

TRUST NEWS

Founders Photos

Photographs of the late Harold Cory and of Dean Emeritus Hugh Dickinson are now displayed in Rose Cottage, commemorating their founding of the Harnham Water Meadows Trust

The Trust has recently received a generous donation of £700 from the Girdlers' Company, thanks to one of our Friends.

Dear Jenny,
As promised, a brief note of the grass snake which I told you about on Saturday.

Wildlife on the river.

Glancing out of the window I noticed an unusual ripple working its way from the watermeadow side of the Nadder towards my bank, and as I got nearer I realised it was a 2-3ft grass snake. It had also attracted the attention of a coot, one of the local terrorists of the wildlife population, who approached and began to attack the snake. There ensued a great splashing, hissing and flapping, with the coot pecking at the snake which raised its head off the water to hiss in return, until finally the snake reached safety and disappeared into a hole in the bank.

There is not often a dull moment on the river.

Best Wishes, Dr Elizabeth Webb

The Town Path.

Jenny Cowan and I, as members of the Friends of Harnham Water Meadows, have for some time now been picking litter up on the Water Meadows alongside the Town Path - around once a fortnight. We do this on Monday mornings, so that we can put the litter out for the "Bin Men" who collect around Monday lunchtimes. We have taken the opportunity to pick up the litter on the Town Path whilst we have been clearing the Water Meadows rather than just walk past it!

Jenny saw the "Street Sweeper" on Mill Road yesterday and took the opportunity to ask him how often he clears the Town Path. He told her that, due to Health & Safety reasons, they are now not allowed to take their "Sweeper Machine" over the Long Bridge onto the Town Path and so have not swept the Town Path for some time.

This has not been announced by the Council - surprisingly!!! This begs the question - "how is the Town Path to be kept clean?" It is marketed as a tourist attraction - does the Tourist Board know that it is no longer being cleared of litter? Why can't the "Street Sweeper" approach the Town Path from the Old Mill end and sweep it that way?

Additionally, despite all the promises we received earlier, we are now into July and absolutely nothing has happened regarding the refurbishment of the Town Path. The metal barrier alongside Island Cottage is now collapsing and, inevitably, the metal poles are ending up in the river. The Town Path remains a disgrace to the Council and everyone involved in cleanliness and tourism.

Mike Gallagher

12 May 2007

Dear Miss Bowen,

I am not sure that I'm addressing this letter to the correct person but, if not, I would be grateful to be advised to whom it should be directed. I have recently been appalled by the tree removal that has been carried out adjacent to the Long Bridge at the Town Path. I fully understand that management of vegetation has to be carried out on banks of water ways in order to maintain them in good order. In this instance it has been done in a way that I can only describe as crude. My judgement was obviously first on aesthetic grounds. This was a charming junction of a brook with an arm of the river. It has been brutalised by the felling of several trees to leave raw exposed stumps. There is a second and arguably greater reason for criticising the manner in which this work has been done: these trees provided a spot where water birds of several species could find shelter from raptors. Just at the season of the year when young broods are most vulnerable to avian predation their cover has been removed.

It is impossible in the short term to regain the natural protective vegetation in that particular location, however it would seem imperative, to ensure that future work on the banks of the streams in this area should be monitored and their effects judged prior to execution.

Yours Sincerely,
Malcolm Simmons

Dear Mr Simmons,

Harnham Water Meadows Trust

I write as managing agent for the Harnham Water Meadows Trust. Thank you for your letter to Jennifer Bowen dated 12th May 2007. Miss Bowen has asked me to reply.

I am sorry that you have not approved of the Trust's recent clearance work adjacent to the Long Bridge. While I appreciate your concerns regarding the loss of protective cover for young birds, I should point out that it was the intention to carry out the work earlier in the winter, when the broods would not have been affected. However, the extremely wet winter meant that we were unable to bring the necessary equipment on to the meadows without damaging the Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The work was carried out with the approval of Salisbury District Council and is intended to improve the view of the Water Meadows from the Long Bridge. The area does look bare at the moment because the undergrowth has not yet had the chance to re-establish itself where it had been shaded out by the trees. The stumps have been left at such a height to enable them to be bagged to prevent their regrowth without the need for chemicals. I am sure that it will not be long before the river-edge plants take a firm hold of the area.

I hope that this answers your queries.

Yours Sincerely,
Will Dobson BSc (Hons) MRICS