

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group



Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2020
Volume 13 No 2

OPENING LINES

Dear Readers,

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Lesley Bromley and I am now chairing the MWHG since the retirement of Joe Savill, which gives me some pretty big shoes to fill!! I have been a Trustee of the Group for over three years now, and my main interest is in the History and Heritage of the Manhood Peninsula the 'human' bit rather than the wildlife, although there have in the past been some pretty wild humans here! None the less as a Trustee, member of the management team and now in the chair, I am also very involved in the wildlife side as well!



Our Group is at an interesting point in our story, as we look towards the end of the Flow project in the middle of 2021, and as we deal with the limitations on our activities created by the Covid 19 pandemic. We have lots of ideas about new projects for which we are looking for funding as I write, and we also have had great success with the setting up of the Selsey Photo Archive which Joe is still very much involved with. This year marked the 75th anniversary of VJ day and the Group marked this with an exhibition looking at the stories of those whose names are on the War Memorials in the villages of the Peninsula. This was held in the Crab Pot in Selsey and was very successful.

We go forward into 2021 with enthusiasm to finish our current work and to take on new challenges which we will be reporting on in the next Newsletter.

Please stay well, and hopefully have a good Christmas

Dr Lesley Bromley



STOP PRESS
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AMAZING TEAM OF RECORDERS ON ACHIEVING RUNNER UP STATUS
IN THE 2020 NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY NETWORK AWARDS! WE ARE ALL PROUD OF YOU!

JOE SAVILL, CO-FOUNDER OF MWHG

On his retirement, a Tribute by Dr. Jill Sutcliffe

In 1997 I was running the Sussex Wildlife Trust, SWT, local group with the late Beryl James in Selsey when a certain Joe Savill rang me up. He was wanting to turn a bit of woodland into a wildlife area adjacent to the school where he was Deputy Head at North Mundham School. So I visited the school, met Joe, was shown round and we had a chat and drew up a plan. Later he rang me. He had had an idea! He wanted to establish a group dedicated to improving their local environment on the Manhood Peninsula (MP). Joe's mother, Eileen, had herself been a local teacher encouraging pupils to take an interest in their surroundings and to value them and the family had strong links with many local organisations and residents.



Given I was already chairing a group which did look after Sussex's wildlife, I was at pains to explain what our group did, ie talks at regular meetings, guided walks and sales to raise funds for SWT to enable them to buy Nature Reserves. BUT it became apparent that Joe had additional ideas. He wanted to carry out a survey of the Selsey Parish using local volunteers after reading a booklet produced by the SWT demonstrating how local people could take an active role in recording habitats and species! So, first things first.

We needed a logo and we found a suitably qualified volunteer; we needed the permission of the landowners in order to carry out surveys on their land and we did this with the help of the then Parish Council, local farmers and contacts. Not only that, but Joe had been in touch with the WSCC Records Centre where Kim Leslie was encouraging communities to record their area as a Millennium Project. So, the launch meeting of the then Selsey Parish Mapping Group (which evolved into the MWHG) heard an introductory talk from Kim, were shown posters from round the county and resolved to produce a poster from the survey work they were engaged in. Once the survey was completed, a display was held in the library of the results. That map of the vegetation led to CDC developing their approach to Green Infrastructure.

The school had to carry out an arduous OfCom visit and Joe decided to step down from his role at school.....which was opportune as I started work for Natural England in Peterborough! Joe and I became the archetypal Austrian weather house – if Jill was working, Joe was the key volunteer on the MP and vice versa, when Joe was busy with teaching commitments I became the key volunteer. Linked to that survey, the group produced a poster which Kim Leslie had great pleasure in exhibiting at conferences he attended and MP became internationally known!

The initial phase was to build the organisation. The next act was to produce the first Parish Biodiversity Action Plan in the UK. As the work involved implementing the actions the workload overtook the volunteer time available. Joe suggested we should set about establishing a role for a Community Wildlife Officer. He had come across a very enthusiastic volunteer and the group set about employing Sarah Hughes with the help of Chichester District Council.

Sarah proved an inspirational choice. The group grew from strength to strength. It took on East Beach Pond and turned a rubbish dump into an award winning wildlife site; Sarah ran exhibitions utilising the skills of the whole group in Selsey providing information and enthusing people in their local wildlife.

In 2010, the UN year of Biodiversity, the MWHG was awarded the Queen's Award for Volunteers. This is an award equivalent for groups to that of an MBE given to individuals. A celebration was held in the Selsey Centre adjacent to where the group had established a Neighbourhood Park, and an orchard of Sussex species. The award was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of the county of West Sussex Mrs Susan Pyper and a number of mayoral chains were in evidence. Four of the group were also invited to Buckingham Palace to attend a garden party. Joe himself was unable to attend. Group members were able to buy small replicas of the award which are proudly displayed on mantelpieces across the MP.

One of the key aims Joe had from the very beginning was to improve the quality of habitat across the whole of the MP....and that is just what the FLOW project has achieved. Step by step, the group expanded to enable it to take those next steps – becoming a company limited by guarantee and then a Registered Charity which enabled us to apply for many more sources of funding. As you will have seen in the newsletter Joe has been busy setting up the Selsey Photo archive, helped devise the Blue Plaque trail and initiated the MWHG leaflets featuring popular places to visit.

Many people have helped to make the organisation the success it is but it is clear that none of this would have happened without Joe, his initial idea, his steady hand and his commitment to protect the MP, its highly important wildlife, heritage and its role as a migration point. He has been and remains a Protector of this very special place ably assisted by his wife Shauna, and their daughters, Holly and Rebecca, who have tended to stay in the background, but who have weathered a lot of time with Joe tied up and busy on MWHG business.

Now, as a grandfather, Joe has finally retired from the management of the thriving and unique organisation he has been so instrumental in creating. However he continues that vital process of enthusing the next generation about environmental matters close to home and further afield.

Dr. Jill Sutcliffe

JANE SCOTLAND

Hello, I'm Jane Scotland and I've taken over as Treasurer for the MWHG. We've lived in Sidlesham for nearly nine years. Soon after we moved here, I got involved with the Friends of Pagham Harbour and became the Treasurer. The Friends formally closed in March and we transferred the assets to the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group.



Back before the internet I studied Mechanical Engineering at Birmingham University and worked for Jaguar Cars. The software industry was taking off so I joined two start-ups and ended up spending a lot of time in Italian data centres. In 2001, Simon and I decided to set up our own business, installing home technology. We developed a successful software business providing integration modules to home cinema and technology installers all over the world. Our business was acquired by a US home control company. We're still fascinated by technology, these days we do it just for fun.

My other passion is gardening. It started with an allotment in London then we developed a garden from scratch here. We've battled brambles, planted native hedges and trees and dug a pond. It's been wonderful to see how many plants and animals have flourished as a result.

The Manhood Peninsula is a very special place. The Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group does vital working improving habitats, protecting vulnerable species and preserving and promoting our unique heritage. It's a pleasure to be involved in such an inspiring organisation.

Welcome to MWHG Jane - The Newsletter Team

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

During lock down we have witnessed a large amount of wildlife destruction, which is always so devastating to see. Some of this loss has taken hundreds of years to evolve and in an instant it can be destroyed, which is another thread of the web of life that is weakened. Without animals and plants we don't survive, the greater the range of biodiversity the better life is for us all.

Thank goodness, there is a large community out there who nurture and safeguard our wildlife for future generations to enjoy. Lock down has allowed life to move at a slower pace for many people, enabling us to enjoy the wildlife in our own gardens. I have been privileged to watch hedgehogs in the early mornings and bats early evening in my little garden in the small hamlet just outside Chichester, called Bognor.

Wildlife thrives and we have fantastic news as we have breeding dormice south of the A27 between Chichester and Emsworth. We have put up further dormice boxes in a hope to highlight and record this extremely rare creature in our district. Further details on the state of our dormice is listed on <https://ptes.org/get-informed/facts-figures/hazel-common-dormouse-muscardinus-avellanarius/>

My work has mainly focused on the proposed seven Strategic Wildlife Corridors (SWC), which connect the South Downs National Park to Chichester Coastal Plain. These are the vital veins for wildlife to move and migrate across our landscape, which is more important now than ever, due to the amount of development proposed in the area (thousands of houses between Chichester and Emsworth a six miles stretch). It is essential that we work with landowners, developers and local people to safeguard our wildlife and the habitats that they use. However, these are proposed wildlife corridors until we can get them agreed by Planning Policy and more importantly past any objectors under the plan examination process.

SWC 1 Hermitage to Westbourne – we recorded a first for England with an exceptional rare red freshwater algae in the River Ems. In June 2020 Greening Westbourne volunteers and I collected samples of the rare algae, which was identified by specialist Howard Matcham (co-writer of 'Atlas of Sussex Mosses, Liverworts and Lichens') who is shielding on the outskirts of Chichester.



Photo © 2020 Sarah Hughes

- *Audouinella pygmaea* was located in the River Ems (Chalk River)
- Last seen in England about 1904 in West Yorkshire
- The River Ems is the only site where it is still extant in England
- All flints looked at had microscopic colonies present
- It will only survive desiccation for very short periods of time
- This species confirms the exceptional rare biological diversity of the River Ems
- This confirms the importance of this site as a Strategic Wildlife Corridor

Further details on *Audouinella pygmaea* and images can be seen on the following link - https://www.algaebase.org/search/species/detail/?species_id=32441

High levels of groundwater abstraction mean that at dry times of year artificial augmentation (adding water back into the river) is required to maintain the flow. However, catastrophic failure of augmentation by Portsmouth Water on 27 September 2020 led to the River Ems being emptied.

- Our chalk streams are internationally rare, with 85% of the world’s chalk streams being found in England.
- They are the UK’s equivalent of coral reefs but they are still being eroded and lost.

It is still unclear if the rare algae have survived but this is considered to be unlikely. Greening Westbourne are setting up a new group ‘Friends of the Ems’ to help protect and enhance this rare chalk stream habitat.

Further details on the state of the River Ems can be seen on the following: -

<https://e-voice.org.uk/greening-westbourne/friends-of-the-ems-fote/>

We are in the midst of completing a botanical survey (over 2020/2021), which is led by Bruce Middleton and we hope to use this data as a template for the other SWC.

SWC 2 Nutbourne to Hambrook - We have witnessed a shocking amount of biodiversity loss in this area. Luckily we have good working relations with many other landowners. We have completed a bat transect and had static bat detectors at either end of the SWC. In one of the sites Nick Gray was able to confirm (via droppings) a *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (soprano pipistrelle) roost in a newly built house (five years old), which shows that bats can use new development if they have the opportunity.

SWC 3 Chidham to West Ashling – Working closely with the travelling community, who own and manage a Local Wildlife Site, we are monitoring dormice in the local area and working through a simple management plan to improve biodiversity and connectivity.



Juvenile Doormouse

Photo © 2020 Sarah Hughes

SWC 4 Bosham to Funtington – The Bosham chalk stream was recorded as one of the most biodiversity rich streams in the UK and we are working on resurveying to compare the data and how the stream is faring today.

SWC 5 Fishbourne to Lavant – We have been fortunate enough to work with Fishbourne Roman Palace and supported by the FLOW team with a working party to improve the biodiversity on the chalk stream on the eastern boarder of the palace. We have a small population of water voles which are thriving in the local area.

SWC 6 Westhampnett – We have started working with Goodwood & Rolls Royce Cars on biodiversity enhancements and connectivity across the sites. This is vitally important as rare bats *Barbastella barbastellus* (Barbastelle) have been radio tagged and we can map their movement from the South Downs National Park to the Chichester Coastal Plain.



SWC 7 Easthampnett – I am in the midst of working with a landowner who manages a large area of land within this SWC. We are extremely fortunate as this is an organic farm with ethical and environmental principles.

We are working with Network Rail, looking at all the crossing points for the proposed SWC and how to improve biodiversity and connectivity, which has been really exciting as there are the H & S issues to balance.

I continue with my training, site visits/surveys and meetings (mostly on zoom now), which have been such a key way to continue communication.

We now have a team of volunteers who highlight the issues of disturbance at Chichester harbour, which covers Prinsted to Fishbourne.

Again, I find myself privileged to work amongst amazing volunteers/landowners and colleagues who continually give to their community and wildlife, without this support, it would be very difficult to do my role, so a big thank you.

Keep Safe
Sarah Hughes

The MWHG HLF FLOW Project update October 2020

WORK OVER THE SUMMER AND AUTUMN PERIOD, APRIL 2020 – OCTOBER 2020

Despite the pandemic situation we have had another busy work period and the FLOW volunteers have been helping us with lots of different activities. We are making a huge difference and our work covers nine parishes

SPECIES SURVEYING

Moth trapping

We have had an army of volunteers carry out moth trapping surveys over the spring and summer, safely from their own homes. It has become a popular activity and the group's moth trap was shared between homes, and a couple of moth traps were bought by enthusiastic volunteers. In the height of summer, it would take a whole day to identify all the moths so a good way of making the time go by. There were over 30 trapping sessions across 10 sites which caught over 300 species of moth.



Willow Beauty



Red Underwing



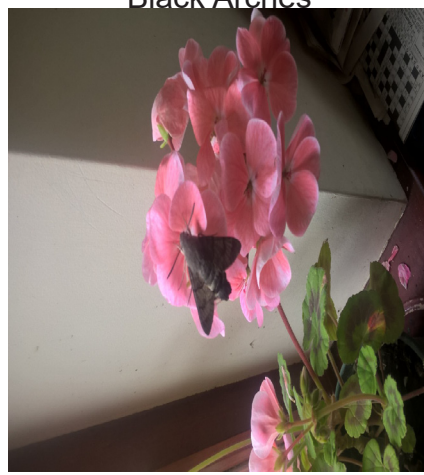
Black Arches



Jersey Tiger



Lesser Swallow Prominent



Hummingbird Hawkmoth

Bat surveys

We have managed to carry out a couple of socially distanced bat survey sessions at 2 of our sites with other planned surveys being cancelled due to rain. We had an amazing turnout with 9 people at one session and 3 at the other. We have had a great showing of bats with Pipistrelles, Soprano Pipistrelles, Natterers and a Brown Long Eared.



Haydons Pond October 2020



Camic Pond September 2020

All of our biological data has gone on iRecord and onto the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre as this valuable information is needed to understand what is happening to species in our environment and to protect our wildlife and landscape.

DITCH SURVEYING

We finished surveying Apuldram parish early in the year and the North and South Mundham parish is underway, so we are nearly finished with ditch surveying for the project. Thanks to an amazing group of residents from North and South Mundham who have continued with the surveying through the pandemic, just need a last push to finish.

MINK MONITORING

We are continuing with mink monitoring across the area with financial support from Barfoots, RSPB and Vitacress. Key trained volunteers have been very diligent and committed in carrying out this work although it stopped on the RSPB managed land during the lockdown period. We are still getting water vole signs on many of the mink rafts and this year we also got otter prints on one raft - they are a useful way of capturing evidence of animal activity.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement and presentations have been cancelled during this period so no coffee mornings, village fetes, fayres, or presentations – all cancelled.

However, the FLOW team have been busy online with quizzes, biological surveying, weekly blog by project manager, site updates, newsletters and an e-bulletin.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORK

We have had one committed volunteer removing Himalayan Balsam along the Pagham rife for us through the summer and it is making a difference with less dense stands noticeable. Thank you to Ian!

Our wetland improvement work has started again, and we are working across the parishes to put in regular sessions on sites to encourage local engagement. We are working most Wednesday, Thursdays, Fridays and 2 Saturdays a month so please come and help, have fun, enjoy being outdoors, make friends and eat cake. We have Covid-19 measures in place for your safety.



BIG THANKS

Thanks go to all the volunteers that have helped us with surveying, admin work, tool maintenance, physical work, refreshments, mink monitoring, carrying equipment, turning up whatever the weather, the smiles, laughter and support. We can't do it without you and your commitment is absolutely amazing!

Jane Reeve

WATCH OUT! THERE'S A CONEY HEDGEHOG ABOUT!

What a lovely day for the Manor Green Park volunteers. The rain held off as I joined them for a socially distanced cuppa.

The volunteers have kept up the good work during this challenging year, reducing in number from eight down to two. I was curious to know how the limited help had affected the park. One volunteer told me that the main challenge was getting to the compost bin which was like "pushing through a forest" as the brambles had taken over!!



Today the wheelbarrow was overflowing and all the volunteers were able to get on top of the work. There were a couple of newbies too, thankful for the company and chat.

Sheila gave us all a laugh as she showed us her attempt at making all the volunteers a hedgehog made from a piece of wood and a fir cone. This was planned as a Christmas gift for everyone. Her attempt can be seen..on the right!



Alex Ainge

THE GIANT WILLOW APHID

The sight of a small colony of Giant Willow Aphids *Tuberolachnus salignus* strung out along the stems of a Crack Willow was unusual. In my 12 years working as a volunteer at East Beach Pond and having regularly surveyed the site, I have only encountered this aphid twice, the last sighting being in 2014.



Photo © 2020 Dave Haldane

With an adult measuring 6 mm in length it is unusually large for an aphid. It has a gun metal colouring and on closer inspection you note a series of tubercles on its back, a raised shark like fin at the rear which is flanked by 2 siphunculi, capable of ejecting a defensive waxy fluid and long spindly legs that are raised when threatened. With a little stretch of the imagination here is a creature that closely resembles the Sci-fi Martian invaders seen in many old B movies.

Researching this aphid, I found it to be poorly recorded nationally. A map of the British Isles produced by the National Biodiversity Network [www.nbnatlas.org/Giant Willow Aphid](http://www.nbnatlas.org/Giant%20Willow%20Aphid) identified only a few confirmed sightings with no reference to records for West Sussex.

Unlike the smaller sap sucking aphids that use their mouth parts to pierce soft plant tissue, the Giant Willow Aphid is capable of using its stylet to pierce the bark of its host tree. Once engaged it syphons sap from the tree which passes through the insect's gut where surplus sugars are excreted through the anus as a sticky liquid. This liquid is commonly known as honeydew and attracts the attention of ants, flies and wasps. Southern Wood ants *Formica rufa* are said to benefit from this sweet mixture, offering it protection in return. Garden ants offer the same service to Greenfly and Black Bean Aphids.

Although there were no signs of ants in the vicinity of this colony, I noticed a pair of Harlequin Ladybirds *Harmonia axyridis*, in tandem and showing a keen interest in the aphids. There is evidence that the Harlequin and its larvae prey on this aphid and are not deterred by any defensive ploys the aphids use. According to the Royal Horticultural Society's on-line gardening advice, the Giant Willow Aphid presents no real threat to our native willows. However, fungi known as Sooty Moulds flourishes on honeydew dripping onto surrounding foliage. This produces black spores which soon cover stems and leaves which is disfiguring but in most cases no threat to the plant.

The Giant Willow Aphid is certainly one to watch out for when carrying out surveys across the Manhood Peninsula.

Dave Haldane

WALKS LEAFLETS OUTLETS

Our walks leaflets can be purchased from the following places:-

Chichester District Council, Selsey Office
Hunston Post Office (Tramway Walks only)
Raycraft, High Street, Selsey
RSPB Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve
Selsey Printing and Publishing
Selsey Town Council Office

MWHG Website
www.mwhg.org.uk

New content and updates are regularly required for example on wildlife, heritage, etc.

All contributions welcome.

email: facebook@mwhg.org.uk

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“mwhgpage”

NEW MEMBERSHIP

If you are interested in becoming a member please go to
www.mwhg.org.uk/get-involved/membership/



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

USEFUL WEBSITES

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group -
<http://www.mwhg.org.uk>
Recording the changing seasons -
<http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/>
Local wood recycling - http://www.aldingbournetrust.co.uk/services_recycling.htm
Local - Bags made from 100% recycled clothing - <http://www.thegreendoor.co.uk/>
Sussex Bat Group -
<http://www.sussexbatgroup.org.uk/>
UK moths - <http://ukmoths.org.uk/>
Bug life - <http://www.buglife.org.uk/>
Mammal Society - <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/mammal/>
Green shop - <http://www.greenshop.co.uk/>
Environmental calendar -
www.countmeincalendar.info
Swift Conservation -
<http://www.swift-conservation.org/>
Wildcare Shop for products relating to ecology, Park management or conservation. -
<http://www.wildcareshop.com>

VOLUNTEERING

Subscribe to our volunteering opportunities and get involved at www.mwhg.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/ or see the attached form

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