



Canada Goose – resting on the Southern Raft – 23.8.11

Newsletter — August 2011

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Introduction:

Spring and Summer have whistled by and Autumn will shortly be upon us again. The commotion associated with the much appreciated West Bank Works is but a distant memory. The early Summer clearing work on the East Bank has overgrown and the grass and reeds need cutting again. I blame the summer that never really was for that — the rain has encouraged much vigorous growth. It is now time for us all to start on our seasonal tasks in preparation for another successful year.

With this Newsletter we are distributing the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting, and in addition to the election of Officers there is a vacancy on the Committee. I know the Committee would welcome a new face and fresh ideas.

Nick Madinaveitia, Chairman.

Wildlife Report:

Gavin Millar has kindly prepared the following report:

High summer hasn't felt anything like the real thing until now, but I guess that's the price we paid for an unusually mild April.

Fish:

Grey Mullet were seen in numbers early on in the season, with quantities of fry, and they are still at it, as the numbers of fry are considerable.

Insects:

I have not personally seen any unusual butterflies or moths, and only a few damsel flies. I'd be delighted to hear from anyone who has.

Plants:



Teasel – *Dipsacus fullonum*



Great mullein – *Verbascum thapsus*

It never ceases to amaze me how many variations we get from one season to another. We have, I think, seen most of the old regulars but each year there are one or two that we haven't seen for some time, or perhaps not at all. This year Mullein and Teasel are two which we have seen previously, but not for a while. I am pleased to say that the roses I planted in early spring have survived, as well some small trees.

Birds:

The end of the breeding season is signalled by the return of the curlews' mellow tones and the swelling number of coots who, although not breeding here, spend the winter on and around the pond. Those who have bred here had what I would consider a moderate season. The resident pair on the northern raft produced 4 chicks early one of which did well, but thereafter the numbers were small. The three cygnets seen in Dolphin Creek from time to time were from the pair which nest on the island between the two entrances to the Yacht Harbour; this is the second year

that they have been successful. The two that took over the Peter Pond and ours repeated their previous disasters, building a nest in the reeds by the West Bank only to see their eggs washed away by the next high tide. Slow learners, I am afraid. The mallards had a better season, with biggish clutches of ducklings and a reasonable overall survival rate.

West Bank:

It is now six months since the West Bank works were completed and the path reopened to the public. The noise and commotion of the digger and the dumper are now distant memories and the rattle of the path roller has been overtaken by the calls of the gulls and coots. The overall cost of the project was some £75,000 of which the SMPPA has contributed about £5,000. A full financial statement will be presented at our AGM in October.

On the 5th May The Association invited representatives of all the organisations who had helped and contributed.

Representatives from the LEADER (WSCC) Team, Chichester District Council, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Southbourne Parish Council, Solent Protection Society and the Emsworth Museum joined

Committee members for an informal inspection. They walked the length of the bank, checked and admired the underpinning and strengthening, and much appreciated the resurfaced footpath. There have also been many favourable comments by the public in general about the works and the tidying up of the path, making all the effort and anxiety worthwhile.





Sculptures

In June two sculptures destined for the Town Mill Pond were inadvertently placed on the pond but matters were soon put right. Here are two versions of what happened:

Operation Sculpture

On Friday 3rd June at exactly 2pm members of the SMPPA and the artist Lou Johns synchronised watches before carrying out a brave and daring rescue of two misplaced persons bobbing about on Slipper Pond.

The operation began when eagle-eyed members of the SMPPA spotted two mysterious entities at the north end of the pond on Friday morning and immediately notified the chairman of the Association. Ever unflappable, Mr Madina tracked down the owner of the sculptures and coordinated the rescue attempt with military precision.

At the allocated hour a fleet of boats was launched, ably captained by Mike Titley and Peter Archer. After much shouting and splashing, the sculptures were carefully towed to shore and returned to their rightful owner, to the delight of onlookers. They were loaded onto Lou's car and driven off to take their proper place on The Town Millpond where they could be admired by all those following the '9 Day Havant Arts Trail' last weekend.

Our thanks go to those members of the SMPPA who bravely ventured onto the pond and provided us with a great afternoon's entertainment. We very much hope that the two sculptures attracted as much attention on the Millpond as they did in Slipper Pond!

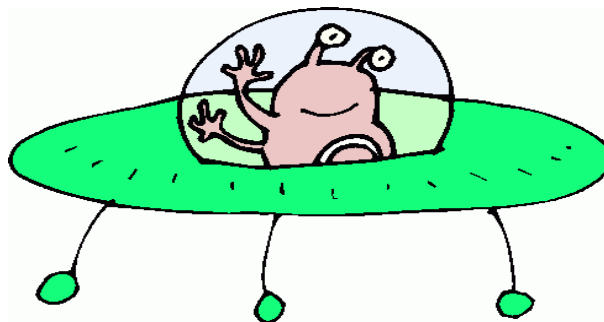
Extraterrestrials

Strange charred fragments of vitreous film were found with hieroglyph engravings on them. A local expert sent them to a friend in Cheltenham who cautiously translated the script:

SPACE CONTROL TO MAJOR LOU

urgent report on mission probe

- Θ Two humanoid observation units beamed to aquatic environment as instructed.
- Θ Mission accomplished under cover of Havant Arts Trail
- Θ Units aroused suspicion of hostile natives
- Θ Unit 1 - functional
Unit 2 - drowned. Restructured by local savages.
- Θ Rapid redeployment of Units to correct aquatic environment achieved.
- Θ Local residents unlikely to notice.
- Θ We await further instructions.



Summer Party



The now annual Summer Party was held on Sunday, 5th August and enjoyed greatly by everyone. We must thank the Urrys for making their front garden available for the occasion as the Summer, in its inimitable style, ensured that it was very windy and impracticable to hold it on the beach. Betty Smith and Sarah Titley were complimented by everyone on their smooth organisation and the splendid event.

September Work Party

We are holding a Working Party on Saturday, 17th September, when we plan to trim the grass and reeds fronting Slipper Road, continue careful pruning of the bushes at the North End and a general tidy up of the bank. All are welcome. Please bring secateurs and stout gloves and wear suitable clothing and footgear. We plan to start at 10am and make it a great social occasion.



" I CAN'T CUT THE GRASS UNTIL
I FIND THE LAWNMOWER AND I
CAN'T FIND THE LAWNMOWER
UNTIL I CUT THE GRASS! "

Dates for your Diary

Saturday	17 th September 2011	East Bank Work Party
Friday	14 th October 2011	Annual General Meeting
Friday	18 th November 2011	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 Agency	Pollution Flood line	0845 9881188 0800 807060
	Mention the local rangers in any calls – Paul Reynolds & Trevor Page	

(Photos: Nick Madinaveitia except where noted)