

Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association

Registered Charity: 277744

www.smppa.org.uk



Periwinkle on pond bank - 14 Jan 2013

Photo: Nick Madinaveitia

Newsletter — January 2013

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Introduction

Belated Christmas greetings. We decided to hold back the Newsletter as, if your mail in December is like ours, one is overwhelmed by junk mail, cards and letters from relations and friends that have to be attended to.

This Newsletter has, in addition to the normal items, two special pieces – the River Ems flooding and the Quiz Night.

The recent appalling weather has made the River Ems very full and on two occasions the Environment Agency has asked us to open the sluice.

Despite our making it very clear that this has no material effect upstream we have felt it was politic to do so. The sluice spillway has now become undermined so we will be leaving the tidal gates open despite the threat to the protected species in the mud.

Please remember that the Quiz Night, in addition to being entertaining, has always been a very happy and sociable event and the more competitors the better it is!! See you there! You might win a prize!!!!

Nick Madinaveitia - Chairman

Quiz Night

Sarah Titley and Bill Warren are prepared to organise another of their splendid and exciting Quiz Nights but before they start working on it they want to be sure that there is sufficient demand. You will appreciate that researching appropriate questions for the membership is a major task and we do not want them to work in vain.



We plan to hold it on 22nd February 2013 in the Day Centre, South Street Emsworth – 7.30 for 8 pm. Bring your own drinks and nibbles.

The deadline for preliminary reservations is Friday 25th January and we will need at least 6 tables to make the event viable.

Please email or telephone Betty Smith on 01243 371576 to say whether you are interested in putting together a table of 4 to 6 people or if you are simply interested in joining a table on the night. We can guarantee you a convivial evening out..

Wildlife Report

Autumn has come and gone and we are now in the Winter period. Recent mild weather following the heavy rain has encouraged some of the birds to think ahead about the Spring.

One can feel sorry for the invertebrates that rely on a

semi-saline environment to prosper as the vast amount of rainwater flowing down the Ems will have upset their balance. Now there is a serious threat of frost as we have had to leave the gates open resulting in the pond being drained at low tide.

A pair of swans has been exploring the pond and seemed to be eyeing up a nesting site on the West Bank. Has anyone the skill to tell them that they are in danger of being washed away at a high Spring Tide??? Coots have been marking out their territory in their inimitable fussy way. The greater



Bird raft on mud – note build-up of tube worm below water level
Photo: N..Madinaveitia

Black Backed Gulls have been paying regular visits and seem to be staking their claim to the central raft. Opinion is divided about them – they are much admired as being the largest of our gulls but at the same time they are fearless predators mercilessly attacking the other water fowl. We have been visited by many cormorants from time to time – indicating that there are plenty of fish in the water.

The East bank looks shorn following the November Work Party and signs of Spring are just starting to appear – several of the transplanted daffodil clumps as well as bluebells are starting to sprout. A solitary Periwinkle was spotted the other day – hopefully many other flowers will follow.



East Bank - looking South

Photo: N..Madinaveitia

Flooding and the River Ems

The beginning of 2012 saw much of the country experiencing droughts and even a heat wave in March. We had the wettest April in 100 years with extensive flooding across Britain which continued through May and led to the wettest beginning to June in 150 years. Locally the deluge of 11th June was an extreme event. Bognor Regis recorded 65mm. that day – the 1 in 200 year predicted value. Locally the rainfall in December caused great concern and flood warnings were issued on 20th December.

In June Westbourne was awash and the gauge recorded a flow of some 3.2cu.m./sec. Locally the fields and gardens were awash and residents of Lumley insisted that we should open the sluice even though the pond was not overflowing.

The wet weather remained with us for the rest of the summer, into the autumn. The countryside was saturated and groundwater levels were at an all-time high.



Water flowing down North Street

*WESTBOURNE- July 2012
Taken from
Westbourne Parish Magazine*

During the night of the 19th December it rained very heavily and early the next morning the Environment Agency issued a formal Flood Warning for the Ems. The already saturated ground upstream meant that the river rose considerably; the water meadows were awash. Flows reached 4.5 cu.m./sec. at Westbourne with significant local flooding. Whilst the level in the pond rose and started to flow over the bank into Dolphin Creek there was no flooding in Lower Lumley. Constant Springs garden was awash and Lumley Cottages threatened. The Upper Lumley residents and the Environment Agency asked us again to open the sluice which we did - whilst reiterating that it would have no material effect.

For many years the Association has been aware of flooding issues and river management. In 2001 it commissioned and paid for a comprehensive report prepared by John Burgess looking into the tidal gates, the sluice and the impact of the river system. This report included a survey of the impact of an abnormal Spring Tide on the pond and upstream as far as Constant Springs and Lumley Mill. It was discussed at a public meeting and accepted by the Environment Agency.

In January 2012 we had pointed out to WSCC and the EA that tube worm growth was starting to affect the hydraulic performance of the A259 bridge. We recirculated the Burgess Report to the relevant officers asking that they accept that it was not necessary to open the gates or sluice unless in case of emergency.

As noted above we were pressured into opening the gates in June 2012 – and as a consequence we reopened discussions with the authorities who, as was inevitable, were restructuring and had not taken on board our management plan. Since then we have been pressuring both WSCC and the EA to accept our views and have developed a good relationship with the EA team who are looking after the River Ems.

To reinforce our case we closed the sluice on 8th January when the flow in Westbourne was 2.9cu.m./sec. and took readings at the stations used in the Burgess Report. The river backed up as suggested by the findings in the Report. None of the readings at and above the Lumley Cottages changed showing that the gate closure had no effect under those flow conditions.

The impact of having had the sluice open from the 20th December 2012 to the 8th January with significant flows has caused great concern. The toe and sides of the down stream apron have been seriously undermined by 20 days' of large quantities of fast moving water. Unfortunately repairing this would seem to be the next major 'pond project'.



Note the extent of the turbulence to the sides



Erosion on the West flank of the spillway



East side showing undercut voids

On Saturday 12th January we were asked by the Environment Agency to open the sluice again – which we did with great reluctance. Here is a copy of our Email summarising the events leading up to it and what happened that weekend.

Text of Email to WSCC & EA - 14th January 2013

It has been an action-packed period and I have tried to send you all copies of my emails at each step.

Thursday 10th January

We closed the sluice which had no impact on Lumley cottages or other houses.

We took a series of river level readings before, 3hrs and 24 hrs after closure.

As we feared, there is erosion around the spillway which looks bad - more detail to follow.

We met Mrs. Mansell (Constant Springs) who had just been told by the EA that they were about to work on the sluice to help relieve the problems

Friday 11th January

Mrs. Mansell found us taking readings and we had a long chat with her when she told us her woes - we stood by our position that the sluice had no material effect upstream.

Saturday 12th January

Deluge morning and afternoon

1500 - Saleema , the EA flood duty officer, rang and asked me to open the sluice and I refused - sending her an Email explaining why.

1800 - She rang again clearly at the end of many complaints so I relented and opened it reluctantly as it was not necessary.

1815 - met your rangers and opened the sluice together and then went up stream and took water level readings

2200 - took another set of readings and met your rangers again

2400 - opened the tidal gates to reduce stress on the sluice spillway

Sunday 13th January

Organised a team of volunteers to help take readings at the top of the tide to demonstrate the backwater curve (still being analysed - will forward them)

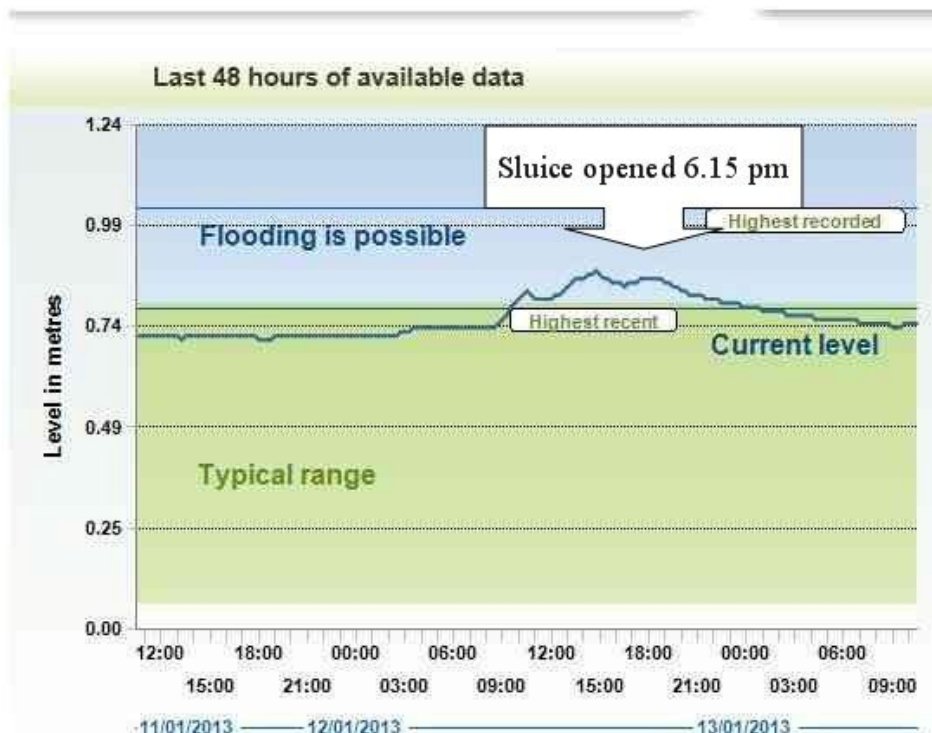
Met owner of Rose Cottage (Lumley cottages) who thanked us for opening sluice. I tried to explain that it had had no impact - which he disbelieved!!!!

I am sending him an Email with the Westbourne Gauge curve marked up showing when the sluice was opened - copy to you.

Today

Will try to complete the levels exercise into a full set of notes supported by photos so there is a complete record.

As noted in my messages to Saleema the tidal gates are now open and exposing the protected species in the mud to last night's snow and any frost we may have. We will close them ONLY if the sluice can remain closed too.



Lumley residents have been and are still convinced that opening the sluice has immediate effect on river levels. The above graph from the Westbourne Gauge shows when we were asked to open the gates at the peak of the flow and how the flows reduced upstream – giving that false impression.

We are continuing to pressure both WSCC and the EA to respect our management approach and to work with them to ensure our neighbours in Lumley understand how the river system works.

In the long term we need to:

- find a passive solution to the problem which has developed.
 - It is unacceptable that SMPPA volunteers are called out whenever someone feels flooding might occur particularly when there is no justification.
- Repair the spillway from the Slipper Pond sluice
 - it is in a poor condition and continual high rates of flow could cause it to be undermined and collapse – threatening the bank itself
- Address silting
 - Recent high flow rates of the Ems have brought a lot of silt into the system – we need to open the gates and allow the pond to flush the mud away.

November Work Party

We had a very successful work day when 23 volunteers helped prepare the East Bank for the winter. We must give special thanks to Leslie Harris and Pam Phillips for bringing the Hampshire Youth Botanical Society to join in.



East Bank Planting

Following the discussion at the AGM and comments received the Committee agreed at its January meeting to replace the old Arbutus with a Spindle tree and plant a new one further to the South of the original. It was also agreed to get another assortment of hedgerow whips and plant them partly at the North end and also adjacent to the rough insect reserves hoping to increase the bird life.

Photographic Competition

Following on from the success of The Maurice Broomfield Photographic Competition 2012 this year's competition is about to kick off with five local primary schools taking part. Sarah Titley and Gavin Millar will be visiting each school over the next two weeks to explain the rules and give out entry forms to all those children in school years 4-6 who wish to be involved. The children will have the rest of the Spring Term to compose their photographs on the

**2013
COMPETITION
LAUCHED**

theme of 'Water and Wildlife' as the closing date for entries is Friday 29th March 2013. Jeff and Gill Thatcher, along with Lizzie Dymock will then have the mammoth tasks of judging the winning entries for a prize giving ceremony at the community centre on Friday 3rd May at 4pm. Seventy five photographs will be chosen to display at the Emsworth Arts Trail in the community centre on Saturday 4th May and Sunday 5th May 2013. Do please put these dates in your diaries and come and support us on as many of these dates as you are able. Our thanks go to the Emsworth Community Association for funding the entrance forms and our entrance fee for the Emsworth Arts Trail.

Annual Dinner

The Dinner was held on 23rd November at the Brookfield Hotel and 75 members and their friends had a most enjoyable evening. The Raffle, organised by Betty Smith and Sarah Titley, was a tremendous success and our thanks go to the individual donors and the following local sponsors of the Raffle:

- The Brookfield Hotel
- The Emsworth Co-Op
- The Sussex Brewery
- The Lord Raglan
- The Deck

and to Keyprint for the Dinner tickets.

Email Addresses:

If you have not already done so please either send your E-mail address to Betty Smith or send an E-mail to membership@smppa.org.uk so we can keep you informed of events, workdays etc. We will only use it for SMPPA business and not pass it on to any other parties.

Please note that our Newsletters, including this one, are also available on our web site: www.smppa.org.uk.

Dates for your Diary

Date	Subject
22 nd - February	Quiz – see above
?? - March	Work Party
26 th April	Spring Talk
?? - August	Summer Party
1 st November	Annual General Meeting
22 nd - November	Annual Dinner

Contacts

General:	Nick Madinaveitia	01243 377749
Treasurer:	Mark Phillips	01243 376756
Social Events	Betty Smith	01243 371576
	Sarah Titley	01243 379947
Wildlife:	The Downland Surgery	01243 377141
	RSPCA	01239 667541
Environment	Pollution	0845 9881188
Agency	Flood line	0800 807060
	Mention the local rangers in any calls – Paul Reynolds & Trevor Page	

QUIZ NIGHT

**have
you let
Betty know???**

see Page 3