



Goslings enter water for the first time  
Photo – Debbie Cairns

# Newsletter Spring 2019

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## **Introduction**

*Welcome to Simon Dwyer, Edward Whalley and Jim Hailstone who have agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee.*

*The EA have confirmed that flooding of the Lumley Cottages in the past has been due to insufficient river capacity to the front and rear of the cottages. This is an important milestone as it exonerates the pond management from problems there over the years. Remain vigilant as the 2012 floods happened in the Summer!*

*In the background the Committee has been working towards the transformation of the SMPPA into the SMPPA-CIO, liaising with the Pond Owners flushing out remaining issues and working on accepting the generous gift of the Wardle Land on the West side of Dolphin Creek.*

*I must add my special thanks to the Broomfield Photographic Competition team for their unfailingly splendid work in organising and mounting this event.*

*Nick Madinaveitia*

*May 2019*

# Ecosystem

## Springtime

Now that Spring is nearly over the grasses and plants have brightened the banks with colour and flowers.

Many of our resident birds have had families. Coots have nested on the northern raft. The geese raised five goslings on the central raft only to have the crows (from Brook Meadow?) feast on them.

The pair of swans who nested in the reeds on the West bank of Peter Pond proudly brought their brood of four cygnets to explore Slipper Pond and in the last few days the Greater Black Backed Gulls have hatched two chicks. The usual family of ducks has just taken their ducklings across Slipper Road from their concealed nest to swim away across the pond.

Reed Warblers have returned again and their fine trills give them away when they are hiding.

Mullet are sculling around in the shallows attracting the attention of passers by who admire the way they circle about.



4 cygnets and several ducklings in early May  
with thanks to John & Angela Brown and Debbie Cairns for the photos

The Guardian's 'Country Diary' of 3<sup>rd</sup> May sums up a typical Spring day's events nicely:

***Country diary: geese and gulls face off over nesting sites***

*In the centre of Slipper Mill Pond, a saline lagoon just across the county border, a female Canada goose is incubating her eggs on a large floating platform. To the south, a smaller raft is occupied by the gander and two great black-backed gulls, the female sitting tight on a scrappy nest of broken twigs and dried grasses while her partner stands beside her, bathed in sunshine.*

*Although at first glance it appears a serene scene, subtle body language hints at underlying tensions between the two nesting pairs. The female goose's sleek black and white head rests on her shoulder, but her eyes are open and alert. On the adjacent platform, the gander stands sentinel, staring down the great black-backs. The female gull shifts on her nest. Her mate shuffles his feet, his neck slightly arched. The gander takes a step forward, tossing his head.*

*Great black-backs are the largest gull species in the UK – formidable, heavy-set birds with powerful blunt-tipped bills. Though they have similar wingspans to Canada geese, the latter's average weight is a hefty 4.6kg to the gulls' average 1.7kg.*

*Canada geese are notorious for their antagonistic behaviour and over the past three years they have repeatedly exerted their dominance over this pair of seabirds. The great black-backs first nested on the Slipper pond in 2012, claiming the largest of the pond's three nesting rafts and rearing two chicks. They have returned each spring, successfully fledging young in all but 2015. In 2017, the Canada geese arrived, ousting the gulls from their prized central platform. Both species form lifelong pair bonds and are loyal to their nest sites, so, although the gulls attempt to stake a claim to their preferred breeding ground in early February, for the third year running they have been relegated to the smaller southern raft as soon as the geese arrived at the end of March.*

*Just as the gander is about to lunge at the male gull, he is distracted by a passing mute swan. Head pumping, he plunges into the water ready to defend his territory, but this cob's mate is tending their nest on neighbouring Peter Pond and he's in full sail, his wings raised and neck snaked back in a threat display known as busking. Powering through the water he pursues the Canada goose who, having met his match, paddles furiously towards the safety of his own nest platform.*

*Claire Stares*

Open licence - Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd

## **Reeds**

EnviroAqua have recently been successful in obtaining spraying approvals from the Environment Agency and Natural England. As reported in earlier Newsletters they had recommended as an alternative to Autumn spraying that it could be successfully done in late Spring when the reeds were about 50cm high.

They came to site on 22<sup>nd</sup> May and, after inspection, suggested spraying at this point in time would have too great an impact on the biodiversity of plants and nesting birds. We agreed that as the Reed Warblers were already in residence we should keep the roadside frontage of the bank cut regularly to contain the intrusion of the reeds.

EnviroAqua will return in the early Autumn after birds have fledged and grasses and flowers have set seed. The spraying approvals are valid for a year so there is no need to seek further permission.



The first trim was carried out at the end of May, the sight lines cleared, the dead bushes at the south end of the hedgerow and a Buddleia and Cotoneaster cut back.

## Infrastructure



### **Footbridge railings**

The renovation has been completed for under £1,000, and favourable comments have been received.

The repairs were a replacement reusing the original upright posts which have an expected life of about 10 years. Full replacement in the future will involve design appraisal, structural evaluation, Highways and Planning approvals with associated delays and overall cost at today's prices in the order of £10,000.



David Urry, Edward Whalley and Bill Keeble

Some members of the team who helped with the repairs

## **River Ems Study**

The Environment Agency held a neighbourhood meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March and presented a recently completed model animation. This modelling is based on the most extreme weather event which might occur at any time in a 100 year period and still needs a third party review before the results can be used. The next stage will be the modelling of different project options to understand how viable they may be, in terms of cost and benefits. The next meeting will be in September when the results of the detailed options modelled should be available with a further meeting in November.

The modelling does not extend southwards to include the A259 itself and the Pond, but it is assumed that the A259 could be flooded and closed during a flood event even after the scheme has been completed.

The EA noted that the works that have been carried out since the floods of 2013/14 have doubled the capacity of the channel in front of Lumley Cottages and significantly reduced the likelihood of flooding from their rear.

## **Westwood Development**

It was noted that the Westwood Grove Residential proposals North of the A27 had been refused permission by Havant B.C. in accordance with EA's observations that the scheme would prejudice projected flood control measures.

## **Flooding Reminder**

The Environment Agency publish a useful guide to measures to protect your property

- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/451622/LIT\\_4284.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/451622/LIT_4284.pdf)

This EA brochure is actively being developed and was explored at an Institute of Civil Engineers meeting in Winchester in April. The speaker championed the idea of greater understanding in the insurance industry and noted that individual householders needed to take more responsibility for self protection. He introduced the Code of Practice which is in preparation by CIRIA.

- [https://www.ciria.org/Research/Projects\\_underway2/Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_and\\_guidance\\_for\\_property\\_flood\\_resilience.aspx](https://www.ciria.org/Research/Projects_underway2/Code_of_Practice_and_guidance_for_property_flood_resilience.aspx)

## **Signage**

Prior to the removal of the old signs in the Pond new reworded warning signs have been placed at the footbridge as well as at the kissing gates and above the tidal gates. The old signs will be taken away and the poles will be adapted to become bird perches.

The Information Panels at the head of the pond and on the wall of Slipper Mill are being reviewed at present and a revised panel is being discussed.

## **Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018 our proposed CIO Constitution was approved by the Charity Commission and, as discussed at the October AGM, we need to have full membership agreement to implement it.

Before we can do this we have various legal matters concerning the Pond Lease to resolve with the Owners' trustees and we have approached a specialist firm of solicitors for help with the technicalities.

## **Wardle Land**

We are initiating the procedure to accept the generous gift of the land and are awaiting final details from the Wardle family before instructing the solicitor to proceed.

## **Volunteers**

We are currently looking for volunteers to be First Aiders for work party sessions. We are very grateful to Julie Warren for her continuing help. However work parties take place during the working week and during holidays when Julie is not available. If there is anyone interested in being trained for this role or who is already a trained First Aider please contact Rob Turner or any committee member.

## **Social Affairs**

### **Summer Party**

We plan to hold the now traditional party early in September and details will be circulated nearer the time.

## **Broomfield Photographic Competition**



Maurice Broomfield, a world renowned international industrial photographer. As a long term resident of Slipper Road he was always keen to encourage young photographic talent. When he died he left some money to the Association which decided to sponsor this local competition in his memory. In due course the estate of Suzie Thompson-Coon, his wife, also donated a sum which has added to the sum set aside for the Broomfield Schools' Photographic Competition prizes.

The competition is open to local primary schools and currently the competition runs in the Spring Term, The presentation of Prizes and Certificates of Merit on the Friday before the May Day Bank Holiday at Community Centre was part of the Emsworth Arts Trail. As the SMPPA is a charity whose aim is to preserve the Slipper Mill Pond and support the wildlife in and around it, the competition has a wildlife theme, and to encourage creativity there is also an open section for any subject of their choice. Cash prizes, sponsored by the SMPPA, are awarded to the overall winner in each section and the winner in each academic year and the schools attended by the overall winners. Primary Schools taking part are Emsworth, Westbourne, Thorney, St James, Southbourne and Funtington and entries are invited from school years 3,4,5, and 6. The photos are entered by email and then printed and mounted for the exhibition to the admiration of the pupils, parents and visitors alike.

This is the seventh year the competition has been held and the number of entries was larger than in previous years. We had 126 pictures entered and they were judged by Margaret Gowen CPAGB, John Cook CPAGB, and Jeff Thatcher all of whom have been members of Havant Camera club for over 20 years.

## Prize Winners

### Open Category



Cracked Clay  
Erin Morgan – Funtington Y3



Connections  
Quinola Arthur – Emsworth Y4



This better be important  
Woody Willis – Funtington Y5



Swiftly Stream  
Jimmy Tyerman - Funtington Y6

## Local Nature Category



Hatching time  
Erin Morgan – Funtington Y3



High Winds Hayling Island  
Marion Lidec – Southbourne Y4



Ladybird on Nettles  
Joe Fellows – Emsworth Y5



Racton Fields Sunset  
Hugo Dobrijevic – Westbourne Y6



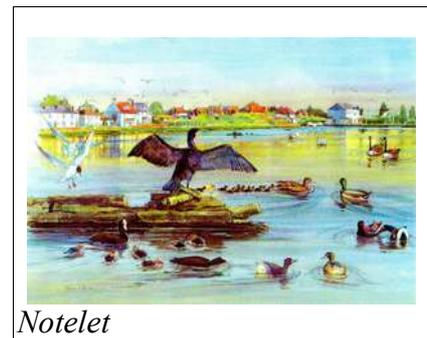
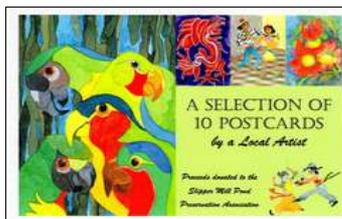
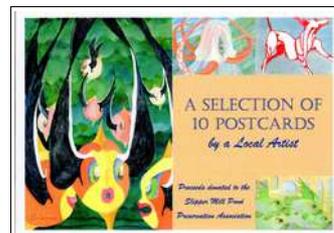
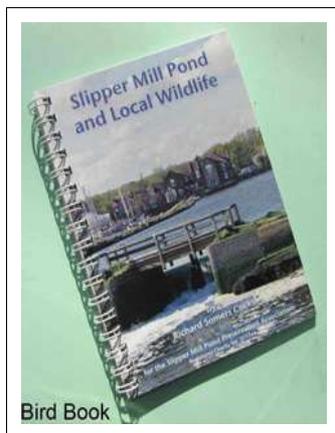
## Dates for the Diary

| Date                      | Day    | Event        |
|---------------------------|--------|--------------|
| tbc                       | Sunday | Summer Party |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> October  | Friday | AGM          |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> November | Friday | Dinner       |

## Contacts

|                    |  |              |                               |
|--------------------|--|--------------|-------------------------------|
| General:           | Nick Madinaveitia                              | 01243 377749 | chmn@smppa.org.uk             |
| Treasurer:         | Mark Phillips                                  | 01243 376756 | treasurer@smppa.org.uk        |
| Membership         | Sharon Corbett                                 | 01243 389994 | membership@smppa.org.uk       |
| Social Events      | Jo Greenfield                                  | 01243 371134 | info@smppa.org.uk             |
| Work Party         | Rob Turner                                     | 01243 376508 | workparty@smppa.org.uk        |
| Photo comp.        | Mark Phillips                                  | 01243 376756 | photos@smppa.org.uk           |
| Wildlife:          | Downland Surgery                               | 01243 377141 |                               |
|                    | RSPCA  | 01239 667541 |                               |
| Environment Agency | All incidents                                  | 0800807060   | <i>Note - revised numbers</i> |
|                    | Flood line                                     | 0345988 1188 |                               |
| Post               | c/o 35 Slipper Road, Emsworth, Hants., PO108BS |              |                               |

## Publications



*Notelet*

Please contact Jo Greenfield if you wish to purchase the Bird Book, Notelets or Cards all on sale to support the Association.

## Data Protection Act 2018

To comply with the EU's 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](mailto:info@smppa.org.uk).

Unless noted, illustrations by Nick Madinaveitia