. 'We are interested in the last two because, broadly speaking, the presence of increased nitrate suggests input from farming activities, and phosphate suggests input from domestic sources such as soap and detergents', Judi says.

Data from the tests, which have been carried out by local schools, will be available soon on the Conservancy website.

Members interested in helping with the Stream Watch project are asked to contact Judi or Gillian on 01243 512301.

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We bought a bat detector! - page 4



New Cycle Route Tested...

The 16 kilometre cycle route linking the centre of Chichester to West Wittering was completed just in time for residents and visitors to try it out during the prolonged Indian summer in October. The Heritage Lottery Fund and other donors funded the cost, which provides a safe, sustainable transport route across the AONB - no motor bikes allowed.

By the time your Hon. Editor extracted his bike from the shed, it was November - a still, chilly day with hazy winter sunshine. The useful leaflet produced by the Conservancy divides the route into five sections, with brief route finding instructions. I tackled the middle section, from Dell Quay to Itchenor Caravan Park.

It's an easy ride, over nearly flat countryside, but you do need sturdy tyres on your bike. The route, which has been christened the Salterns Way, uses minor roads, farm tracks, the occasional footpath, and specially built trails across farmland. These are made of what looks like compressed hoggins, and give a firm and even surface.

There's a useful explanatory board at the start of each section, and small lozenge-shaped markers to keep you on the right route.

As I pedalled southwards, quite a few walkers were out on the new route,

and approved!

finding it preferable to muddy footpaths, I imagine. A parliament of rooks was chattering away in a field of Spring wheat, while in the next field newly ploughed soil glistened in the thin winter sunlight. A bi-plane circled overhead performing acrobatics. It was good to be out in the clean air.

Soon I was cycling through Salterns Copse on the north side of Chichester Marina: another display board told me that it was one of the few remaining areas of natural woodland around the harbour - and one which the Friends regularly help to coppice.

Next, I cycled round the marina - boats, like much of the wildlife in the fields, hibernating until the return of summer. A pretty country lane meanders through the outskirts of Birdham, and then a newly-laid section zigzags across the countryside towards Shipton Green.

At the caravan park, I turned back and with a south westerly breeze behind me, made good progress towards the car. Cycling north, you have the tall spire and distinctive green roof of Chichester cathedral to guide you on your way, like an inland lighthouse.

It's certainly a great way to see the harbour and its countryside from a new angle - and as the Conservancy helpfully point out in their leaflet, there are a number of well placed pubs and cafes along the way. By the way, the Salterns Way is navigable by wheelchairs as well - but only the all-terrain sort, or those with soft tyres.

Ten out of ten to the Conservancy for thinking up this project - it was well worth the wait.

- Ian McIntyre

A copy of the Salterns Way leaflet is included with this newsletter. If you need further copies, they are available at the Harbour Office or Tourist Offices. Details are also on www.conservancy.co.uk

More Friends Volunteer



It has been a busy season for Friends' working parties, and we have been really pleased to see many new faces, writes *Nicky Horter*. This time of year sees us out on lots of coppicing tasks, including woodland management at Salterns Copse and footpath repair work.

Nicky says that a full and varied programme of activities will be arranged for the New Year - so please come along and join if you can. For more information, and to sign up for the weekly e-mail up-date, contact nicky@conservancy.co.uk.

JUST A MEMORY..cont'd

could reach once in every five years by the middle of the century.

Professor Clarke's message was that to combat all this change, it was necessary firstly to monitor carefully what was happening, and then adapt and adjust our conservation policies.

We needed to be able to cope with rapid change and uncertainty - 'waiting for certainty is not a sensible option', he said.

We were already seeing a trend away from 'hard' coastal defences - building sea walls to keep the sea out - to a more flexible approach involving managed retreat and other techniques (the Conservancy's AONB manager Philip Couchman described how rising sea levels were already affecting the harbour in the winter 2004 issue of the Newsletter).

Lt Col John Davis, the Harbour Master, echoed the theme of the need to adapt and change, when he gave members an up to date report on East Head. A long term solution was at least one to two years away, he said, and more recharging of the Hinge may well become necessary.

Did You Know?

☞ 18,000 tons of sand and shingle were moved from the north west corner of East Head in June, to build up the Hinge after the sea had washed through it the previous winter.

☞ The Solent Protection Society are promulgating the idea of a Marine National Park in the West Solent.

☞ The Conservancy spent a total of £1.8 million in 2004/5 - £923,000 on the harbour, and £931,000 on environmental activities.

☞ The Thorney Island church is now accessible by sailors, as well as walkers. They can use the jetty to access the grounds and memorial garden. The padre, John Durant (telephone number in the porch) will open the church for visitors if he is around. www.southbournewiththorney.org

A SPECTACULAR OSPREY JOINS THE WINTER MIGRANTS

This autumn, perhaps encouraged to linger by the unusually warm weather, some spectacular migrant birds have been spotted by bird watchers around the harbour, writes *Anne de Potier*.

The most notable were a well-watched Osprey which based itself on Thorney Island for a while, and three spoonbills which passed through in late October.

For the first time since 1999, the Brent geese have had a good breeding season in Siberia, and over 30% of the flock arriving in the harbour are young birds. You can tell if a bird was born this summer by white edging to the wing feathers. This creates a barred effect on each side visible when it is swimming or walking.

This breeding success will go some way towards making up the deficit in numbers which has developed during the intervening seasons. Numbers of other species of wildfowl and waders are also building up to their winter peaks.

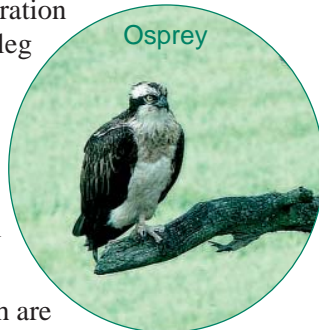
During the autumn, good progress was made on the Heritage Lottery funded Greenshank migration project. Thirty more birds have been given individually distinctive combinations of coloured leg rings, and 21 had small radio transmitters attached to their backs.



Spoonbill

The transmitters enabled us to find out where they were even if they could not be seen, which was particularly interesting at night. Many of the birds have now migrated further south, but others have remained in the harbour, so if you see any, let me know! And visit www.greenshank.info for the full details.

There are also some colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwits in the harbour, which are part of a long-term study based in Iceland where they breed. If the weather is cold, keep a look out for unusual visitors such as Long-tailed Duck. And at home, feeding the birds in the garden will help them and give you much entertainment.



Osprey

rsph-images.com Mike Richards

SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW £5

The AGM approved an increase in subscriptions from £2 to £5, with Life Membership going up from £100 to £150.

Our Chairman, David Rolph, explained that subscription levels had stayed at their current level for

eight years. With the Friends now meeting all their own costs, it was felt advisable to raise subscription levels from 1 January 2006.

He also reported that our membership has risen again - over 1,800 households now take out annual membership of the Friends, and we have 290 Life Members.