

## HADRIAN COOK'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

Writing for the Friends Newsletter always causes me to focus on the past six months or so. This time, I find the single most outstanding achievement has been increasing work from our volunteers, something that the Friends have helped me to grow. I would like to offer my appreciation to Jan Fitzjohn and Lesley Wright who are expanding our education work (school visits, mail shots and related events) and to Tim Kidner for his photography, including undertaking a survey of our above-ground archaeological structures. There are many more who have given their time to event organisation, to conservation of the meadows and to working in Rose Cottage garden. There are regular visits from the Harnham Scouts who undertake valuable conservation work towards their Scout Environmental Award; other valued contributors have come from Friends Provident and from British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

In response to these developments, the activities at Rose Cottage continue to grow as our visitor centre, proving suitable for small groups of children and adults. Meetings, discussions and lectures are regularly held on the premises. There has been damp proof work on the downstairs and we are looking forward to a lick of paint

to the internal walls by the Friends volunteers over the summer. I would like to thank Dr Terry Clayton for donating a magnetic display board and to John Beckett and Jan who made possible the re-organisation of the entrance.

Visitors may also have noticed the fine new sluices that are complete, funded by a South Wilts Area Grant Scheme and by the Environment Agency. This will give better control across all of Seven Acres and will form a part of the proposed public demonstrations of drowning that I plan to undertake in February 2010 using these new hatches. We have volunteers coming forward to help in future here: thanks to Hugh Thomas and to Martin Wright. These gentlemen will have to undertake a gruelling apprenticeship in order to meet the Harnham standards!

The Association for Industrial Archaeology Initiative Award was presented to Jenny Bowen and me at the Trowbridge Museum on 16 January, in recognition of the work of the Trust for interpretation. The work of Mike Cowan was acknowledged at the ceremony. I represented the cause of water meadows at an important meeting towards a strategic framework for restoration of the River Avon System on 24 June in Dinton Village Hall. This year so far has also seen the usual Open Day in

March, and the Family Environment Event in May with a further Open Day planned for 20 September 2009. On such occasions, when I lead guided walks, it is clear how community interest in the meadows continue to grow.

With the increased volunteer help, we have supported Science in Schools Days at Larkhill, Downton, Winterbourne Earls and the South Wilts Grammar School Charity Fair, while Lesley hosted children from Leehurst Swan School. We are also pleased to have hosted four visits in June from Year 8 geography students from Bishop Wordsworth Grammar School who visited the meadows as part of their project on rivers and floodplains. My work with adult education, including universities, has continued with a seminar at the Southampton University Geography Department, and University of the Third Age - lecture in February, and a visit from the adult education class on landscape archaeology at the Salisbury and South Wilts Museum. There were four Plymouth University teacher training days in March, involving children from St Martin's school. I gave a lecture to the Civic Society (22 April), as part of their series on Georgian Salisbury and also talked to and hosted a visit from the Harnham Wives Group.

Thank you to you all once more, for your fantastic support.

*Hadrian Cook*