

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group



Newsletter

Summer 2013

Volume 6 No 2w



Long-eared Owl at Paghham Harbour

© 2013 Paul Greenough

OPENING LINES

Well, spring was late, cold and grey this year and many of us reminisced about the three-week spell in March last year when the temperature was 70°F which preceded that drought and then the endless rain which began with the appointment of the minister for drought!

One of this year's 'developments' was the publication of the draft Local Development Framework by Chichester District Council, that is, the outline planning policy by which the Council expects to judge any applications for development after 2014. It is a document subject to public consultation and comments had to be submitted by 3 May 2013. It is important because it sets the strategic direction for planning in the area. There is a strong push by central government to encourage "sustainable development" but the definition they are using is a very narrow one - they mean sustainable economic development whereas the original terms means taking Social, Economic *and* Environmental considerations into account. A large amount of land which was previously part of Chichester District is now under planning control by the South Downs National Park and this has made the gently undulating area of the Manhood Peninsula very vulnerable to planning applications - which have been coming in thick and fast.

Any planning policy needs to take account of three overriding factors.

Firstly, we have two internationally important wildlife sites (Chichester and Pagham Harbours) and one being created (Medmerry), the Local Wildlife sites which need safeguarding, and buffer zones to make sure that their associated wildlife is protected. For example, Brent Geese are now using fields they didn't use before the creation of the Medmerry site and this needs to be taken into account. Sir John Lawton, when asked by the government if the UK had a viable network of protected wildlife sites, pointed to the need to improve the ones which exist, make them bigger and, importantly, link them up. The CDC Environment Unit has now produced some maps showing how our Green Infrastructure links up across the peninsula providing species with a chance to move across the area using hedges, ditches and Rifes etc. The Manhood Wildlife Alliance, composed of all groups with an active interest in wildlife conservation on the peninsula, is drawing up a *Vision* for the area to help ensure that there is a sustainable future for the very diverse set of important rare habitats and species which live in the area.

Secondly, there are real difficulties with the infrastructure for people on the peninsula – the sewage treatment works, the lanes and roads which easily get full and blocked, and access to medical facilities. While the draft framework makes reference to some of these the full impact is not analyzed. Meanwhile there are plans for an additional 813 houses and as, yet, no change in sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

Thirdly, climate change is contributing to the changes happening to our wildlife – the arrival of the Little Egret helps to demonstrate this. The Manhood Peninsula is a traditional migration point and species arriving from Europe are likely to use this route. As experienced in June and December 2012, flooding continues to impact the area and the ditches need to be managed sensitively in order to help drain surface water but also in ways which secure a safe future for the regionally important population of the rare and endangered Water Voles.

Jill Sutcliffe

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

It is fantastic to see everything green and in bloom after what seems to have been a very long winter and spring. I do hope you are all getting out and exploring this incredible area.

I have been busy with my 'Acorn Study'. The more I learn the more I realise the vastness of the animal kingdom and that it would take more than one lifetime to learn and understand the intricacy of the web of life. I marvel how different species can work together to their mutual benefit. I think we could learn a thing or two. I have been lucky enough to collect (just a small sample of) otter (*Lutra lutra*) droppings from a site visit in Exeter. I am hoping it won't be long till we have our own otter droppings! Otters are currently increasing in number and distribution after a prolonged period of decline. They receive protection under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Otters and their resting places are fully protected. It is an offence deliberately to capture, injure or kill them or to damage, destroy or obstruct their breeding or resting places. It is also an offence to disturb otters in their breeding or resting places.

I have also been learning about bats. All British bats are protected under Schedule 2 of the European Protected Species list. There are about 950 different species of bats in the world and a quarter of all mammals worldwide are bats. In the UK we have 54 land mammals and 17 or 18 species of bat, so again bats account for a high proportion of all our mammal species. '17 or 18' because the 18th species - the Greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*) - was thought to be extinct in the British Isles. It is the largest British bat but only ONE male has been found, which lives in Sussex.



UK Bat Species:-

Greater horseshoe bat (<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>)	- Horseshoes
Lesser horseshoe bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>)	- Horseshoes
Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	- Pipistrelles
Soprano pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	- Pipistrelles
Nathusius' pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>)	- Pipistrelles
Brown long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)	- Long-eareds
Grey long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>)	- Long-eareds
Serotine (<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>)	- Large bats
Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	- Large bats
Leisler's bat (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)	- Hairy-armed bat
Barbastelle (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>)	- The rarity
Natterer's bat (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)	- The Myotis bats
Bechstein's bat (<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>)	- The Myotis bats
Daubenton's bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)	- The Myotis bats
Whiskered bat (<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>)	- The Myotis bats
Brandt's bat (<i>Myotis brandtii</i>)	- The Myotis bats
Alcathoe's bat (<i>Myotis alcathoe</i>)	- The Myotis bats

Bats are small-bodied flying mammals and British species have wingspans that range between 192 mm and 450mm. Their bodies are fur-covered with wings of elasticated skin.

All British bats are insectivorous and to avoid competition between species they all have different preferences for roosts, foraging areas, food sources (from tiny mosquitos to large moths) and foraging methods, including hawking, gleaning, perch-hunting and trawling. Bats are long-lived with pipistrelles living 10 – 15 years and Greater horseshoe bats up to 35 years. The loss of one individual can therefore have a large impact on populations.

Bats hibernate during the winter, normally between late-October and early-April. Mating usually occurs in late autumn prior to hibernation, but fertilization does not happen until the start of warm weather with birth following in the early summer. Bats normally have one 'pup' per year, which stays in the nursery roost whilst the mother forages, or is carried around by the foraging mother (depending on the species). Babies will wean and then fly in three to five weeks.

Bat species are found throughout Britain but there are generally more species in the south and south-west, apparently due to the longer summers and warmer conditions.

I will be continuing my study with a Dormouse Ecology & Surveying training day. Further details in the next newsletter.

Keeping up-to-date with the council's Health and Safety policies, I am happy to confirm that I have passed my 'Water Safety Training' (hosted by West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service) and my 'Safeguarding Workshop Level 1' (Council's in-house training). It is difficult to know which one I enjoyed the more.

I am looking forward to getting out in it.

Enjoy life

Sarah Hughes

WATER VOLE PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

It is the surveying season again. At last the weather has warmed up and water vole activity has started. I think they have been as desperate as we have for some sunshine to warm up the water and get the plants growing so that they can fill up after a lean winter period.

A water vole surveying workshop held at Sidlesham Church Hall on Saturday 6 April was extremely well attended. We all brushed up on our surveying techniques and planned some of the work for the next few months. We were also treated to a water vole pickling about on Florence pond, just opposite the church



hall, so that most people were able to see behaviour in action. He didn't seem to be at all shy and swam about dragging choice cuts of hemlock water-dropwort back to his favourite eating place. He also gave an acrobatic display, climbing into a holly tree, grabbing a leaf and then backflipping into the water. We were all very impressed! Unfortunately, because of all the water vole activity, this pond has been the focus of attention for predators. A heron has been seen munching on a water vole here and I saw a mallard drake drown one of our furry friends! However, a water vole has been seen since so they seem to be persisting on this site despite the best efforts of the bird life!

Photo © 2013 Jane Reeve

A couple of volunteers joined me on a water vole course with the SWT and Rowenna Baker on the Amberley Brooks at Houghton Bridge. It was a truly wet and windy day and even the interesting topic and the water voles could not prevent us getting totally wet through within a very short period of time. The site is very open with no shelter and even Veronica's rain bonnet couldn't cope. We all looked like drowned rats by the end. It was in complete contrast to last year when it was sunny and bright. We have two interesting projects coming up with the arrival of some pre-planted coir rolls that will be used to give some bare ditches and pond banks a kick-start. We hope to take delivery in mid-May and then position them across the peninsula at key sites. Many farmers have expressed an interest in having them and they will be used to green up severely dug out ditches or to help clean up ponds that suffer from cow slurry leakage.

There is also a day of trying to remove a non-native alien invasive aquatic plant, Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*), from a large private pond that links two ditches. This plant has already overwhelmed the pond and is now marching on the ditches. The EA are not going to tackle it so we will try and halt it. The ditches are important for water voles and this invasive species smothers the water not allowing any other plants to survive. This plant will need to be removed on a six-weekly cycle so dates will go out and muscles will be required! It should be fun and we hope to make a tangible difference.

Thank you for all your help, support and humour!

Jane Reeve

WATER VOLE PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT - ADDITIONAL

This special article celebrates the hard work of the team that helped to put the coir rolls in place. Thanks are due to both the Big Lottery which funded the coir rolls in the first water vole grant (Big Lottery Community Wildlife grant) and the Heritage Lottery Fund which funds Jane's current work and the Vole Patrol etc.

The team was made up of Tony, Trevor, John, Bruce, Sheila, Ian, Felicity, Jill, and Campbell. This was a very physical project that involved lifting the coir rolls off an HGV, stacking them up, loading them onto a trailer, shifting them on to new sites, and then staking them in.

The coir rolls are pre-planted with a native mix of aquatic species that should be of benefit to their new locations. They were very hard to move as they were metres long and very heavy!

This crack team of 'can do' volunteers was brilliant and a lot of laughs were had with no one falling in!

The coir rolls arriving



Unloaded coir rolls



Coir rolls ready to be moved



Coir rolls being shifted to site



All the coir rolls were put into place after three days and thanks should also be given to Chris Spiby and Campbell Thorpe for use of their vehicles and trailers. The coir rolls have been put at Mapsons Farm, Southend Farm, Marsh Farm, Bracklesham Bay ditch and Littleton Cottage.

Jane Reeve

Photos © 2013 Jane Reeve

Coir rolls staked into place



THE FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE

Spring 2013 has not been an easy time for either gardeners or wildlife, but many of us will have seen a bumblebee during the early weeks of the year. These will be fertile queens who have hibernated over the winter and are seeking a nest site in which to lay their eggs. Their 'fur' helps to protect them from the cold. Sometimes one may be found crawling around on the ground with trembling wings. It is not dying, just using its wing muscles to generate warmth. Bumblebees have long tongues, so they can access flowers with long corollas, such as lavender, thyme and catmint. They are also useful early pollinators.

There are 23 species of bumblebee in Britain, which may be a surprise, although many are in decline due to the lack of flower meadows in the countryside. Here I will concentrate on those we are most likely to see in our gardens. These are;

Early, *Bombus pratorum*;



Red-Tailed, *B. lapidaries*;



White-tailed, *B. lucorum*;



Buff-tailed, *B. terrestris*;

and



Garden, *B. hortorum*.

Illustrations © 2013 Gina Scott

The fertile queen will make a nest in an old mouse hole, in a tussock of long grass, or sometimes in a bird nest-box. She has to make the nest, gather nectar and pollen for food and rear her first brood on her own. She will not make a honey-comb, but will construct little wax pots in which to store food and raise the larvae. These will hatch into sterile female worker bees, and they help to gather food for subsequent broods. A colony can become as large as 100 at its peak.

The queen bee is able to determine the sex of her progeny by an ingenious method. When she mates she stores the male sperm, and she can select whether or not to fertilise each egg as she lays it. Instinct and the state of the environment at the time assist her in 'deciding'. Unfertilised eggs become males and fertilised ones become females. The colony declines and ceases by the end of the year, with only mated females surviving to become the following year's fertile queens.

Bumblebees are not aggressive; only the female can sting, and is unlikely to do so unless she is roughly handled, or her nest is disturbed. Two further species may make an appearance in the garden. The Common Carder Bee, *B. pascuorum*, looks different from the other common species and appears later. The Tree Bumblebee, *B. hypnorum*, is a recent arrival from the Continent.

Gina Scott

For further information visit www.bumblebeeconservation.org



PUBLICATIONS GROUP NEWS

IT'S GOODBYE FROM ME.....

I have edited and commissioned articles for this Newsletter for several years now and I feel it is time for a change. I have really enjoyed the job, watching the newsletter grow alongside our fantastic publications team and talking to interesting people along the way; but a fresh outlook and new ideas are always a good thing. So although I shall remain on the Newsletter team this is the last issue I am 'in charge.'

Gina Scott

.....AND HELLO FROM HIM!

A member of MWHG since moving to Selsey in 2011, I spent 50 years of my life working in the Printing and Publishing industry, travelling in Europe, Russia, Middle East, Africa and USA. Since retirement, I worked for two years as a tutor in top security prison.

Challenging time as Editor, especially as Gina Scott has set such a high standard, my writing experience has included Saga, Canal & Riverboat and Bond magazines.

I welcome suggestions for inclusion in future publications.

David Devereux

The Publications Team would like to thank Gina on behalf of the whole Group for all her hard work, enthusiasm and expertise during her years as Editor of this newsletter. Were it not for her suggestions of interesting articles, and knowledge of suitable people to approach to write them, it would never have become the successful newsletter it is today. We are all very pleased that she is going to remain a member of the Team.

ASHE GROUP

We have been busy working on Hayden's, Morgan's and Florence Ponds. Water voles are active at both Morgan's and Florence Ponds. Vegetation surveys on all three ponds show that many wild flowers are flourishing and there is plenty of greenery to keep the water voles well fed.

The moth trap has been put out in Sidlesham and Almodington and the grand total of moths in each survey was nought. Very disappointing, but here's hoping for a good count when the fruit trees are in flower and the warmer weather arrives; not this week, judging by this evening's forecast.

We were just setting out for the survey on Hayden's Pond when to our great delight we were joined by Sarah, Gina and Francine. What a lovely surprise. Suddenly Hayden's Pond looked even more beautiful and the sun felt warmer. The surveys revealed more than 30 species of wildflower and a variety of pond life, including a pregnant female palmate newt; very pleasing for a pond that on our first survey, two years ago, was completely devoid of life.

Veronica Wilkes



MANOR GREEN PARK – SUSSEX APPLE ORCHARD

I have just started my second year as a member of MW&HG. Although thoroughly enjoying the experience, I'm still going through the learning stages of the 'What if? & Where?' syndrome. This means discovering hidden gems within the peninsula which more established members take for granted.

A good example of this is the Sussex Apple Orchard. It was planted in a corner of Manor Green Park, to the right-hand side of the Selsey Centre, during the early part of 2009. I understand the whole idea for such an orchard was the brain child of Margaret Smith, who unfortunately has since moved out of the district.

The house I and my family moved into from the East Midlands just over a year ago is only a few minutes away from the orchard. Therefore, under the direction and careful eye of Dr. Anthony Preston, I have volunteered to look after the 25 trees which currently make up the orchard.

But these are no ordinary apple trees. Far from it. All of these varieties were originally grown and developed in Sussex. Consequently, some are very rare with only one or two specimens in other protected orchards. The varieties have colourful names, such as:

Edmund Jupp. Originated near Horsham. It was first recorded in 1862. Fruits have a tender flesh with a sub-acid and slightly sweet flavour.

Duck's Bill: Received by the National Fruit Trials from Fred Streeter, Head Gardener at Petworth House, West Sussex and well-known broadcaster on early gardening programmes on the BBC. Fruit has a sweet rather chewy flesh.

Doctor Hogg: Raised by Head Gardener at Leonardslee. Introduced 1880 and named Doctor Hogg, a pomologist. A large cooking apple, possibly a seedling of Calville Blanc. Cooks to a puree and retains pleasant flavour.

Crawley Beauty: Found in a cottage garden in Tilgate, near Crawley, Sussex in 1870. It was introduced to the public by J Cheal Nurseries in 1906. Flowers late Spring making it suitable for colder areas of the UK.

Sussex Forge: Recorded in 1851, but believed to be older. Known as the 'Cottager's Friend', it was used for making cider, for cooking and then by Christmas, as an eating apple. Crisp and delicious straight from the tree.



Edmund Jupp just coming into bloom

Photo © 2013 Suzie Devereux

Lady Sudely: Originally named after the farm bailiff Jacobs who found it in 1849. But subsequently renamed Lady Sudely by Bunyard Nursery. The fruit is medium sized, with prominent deep red streaks.

Sussex Mother: A 19th century dessert apple, discovered in 1884 in the Heathfield area. Still growing in this area, it ripens in early September. It has soft, greenish white flesh, with a sweet, spicy taste.

Egremont Russet: Thought to have been raised by Lord Egremont in the 1870's at Petworth. Rich nutty flavour, crisp, firm and fairly juicy. Holds its shape well in cooking. Golden green fruit flushed with yellow ochre russet.

Alfriston: Raised in Uckfield in the 1700's. Originally called Shepherd's Seedling Pippin after the person who found it, a Mr Shepherd. But it was renamed Alfriston in 1819. Greenish yellow fruit, which has a delicious pear-like flavour.

So there you have it. Eight of the twenty or so varieties of apple trees currently alive and well. With a brief history on where each variety originated and the sort of fruit one could reasonably expect to harvest in the future. And all originated in Sussex! Why not visit the site to see these and the remainder of the orchard?

Some short time ago, I took up the offer of meeting Veronica Wilkes at a Saturday morning open visit to the Sidlesham Community Orchard, situated near the recreation ground. The individual trees were sponsored by local families, some of whom were there, and looked after by ASHE. Although she denies it, Veronica, is well versed in all things relating to fruit trees. From grafting through diseases and how to treat them. The essential use of a mixture of bone meal and blood, particularly around young trees, to encourage strong growth in the early years. Also how vital it was to keep young trees, especially, supplied with a good supply of water. To ensure that the water is not wasted, it was important to keep the surrounding beds clear of weeds. This applied especially to the deep seated weeds, such as buttercup, dandelion and clover. This sound advice is being put into practice in the Selsey Orchard, thanks to Veronica's input.

David Devereux

STOP PRESS - The Sensory Garden has again won an award in the South East Britain in Bloom competition. More details in our Autumn issue.



Beachwatch Big Weekend

20th - 23rd September 2013

Volunteers
needed for
beach clean



For more information about Beachwatch
Tel: 01989 567807 Email: beachwatch@mcsuk.org
Web: www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch

Beach

EAST BEACH, SELSEY

Date & time

SATURDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER
3.30-5.30.

Meeting place

EAST BEACH CAR PARK
SELSEY
THE BEACH CLEAN WILL BE
FOLLOWED BY A BARBEQUE
ORGANISED BY THE
SELSEY LDNS

Contact your local organiser for
more information about this event:

Organiser

GINA SCOTT

Contact details

TEL: 01243-778689
ginacarrington@btinternet.com

20th Anniversary
Beachwatch
1994-2013

Protecting our seas, shores and wildlife

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
Saint Andrew's Lodge, Selsey
Selsey Printing and Publishing
Selsey Town Council Office
Tourist Information Centre, South Street, Chichester
Tourist Information Centre, Midhurst

MWHG Website

www.mwhg.org.uk

At the moment, the only section which is regularly being updated is the "Current Programmes" page. New content and updates are regularly required for example on wildlife, heritage, etc.

All contributions welcome.

email: newsletter@mwhg.org

2013/14 DEADLINES

31 August (Autumn)

10 November (Winter)

10 February 2014 (Spring)

10 May 2014 (Summer)

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>

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



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