



Manhood Wildlife & Heritage Annual Report 2023



Chair's Report

Looking back over this year we have been able to push forward on several projects as well as continuing the work started before the pandemic. This is thanks to great efforts by everyone involved, the management team and all our wonderful volunteers.

This year we were able, with the support from Portsmouth Water to complete the update of the water vole action plan and even managed to record some video of a water vole swimming in one of the rifes on the peninsula. The Community Conservation Project work supported by the Woodger Trust in the Witterings area has been very successful. Including habitat renewal, new gardens, and a good deal of work with schools and youth groups. Louise Barnetson has given us a detailed description of the work with lots of excellent photographs in her report in this document. Many congratulations and thanks to her and Jane Reeve for all they have achieved this year. Our wonderful group of volunteers continued to turn out in all weathers to man the working parties and the species surveys.

The West Wittering Tree Nursery with Alex Ainge leading the group has continued to raise native species trees and now is in its third year. The Selsey tree nursery, to be named the Beryl James Tree Nursery which is on land leased from Langmeads Ltd, has been set up and now has two beds of young trees growing on, with space to make more beds, and donations of trees waiting for planting in the autumn.

For the second year we have worked with with West Sussex County Council with the Pollinator Highway project. To increase the numbers of pollinating insects, a series of verges in Selsey and along the road to Chichester are not mown during the summer and allowed to grow, in addition they are seeded with wild flower seeds. This year we added new verges and were helped by WSCC having a 'no mow May' policy which increased the flowering plants across the town verges. At the end of the season the verges are mown and raked and the material is composed. A lovely group of volunteers from Target came and helped us.

The East Beach Pond and the Manor Park Gardens continue to be looked after by our volunteers. As we see the effects of Climate Change on the weather, with increasing numbers of heavy rain storms, the East Beach Pond is an important part of the drainage and containment of surface water as well as being a haven for birds and animals, so the work of the group to keep it in good order becomes more and more important. Manor Park Gardens continues to be a quite space of great beauty in Selsey. The Town Council is hoping to develop the Selsey Centre for the community, the Garden will be a key part of any improvements.

We continue to work to keep the Manhood Peninsula as a special place with a vibrant history and a unique ecology. Our 25th year, which we celebrate at the AGM has seen us still here and still working towards this end. With the changes we are seeing in the world, Climate Change has come to the front of our thoughts and we work to mitigate these effects in all our projects.

I would like to take this opportunity in our 25th year to give a special thanks to the project leaders and management team for all their time and energy given to MWHG, they are also volunteers, and they put in an enormous number of hours to 'keep us on the road'. Jill Sutcliffe who does an amazing job applying for grant money, Jane Scotland our Treasurer, Joe Saville who, as well as running the Selsey Photo Archive and the Beryl James Tree Nursery, is involved in other projects, and along with



Jill is a fount of knowledge and history of the group. Bill Martin, who works tirelessly on the Heritage agenda, and Paul Bedford, who's specialist knowledge of the wetlands and waterways, and his invaluable contribution to planning issues on the Manhood has been so valuable to the group and to the environment.

Running a charity requires a great deal of unseen work. I would like to thank Nikki Timney for all her work collating the quarterly newsletters, updating and maintaining the website and uploading wildlife records to the iRecords database.

This year we have also seen a great deal of activity in the Heritage area. The Selsey Photo Archive, have continue to upload photos from various collections to their website, and have given some talks to various community groups in Selsey based on the collection. Bill Martin has finalised the walk along the route of the Selsey Tramway, the route is now signposted and has information boards along the route telling the story of the individual stations.

As we go forward we are always keen to have contributions from those who may not feel their talents are out in the field, but could provide support in a different way. We have been 'managing' with out a Secretary, and would be enormously grateful for some one to step forward and take on some of this task. We also need a Health and Safety officer if any recently retired person from that industry would like to join us!

We plan to finish off our 25th year with our AGM in October, with a review of the last 25 years and a speculative look forward to the next 25. This will be followed by some socialising with food! I hope many of you will be able to join us.

*Dr Lesley Bromley
Chair of the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group
September 2023*

Gina Scott

A very early volunteer who joined the initial group, then called the Selsey Parish Mapping Group in its infancy before spreading out and acting across the entire Manhood Peninsula [MP] from 2002, was GINA CARRINGTON.

Gina lived in Sidlesham and was a member of the Manhood Friends of the Earth Group, FOE. With her love of flowers and her artistic skills she made a great knowledgeable contribution from the start. The initial meeting drew together those interested in mapping the habitats of the Parish of Selsey in order to establish a baseline of knowledge about the Parish and its wildlife. This work led to an exhibition in the local library in Selsey, a drive for more volunteers and culminated in a Phase 1 Habitat Survey for Selsey and the publication of the Selsey Parish Map. Gina was one of a group of four volunteers who conducted that initial Habitat survey.

She went on to work with a group to do similar work for the Parish of Sidlesham. In addition, the work done in these parishes later prompted the District Council to draw up a map of the entire MP illustrating the important areas for Water Voles, Bats and Barn Owls. There is always a mix of people in any group. Gina has a quiet non-confrontational manner and a marked persistence. Don't be misled by the quiet understated personality! She gets any job she tackles done and done to the highest standards. So, as a member of the group's management team, she played a pivotal role in steering the group forward. It was during this time David Scott who was also a member of the MP FOE group joined the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group, MWHG. They married. Ideally matched, David was an architect and committed to the group, helping it by becoming Hon Treasurer and enabling the group to produce professional accounts. Together, they provided the group with a range of skills, enthusiasm and friendly contributions. When David died a path and pond was constructed in his name on the Manhood Peninsula and Gina wishes to add to the MP's shortage of trees with a grove of trees in his name. The location and implementation of this aspiration has yet to be agreed and implemented.

Not only did Gina provide much encouragement to others then running subgroups across the MP, including Health and Safety and activities with moth traps etc., she also, alongside David, was a key member of the Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands [FLOW] Steering Group and was a Trustee for the group as a whole. She has played a vital and invaluable role throughout the group's existence and now aged 80 – doesn't look it – has decided to step back but will still be available for celebrations. WELL, we celebrate Gina and her remarkable contributions which have helped make the organisation the way it is today and made possible the massive amount of work done and ground covered.

Joe Savill and Jill Sutcliffe, MWHG Co-founders, 1997

Selsey Photo Archive

All of the original aims of the project have now been achieved but there is still much exciting work to do. Here are some of the highlights from this year:

- Descriptions for all the different categories of photos on the website have been completed and added to the site;
- Users of the site can now increase the number of photos shown on each page of their search list;
- Every photo on the site has been placed within a specific decade to aid searching the gallery by date;
- In June 2022 we put on a display in the High Street of Selsey's Royal Celebrations, as part of the Selsey Jubilee Jamboree. Thanks to Jeff Alan for allowing us to use his empty shop;
- In January 2023 Keith Batchelor gave a presentation to Selsey WI about the history of the High Street. Keith also gave talks, using photos from the archive, to other groups throughout the year. Huge thanks to Keith for this;
- In March 2023 we had a display, promoting the project, at the Selsey Town Meeting. Thanks very much to Felicia Hughes-Freeland for stewarding this for us.



As well as all this, we have continued to scan and catalogue the new collections that have been loaned or donated to the archive. We have also been preparing to gather memories of life in Selsey by interviewing some of the older residents. We intend to pilot this later this year. None of the above would have been possible without the brilliant project team. Their enduring commitment and enthusiasm is inspiring.

Please visit www.selseyphotoarchive.co.uk

Joe Savill

The Selsey/Beryl James Tree Nursery



The licence agreement with David Langmead for the site in Selsey was finally signed at the end of March 2022 and this year has mainly been spent planning, resourcing and setting up the site. After delays because of ground conditions, caused by the very dry, hot weather, the rabbit fencing enclosing the nursery site was eventually erected in October. The first tree – an oak sapling – was planted in a newly prepared bed at the end of that month. Further donated trees were added to this bed in November.

During the autumn volunteers collected local tree seed and this was sown towards the end of November at the Hidden Garden in Selsey, where they are being looked after.

The nursery site is now protected and well provisioned with essential tools, equipment and materials. This has only been possible because of grants from the Sussex Community Foundation and Chichester District Council [CDC], through their Government funded tree project. So huge thanks to both these organisations and, of course, David Langmead for providing the land.

I would also like to say a special thank you to Sophie Hamnett – the CDC Tree Project Officer – for her continual support with the grant funding, advice and enthusiasm for the project and to Paul Sadler, who runs the Grow Selsey Project, for offering us use of the Hidden Garden as well as all his expert guidance.

We are fortunate to have recruited a team of seven very hard working volunteers who are sharing the work so far. But more people will be required as the site develops, so do get in touch if it interests you.

Joe Savill

Vitacress Wildlife Survey Project

Our relationship with Vitacress Herbs, Runcton was rekindled this year when they reached out for support with monitoring their Biodiversity Management Plan [BMP] for the site. MWHG helped with the development of this plan when we produced a Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report for the site in 2016.

A group of enthusiastic, committed volunteers has been assembled and in June 2022 we carried out baseline surveys of some of the more important hedgerows around the site. This was followed by regular pollinator surveys throughout the summer, based on training provided by the Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust, organised by Vitacress.



In October, Shane Makin [Site Manager] and Leah Mathias-Collins [Vitacress Group Environment Manager] hosted a meeting, for the volunteer group, to outline the company's overall environmental plan and to discuss our contribution. It was a very uplifting meeting as the company has very ambitious plans for sustainability and environmental improvement, and they provided a great selection of refreshments!

This is a long-term monitoring project, as the BMP covers a 10 year period to 2031, so more volunteers would be very welcome. I would like to thank all the volunteers for their dedication and support as well as Leah and Shane, who have always warmly welcomed us and shown appreciation for our work. I'm also very grateful for the funding we have received from Vitacress this year.

Joe Savill

Wittering Area Community Conservation Project

Report for April 2022 – March 2023

The Wittering Area Community Conservation Project is a three-year project, which started in November 2021. The Project is funded by the F Glenister Woodger Trust to work across West Wittering, East Wittering, Bracklesham, Earnley, West Itchenor and Birdham with the aim of improving wildlife habitat, flood management, community engagement with the local environment, and promoting community and personal well-being. The funding allowed for the creation of a Community Conservation Officer role for a three-year period. The role is shared by Jane Reeve and Louise Barnettson, who are leading the project.

Habitat Management & Surveying

Our regular weekly volunteer sessions continued, carrying out habitat management during the autumn/winter months and surveying of flora and fauna during the spring/summer months. There were 44 volunteer sessions from 01 April 2022-31 March 2023, involving 266 volunteers, and amounting to 1,015 volunteer hours. From April 2023 up to the end of June 2023 there were a further 17 sessions, involving 87 volunteers, amounting to another 221 volunteer hours.

The work we have done to maintain, improve, and create habitat for wildlife at various sites has included cutting and clearing vegetation, sowing wildflower seeds, planting trees, creating 'dead hedges' and log piles, removing invasive plants, installing bird and bat boxes, and expanding and improving the tree nursery in West Wittering. We have involved several corporate groups in our habitat management work, and this continues to be a growing area with many more requests coming in from a variety of different organisations wishing to offer their staff 'volunteer days' - we already have several booked in for autumn/winter 2023/24.



Above: Team from publishing company, Wiley, creating a wildflower area in West Wittering. This land, by the Bus Stop on Rookwood Road, was previously closely mown. We achieved an agreement

with local authorities to make it 'wilder' and it now provides important habitat for pollinators and other wildlife.



Above: Team from WSP improving wetland habitat on Cakeham Manor Estate land. After a hiatus (for reasons out of our control), we re-established our relationship with Cakeham Manor and will continue to manage this important wildlife site.



Above: Environment Agency team, working alongside regular MWHG volunteers, planting trees at Birdham Recreation Ground. We worked with Birdham Parish Council to develop a plan to improve the biodiversity value of their recreational ground with more trees and less mowing. We have also installed bird and bat boxes at this site.



Above: Volunteers removing invasive plants and sowing wildflower seeds at West Itchenor Pond.



Above: Volunteers managing Birdham Village Pond, which provides habitat for endangered water voles and attracts many bird species.

Our floral surveying of sites took place in April, May and June, our regular weekly moth trapping and ID sessions took place in June and July, and bat survey sessions also in June and July. Bats were recorded at all the sites we visited. Further to this, volunteers have been recruited to observe and record wildlife independently by making regular visits to our sites over the summer and recording their sightings on iRecord. Training and guidance have been provided with a focus on encouraging more people to use iRecord, making the data available to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN).



Above: Moth ID session with volunteers in Earnley.



Above: Floral surveying at Triangle Pond, Birdham.

Engagement & Education

We have continued to work with local children through our popular 'Wildlife Warriors' after-school clubs, held at local primary schools in Birdham, West Wittering and East Wittering. These sessions typically involve 8 to 12 young children at each session where we aim to enthuse and educate them about wildlife through hands-on (messy!) activities such as making bird feeders, pond dipping, minibeast hunts, and owl pellet dissection. We have also run several sessions with the 1st Birdham and Witterings Scout Group and with the 1st East Wittering Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. These sessions often involve tree planting days, species surveys outdoors, and hands-on practical activities.

We also delivered a day of teaching in every class, to 140 children, at Birdham Primary School about water voles, habitat and looking after our local environment. We hosted a Community Action Day for Seaford College pupils and staff at Bracklesham when they picked litter across the site, made and painted bird and bat boxes and seeded a new wildflower area for Bracklesham Barn.



Above: Cub group processing tree seeds. Working with children to process and pot up the seeds we grew approximately 500 trees which have all been planted out at the West Wittering Tree Nursery.



Above: Bird feeders made by Brownies in East Wittering.



Above: Pond-dipping with children at Birdham Primary School.

We have been involved in public events, including West Itchenor Village Fete in June 2022, the Birdham Craft Fayre in April 2023, and a family wildlife engagement day at St James Church in May 2023. This day was a huge success with over 150 people attending, lots of children's activities set up and plenty for people to take away.

Supporting Parish Councils & Landowners to Improve Biodiversity

We have continued to work with local Parish Councils, particularly West Wittering Parish Council, supporting initiatives to improve biodiversity. The main drainage ditches and channels were walked and reviewed in January 2023 and a report given to West Wittering Parish Council with recommendations for ongoing actions and maintenance to reduce flood risk in the parish. The Parish Council have also recently agreed to expand wildflower areas within the parish. The pollinator-friendly flowerbed we created at Marine Drive Triangle has been particularly successful and well received with positive feedback from local residents.

Right: Volunteers carrying out maintenance of the Marine Drive Triangle pollinator-friendly flowerbed.



We have also developed a good relationship with Harbour Churches (the churches in Birdham, West Itchenor and West Wittering), providing advice and support on how to improve the churchyards for biodiversity. Habitat management advice has also been provided to landowners in Birdham, Bracklesham, West Wittering and East Wittering.



Above: Volunteers enjoying refreshments and conversation after species surveying at St James Churchyard in Birdham.

Volunteers Survey

In March 2023 we sent a survey to our volunteer mailing list asking for feedback on our volunteers' experiences of volunteering with MWHG with a view to finding out more about people's motivations and what was – or was not – working well. We received responses from 35 volunteers.

"Meeting like-minded people" was the most commonly stated reason that people enjoy volunteering. We were struck by how much the 'well-being' aspect to volunteering was so important to people. Other frequent answers were:

- Helping to look after wildlife/nature/environment
- Giving something back/doing something useful
- Fresh air/being outdoors
- Friendly group
- Learning new skills/learning about wildlife & environment
- Physical exercise
- Good leadership, organisation, and communication

Improvements that could be made:

- More weekend sessions
- More social events
- More information about overall project objectives, long-term plans, etc
- More information about what different parts of the Group is doing
- More non-physical volunteering opportunities

The primary reasons for not volunteering, or not doing it more often, were:

- Not enough time/work commitments/family commitments
- Personal injury/health problems

We received some lovely comments from our volunteers, and we share some of these below.

- "It is well organised, plenty of timely communication, friendly, well equipped, lovely people. There is something to do regardless of your skill level or physical capabilities. It's a great opportunity to learn new skills and find out about wildlife in the area."

- “I love working outside and volunteering with MWHG it is a great way to help protect our area. Cutting back brambles, dead hedging, clearing ditches and checking for signs of water voles makes you feel energised and useful. I have gained lots of knowledge from the wild flower and species surveys we carry out. The other volunteers and staff are very friendly and like minded people. No one minds if you only come for part or all of the session which makes it accessible for everyone.”
- “I love the community spirit. I love learning from the professionals to develop my own skills and knowledge. I love how everyone is like-minded and I always feel so proud, accomplished and satisfied after sessions.”
- “Great for mental health and physical well-being. Opportunity to learn about wildlife and habitat management and to meet like-minded local people.”
- “My efforts are always appreciated, there is suitable kit, the “staff” (Jane & Louise) are knowledgeable and the whole atmosphere is supportive and friendly - not to mention the cake!

The cake was mentioned quite a few times!

Louise Barnettson

Sidlesham Land Settlement Association (LSA)

The Sidlesham LSA website (www.sidleshamheritagetrail.co.uk) continues to produce more contacts – most recently from the USA where Roger Hart, whose father, Andrew, was one of the early assistant mangers. Roger then revisited Batchmere House to see the house where he was born in 1940!



The LSA house dismantled in 2017 remains in storage at the Weald and Downland Living Museum. Once rebuilt the LSA Story, not just Sidlesham, but all 20 LSAs across England will have a permanent home. In the meantime, activities continue to raise the profile of the LSA – 40 presentations which had

been held with local groups ceased with Covid but started again in September with the Chichester History Society. The Sidlesham Heritage Centre promotes the LSA and other local heritage items.

In May the Charlie Row Gallery opened in the Sidlesham Memorial Hall. Charlie had been a former LSA tenant and a prominent member of Chichester Camera Club with a large collection of LSA related photographs which we are now able to share with a larger audience.

Bill Martin

Walk the Selsey Tramway

MWHG volunteers have helped to clear undergrowth from the platform at Chalder Station. Plans are being discussed to restore the -platform, put back the station' name, reinstate a section of track and possibly rebuild the waiting room.



In February David Pearce and Bill Martin gave a presentation on the Selsey Tramway to the Donnington Gardening Club. A second anniversary walk was held in August 2003 with 25 participants. Copies of the walking guide and an interactive map for use on mobile phones are both available on the MWHG website

We are now working with staff at the Novium Museum to stage an exhibition on The Selsey Tramway, starting in June 2024. We are currently fund raising to finance a film as part of the exhibition.

Bill Martin



West Wittering Tree Nursery

As I write this piece, I am experimenting with rowan seeds. The process of extracting seeds from berries is usually a lot of trial and error!



Here at the West Wittering Tree Nursery, we have seen the fruits of our labour and are now in our second year of planting. We now have three raised beds, two of which have seedlings under one year old and the third bed has seedlings between 1-2 years old. There is a mix of oak, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, rowan and briar rose. Local people have also generously donated tree seedlings that have sprouted in their gardens.

With the addition of a polytunnel this year, we are now able to introduce tree seeds to pots under cover, without worrying about storm damage.

With thanks to Jane Reeve, Louise Barnetson and Cathy Turner for their continuing hard graft and to David Thompson, chairman of the allotment and chief supporter of our nursery.

Alex Ainge



Funds and Finance

We are entirely reliant on grants, funding and donations to fund the work that we do. We would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to the following organisations who provided funding during the financial year to 31st March 2023.

- **The F Glenister Woodger Trust** - for the second year we are extremely grateful to the Woodger Trust for funding the Wittering Area Community Conservation Project including two part-time Project Co-ordinators. The leadership and organisational work that Jane Reeve and Louise Barnetson undertake are invaluable. These paid roles enable us to effectively leverage the contributions made by our volunteers.
- **Ferry Farm Community Solar** - funding towards the Pollinator Highway project.
- **VHB (Vitacress)** – funding towards the Pollinator Highway project.
- **Target Professional** - funding towards the Pollinator Highway project.
- **Wagner Renewables** - funding towards the Pollinator Highway project.
- **VHB (Vitacress)** – funding for Mink Monitoring.
- **Portsmouth Water** – Watervole grant.
- **Nature's Way** – funding for website, IT support and conservation work.
- **Sidlesham PC** – contribution towards volunteer sessions at Florence Pond and Willow Glen.
- **Earnley PC** – contribution towards volunteer sessions in the Earnley Parish.
- **Selsey Town Council** – tools for the East Beach Pond project.
- **Selsey Walking Group** – donation to the Selsey Tramway project.
- **North Mundham PC** – contribution towards volunteer sessions in the North Mundham parish.

Accounts

A full set of accounts are available as a separate document. We are very grateful to Wendy Peters at Workspace Accounting Ltd for acting as the Independent Examiner and providing the report on the accounts.

Jane Scotland, Treasurer