

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage
Group



Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2019
Volume 12 No 1



Photo © 2019 Peter White

MANAGEMENT MATTERS

As last issue, I would like to begin by welcoming a new member to our staff team. Leanne Clements has joined us as our new Community Conservation Officer, replacing Jan Atkinson. I know that many of you have already met Leanne or communicated with her and she's been delighted with your warm welcome. The main purpose of her post – funded by the Postcode Local Trust and the Tesco Bags of Help scheme – is to set up independent volunteer groups in other parishes of the Manhood. This has always been a central aim of the group, but apart from the ASHE group – thanks especially to Veronica Wilkes – our established groups are still Selsey based. The extensive Manhood-wide work of the FLOW Project has now created the opportunity to develop these new groups so our hopes are high.

The Management and FLOW teams have been planning events for the summer. So, amongst others, look out for more details of Love Parks Week, including activities at East Beach Pond and Manor Green Park in June, Lifeboat Day at the beginning of August and a Selsey Heritage Exhibition at the end. If you would like to help with any of these events, do get in touch.

As FLOW progresses, thoughts are now turning to succession planning. The Management Team is determined to ensure that the phenomenal efforts of Jane, Chris, Emily and all their wonderful volunteers are built upon. Ideas are being developed, so watch this space.

Other updates include the Management Team's submission to the Chichester District Council Local Plan consultation, in which we strongly supported the establishment of the Strategic Wildlife Corridors proposed. Huge congratulations go to Sarah Hughes and her colleagues at CDC for their detailed work in developing these. Also a new Safeguarding Children Policy has been produced – thanks to Val Gatehouse – and is available in the Members Only section of the website. It applies to all volunteers so do have a read.

As I write this, I'm still digesting David Attenborough's powerful documentary: 'Climate Change: The Facts' and thinking about the world my granddaughter may inherit. I for one will be increasing efforts to reduce my carbon footprint and continuing to add my voice to all the others demanding action now. As a group, we can take comfort in all the carbon capturing trees we are planting and wildlife observations we are recording – these help to build a picture of how nature is coping with a changing climate. But, climate change is the greatest threat to all the work we've done, and continue to do, for wildlife on our low-lying peninsula.

Finally, please keep using your blue Co-op members' card when you shop in Selsey Co-op and others. When I last looked, more than £370 had been raised for us so far.

All the best and have a great summer.

Joe Savill
chairmt@mwhg.org.uk



COMMUNITY CONSERVATION OFFICER

Last year a bid to the Postcode Local Trust was successful which enabled the appointment of a Community Conservation Officer to deliver a twelve-month project. I was delighted to be selected for this exciting role. Nature and heritage conservation is a huge passion and I have been fortunate to have spent the last twenty plus years working in senior leadership positions for the RSPB in Dorset, the National Trust in Wiltshire and as Director of Amberley Museum. I run a small building business with my partner Rich from our 'wildlife surrounded' home in Parham, near Amberley, I am a devoted (and often exhausted!) auntie of three, I love walking the South Downs with our two dogs and can't resist a quality G&T.



My role is all about working to ensure a sustainable volunteering future for the group, engaging our local community to help keep the Manhood Peninsula special. Since starting at the end of February I have been identifying the most urgently needed volunteering opportunities which will provide support and sustainability. The primary focus is on setting up Parish-led volunteer groups across the Peninsula, creating deep and lasting relationships and secondly on recruiting volunteers for roles which directly help the management team and Trustees, including volunteer coordination and communications, work party team leaders, and events and fundraising teams.

I would love to hear from you if you have any ideas and suggestions, if you know a friend or relative who would be keen to join us, you may even be interested in helping in an additional or different way yourself. If you would like to chat about new volunteering opportunities or learn more about the Community Conservation Project do get in touch at lclements@mwhg.org.uk

Leanne Clements
MWHG Community Conservation Officer

PROJECT OFFICER'S UPDATE

I had an excellent start to the New Year, obtaining my hazel dormice licence, which entitles me to survey these amazing creatures for scientific or educational purposes and I received a 'Individual Award for Exceptional Service' from Chichester District Council. Working together we can achieve so much positive action for our precious and vital wildlife. I have had the pleasure of working with a range of groups, which include; County/District & Parish Councils; wildlife groups; Men's sheds; local residents and developers.

Over the winter period I continued with the engagement of dog walkers at Chichester Harbour, highlighting the important role we have as dog walkers not to disturb the protected winter waders from feeding and resting, as this is just one of many pressures they are under.

I continue to work in schools, with a range of wildlife focused sessions, this is heart-warming as these little people are passionate about wildlife, their planet and the positive role they can play.

Great thanks and appreciation go to Trevor, Chris and Tom, who covered my session of hedgelaying at Tuppeny Barn and did an amazing job. Also thanks to Keith and Georgie (Chichester Harbour Conservancy) for covering the tree planting session at Apuldram Church and for their assistance (with the Friends of Chichester Harbour) at the ditch/hedgerow in Southbourne.

As always the Sussex biological recorders' seminar in February was the yearly tonic for any negativity, as seeing so many amazing, passionate volunteers/ecologists etc. shows all is not lost so long as we work together. We were fortunate to promote the proposed Wildlife Corridors, enabling us to ask for help with gathering further vital evidence for this policy to be adopted in the Local Plan.



Photo © 2019 Alun Lee

I am surveying the corridors between Chichester Coastal Plain and the South Downs National Park. This has been an amazing experience, exploring and recording wildlife with a team of volunteers.

The highlights have included water voles (obviously); bats; birds (including the Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*); insects etc. and ancient woodland/hedgerow indicators, such as Dog Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*; Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and Butcher's Broom *Ruscus aculeatus*. This shrub has spikey looking leaves, but they aren't leaves, but modified stems. The flowers come out of what looks like the middle of the leaf, which is related to the lily and was used by butchers to clean the butchers block. It grows in ancient woodland in soil that hasn't been disturbed for centuries.

This summer I will be back in Selsey promoting the Selsey Bathing Water Enhancement Project, which includes ‘Yellow Fish’ & ‘Rain Down the Drain’.

This project will clarify to the general public in and around Selsey about how an outdoor drain is different than a household drain, where it goes and why you can’t pour waste substances down them. Road and surface water drains are designed to carry only rainwater, usually to the nearest watercourse. Pouring waste liquids such as engine or cooking oil, paints, chemical wastes, detergents and even litter down these drains causes pollution to enter the watercourse, affecting water quality and harming fish and wildlife.

Under the ‘Yellow Fish’ campaign we will spray paint ‘Yellow Fish’ stencils on the drains that affect East Beach Pond and Selsey Bathing Waters; working in schools and with local groups and organisations over the summer period, finishing with a beach clean and survey at East Beach Pond in September, under the Marine Conservations Society’s Big Beach Clean.

‘Yellow Fish’ – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avoiding-pollution-yellow-fish-scheme>
‘Only Rain Down the Drain’ - <http://lovemybeach.org/rain-down-the-drain/>

Again, it is down to volunteers that so much positive work, benefiting wildlife can be achieved and it is such a pleasure working with them.

A big THANK YOU to all volunteers.

Sarah Hughes

Congratulations on receiving CDCs Individual Award for Exceptional Service, very well deserved!
The Editor



Wood Anemone
Photo © 2019 Sarah Hughes



Dog Mercury
Photo © 2019 Sarah Hughes



Butchers Broom
Photo © 2019 Sarah Hughes

THE MWHG HLF FLOW PROJECT

IMPROVEMENT WORK OVER THE WINTER PERIOD OCTOBER 2018 – MARCH 2019

We have had the busiest work period ever and the hard work and commitment of our volunteers has been awe-inspiring. We are making a huge difference and our work can now be seen in seven parishes.

Sidlesham Parish

One of our most visible sites is **Willow Glen** on the B2145 in Sidlesham and we have completely changed the look of this site by cutting back and removing willow, digging it out and deepening the base, planting a mixed native fruiting hedge along the back, seeding with wildflowers, installing coir rolls and a range of wetland plants.



We have worked on a relic pond on Ham Road called **Sheepwash pond** that was so overgrown that no pond was visible. Once checked on tithe maps the outline shape could be seen. The only clue there had been a pond was the willow. Volunteers worked hard to open this area up and then a digger came in and started work. A deep area was created and then the rain came so we will continue this work next season. A dead hedge was put at the front to use the material generated and to form habitat, and also to offer this site attractive to fly tippers some protection.

Last year when surveying the Sidlesham parish we came across a large ditch with a wide verge at **The Elms**, Ham Road, which had not been managed for 30+ years and which was dark and dried up and very shallow. After a BioBlitz to record species in the summer, we carried out clearance work and then used contractors to remove some of the willow and dig out the ditch. We then seeded with wildflowers, installed a coir roll and planted lots of wetland plant species. The adjacent road has experienced much flooding in the past but with a large grip put into the verge the water now drains into the ditch and is held there.

The FLOW team were contacted by WSCC Highways about an area of **Ham Road / Easton Lane** that flooded continually, and we came up with a plan to reinstate a pond that had been on the 1846 tithe map to hold some of the water off the road. We carried out the digging work and WSCC put in a new headwall to protect the culvert under the road. We have since planted it with wild fruit trees, a coir roll and wetland plant species to try and combat the high levels of nitrates and phosphates suspected to be coming off the adjacent fields.

Hunston parish

We have been working on **Spire Cottage pond** in Church Lane to improve its biodiversity and this year we dug it out so that it can hold water for longer. We have now planted a mixed native fruiting hedge to protect it and to make it look loved and also created small copses by grouping trees. We have planted coir rolls and wetland plants here and are getting the local community involved in species surveying of the site.

West Wittering

We have been working on the large wetland area at **Cakeham Manor Estates** since the start of the project and divided up the site into three sections, working on one area each year. We finished the last of our big work this year and so in the future light management only should be required. We always had strong support from local residents at this site and all our hard work has been rewarded with water voles moving in and kingfishers flying the length of the waterway. We have cleared areas of the bank of Hemlock Water Dropwort and then seeded with wildflowers. We have also installed coir rolls and wetland plants.

We were approached by **West Wittering Estates** to manage a stretch of wetland that they own adjacent to that of Cakeham Manor Estates. They saw what we had created there and asked us for management help. We discovered some invasive species which we have taken steps to remove and then applied for planning permission to get some willow and sycamore pollarded. The Estate then brought in a tree surgeon who carried out the work and left all the wood onsite. We went in and created a dead hedge to use up this material and also to protect the site from dogs and people and to become linking habitat.

East Wittering and Bracklesham

We have been working on a large pond at **Hilton Business Park** as this has potential to hold a lot of water year-round. We had previously used many volunteer sessions opening it up and this year started digging it out in October – and then the rain came! We will have another go later this year, but it is responding well, and local residents tell us it is a hot pot for wildlife now.



The long ditch in **Tile Barn Lane** was identified as having potential during our ditch surveying phase and we have worked hard on it to open it up using volunteers, dig it out with contractors, plant a new mixed native hedge, seed it and put in wetland plants. We hope to see a real biodiversity increase here and already water crowsfoot has moved in without our help so hoping water voles find it suitable in a year or two.

A small but linking pond on the Bracklesham road corner had trees removed from it last year and this year we asked the landowner to dig it out. **Spinney Pond** still needs further digging and we hope to do this at the end of the year as it still did not retain water over the winter.

Bracklesham Barn ditch was worked on this year to open up one side of the bank and remove all the debris and rubbish that we find on this site. Volunteers removed bramble and litter and we reinforced the dead hedge along the edge to try and create some protection.

Earnley

In the Somerley area of Earnley Parish there has been persistent flooding and we have tried to create more tanking areas using relic ponds while also improving the wetland value of the areas. Sparrow Cottage has been a site where we have reinstated a relic ditch, planted a wildflower bank, put in a linking pond, cut back some shading trees over a rife and ditches, and planted wetland plants and installed coir rolls. The site has responded, and water voles are now using the rife where previously there were no signs as there was little light and no diversity of plants.

Hedgehog Hall pond is linked to Sparrow cottage and we have just started to work here, opening it up and taking back some of the trees to get more light in. towards the end of the year we hope to carry out some digging work to deepen it so it will hold water for longer.

Mill Pond house is in the same area as the two above properties and has a large pond in it that was dug out to improve tanking by the Parish Council. We had added some wetland plants so that it becomes a piece of valuable wetland for water voles and other species.



Haydons pond has been on our radar for a while and we have started to manage it. We have opened it up and reduced the height of some of the leaning willows and it maybe dug out later this year. We are mindful the rare oak aphid lives on an oak tree on an island within the pond. We hope the pond will improve in biodiversity with more light let in.

West Itchenor Parish

We continue to advise the Parish council on management of the **West Itchenor village pond** and have carried out monthly working parties opening up key areas, removing Hemlock Water Dropwort, planting a native species hedge, installing stakes and binders, coir rolls and a greater range of wetland plants. Water voles have now moved into the pond after being absent for nearly twenty years so we must have been doing something right!

Birdham Parish

We have three linked ponds in Birdham that we have been working on with the parish to improve their biodiversity and to increase their water holding capacity. **Kingfisher pond** has been transformed with willow removal, coir rolls and digging out.

Birdham Village pond has been taken on as, after years of water vole presence and some harsh management by the parish council and their subsequent disappearance, we decided that we would try and get them back. We have taken down the height of the shading trees and plan a light dig of the silt late summer. We will leave the banks as they are and encourage a better range of wetland species to colonise.



We started work on **Triangle pond and copse** after being approached by the landowner for help. This is a key site as it links the two other ponds but was completely overgrown with a shallow ditch, blocked culvert and heavily shaded. We had some challenges to overcome with spoil dumping by a WSCC contractor but that got sorted and the volunteers worked hard to open it up and to find the edges of the ditch banks. With selective sycamore tree removal and willow thinning this site has now had a footpath created and a large ditch and pond area dug in. The banks have been seeded and a mixed native hedge planted along the front. Coir rolls and wetland plants will finish the site for this year.

DITCH SURVEYING

As well as all this hard-physical improvement work, we have had volunteers still carrying out the all-important ditch and hedgerow surveying that informs our work. They continue to go out in challenging weather and to collect the data that is so valuable to the project.

Donnington

We have had a single volunteer complete all the ditch surveys across this parish in just a few months and he is a total hero. Chris and I hope to turn this data into maps and a report in the near future.

Hunston

We have had a volunteer carrying out surveys of this parish estimate we are 60% through. We are also supporting this parish to identify their environmental assets and to carry out species data gathering ahead of writing their Neighbourhood Plan.

Selsey

We have had a couple of volunteers go out and collect ditch data and are hoping to finish the surveying in this parish in the next few months.

North Mundham

We have just started to make contact with this parish and to approach landowners about access to land. We will hope to recruit volunteers from this parish to help us with the surveying.

Apuldram

We have approached a key landowner in the parish and hope to start surveying here over the next month

OTHER WORK

Mink monitoring

We have been managing and carrying out 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 as a mink has been seen about but has remained elusive despite great efforts to catch it. We are exploring another strategy that involves a device that lets the trap contact a mobile phone if it is triggered – we'll keep you informed of the results!

Education

Emily, the FLOW Communications and Events Officer, has been teaching in schools and focusing on the importance of ditches and wetland to people and wildlife.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We have a busy program of attending events like fetes and village fayres on the Manhood Peninsula over the summer and Emily will be heading that up. She could always do with help as it is fun with a cheery team to put out the word about what we do and why and to recruit new volunteers to help with our work.

Species surveying and habitat surveying

We will have a busy program of species and habitat surveying over the summer and need lots of help with butterfly, moth, bird, reptile, floral and small mammal surveys. We want everyone using iRecord to get our biological data into the Biodiversity Records Centre as this valuable information is needed to protect our wildlife and landscape.

Reports written by the FLOW project

The reports can be seen at www.mwhg.co.uk for the West Wittering Management Plan, the East Wittering and Bracklesham Management Plan and the Earnley Parish Plan. The Sidlesham and Donnington Plans will be over the next couple of months and we will hold information events in those parishes.

BIG THANKS

Thanks go to all the volunteers that have helped us with surveying, admin work, tools, physical work, refreshments, mink monitoring, carrying equipment, turning up whatever the weather, the smiles, laughter and support.

Jane Reeve



Photos © 2019 Jane Reeve

THE FIRST FLOW COFFEE MORNING

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, FLOW is a major conservation scheme to restore the drainage function of wetland on the Manhood Peninsula and provide essential habitats for wildlife. Volunteers are instrumental to the success of the project and the FLOW team would not be able to complete their mission without their hard work! With a cake-loving workforce and three years-worth of parish improvements to share, the team invited the local community to join them for their first ever coffee morning, on April 13th.



Photo © 2019 Nicola Timney

Over thirty regular FLOW volunteers and members of the wider Group, plus individuals new to the project, came along to see the results of the restoration work to date and get inspired about the positive changes being made to ditches, hedgerows and the local environment as a whole. For some contributors to FLOW, the event was their first time meeting the whole team, as these participants complete ditch condition surveys independently, outside of the regular Wednesday, Friday and Saturday group working sessions. It was encouraging for the

team to see a representative from Birdham Parish Council attend, since collaboration with governing bodies has been a priority for the team to create a permanent solution to wetland management.

Attendees discussed the long term aims of the project over maps showing the results of extensive FLOW surveys. These maps highlighted locations which had inadequate vegetation, a high risk of flooding and wetland features that would benefit from considered management. From these findings, the team planned to bring their work to more parishes, as well as train and support volunteer-led groups to care for their local watercourses, with FLOW Communications and Engagement Officer, Emily, and Community Conservation Project Officer, Leanne, leading the exercise. Two grandchildren of FLOW volunteers at the event, were particularly passionate about helping the environment and were keen to learn more from MWHG members about the wildlife that could be helped through the project.



Photo © 2019 Nicola Timney

After a successful first coffee morning, the FLOW team were excited to continue hosting these social meetings and planned to move the regular event to different parishes, take attendees out to visit wetland sites and even complete some bioblitz's during the summer months.

If you would like to know more about the FLOW project or are interested in getting involved, look out for notices of upcoming coffee mornings on www.mwhg.org.uk and on social media '@mwhgpage', where you can meet and talk to the team and existing FLOW volunteers, or get in touch with the FLOW Communications and Engagement Officer at 'hello@mwhg.org.uk'.

Nicola Timney

THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF WHITE-TAILED EAGLES



The Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation and Forestry England have recently been granted a licence by Natural England to re-introduce white-tailed eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* to the Isle of Wight. The five-year programme will begin with the release 6-8 juvenile birds this summer. It is hoped to establish a small base population in the Solent area from Poole to Pagham, with birds eventually spreading out along the South Coast. Studies in the Netherland's have shown that the species are content to nest in populated areas.

White-tailed eagle prey on fish and water birds but will also scavenge readily. Most of the water birds taken by eagles are thought to be injured or sick, with carrion making up around 30% of their diet during the winter months. Fish form an important part of the birds' diet during the spring and summer, when we can expect to see them fishing for abundant species like grey mullet *Mugil cephalus*, found within the shallow waters of our estuaries and harbours.

Disturbance caused by the eagles to wading birds is understood to be similar to that of peregrine falcons *Falco peregrinus*. Prey species quickly become accustomed to their presence, if they are not so already – breeding colonies of gulls and terns are very adept at mobbing and driving off the eagles.

As well as the conservation benefits, it has been shown that in areas where white-tailed eagles have been re-introduced previously, they have generated significant benefits for the local economy. The Isle of Mull for example, receives up to £5 million per year through eagle related tourism.

I will be looking out excitedly for these birds later in the year. With their impressive 2 m – 2.4 m wingspan supporting a 3.5 kg – 7.4 kg bird, they will be certain to turn a few heads!

Sources:

www.roydennis.org/isleofwight

www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/white-tailed-eagle

Nick Gray

Article by Richard Williamson in the Chichester Observer 11 April 2019

Despite plastic pollution, habitat destruction and extinction of our precious wildlife species across the globe there are armies of determined people who want the planet to stay blue. They are in our backyard too.

One such group of volunteers lives south of the city of Chichester and they call themselves the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group.

They have once again worked all through the winter making the lovely Sussex Plain with all its little meadows and hedges and ponds and streams and old oak trees a more healthy environment for all of us to enjoy. They have sent me their autumn and winter report.

Mums, dads and children down on the Selsey peninsular and along the harbour walls have been carefully managing this secret world of water voles and herons, bumble bees and dormice so that the water flows and some sunlight gets through the canopy to refresh the pond sedge, the dragonfly, and the wild orchid as well.

The area is a miniature Amberley Wildbrooks, which is itself now well guarded as an international treasure that must never be destroyed as it nearly was back in the 1970s.

Londoners in their tens of thousands escaping the pressure of grinding traffic and air pollution on summer days come down here to the coast and breathe again as they trundle gratefully through the last ten miles to the Witterings and the seaside carpark.

The MWHG newsletter has on its front cover a photo of a winter scene with snow surrounding a newly cleared stream winding through the trees.

It reminded me of an Edward Seago oil painting of a Norfolk Broadland scene. Again, a reminder of an international treasure. (In case you don't know Seago's works, they are all in Royal and international collections now but superb reproduction plate books are available and well worth seeing to show you what I am talking about).

Apart from riparian maintenance, the MWHG monitors all species and their records are held by the Sussex Biological Records Centre and National Biodiversity Network and they have been short-listed for an award by NBN. Access the work at www.mwhg.co.uk.

Some people have questioned the work on pond and ditch clearance which can seem a violent intrusion upon the landscape as it is carried out. But without this management work, waterways silt up, dry out, and become woodland.

That is fine up to a point but in these days of limited resources there are some rare and very beautiful species that can be seriously disadvantaged and die out since fresh water habitats are far more rare than natural woodland.

Amberley Wildbrooks mentioned above would turn into woodland if not managed, with the loss of 360 species of flowering plants, and also birds with specialised requirements such as snipe and reed warblers.

So trust the team of volunteers working down on the Manhood peninsula for they are led by experts such as Jane Reeve and Sarah Hughes.

Now you know what I am going to say last of all don't you? If this article gets just one more volunteer to join the friendly group we shall all be very pleased. You will be welcomed with open arms. Nothing could be more useful or healthy for you to get involved in.

THE EILEEN SAVILL AWARD 2019

Has there ever been a better time to praise young people? All around the world they are taking a stand to ensure their future and that of the planet by demanding action on climate change and biodiversity loss.

The Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group [MWHG] is again seeking nominations for the Eileen Savill Award. This is an annual award for young people, under 25 years of age, who contribute to the conservation or celebration of the landscape, wildlife or heritage of the Manhood Peninsula, or help others learn about this special place.

The award is open to individuals or groups who have shown enthusiasm and commitment towards practical conservation work or learning about the wildlife and/or heritage of the area or celebrating it through art, photography, writing etc. Those nominated do not have to live on the Manhood Peninsula but their activities must relate to it.

Examples of actions meriting nomination could include:

- Setting up a wildlife garden
- Campaigning on environmental issues
- Tackling plastic pollution
- Working for a Green Group or Gardening Club in school
- Taking part in survey work
- Regular volunteering for an environmental or heritage group
- Keeping a nature diary or records of sightings
- Helping to clean up an area
- A research project
- Helping others to understand more about their local heritage or wildlife
- Leading practical conservation tasks
- Writing, art or photography inspired by local landscapes, wildlife or heritage

We welcome nominations for individuals, family groups, children/students at school, college or university, cubs, scouts, brownies, guides, members of other youth groups as well as members of conservation or history/heritage groups. Previous nominees may be nominated again.

The winner of the award will receive a locally hand-crafted trophy and a prize chosen to support the winner's activities. The presentation will take place in the autumn.

Eileen Savill lived in Selsey for almost fifty years and devoted her life to encouraging young people by teaching for twenty-three years at Manhood School [now The Academy, Selsey]. She always saw the potential in young people and nurtured it, even when others had written certain young people off. She was a founder member of the MWHG and contributed artwork and photographs to many of the group's publications. Eileen loved the area and was passionate about preserving and celebrating its heritage. She was also an active volunteer in many of Selsey's groups, including the RNLI and Camera Club. She spent her life giving.

Do you know a budding Greta Thunberg or someone with a similar passion for preserving our green planet?

Look out for nomination forms soon on the MWHG website: www.mwhg.org.uk

Joe Savill

SELSEY PHOTO ARCHIVE PROJECT

In 2018 Selsey Town Council received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project to preserve and make accessible a significant collection of photographs from Selsey Society's archive. The project, made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, will focus on creating a dedicated website as an invaluable photographic resource for everyone. It has brought together volunteers from the community with members of the Manhood Wildlife & Heritage Group, Selsey Town Council, former members of Selsey Society, and expert staff from the West Sussex Record Office who are providing full training and guidance.

The Selsey Society, which dissolved in 2015, collected a wide-ranging collection of several thousand photographs, postcards and other artefacts. The collection has images dating from the 19th century to the present day and covers significant topics unique to Selsey and rare in Sussex, such as lifeboats, coastal erosion, the fishing industry, railway carriage homes, the Selsey Tram light railway, caravan and holiday parks. The collection, according to Selsey Society's constitution, was to pass directly to the Record Office in Chichester but this would have, potentially, made it less accessible for the people of Selsey and beyond. This project aims to resolve this issue by making it accessible to all whilst ensuring the long-term preservation of the originals in the Record Office.

After initial training by Record Office staff, volunteers have been cataloguing the collection using a detailed spreadsheet produced by the Record Office. Important details, such as description, date, location, etc, about each photo are recorded as accurately as possible. So far more than 2,500 photos have been catalogued. During this process photos are being selected for the initial 500 to be displayed on the website. The next stage will be scanning the selected photographs and preparing them for uploading onto the website. A team has recently been engaged to design and build the site and the design process is just beginning. It is hoped that the website will go live sometime in the autumn.

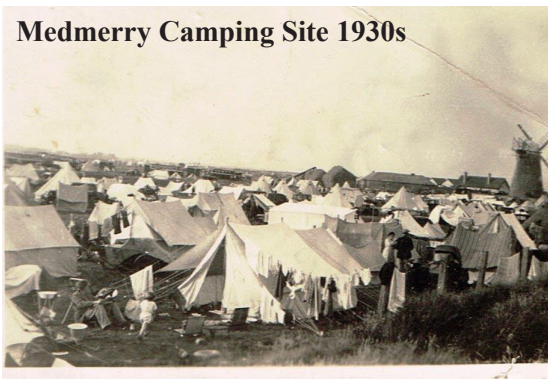
A Selsey heritage exhibition, in partnership with Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group, is planned for the August Bank Holiday weekend. It will focus on the history of Selsey High Street and will include images from the collection.

The project has been very fortunate to have recruited an enthusiastic and committed group of volunteers but more help would still be valuable. Anyone joining us will benefit from training, provided by Record Office staff, in cataloguing, scanning and conservation techniques, as well as the sheer joy of viewing and researching fascinating images from Selsey's past, not to forget becoming part of a very welcoming volunteer team which has a real say in the project's development.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering should contact Selsey Town Council on 01243 605803 or email enquiries@selseytowncouncil.gov.uk or email the Project Co-ordinator at chairmt@mwhg.org.uk

Joe Savill
Project Co-ordinator

Medmerry Camping Site 1930s



Marine Hotel



BIODIVERSITY/ iRECORD

I joined the MWHG as a volunteer at the end of 2018, with FLOW and general conservation in mind. At one of the volunteer briefings, Jane talked about biodiversity and iRecord. Their website makes it easier for wildlife sightings to be collated, checked by experts and made available to support research and decision-making at local and national levels. By registering with iRecord, your sightings are shared with the recording community, and you have access to dynamic maps and graphs of your data, thereby making a contribution to science and conservation.

In January 2019, I started reporting sightings via iRecord of birds in our garden, and also in the three hedgerows that surround our housing estate near Drift Road, Selsey. Most of these sightings are for common garden birds (albeit some are on the RSPB's red list): starlings, blackbirds, robins, sparrows etc. I report these sightings via a phone app; this is very easy to use and keep track of what's been sighted e.g., where seen, bird type, abundance etc. The sightings are then checked by an expert at iRecords, and the outcome confirmed by email; normally "*Accepted as considered correct*".

In March/April this year, I received an unexpected email saying that my tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*) sightings were "*Awaiting review*", with the following additional comments:

Hello David - this is a very scarce species in Sussex away from the two breeding areas on the Pevensy and East Guldeford Levels (East Sussex). Did you manage a photograph and have a more precise record of abundance? Local experienced birders are checking the 'sparrows' in Selsey as this is a very unusual species away from the two small breeding colonies in East Sussex.

The RSPB website shows UK conservation status for tree sparrows as red; the highest conservation priority, with species needing urgent action. I will be paying more attention to my sparrow sightings from now on, in particular abundance and photographs. It's good to know that there is someone at iRecords reviewing sightings. In addition to my local area, I have seen sparrows around the recreation ground at Oval Lane/ Grafton Road, Selsey Bill.

The point of this article in the MWHG newsletter is twofold: I would endorse Jane's advice and encourage everyone to register with iRecords. If you are already registered with iRecords, report sparrow sightings in the Manhood Peninsular!

David Wyatt



House Sparrow © 2019 Istock

LIFE IS A DITCH

Hi, a little about me; I'm Kim, 61 years old and this is how I found MWHG and how it has helped me through a traumatic time.

For 7½ years, along with my husband Mick, I travelled France, Spain, Scotland and all over England in our large motorhome. We did this full time as we sold the family home. During our travels we had come across lots of different sites of nature in the countryside of Europe and the UK. We are very avid walkers and love wildlife, flora, fauna and take an interest in the environment.

We sold the motorhome last June 2018 and moved permanently to West Wittering in July. We were keen to meet new friends and explore the area. It was on one of our walks that we came across a leaflet at The Wad, regarding volunteering for MWHG. After discussing it I emailed Jane Reeve who emailed back with details of the next group working at Itchenor Pond in Dec 18 / Jan 19. We went along in the afternoon and met Christopher Drake and the team of volunteers. He chatted to us about the work and introduced us to the members. This really whetted our appetite and we decided we wanted to join this wonderful worthwhile group, which we did in January 2019.

The work is very varied and can be quite hard at times, but we get a lovely “green workout” - no need for the gym! The work involves digging, planting wetland plants, clearing invasive weeds, planting trees, scattering wildflower seeds and grasses, and of course watering where we can. We work every Wednesday, 9.30am – 3.00pm and some Thursdays and Saturdays. I don't do a Friday as I have counselling on that morning due to reasons I will explain later. We have done ditch surveys with Christopher which is so interesting and made us realise how important surveying these ditches are. We take our grandchildren out on walks when we have them and always take bags and litter pickers with us (supplied by Jane). The two young ones, Elsie aged 8, and Matilda aged 3, are so excited about this and always ask to go litter picking. They are like little sponges and are so eager to learn about nature and saving the planet. They have both made posters for Jane about littering, plastic and how it is damaging the planet.

Just recently while visiting Triangle Pond, Birdham, to see how the planting was coming along, we met a gentleman walking his dog. He stopped us to chat about the wonderful job the volunteers (along with Jane and Christopher) had done and I was proud to say I was part of the group.

During a recent visit to Chichester Canal we were lucky enough to see three water voles and as we know they are in decline we were absolutely thrilled, and I managed to get a clear video recording of one swimming across the canal. We have recently had a wonderful day out with the group to Binsted Woods surveying dormouse and the day was perfect with very knowledgeable wonderful people.

We are always provided with tea, coffee and cakes and they get special cakes for me as I am gluten free. Everything is provided; gloves, tools etc. I would highly recommend volunteering for this wonderful group.



Photo © Terry Whittaker

I have suffered from depression (counselling on Fridays) due to childhood abuse by my adoptive father as a young child and young adult. After he died in October 2017 I went to pieces and finally told my doctor who referred me to PARCS for counselling. Joining the MWHG had “saved” me so I can put everything into the work, which keeps me focussed and stops me thinking of what has happened to me.

Kim

Thank you for sharing this personal experience, Kim. It is proof in action that involvement with nature can help mental as well as physical health. The Editor

MANOR GREEN PARK

It has been a busy time at Manor Green Park! After consultation with Selsey Town Council, it was decided to remove the low rail fence around the orchard and include that area into the general park. The few remaining apple trees will continue to be looked after and the empty plots filled in and grassed over.



In the rough area next to the orchard, commemorative trees were planted some years ago and these, too, have had mixed success. One which was lost was planted in memory of Bill Lelliott and it was a pleasure to obtain a replacement Rowan for his widow, Dee. Dee came along with her son Jonathan to see the new tree and help plant cowslips, another favourite of Bill's, around it.

For some time now, the rockery in the Sensory Garden has given concern. All efforts to keep it looking attractive and weed-free have failed. When it was suggested that a Lavender Bed would look good there, the idea was seized upon; the time of year was right and there was no stopping us! A variety of small, healthy, English lavenders have been planted and will be tended carefully. We are delighted with the result.



The Sensory Garden will be part of Open Garden Day on 2nd June this year and we hope some of the lavender will be flowering by then to give a really good show.

We have also continued to improve the bed along by the Nursery and are reaping the rewards, with the planting looking much more mature and colour being maintained over much longer periods.

Selsey Town Council has asked Manor Park to be part of the Love Parks Event on Sunday, 23rd June. Many attractions are planned, and Manhood Wildlife and Heritage volunteers have once again come up trumps by offering full support. It is hoped to have a moth trap, reptile sheets, a music attraction and other activities and to attract more interest and appreciation of the lovely area from the many visitors to the park.

Sheila Wilkinson

EAST BEACH POND

In October 2018 contractors began installing a large foul water sewage pipe along Beach Road Selsey. A sizable storage compound housing plant and materials was set up in the East Beach car park. Signs and bollards were placed across the whole site with several finishing up in the pond. The low water level in April allowed us to extract the majority of these from the murky water. This construction work has taken far longer than the original six month estimate and the long suffering residents have lived with the daily sound and vibrations of excavators and pumps, coupled with the stench of diesel lingering across the area.

A drop of 30 centimetres in the pond water level over a two month period gave us cause for concern. The construction company said they weren't to blame but when an engineer from CDC investigated, his conclusion was that low winter rainfall had lowered the water table but the excavation work, which required ground water being pumped out and released south of the pond, may have contributed to this. With no water entering or discharging the pond soon stagnated which seemed to encourage reed growth. At the end of April, after light rain, a trickle was noted at the inlet which seemed to confirm the engineer's assessment.

A barren site on a slope at the north entrance has been improved using small turfs. Again we sourced our turf from the car park grass verges where it spreads onto the concrete surface. It has been four years since we cut the verges and during that period the grass had spread about 20 cm. Although the turfs consist of ragged clumps, some with soil and others just a network of roots bound together by windblown grits, they do the trick. By roughing up the soil prior to laying the turfs and adding silt from the pond margin to raise the thinnest ones, the finished effect is acceptable. The unevenness will soon find its level and as the wildflowers and perennial grasses develop, the scars will be hidden.

Brent Lodge released five juvenile swans on the pond in the early part of 2019. In February their tranquil existence was disturbed when two adult swans returned to the pond. The adults looked as though they were establishing territory, which meant the youngsters were constantly being attacked. Three of the five got the message and left but a pair chose to hold out. The adults created a platform of reeds and continued to harass the two remaining youngsters. This display of territorial dominance is natural and provides an important lesson for the youngsters but it was unfortunately misinterpreted by a few local people. Upset by the viciousness of the adult's behaviour someone started circulating the story of the aggressive swans of East Beach Pond. Sarah and I received e-mails, as did others who were drawn into this farce and the story even reached the local newspapers. Meanwhile the two juveniles sought refuge elsewhere but when a week later the adult birds abandoned the site the youngsters returned and have become firm favourites with local people.

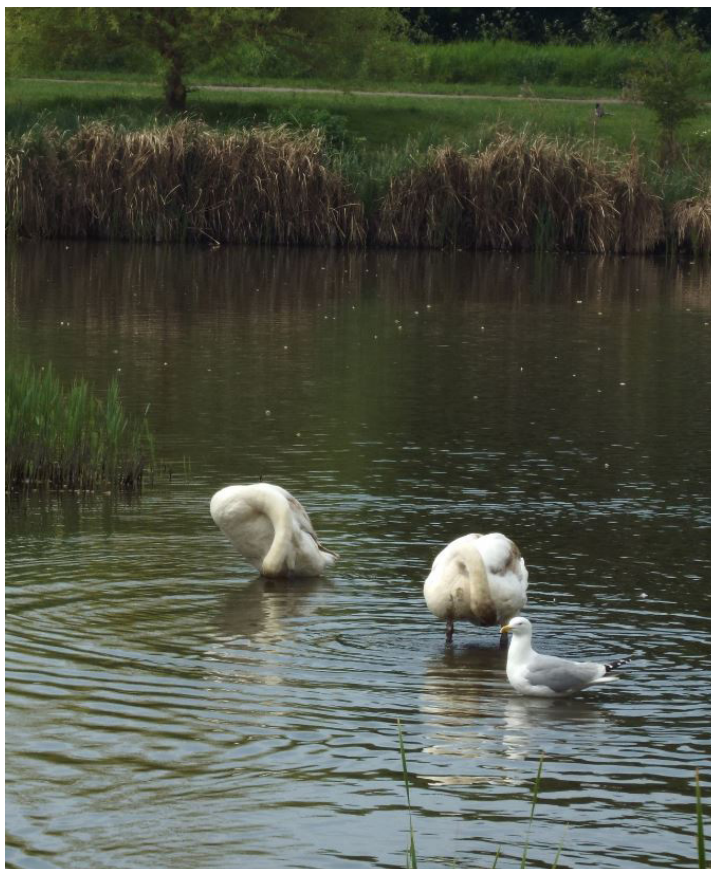


Photo © 2019 Dave Haldane

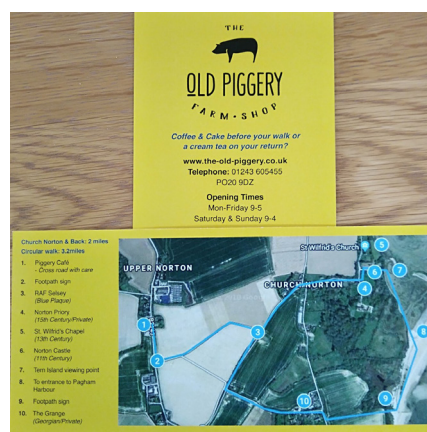
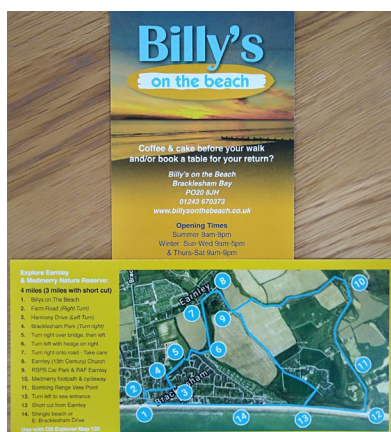
Dave Haldane

HERITAGE

Trail leaflets

Two Heritage Trail leaflets have been produced in conjunction with local businesses:

The Old Piggery Cafe have 'sponsored' a trail which visits the castle and chapel at Church Norton and Billys-on-the-Beach have funded another trail which explores Earnley Church, RAF Earnley and Medmerry Nature Reserve.



Other trails are being developed with Birdham and Mundham Parish Councils.

Exhibition:

The 'Pavilion' at Chaplins Coffee House has been booked for the August Bank Holiday (24-26th) to stage an exhibition in conjunction with the Selsey Photo Archive Group based on Selsey High Street.

Bill Martin

Land Settlement Association

Weald and Downland

Longport Farmhouse (the former reception to the museum) is now an additional exhibition space and it may be home to an LSA display in the Autumn. It would be great if you could, as you have in the past, help to promote the LSA story by stewarding the display for a morning or afternoon session. I will be meeting with museum staff to discuss the format of the display and will then be able to advise you about actual dates and times.

You will recall that the Godfrey Shirt, who lived in the LSA house which is currently in storage, had also been a founder steward at the museum and has his name on a bench outside Bayleaf House. There is now another LSA/museum connection. Keith Coles, a volunteer at the museum working with the oxen, used to live at No 41 (Rookery Road) on the Chawston LSA in Bedfordshire for 20 years from 1991. The previous owner had purchased the property at the closure of the LSA in 1983. Keith and his wife Linda knew several former LSA tenants and I am currently trying to make contact with John Chinnery (No 22), who may have previously worked on an LSA smallholding in Sidlesham!

When you next visit the Weald and Downland you will see two new buildings and will soon be able to enjoy butter made at the dairy on bread baked at the bakehouse made from the flour which is ground at the nearby mill!

Sad News

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the death of one of the stars of our film - Freda Booth (No 15), who died peacefully at the end of January. Like so many others of you Freda not only made a huge contribution to the LSA, but also to the recording of its history. My condolences to Rosemary, Roger and Bernard.

Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)

I visited MERL again at the end of February to research the early LSA Annual Reports. You may be interested to know that Sidlesham was at the forefront of LSA innovations! In 1937 hen batteries were installed in preference to the more orthodox outdoor system and in 1938 Sidlesham (and Dedham LSA) became central training centres with 292 men admitted before the outbreak of war – 194 went to work on other LSAs and 98 ‘relinquished’ training in the first three months. PTO

Sidlesham Heritage Trail

Beamish Museum

In April I visited Beamish Museum in County Durham. There is a 1900s pit village there, complete with pit pony stables. Beamish also host an annual ‘Yesterday belongs to You’ event for local history groups and I have contacted the organisers in the hope of developing links with some of the families who came to Sidlesham, but then ‘returned north’.

Foxash LSA

I have been contacted (via the website) by someone at Foxash LSA in Essex. Brian Howe came to the estate in 1941 at the age of six, when his father became Orchard Foreman. After the closure in 1983 Foxash Growers and Dedham Vale Nurseries were established, similar to Sidlesham Growers.

Sidlesham School

How times change! In 1939 four new classrooms had to be built to accommodate the influx of LSA families, at least one family had ten children. The school population at that time increased from 120 to 284. In 2019 a total of eleven children (of the 132 at the school) live in former LSA houses - six of them in one class which I led round part of the heritage trail earlier this week.

Tell me a story

I have now done 42 presentations to local groups and societies (with a total audience of more than 1600 people) as well as several heritage trail walks. Four more dates are booked for 2019 so if you have friends or family who haven’t seen the archive film, or would like to know more about the LSA and the heritage trail, let me know and I can share the dates.

Only three first names left

No 41 JE Freeman (1950s-60s), No 70 Husband of Joan Holley (1950s-60s) Joan was Secretary of Fletchers Hut & Boatman also No 70 in the 1970s.

Thank you for all your continued support and assistance with this project.

Bill Martin

MEDMERRY – THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

To take a quote from a classic 1980's movie, "If you build it, they will come". The same can definitely be applied to the Medmerry Managed Realignment Scheme. Five years of monitoring has been completed since the breach in September 2013, covering everything from topography, mud invertebrates, saltmarsh development, fish, breeding birds, molluscs, flowering plants, reptiles, water voles.....the list goes on.

Some of the highlights include breeding waders increasing year on year, with avocets starting to nest in 2013 (one pair) and reaching 36 pairs in 2018. Overwintering wader numbers have trebled since 2014. Despite national trends showing declines in farmland birds, at Medmerry breeding numbers have quadrupled since 2009. Skylarks have trebled in number since 2014. Yellowhammers have increased from 2 pairs in 2014 to 32 pairs in 2018. Nesting Linnets have doubled since 2014, with over-wintering flocks of 1240 plus birds – a new County record.

Annual surveys have sampled over 10,000 fish, identifying 32 species. Gobies, sand smelt, bass and mullet dominated, identifying the site as an important "nursery" for sea fish. Thirteen species of marine mollusc have been identified, four of which have only localised distribution.

And what about the flooding? Well, we have had plenty of named storm events over the last five years and there has been no repeat of the flooding in 2008 which caused £5million worth of damage. Both the marine and freshwater storage areas seem to be performing well and to the specifications they were designed for.

It's fair to say that the Medmerry scheme is delivering on many levels.

Steve Webster

Medmerry aerial shot, early January 2014 © John Akerman



MWHG COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECT

EVENTS CALENDAR 2019

All of the events will have a staff team member on hand, and it would be great if we could be supported by a couple of volunteers at each one. You will have the chance to chat with members of the public, share how we work to protect and preserve local wildlife and heritage, and of course have lots of fun!

If you are free to offer just an hour or two, or stay for the full event, we would be most grateful. We will bring refreshments, but ask that you bring lunch (where required) if you will be able to help for a longer event.

Please take a look at the list and if you are free to support any of the events let me know as soon as possible which ones and how long you are able to offer at lclements@mwhg.org.uk

Event	Date	Time	Activity / Opportunity
Selsey Town Council Love Your Parks Week East Beach Pond	Sat 22 June	10.30am-3.30pm	Pond dipping, nature trails, quiz Engagement, awareness raising, volunteer/member recruitment, fundraising
Selsey Town Council Love Your Parks Week Manor Green Park	Sun 23 June	10.30am-3.30pm	Moth trapping, nature trails, quiz Engagement, awareness raising, volunteer/member recruitment, fundraising
North Mundham Gala & Flower Show	Sat 13 July	Set up from 12noon Event 2-4pm	General awareness, volunteer/member recruitment, activities
Binsted Strawberry Fair	Sun 21 July	2-4.30pm	General awareness, volunteer/member recruitment, activities
Sidlesham Village Fete	Sat 27 July	Set up from 12noon Event 2-4pm	General awareness, volunteer/member recruitment, activities
Selsey Lifeboat Station Lifeboat Day	Sun 4 Aug	10am-5pm	Engagement, awareness raising, recruitment, fundraising
Transition Chichester Brewery Field Open Day	Sun 25 Aug	Set up from 10am Event 12-4pm	Awareness, engagement, recruitment

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

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter at
“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

EDITORIAL CONTACT DETAILS

newsletter@mwhg.org.uk

Copy date for next issue 10 November 2019



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Registered Charity Number 1147335

Company Number 07629112

Printed by Selsey Press on 75% recycled paper

