

*Little Egret on Pond perching pole
(photo by Simon Eveleigh)*

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SMPPA Newsletter

July 2021

We are delighted to welcome nearly 50 new members to the SMPPA this year, taking the total number of members to around 150 and raising our annual income by over £500. The increase is in part due to a “membership drive” to around 400 households in the local area, along with an article about us in the Ems Newspaper in January. We rely almost entirely on your contributions for the work we do maintaining the Pond (along with the income from Dolphin Quay) so any donations are hugely appreciated, particularly as we now need to save towards a “Contingency Fund” to repair the sluice outfall/ apron, which will be a large expense (see page 6).

The COVID-19 lockdowns during the winter enabled small groups of us to do lots of work clearing, planting and attending to maintenance such as work on the bird rafts and signage in particular. We have now removed most of the “garden” plants and are gradually replacing them with indigenous species such as sea buckthorn and dog rose, along with sowing coastal wildflower seeds, aiming to support the Wildlife Corridor Initiative. We are consulting with those households who are concerned about their views being impacted by planting, particularly of trees.

I have quickly learnt that it is impossible to please everyone and that there are many different views on what should be done and how we should do it. If you would like to be more involved in the strategy, decision making and monitoring of our planting and wildlife, please get in touch. We are also looking for fresh ideas and energy around our social events, which we are hoping to start up again later this year, with our summer garden party on Sunday 15th August (details on page 6).

All the topics in this newsletter are under constant review by our small Volunteer Team which has limited resources and access to expertise. Please rest assured that we try our best, taking into account the feedback that we receive from You Our Members!

Jo Greenfield

Swans and Cygnets



The swans and their young always provide entertainment at this time of year. Our resident swan has historically nested too close to the water's edge in the north-east corner and this year we tried to encourage her to move higher up, by creating a make-shift nest for her with cut reeds. She successfully laid at least 7 eggs, but sadly this still was not high enough up for the 5m Spring tides at the end of April and once again they were washed away.

However, the Peter Pond swan hatched several cygnets and then moved south onto our Pond, although the young keep on getting separated from their parents when they inadvertently slip over the tidal gates – we have managed to help reunite them on a few occasions.

The Bird Rafts and the Great Black-Backed Gulls (GBBGs)

At the beginning of the year, as voted by our members at the AGM by a substantial majority, we installed frames and netting in order to deter the Great Black Backed Gulls from accessing the rafts to nest. This was a large amount of work, using nearly 100 metal rods which had to be welded together.

The GBBGs were deterred at first, however they are extremely determined birds and eventually managed to access the middle raft and produce 3 chicks. Sadly, as also occurred in 2015, it appears that the chicks fell off the raft and drowned as they were unable to get back on due to the height of the raft above the water. Smaller birds such as coots and ducks are still able to easily access the rafts and have been nesting on them.



Picture courtesy of Brian Fellows

Signage and the West Bank Footpath



The “one-way” signs on the west bank were taken down in late April, after the number of walkers going the “wrong way” increased significantly and confrontation was becoming more commonplace. The signs proved to be very welcome on the whole. A count of footpath usage over 4 days in January showed an average of 400 walkers a day, translating to footfall of nearly 150,000 a year.

We are very grateful to our regular litter pickers who have picked up the numerous abandoned coffee cups and other items. The dog waste bin has been overflowing at times but WSCC have been quick to empty it when we have reported it.



Sign on the wall of Slipper Mill

Both information boards have been refreshed and many birds including a Little Egret (see cover) have enjoyed perching on the poles installed after the old warning signs in the Pond were removed.



Simon Eveleigh - northern sign

Pond Draining / Opening the Tidal Gates

At the beginning of March, the Environment Agency requested at the last minute that we open the tidal gates to drain the Pond. This gave them the opportunity to measure the water levels upstream at Lumley. They concluded that the Pond level had no effect on the water level at Lumley and are now updating their procedures to reduce the frequency with which they ask for the gates to be opened.

The anti-walk wooden topping on the beam directly above the gates (see photo) has been removed as it was rotten and collecting water. As a result the life of this large beam will be prolonged significantly.

It is not planned to open the gates again until late September.



Planting



The reeds have grown back quickly, in spite of it looking very bare over the winter, and the reed warblers have been heard singing again. We will continue to do selective trimming of reeds that appear along the banks. We are not planning to fully trim the banks, in order to leave the wildflowers.

We have planted several dog rose, sea buckthorn, sea aster, along with yellow flag iris, and marsh marigold in the water; not all of these have survived as it has proved difficult to get good specimens. Coastal wildflower seeds have been sown in several places along the east bank, which have kindly been watered by neighbouring houses. Corn Marigold appear to be thriving even though they were not supposed to be in our seed selection!

This is in line with our vision to plant native varieties of plants that are more appropriate for a pond wildlife haven and to enable management of the vegetation without the requirement for significant amounts of volunteer labour. Ensuring the verges are clear on Slipper Road, that any vegetation is relatively low maintenance, whilst trying to prioritise the wildlife and keep all our members happy is a very difficult balance. If we could leave everything overgrown, we would!

Other Maintenance

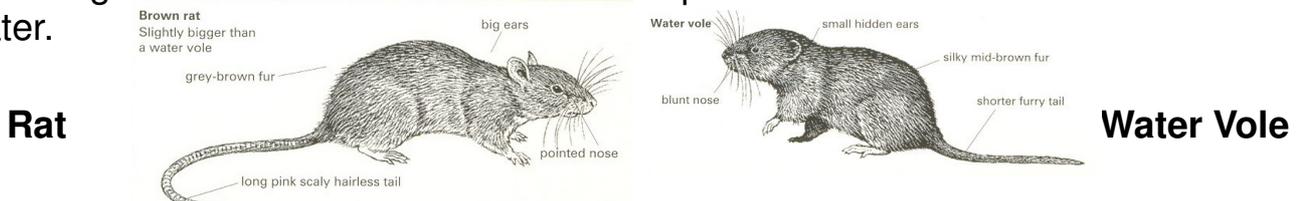


Jim Hailstone and the asbestos tank

During the winter we cleared the south-east corner, including the removal of a large asbestos tank (see photo) and lots of netting that was buried in the ground, and repaired the field drain there. We will be doing various other maintenance works during the summer, including brick pointing around the tidal gates, and treating the woodwork and timber. We are currently looking at options around repairing the sluice apron/outfall (see “Contingency Fund” on page 6).

Rats or Water Voles?

There seem to have been more rats than usual this year, which is apparently a nationwide problem. We urge anyone who has put bird feeders on vegetation on the Pond banks to remove them, as unfortunately these are a known reason for encouraging rats. We are not able to use poison as this is not allowed within 5m of water.



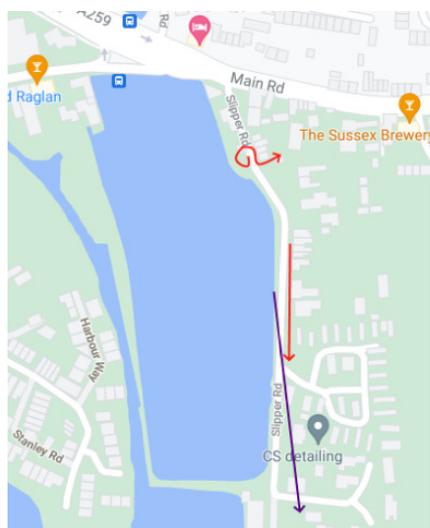
Maurice Broomfield / Schools Photographic Competition



Many of us enjoyed “My Father and Me”, a portrait by film producer Nick Broomfield of his photographer father. It was a treat that the Pond and Slipper Mill both featured in the programme.

The Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition is next planned for 2022. Even though the Emsworth Arts Trail is due to go ahead in September, the schools have said they would not have time to prepare for the Competition after the summer break.

Bats



Katy Goddard, a local ecologist and SMPPA Member, who conducts surveys of protected species, carried out a bat survey on 30th May and recorded 3 species – common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule bats. They were foraging and commuting along Slipper Road.

The first two types are quite common small species, roosting in small gaps such as under roof tiles or hanging tiles. Noctule is a large species of bat which roosts predominately in trees, in gaps such as woodpecker holes.

The Bat Conservation Trust www.bats.org.uk has more information on bats, including how to site and construct your own bat box!

Dolphin Quay



Several of you have asked who does what work around Dolphin Creek / Quay. Chichester Harbour Conservancy are responsible for any maintenance to the footpath itself, and are obliged to keep it accessible to users. They have recently resurfaced parts of the footpath. The boatyard owners trim the grass solely to allow safe access to the moorings.

We have recently removed a dead ash tree that was overhanging the path. Our overall aim continues to be to do the minimum amount of work in this area so that it is left looking as wild as possible.

Bank Account Closure

The old SMPPA bank account no. 20024430 (sort code 20-69-34) has now been closed and we are fully able to conduct online banking with the new account. For those who normally pay by standing order, please check that you have changed your payment details to account number 23724018, sort code 20-11-43, as any payments made to the old bank account going forward will be rejected by the bank.

Social Events



Summer Garden Party

We have a provisional date of Sunday 15th August. Simon & Claire Dwyer have kindly offered to host this informal get together in the garden of their home at Slipper House at the north-east corner of the Pond. Start time 4.00pm. This year, we won't be asking you to bring "a plate" of food to share; just bring your own drinks and glasses, and your own food if you would like to eat. We will provide a few tables and chairs but you may wish to bring your own chairs just in case. More details will be sent out nearer the time, as this event is weather (as well as Coronavirus) dependent!

We do hope that this event will be able to go ahead and that lots of you will be able to join us.

AGM – currently planned for Friday 29th October 2021 at 8.00pm.

Spring/Autumn Talk – we are hoping to have an autumn talk, probably in November.

Annual Dinner – we may move the timing from November to February 2022.

Contingency Fund for Sluice Apron/Outfall



Damaged Sluice Apron / Outfall

We are looking to build up a fund for the repair/ replacement of the outfall (apron) south of the sluice gate (see photo), which will to be a significant cost. If you would like to contribute, please get in touch or visit smppa.org.uk/donations for more details, including how to set up a legacy in your will.



New members are always welcome; if you know of anyone who has just moved in to the area and might be interested in joining us, please let us know, or pass our details on to them.

Wanted!



We will be losing 2 Trustees this year – Bill Keeble is stepping down after 10 years of service, and Gary Lamb has moved away from Emsworth. We thank them both for their contribution over the years.

In particular, we are looking for someone to take on the Social Secretary Role organising our social events. Ideally we would like them to join the Committee but this is not essential. See page 6 for more details on the events we usually hold.

The Committee meets quarterly, with additional small groups meeting/liasing as necessary. We have a great action-focused team and try hard to be non-bureaucratic!

As ever, I am always open to suggestions and ideas, so feel free to email or phone me, or even knock on my door.

With very best wishes to you all.

Jo Greenfield

(and SMPPA Trustees)

chmn@smppa.org.uk

01243 371134

56 King Street, Emsworth, PO10 7AZ



Committee Members/Trustees

Jo Greenfield (KS), Sharon Corbett (SR), Simon Dwyer (SR), Simon Eveleigh (KS), Bill Keeble (SR), Gary Lamb (HW)

where SR is Slipper Road, KS is King Street, HW is Harbour Way.

Dates for the Diary

Date	Event
Sunday 15 August	Summer Garden Party (see page 6). Slipper House. 4.00pm.
Friday 29 October	AGM – 8.00pm. Location tbc.
TBC	“Spring/Autumn” Talk – possibly November
TBC	Annual Dinner – usually November but probably postponed until February 2022
2022	Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition - Early May Bank Holiday (Emsworth Arts Trail)

Data Protection Act 2018

To comply with the General Data Protection Regulation, our Data Protection & Privacy Policy is on the Membership page of our website. If you have any queries, or do not wish to receive email or postal communications from us, please let us know.

Answers to the Crossword from the January 2021 newsletter:

Across

- 3 Type of tide that is needed before the tidal gates will open - **Spring**
 4 What are the invasive Phragmites Australis otherwise known as (6,5) - **Common Reeds**
 8 Flash of blue often seen flying around the Pond - **Kingfisher**
 12 Bird symbol of the Pond in Marian Forster's picture - **Cormorant**
 13 Surname of the photographer whose legacy is the schools photographic competition - **Broomfield**
 15 The Pond is a SNCI - 'Site of Nature Conservation _____ - **Importance**
 18 There were 4 of these in the local area providing grain - **Mills**

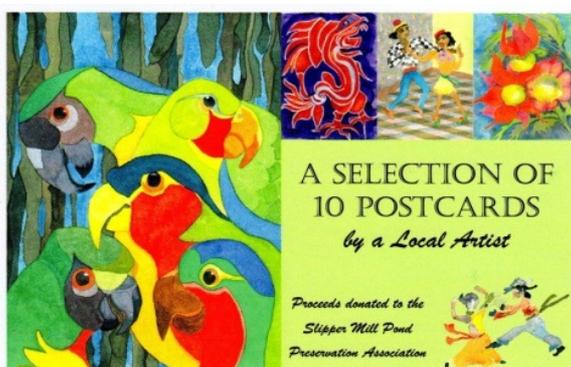
Down

- 1 Common name for Ficopomatus enigmaticus - it leaves very distinctive casts on rocks and other objects in the pond - **Tubeworm**
 2 A basket or container filled with earth, stones, or other material and used in civil engineering works or fortifications. - **Gabion**
 3 Material used for kerb edging on Slipper Road - **Sleeper**
 5 Birds that live in Phragmites (4,8) - **Reed Warblers**
 6 Sliding gate for controlling the flow of water - **Sluice**
 7 First name of our former chairman - **Nick**
 9 Great Black _____ Gulls - **Backed**
 10 River that flows into the Pond - **Ems**
 11 Name of the family that donated Dolphin Quay Footpath - **Wardle**
 14 There are 3 of these structures on the Pond - **Rafts**
 16 Prevalent type of fish in the Pond - **Mullet**
 17 Cormorants can often be seen eating these - **Eels**

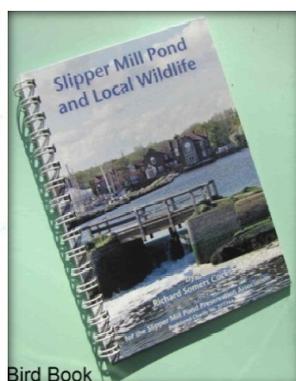
Useful Contacts

Enquiries	Jo Greenfield	01243 371134	info@smppa.org.uk
Membership	Sharon Corbett	01243 389994	membership@smppa.org.uk
Wildlife	Downland Surgery - 01243 377141 RSPCA - 01239 667541		
Police Emergency 999	Disturbances 101: Please mention PCSO Baylee Reed of Sussex Police for tracking purposes		
Environment Agency	All incidents 0800 807060 Flood line 0345 988 1188		
Fishing Policy - SMPPA	www.smppa.org.uk/fishing		

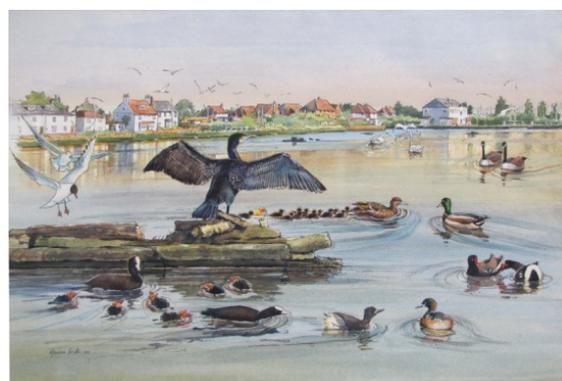
Publications



Postcards - £5 for a pack of 10 by a local artist



Bird & Butterfly Book - £5



Notelets - £3 for 6 (incl envelopes) by local artist Marian Forster

All available to purchase – please contact Jo Greenfield.