



Summer Party

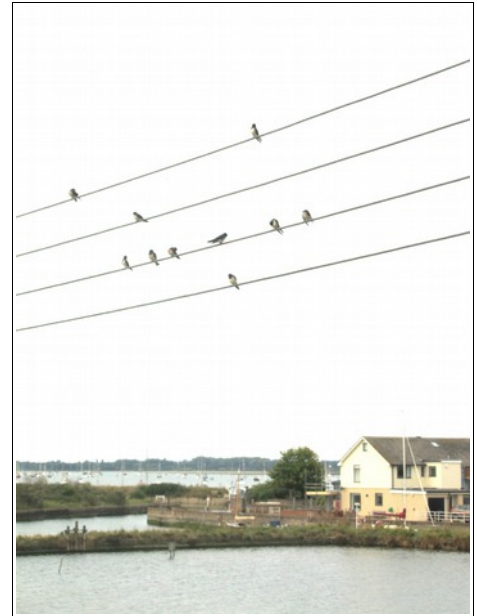
Newsletter — September 2016

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Introduction

Writing this in the splendid late August summer weather is difficult as the preparations for the Annual General Meeting and the Dinner turn my thoughts to Winter, cold weather and storms. The swallows preparing to migrate are a timely reminder that the seasons do change and the Summer Party is now a pleasant memory of those heady days.



On a much more cheerful note this Newsletter describes the continuing improvements to the north end of the eastern bank thanks to the sterling work done by the many volunteers. Nature has been much in evidence. Birds have had a successful breeding season taking into account the predations of the Greater Black Backed Gulls. Despite this our resident swans raised three cygnets. Some later-hatched cootlets and ducklings survived. In the still of the evenings the surface of the pond is ruffled by the wakes left by the many fish and its silence broken by the plop of sea trout jumping.

In the Autumn and Winter we will be holding the gates open from time to time during Spring Tides to flush out silt from the pond and Peter Pond, liaising with our upstream neighbours.

Looking forward, the refurbishment of the sluice and apron needs to be considered. We will also continue working with the Lower Ems River Management Group addressing issues of common interest.

I hope to see you at both the Annual General Meeting and the Dinner.

Nick Madinaveitia

Wildlife report

Birds

May – 5 cygnets hatched from nest in the reeds GBBG caught one and took it onto raft and devoured it

June – 3 GBBG (Greater Black Backed Gull) chicks hatched
- 3 cootlets hatched – first time on water predated by GBBG took it to central raft and ate it on the spot

June - 4th cygnet found lost in Dolphin Creek and returned to pond – trail of bread crumbs... Clayton

June – dead GBBG chick seen on central raft

August - Duck & 3 ducklings visited from Peter Pond



Southern bird raft blooms

Sharon Corbett recounts events at the top end of Slipper Road in “A Duck Tale” -

It is unusual to see a duck in my back garden, so on seeing one emerge from the back of my flowerbed and fly away I investigated and discovered a nest with several eggs. Online information told how ducks would lay an egg a day until the nest was full and only then would they begin incubating them. So after some days the duck became a permanent resident of the garden, leaving only briefly once a day to pay a visit to my neighbour's for food and water.

From the start it was clear that getting ducklings out of the garden would not be straightforward as the only way out was down a flight of steps. I looked out a suitable ramp and earmarked a piece of fibreboard of about the right size.

After 28 days had passed, on returning from work I went to the back garden to see if there was any sign of the ducklings and was met by the mother, no longer on the nest and quacking wildly. It was soon apparent that she had led the ducklings the wrong way and they were stuck at the bottom of another flight of steps with no way out.

Having no idea what to do I rushed to my neighbour's and together we puzzled over how to get the ducklings back up the steps. To make things more difficult the mother duck had now joined the ducklings at the bottom of the steps and was aggressively defending them from any rescue attempt. The information website advised that gloves must be worn when handling ducklings as the mother would reject them otherwise. They would also serve as protection from pecks!

So a plan was devised and I went into the house to open the window behind the ducks and shoo them towards the steps with a long handled brush. Fortunately, at this point the mother flew off and, armed with only gardening gloves and trug, my neighbour rushed down the steps and scooped the thirteen ducklings into the trug. Meanwhile I ran back round to the garden, took the trug of ducklings and tipped them back into the nest just as the mother returned.

We blocked off all access to steps and agreed that early the following morning we would attempt to shepherd them over the road to the pond. This went surprisingly smoothly, and soon the mother, father and thirteen ducklings were swimming around at the pond edge. Feeling happy with our work we left them to it, but later that day my neighbour went to check on their progress and witnessed a most peculiar thing.



from www.birdsnews.com

Despite her having ducklings to care for, ardent male ducks were attacking the female. During the commotion another female with six ducklings of the same age as the thirteen swam by. It was a great surprise to see ten of the thirteen leave one mother duck and join the one with the

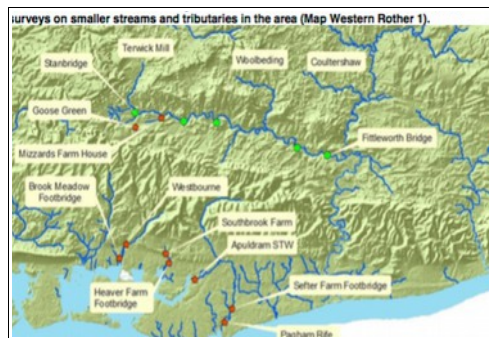
six ducklings. She swam on, now with sixteen young, and the other was left with just three.

Sadly the tale does not end well as by the end of the day she was seen with only two and by the next morning she was back in my neighbour's garden with none at all. The mother with sixteen was nowhere to be seen.

Fish

This summer on warm evenings shoals of mullet have been congregating in the shallows on the East side of the pond making the surface boil. Occasional sea trout have been jumping clear of the water.

As part of researching what can be seen the Environment Agency's Fish Survey 2015 was consulted which gave reassuring information about the health of the River Ems, both at Westbourne and Brook meadow. These screen dumps summarise their findings – and for more detailed information please look at the EA's website.



https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543454/Environment_Agency_SSD_Fish_Monitoring_Report_2015.pdf

Local results:

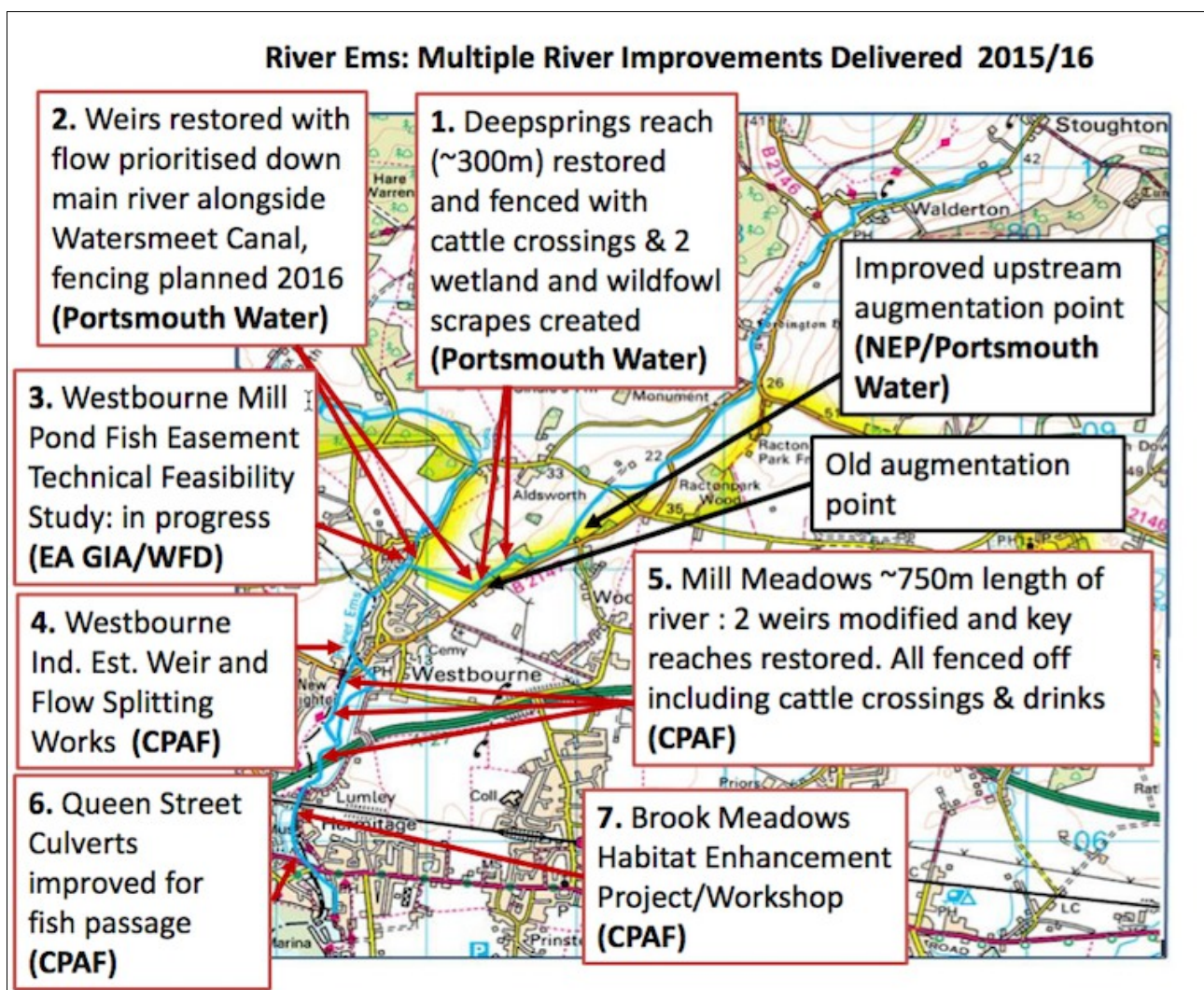
Site	Atlantic Salmon	Brown/Sea trout	European Eel	Bullhead
Brook Meadow footbridge	1	46	15	50
Westbourne		27	7	500

Silt

This Autumn and Winter we will be holding the gates open for limited periods during Spring Tides when we hope to flush out as much silt as possible from both Slipper and Peter ponds and enable essential maintenance to be carried out.

We continue pressing LERMG to help everyone to fully understanding the local silting mechanisms for both ponds.

The full consequences of the work carried out by the Arun and Rother River Trust on the Ems, completed without due consultation, have still to be understood.



Details of their works are shown on:

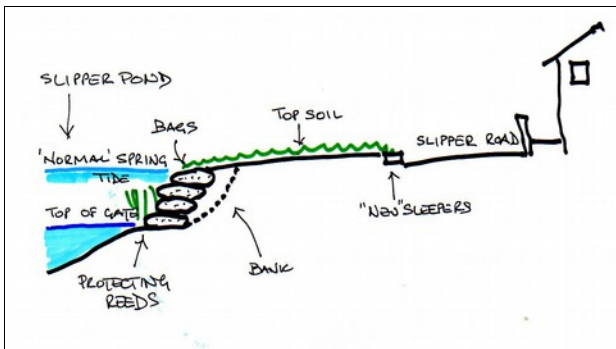
- <http://www.wildtrout.org/news/diggers-river-ems-west-sussex>
- http://www.therrc.co.uk/sites/default/files/files/Training/training_courses/CPAF/presentation_ses_wright.pdf

Slipper Road Boundary

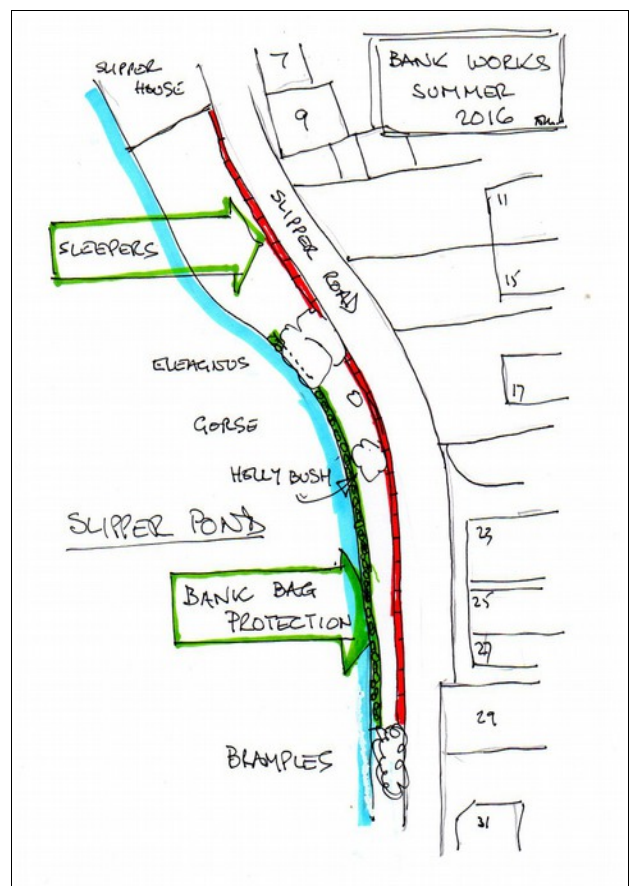


In our May Newsletter we described the fixing of the sleepers forming Stage 1 of the works to stop the road encroaching into the pond bank. On Saturday 9th May we had another large work party and completed Stage 2 and were able to stand back and admire a job well done.

We then directed our attention to tidying up the bank itself to make sure that all hollows and ditches were properly filled and strengthening its outside face.



Over the Summer we had a series of six 'formal' work party Saturday mornings preceded by preparation sessions. We quickly established a routine of an early 8.30 start to miss the worst of the heat. We all settled down to our preferred tasks – some preparing footings for the bag wall, filling the net bags with arisings, barrowing them to the work front, placing them and then dressing the bank surface.





After the workparty of 17th July Sue Dadswell summarised the position as:



“The members met last Saturday to continue the work being done to protect the Eastern Bank from erosion. Net bags were being filled with hardcore from a local garden to reinforce the bank. The group will continue this arduous job over the summer helped by copious helpings of tea and cake” How right she was!

By the end of July we had placed about 775 of the 1,000 net bags in store in the major sessions!! Each session the many volunteers (pressed or not!) were all very grateful at coffee time for Debbie Cairn's catering services!

Volunteers included Richard Baker, Kristin and Harry Baldwin, Steve Bird, Angela Brown, Clayton Cairns, Charlie and Max Greenfield, the Dadswells, Tim Hollins, Clive Johnson, Catherine Jones, Bill Keeble, Gary Lamb, Nick Madina, Gavin Millar, Mark Newman, Mark Phillips, Jonathan Stamper, Rob Turner, Oliver Wallace, Bill Warren.



Examining the 'top of bank' during the August Spring Tides has shown we need to add a layer of bags to the North end of the works to bring them all to approximately the same level. We have top soil and fill to use..... (Volunteers!!!)

Common Reeds

Reeds (*Phragmites australis*) are continuing to sprout in designated 'no grow' areas and we will be treating them using glyphosate and applying it manually within the established guidelines to avoid causing any danger to the pond and its inhabitants.

Infrastructure

General

Our pond and its banks continue to be in good condition apart from the sluice and its apron.

Sluice and Apron

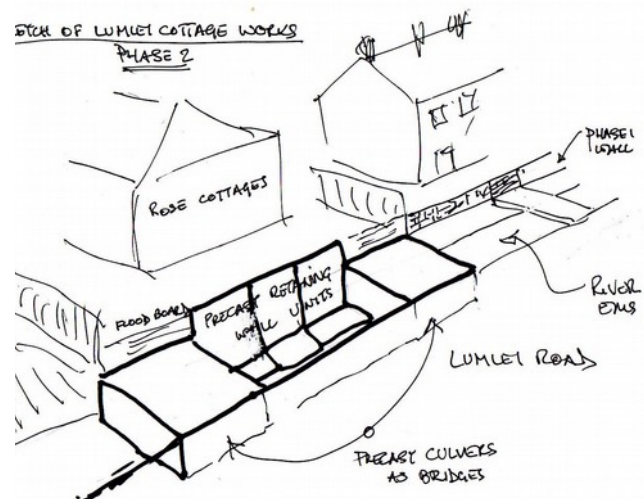
Good news - West Sussex County Council have agreed to help by funding Opus International to prepare the necessary report to help us in organising funding etc.

Lower Ems River Management Group

In our May Newsletter the findings of the Environment Agency's Lower Ems Appraisal Report conclusions were that any proposals involving Slipper Pond and its banks they considered were very costly and did not demonstrate value for money.

Group Projects

- Lower Lumley Road – Works complete
- Lumley Cottages Phase 2
Grant applications have been successful and the contract has been let. It is hoped to start works in September.
- Lumley Cottages Phase 3
The design and detail of the bank to the rear awaits the outcome of a detailed ecological impact review and funding.



- Gooseberry Cottage Area and Balancing basin
The EA have completed the strengthening of the flanking bank.
- Slipper Pond
See above – sluice and apron repairs

Dolphin Quay

We have not heard news about any further about the development following the public display this July.

Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner will be held at the Brookfield Hotel, Havant Road, Emsworth, on Friday 25th November 2016. Tickets are £24 each and will be available from Jo Greenfield who would be grateful if you would bring any contributions for the Dinner raffle to the Annual General Meeting.

Work Parties

Autumn work parties to cut the grass, trim the bushes and tidy up are scheduled for 15th October, 22nd October and 5th November. Start 9.30am. Tasks include shrub pruning/ weeding/ finish bank defences/ cutting down the length of Slipper Road grass bank. Anyone wanting to volunteer to contact Rob Turner at workparty@smppa.org.uk or 01243 376508

Summer Party

TIME TO RELAX AND CELEBRATE



What a very enjoyable Summer party we had this year on July 17th. Members of SMPPA sat most comfortably in Jan and David Urry's sheltered, freshly mown garden, surrounded by flowers and shrubs, in company with groups of friends and neighbours. As always, people arrived

bearing platefuls of delicious food, inviting all to try, and providing a large selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks to choose from. It was a most delightful occasion; Betty Smith and Jo Greenfield organised exactly the right environment on a splendid sunny afternoon; thanks to the Urrys and the volunteers who arranged seating and tabling. It was a pleasure to meet new as well as established neighbours, and much gossip was exchanged!

Our Chairman, Nick Madina, celebrated yet another successful year of SMPPA enterprise. He reminded us of the work of the work parties which laid tropical hardwood sleepers to the edge and the current strengthening and reinforcing of the Bank. On behalf of the SMPPA he thanked all who had been involved and participated, and in particular Betty Smith for her many years of work as Social Secretary and her able helper Sarah Titley. He reminded all of the pleasure we derived from the Christmas Dinner and its raffle as well as the flawless organisation behind the AGM and Spring Talk. Betty has been a reliable, unflappable Committee member with vivacious energy and commitment and will be sorely missed. He praised her and wished her well in the future.

Nick also welcomed new members and introduced them to the Committee and the neighbourhood.

The weather was pleasant, the company agreeable; what more could one ask? Let's look forward to meeting at the party in Summer 2017.



Dates for your Diary

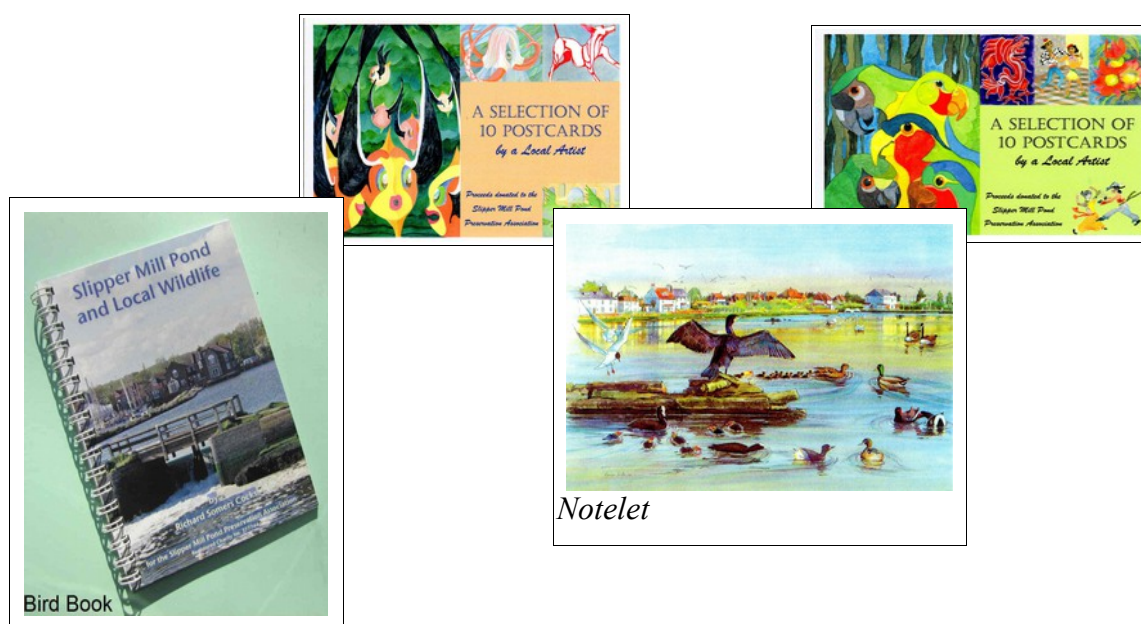
15 th October. 22 nd October 5 th November	Saturday Saturday Saturday	Autumn Work Parties
28 th October	Friday	Annual General Meeting, Hewitts, South Street, Emsworth (was the old Day Centre)
25 th November	Friday	Annual Dinner, Brookfield Hotel.

Contacts

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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	Pollution	0845 9881188	
	Flood line	0800 807060	

Publications

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



Unless noted illustration by Nick Madinaveitia