



Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association

Registered Charity: 277744



(Photo – Richard Somers Cocks)

Newsletter — December 2011

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Introduction:

Autumn's warm days were deceptive - all of a sudden it was time for the Annual Dinner and now Christmas is upon us. In the last months we have put into action the East Bank management plan with several Work Parties. In the Spring and Summer we hope to see it revitalised - the results of the hard work our volunteers have done.

I draw your attention to the Litter Picking item – we are looking for a volunteer to take on Peter Archer's role as he feels he is not as nimble as he used to be. We must all thank him for the work he has done in helping us maintain the pond at such a high standard .

The Association is continuing to look after the pond, currently paying great attention to the problems of silting and of the tidal gates leaking – more about these in the next Newsletter.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone.

Nick Madinaveitia, Chairman.

Wildlife Report:

Gavin Millar reports:

*You will all have seen that the East Bank has had a fairly radical “haircut” in the last few months, and quite a few of you took part, for which many thanks. Radical but not uniform, you will have noted. We purposely left patches untouched at intervals along the bank. The reason is to provide habitat for insects, small mammals, etc., which rely on long grass and low bushes for shelter during the winter. One of the advantages of having areas cut short (and the grass has already been growing since we did it) is that I can get a much clearer view of plants which are not usually visible until the spring, but are already shooting, possibly with the mild November encouraging them. There are bluebells, speedwell, cow parsley, cleaver, and others well on the way. Flowers are scarce but the old faithful, gorse, provides colour and the Eleagnus at the bend in the road still has flowers which give scent, but only if you get really close! The hacking job on the orange ball tree was **not** done by us, (and steps have been taken to prevent a repeat) but one thing it did reveal was a fine crop of fungi.*

Bird life on the pond has regressed to its usual winter state. Loads of coot (at least sixty) a few mallards, the resident pair of swans, who seem to have repelled all invaders, a lonely Canada goose, some dabchicks, gulls galore and varying numbers of cormorants. What the latter are eating I don't know. The grey mullet breeding season went on well into the autumn but I haven't seen any fish or fry recently. Perhaps there are a few eels still about.



Little Grebe/Dab Chick
(photo Richard Somers Cocks)



Tube worm growth on stones
(Photo Richard Somers Cocks)

*When the pond was emptied recently for cleaning the gates it showed just what a successful breeding season our rare tubeworm, *Ficopomatus enigmaticus*, had this year. The chalky encrustations on just about any suitable surface, vertical or horizontal, are very striking--- a relief when the previous two years showed little*

evidence of breeding activity. I thought maybe we'd lost it, which would be sad, and not a thing I would like to see on my watch!

West Bank: Inspection

On a splendid 26th October we had a formal visit of the LAG (Local Action Group) of the WSCC LEADER Project who had given us a generous grant enabling repair the West Bank.

The members, who had only seen details of the project on paper, inspected the repairs and were able to appreciate its environmental and historical context. We were able to show them on the ground how important the pond is in terms of a buffer zone between Emsworth village and Southbourne and how it forms a pleasant visual boundary between the two settlements. Coots and cormorants were up to their usual antics and two swans came up to query what we were all doing on the bank emphasising its biodiversity. We even borrowed several old photos of the mill from Tony Yoward to explain how it had been built in the 1760s to service the Navy's increased demand victuals. As with all industrial buildings it and its surroundings have been constantly evolving. The mill and pond were forever repaired and patched and had come to the end of their useful working life in the 1960s.



Slipper Pond - looking South along the future Slipper Road - about 1900

The visitors were:

- Peter Simpson - LEADER Programme Manager
- Richard Chalk – LEADER Project Manager
- Robin Barnes - LAG member
- Bob Norris - LAG member
- Martin Rhodes - LAG member
- George Smith - Chichester District Council
- Barry Willett - DEFRA



(Photo: Richard Chalk – LEADER)

[LEADER = EU funding entitled “Liaison Entre Actions de Developement de l'economie Rurale” - ie: integrated action for rural development]

Litter Picking:

We are looking for a stalwart person to take on from Peter Archer, who has been carrying out litter patrols around the pond for many years. He has explained that his primary concern was the pond edge and picking the debris that accumulated in the reeds at the foot of the bank. He commented that banks themselves were usually litter-free as most passers-by were very responsible and took their litter home and even picked up and disposed of stray items.

Please could any volunteers make contact with a Committee member.

Autumn Work Parties

We had two very successful Saturday work parties – the first on 17th September and the second on 12th November when the East Bank was prepared for the winter. We worked carefully to the agreed Management Plan. We cut back the Phragmites reeds to the outside edge of the top of the bank and then cropped and raked the grass to encourage fresh growth. We specifically left sections untouched as refuges for the wild life. We also attacked the overwhelming brambles and Lonicera shrubs at the North end by Slipper House as they had become an impenetrable sterile mass.



We all owe the many volunteers who took part a great vote of thanks – a measure of the amount of work done is that David Urry offered to take the waste to the tip and, over the two sessions, took more than 40 very full builders bags of debris as well as several black bin bags of assorted litter.

We still have to remove the roots of the Lonicera and trim several of the other shrubs before the Spring – and will tell you in advance when we plan the next Workday.



2011 Annual Dinner



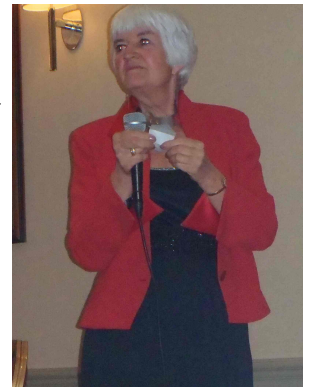
Betty Smith reports

The annual SMPPA Dinner took place on Friday 18th November 2011 at the Brookfield Hotel and was attended by 84 guests. An extremely pleasant evening all round – the company was good and the food was excellent.

Nick Madina, our chairman, talked briefly about the Pond's year and then cracked a few jokes (some so awful, they were actually very funny!), the raffle provided its usual amusement and our thanks as always go to the membership for their generous donations.

Our thanks to the Brookfield for the high standard of service and also for their raffle prize of a Lunch for 2 at the Brookfield. Our thanks also for raffle prizes from the following local organisations:

- *Emsworth Co-Op - for £20 worth of Vouchers*
- *The Deck - for Breakfast for 2*
- *The Sussex Brewery - for a Sausage Supper for 2*
- *Taste of India - for their voucher for a £15 discount on any food order.*
- *Keyprint for printing the Dinner tickets free of charge.*



The Dinner and raffle raised £556.53 for the Pond – with grateful thanks to all concerned.

Email Addresses:

Please can you 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: smppa.org.uk.

Dates for your Diary

Friday	20 th April 2012	Spring Talk
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 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)