



Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association

Registered Charity: 277744



Pond gates leaking

Newsletter — March 2012

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Introduction:

This Newsletter is to remind you about about our Spring Talk and to bring you up to date with the replacement of the pond gates.

I make no apologies for the long account about the gates but have included it so you can appreciate why we were not able to repair them at the beginning of February as we had wanted. I had not expected to have such problems in finding a suitable contractor and more particularly becoming involved in an almost infinite paper chase to obtain the appropriate approvals.

Hopefully we will have action on site at the beginning of April and if the contractor lives up to his promises, the path should not be closed for more than a working week.

Then, in the middle of April, we are going to have a Work Day – details in the text.

Nick Madinaveitia, Chairman.

Impact of the leaking gates during Neap Tides



Slipper Pond



Peter Pond

Wildlife Report:

In January I received the following Email:

To: webmaster@smppa.org.uk

Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2012 1:54 PM

Subject: Slipper mill pond

Hi, We are attempting to collect some saline -adapted 3 spined sticklebacks, I have found few in the upper reaches of Paghham Harbour, but wondered if you knew of any in the Mill Pond, and would it be possible for us to try and collect some? Any advice would be much appreciated.

Thanks, Paul

Dr Paul Farrell

Senior Lecturer

Institute of Marine Sciences



Three Spined Stickleback

All intrigued I made contact, and on 24th January he and two assistants came and we had a successful exploration. Here are the notes I made:

Notes on Site Visit

Present:

- *Paul Farrell – Senior Lecturer, Institute of Marine Sciences, Portsmouth*
- *Dr. Karen Thorpe – Researcher*
- *Richard – Research Assistant*
- *Graham Taplin – Committee Member, SMPPA*
- *Nick Madina – Chairman, SMPPA*

Introduction:

Paul explained that they were attempting to collect some saline -adapted 3 spined sticklebacks for research purposes as they had already found some in the upper reaches of Pagham Harbour.

The SMPPA described the river system supplying the Pond, and suggested various sites which might be stickleback habitats. They explained that their jurisdiction was limited to the pond, but that they had discussed and cleared the investigation further upstream with David Gattrell, the Voluntary Pond Manager of Peter Pond.

The Visit

Slipper Pond

- *Slipway at North end of Slipper Road – not a likely habitat*
- *North-East Corner - not a likely habitat*

Peter Pond

A259 Bridge

- *still a 'marine' environment*
- *Tube-worm growth encrusting the bridge was inspected*

Hermitage ditch

- *still a 'marine' environment*
- *Peter Pond Reed beds*
 - *more likely position*
 - *a juvenile flounder and several bull-heads found*

Upstream below Lumley Cottages

[Owned by Havant Borough Council?]

- *Potential habitat*

Lumley Cottages



Bullheads

- *Stream belongs to the individual cottages?*
- *Upper limit of exceptional sea flooding*

Railway Bridge to the Sluices

- *Owned by Constant Springs*
- *Large fish spotted momentarily*

[We walked along the footpath connecting the sluices to the Brook Meadow Seagull Lane bridge]

Brook Meadow

Brook Meadow look after the area. The Environment Agency is responsible for the stream as it is a 'Main River'.

- *Fresh water river bed with very infrequent sea flooding*

Queen Street Mill outflow

- *A marine area – tidal.*

General

Tube worm

- *Paul knew Dr. Clifford Thorpe, Thorpe's work on the Tube worm (*Ficopomatus enigmaticus*) and would pass on our regards*
- *He noted that a follow-up study could be an M.Sc. Project and he would see if the students were interested.*
- *The SMPPA offered and Paul accepted an encrusted Road Cone as a souvenir.*

Fish Count

- *Paul asked if a fish count could be made. We welcomed this subject to their checking with the EA etc. as special permissions might be needed for netting etc.*

Bristle tube worm and Starlet Sea Anemone

[Alkmaria Romanijni and Nematostella Vectensis]

[These are special Red Book Species and why the Pond has SSSI status]

- *Paul offered to help in looking for them.*

On the way back I persuaded Paul to remove the traffic cone that had been thrown in near Chequer's Quay – which he took back to the University triumphantly to show to the students as an example of marine encrustation.



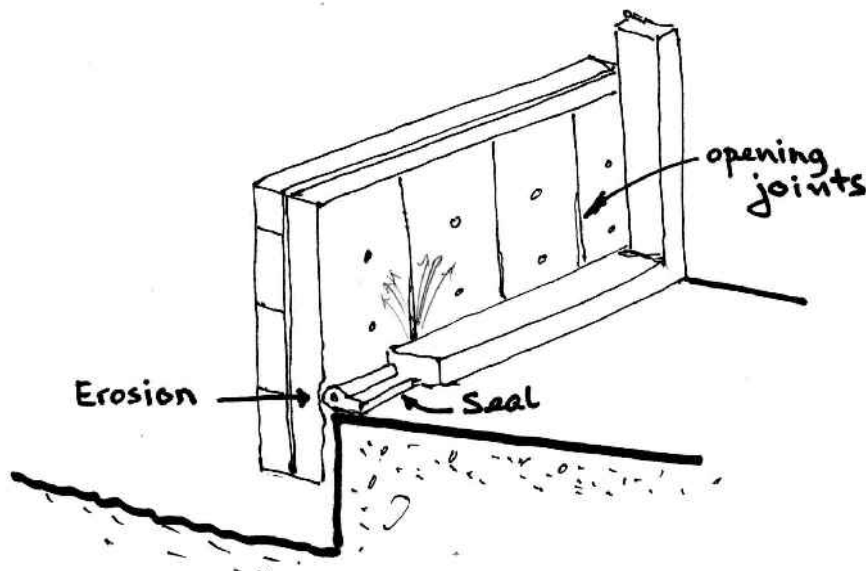
Pond Tidal Gates:



During the Autumn the gates were leaking more and more and, despite careful cleaning of the seals, we had to accept the inevitable. Visually the gates seem as strong as ever and at first glance little needs to be done. However detailed examination revealed that the main problem was erosion of the outer face of the gate where the seals meet it causing small leaks which are being enlarged by the sand and mud abrading the timbers.

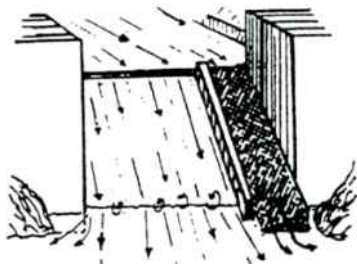
At the December Committee Meeting to seek help in repairing them a full appraisal of the issues was made and Paul Russell, who had built the present set of gates in 1977 and refurbished them in 1999, was looked for was mentioned and we tried to find him.

At a Special Committee Meeting early in January we noted that the leak was worsening and immediate action was needed in order not to affect the breeding season.



Approvals:

The process started in an interesting way. We needed to know the flow in the River Ems to drain the residual pond once the gates were open so as to maintain the seals. I approached contacts in the Environment Agency and after several Emails and much chasing managed to find the information. I now have live data from the Westbourne Gauge (behind the church) and the formula to calculate the volume passing. This gives an idea about the flows through the pond provided due allowance is made for the flow diversion at the Constant Springs sluices enabling pumps to be sized.



One of the potential Eel Pass solutions

Taken from the Environment Agency Fish Pass Manual

The officer drew my attention to SI 2009 No. 3344 “The Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009” and an Environment Agency Report on Fish Passages on the River Ems (River Ems Fisheries Habitat Assessment by Windrush AEC 2009). This report stated that our tidal gates were fixed and a clear barrier to the upward passage of fish in the Ems! I rang him straight back and explained how they do open on a rising tide!!!! Our conversation turned to the need for the provision of a fish passage as well and he referred me to an expert in Winchester who had co-authored the Environment Agency's Fish Pass Manual. After several discussions it was agreed that the SMPPA did not need to provide an Eel ladder or fish passage. As usual I had kept Chichester Harbour Conservancy up to date with our plans and they responded by making a generous offer of a grant from this financial year's Social Development Fund if we could complete by the end of March. I duly submitted the Grant Application Form (which is still in abeyance) and, as we had included a Management Plan with it, they gave their approval subject to our gaining Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) approval. Natural England required a full submission, and once I had obtained additional agreement from the West Sussex County Council there were no problems.

The MMO has proved to be a drawn out process as they are a very new Quango and their Website application system lacks any 'help'. It has taken three weeks to submit " Pre-Application (Licence Enquiry) SU 75338 O5483"

Contractor:

Discussions with local boat builders had led to the conclusion that repairing the gates in-situ was not viable, and that they needed to be craned out, worked on the bank and then re-fixed. All expressed concern about the seals, were all reluctant to submit a firm price because it was at the limit of their experience and the time-scale of carrying the work out before the breeding season was in conflict with their period of maximum work preparing boats for the sailing season. None the less by the end of January we had two albeit reluctant offers to consider.



Central Post Seal Detail

At this point we found Paul Russell - and after a site visit with his son, James, he submitted a very competitive quote a couple of weeks later. After consultation the Committee agreed to appoint him, and a formal letter was sent to him on 6th February with letters to the other firms thanking them for their time. All hopes were high that the work could be carried out before the Spring. This was not to be - Paul called on the Chairman on 16th February explaining that he could no longer undertake the work for personal reasons.

At this point we were in a quandary - with leaking gates and no-one to fix them. I cast the net much wider and approached some ten organisations for help. In the end the National Trust suggested two - 'Hargreaves Lock & Gates' and 'Greenoakcarpentry' - both of which had carried out lock work for British Waterways recently. I asked Hargreaves, who are based in Halifax - Yorkshire to submit a budget figure - which was in line with the offers we had received. 'Greenoakcarpentry' - from Liss who have built gates for the Basingstoke Canal and Lee Navigation, made an initial visit to site and asked us to lower the pond so they could inspect the seals and hinges to be able to give a robust price. Whilst we were discussing matters James Russell made contact and offered to carry out the work on his own account with some colleagues. I asked him to price the works carefully and to have as few variables in it as he could and his offer arrived at the beginning of March.

After due deliberation the Committee has agreed to engage Greenoakcarpentry and it is expected that the works will cost about £10,000 and start on site at the beginning of April.

Funding:

We have been promised £1,000 by the Conservancy and we have applications outstanding with Chichester District Council, the ERA and the Business Association. WSCC have not helped us directly but waived the application fee for the temporary closure of the footpath (about £500)

Timetable

Hopefully – start on site 2nd April – finish 6th April

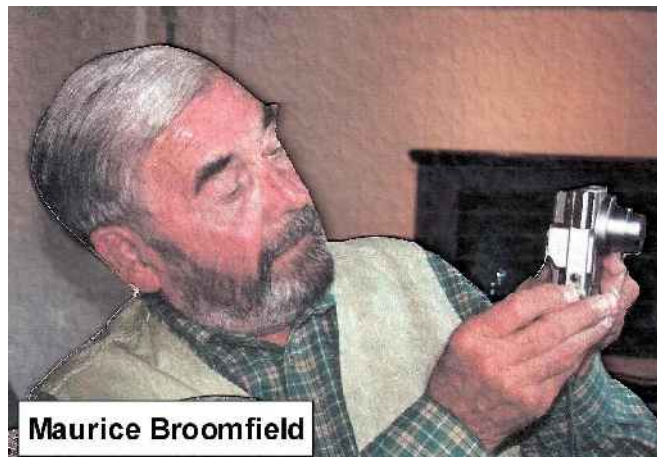


Lower hinge with worn pintle - to be replaced

Westbourne Primary School

The Year 6 teacher, Richard Weston, asked me for help with information about the Pond and the River Ems so the presentation I had prepared for St.James Primary School was adapted. On 7th February I gave a talk, covering the upper Ems Basin, the river through Westbourne with its flooding and the pond. There was much enthusiasm about how Slipper Mill used to work and the class decided to have a model mill competition. They were going to ask Tony Yoward to visit, talk about mills and then judge the models.

Maurice Broomfield Photography Competition



Maurice had an international reputation for photography principally of British industry. He spent the last years living beside the Slipper Pond, where he loved to watch the wildlife and people. Donations to his memory were dedicated to us, the Association, which he supported whole heartedly. Now, with the help of his widow and many friends, the Association is using those to support an annual competition to encourage school children to take up photography. It is open to pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 with a maximum of three entries per pupil. There will be no specified subject matter – Maurice always stressed that the most unlikely things could make a brilliant photograph. The winning images, plus as many others as possible will be exhibited at the Emsworth Community Centre as part of the Emsworth Art Trail in May.

Work Party - Saturday 14th April

All volunteers are invited to join us with preparing the pond for the Spring. The tasks we will be addressing are:

- rake and bag debris at the back of the reeds along the East Bank
- general litter pick and tidy up
- bring reeds from Peter Pond in wheelbarrows
- planting them along the West Bank to strengthen the existing reeds

As ever, please wear appropriate protective clothing and SMPPA tabards are available especially for those crossing the roads. Tools and wheelbarrows would be most welcome.

We will start at 10am, and meet by the gate at Slipper Mill.

Spring Talk

The Talk this year will be given by Richard Somers Cocks, a member of the SMPPA and a local photographer and wildlife enthusiast. Richard will be talking about and showing his photographs, of “The Birds and Other Wildlife of the Slipper Pond and Surrounding Area”. The talk will be held, as usual, in the Pastoral Centre in the Square in Emsworth on Friday 20th April 2012 and will start at 8.00 pm. Tea and coffee will be served at the end of the evening.

This event, with its local emphasis, always turns into a very pleasant evening – do come along if you can.

Litter Picking:

First of all we must all thank Peter Archer for his sterling work over the years, keeping the banks and fringes of the pond clear of all sorts of detritus.

We are pleased to announce that Rob Turner accepted the official Litter Picker Tool from Peter Archer at the last Committee meeting – and that Tim Hollins has kindly offered to help on a regular basis.

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 webmaster@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

Saturday	14 th April	Work Party – start 10 am.
Friday	20 th April 2012	Spring Talk – 8 pm
tbc	August	Summer Party
Friday	9 th November 2012	Annual General Meeting
Friday	23 rd November 2012	Annual Dinner, Brookfield Hotel.

Contacts:

General:	Nick Madinaveitia	01243 377749
Treasurer:	Mark Phillips	01243 376756
Social Events	Betty Smith	01243 371576
	Sarah Titley	01243 379947
Wildlife:	Gavin Millar	01243 377071
	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	

(Photos: Nick Madinaveitia except where noted)