



Old Sluice Gate



**Jo Greenfield & Nick
Gates by the new
Sluice Gate**



New Sluice Gate

SMPPA Newsletter

January 2021

After Nick Madinaveitia's many years of dedicated service, it is with some apprehension that I have taken on the role of Chair. The COVID-19 lockdowns have at least facilitated some time to digest a small portion of Nick's vast knowledge. Although I have been on the SMPPA Committee since 2016 acting as Social Secretary (taking over from Betty Smith), with the responsibility of organising the Annual Dinners, Summer Parties and Spring Talks (now distant memories!), I confess I had not realised how much work goes on behind the scenes.

Most of the Pond activities have been going on for a long time in one form or another, and so decisions and choices have a recurring theme. Along with all the infrastructure, flooding and bank management issues to understand and manage, there is also a surprising amount of administration that goes with running a Charity, no matter how small. This has been exacerbated by having 2 legal entities: fortunately, from this year onwards we can at last operate solely under our new status as CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) which will simplify matters, as well as providing protection for the Trustees/Committee Members with regard to potential liability.

A list of the elected Trustees/Committee Members can be found on page 5 of this

newsletter: we currently have 6 officers, 3 on each side of the Pond, with Jim Hailstone planning to rejoin our Committee when the transfer of the Pond to the Owners has been completed. More than half of us still work/run our own businesses and we dedicate a significant amount of our personal time organising and carrying out maintenance on the Pond and its environs.

From speaking with many of you, I have realised that most queries and concerns we receive relate to a handful of themes. Updates on these and other news can be found on our website and below.

Also enclosed with this newsletter is a paper by Nick describing many of the highlights of the achievements and changes during his time with the SMPPA.

I hope that you enjoy this edition, including the crossword on page 7!

Jo Greenfield

Signage and the “one way” signs on the west bank footpath



The footpath continues to be very busy with walkers and their dogs; the one-way signage put in place during COVID-19 definitely makes a difference to the direction of the walkers.

To most people they are welcomed, but sadly we still receive a handful of complaints (from non-members) suggesting that the vulnerable should not use the footpath at all if they are concerned about social distancing.

We have now removed the warning signs that were in the water as they were becoming rather unsightly and outdated. We have replaced them with horizontal poles for the birds to perch on.

We have refreshed the information board on the wall of the old Slipper Mill and are in the process of refurbishing the information board in the Pond next to the A259 – with thanks to Simon Eveleigh for all his time spent on this.



The reasons for opening the tidal gates



We update the home page of our website when we are opening the gates. Both the tidal and sluice gates were last opened on 12th November for a month, in order to facilitate the repair works to the sluice gate (see update on page 4).

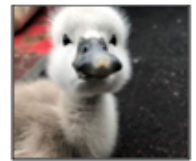
The Pond is drained from time to time during the winter months (October-January inclusive) to help reduce the build up of silt, enable up-stream valves to be serviced, and allow inspection of the sluice and gates. We try to avoid opening it in other months due to the need to protect the wildlife in and around the Pond. As a general rule we only open the large tidal gates and not the sluice gate due to the weakness of the outfall on the south bank.

Disturbances to wildlife caused by dogs

In the breeding season (April-August inclusive) we put up additional signage requesting that walkers keep their dogs on leads in order not to disturb the wildlife; every year at least a couple of dogs run after and catch a young bird, usually a cygnet, and this causes much distress for the owners and onlookers, let alone the birds.

We ask that dog walkers keep their dogs on leads for your dog's safety too as adult swans can get very aggressive during the breeding/nesting season.

**TWO CYGNETS
KILLED THIS YEAR**



For My Sake....

**PLEASE KEEP
YOUR DOG
ON A LEAD!!**

Disturbance by gatherings of young people on the summer high tides



PCSO Baylee Reed

This was more problematic than usual this year. Following consultation with PCSO Baylee Reed of Sussex Police, he has asked that we call 101 if large groups gather on the bridge blocking the footpath or causing a disturbance, and if there is any abuse (verbal or physical) to call 999.

In this way he can build up a picture of the problem and get regular patrols to visit the area instead of just driving past Slipper Road. This will also apply after COVID-19. If you do ring, please quote his name.

The bird rafts and the activities of the Great Black Backed Gulls

As voted at the AGM, we are currently investigating options to modify the bird rafts in order to attempt to deter the Great Black Backed Gulls who have now been resident since 2012. More background can be found on pages 4-5 of Nick Madina's summary.



East bank planting, and the management of the reeds



We have recently cut back the two northern-most sections of common reeds as part of our aim to stop the reeds from spreading and reduce their height. These reeds (*Phragmites Australis*) are invasive and we have been advised to cut them back during the winter months, before the Reed Warblers return from their Africa migration in early April.

These cuts resulted in 25 large builders' bags of cuttings to be taken to the refuse tip – with grateful thanks to Jim Hailstone and his trailer. More background on the reeds can be found on page 6 of Nick's summary.

We are in the process of developing a planting plan and will make sure that members are consulted before making any substantial changes. It is likely to necessitate the removal of some additional planting that has become overgrown.

Dolphin Creek footpath

We are delighted that the gifting of the land around the footpath was at last completed during the summer and are most grateful to the Wardle Family for their donation.

We will ensure that it remains an open ecological space, while providing a useful income stream from the associated mooring access lease. More background can be found on our dedicated webpage at smppa.org.uk/dolphin-quay-footpath.

The footpath is a Hampshire County Council right of way, and is looked after by Chichester Harbour Conservancy who ensure that it is accessible and clear of any overhanging branches.



New Sluice Gate



Nick Gates & his Team

The new gate has been much admired and there is now negligible leakage around the structure. Nick Gates (a wooden boatbuilder based at Emsworth Marina) used local English oak and refurbished the original ironwork. It is a highly professional job: what appears to be a simple structure is a clever and accurate piece of engineering and required a high level of precision and joinery.

As a result, the final cost was considerably more than estimated, but was comparable with other quotes and, given proper maintenance, it will outlive the previous structure (ie more than 75 years).

Nick Gates has also advised on maintenance plans for other timber structures around the Pond, in order to extend their life expectancy.

We are looking for offers for the old sluice gate, as ideally we would like to raise some money from selling all or part of it - please contact us if you are interested or have any other suggestions.

Pond Ownership Transfer

Unfortunately the Pond transfer continues to be delayed, mainly because our respective solicitors are busy with house sales generated by the stamp duty holiday, and don't seem to have any time to spare to conclude the transfer!

We say thank you again to those of you who have agreed to gift your shares to the SMPPA so that affairs can now be more easily managed by the Association.

I am passionate about the Pond and will do whatever I can to promote and enhance its beauty while trying to ensure that maintenance is kept up-to-date, and that all administrative items that go with running a charitable organisation are carried out, including newsletters! In particular, the Trustees and I are very keen to focus on the planting and wildlife.

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

With very best wishes to you all for a healthy, safe, happy and peaceful 2021.



Jo Greenfield
(and SMPPA Trustees)

chmn@smppa.org.uk
01243 371134
56 King Street, Emsworth, PO10 7AZ

Committee Members/Trustees

Jo Greenfield (KS), Sharon Corbett (SR), Simon Dwyer (SR), Simon Eveleigh (KS), Bill Keeble (SR), Gary Lamb (HW)
where SR is Slipper Road, KS is King Street, HW is Harbour Way.

Bequests and Donations

We were very fortunate to receive some very generous donations in 2020, and these made a big difference to us, helping to part fund the new sluice gate along with legal advice associated with the Dolphin Quay Footpath and Pond Ownership transfer.

The SMPPA annual income averages less than £4,000 (excluding the annual dinner and any donations or grants, if received). It will continue to be a challenge relying on our Trustees/Committee Members and volunteers; if we are to further invest in planting, infrastructure and maintenance.



If you would like to make a one-off donation, or fund any specific items (such as trees, seeds, plants, signage), please get in touch or visit smppa.org.uk/donations for more details, including how to set up a legacy in your will.

We are always looking for new members, so if you hear of anyone who might be interested in joining us, please let us know, or pass our details on to them.

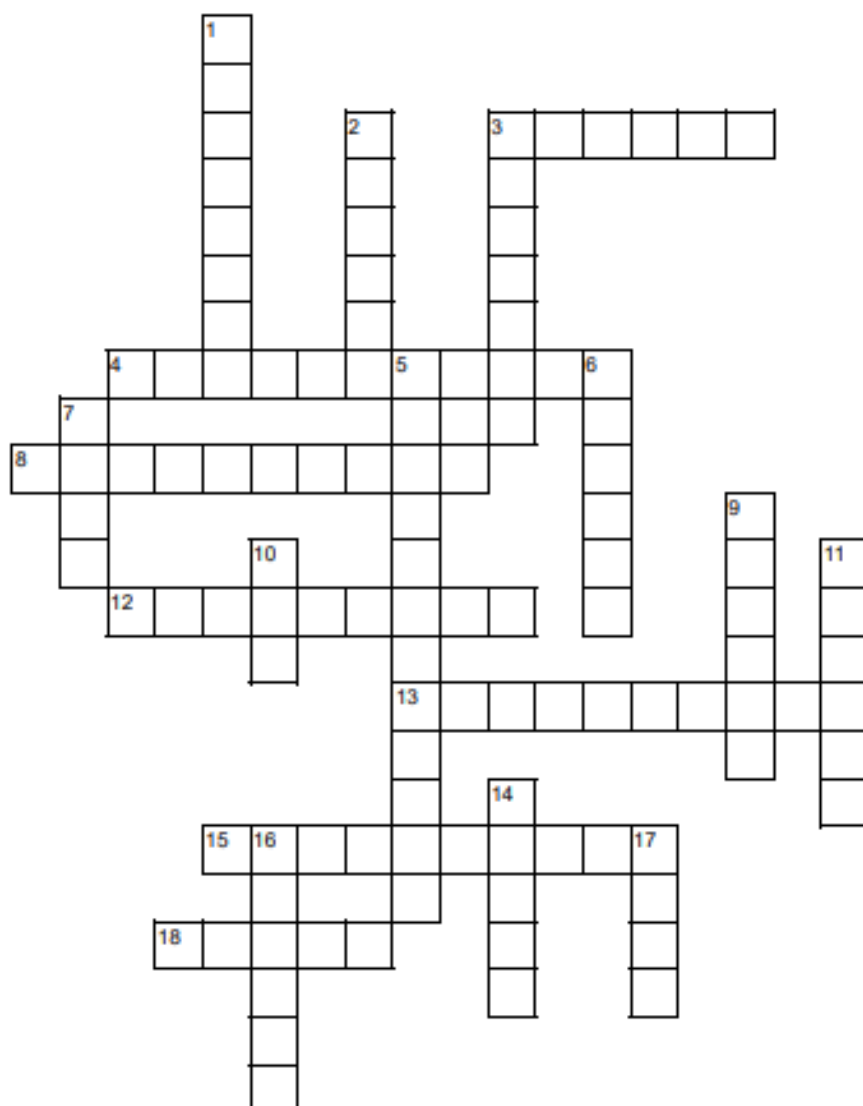
Dates for the Diary

All on HOLD	Date	Event	Usual Timing (approx)
		Spring Talk	Friday in March or April
		Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition	Early May Bank Holiday (Emsworth Arts Trail)
		Summer Garden Party	Sunday in July, August or September
		AGM	Friday in late October
		Annual Dinner	Friday in late November

We are hoping that we will be able to resume some workparties and social events in 2021. Please let us know if you would like to be involved.

Slipper Mill Pond Crossword

All the answers can be found in this month's newsletters or on our website



Across

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

Down

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

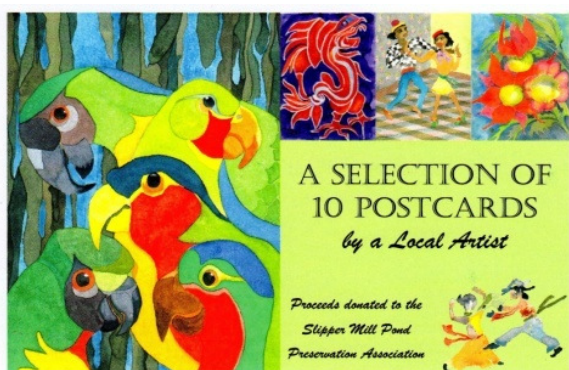
Answers in the next newsletter.

Useful Contacts

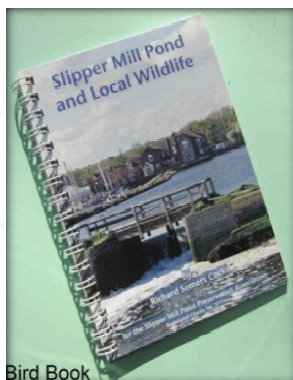
General Enquiries	Jo Greenfield	01243 371134	info@smppa.org.uk
Membership	Sharon Corbett	01243 389994	membership@smppa.org.uk

Wildlife	Downland Surgery - 01243 377141 RSPCA - 01239 667541 smppa.org.uk/emsworth-wildlife-links for local wildlife links
Environment Agency	All incidents 0800 807060 Flood line 0345 988 1188
Police Emergency 999	Disturbances 101: <i>For help & possible tracking please mention PCSO Baylee Reed of Sussex Police</i>

Publications



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



Bird & Butterfly Book - £5



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

The Bird Book, Notelets and Postcards are all on sale to support the SMPPA – to purchase, please contact Jo Greenfield.

Data Protection Act 2018

To comply with the General Data Protection Regulation we have added our Data Protection & Privacy Policy to the Membership page of our website. If you have any queries, or do not wish to receive email or postal communications from us, please let us know by writing or emailing to info@smppa.org.uk.