

REPORT ON MANAGEMENT OF THE MEADOWS - Hadrian Cook

I work for HWMT on a three days per week basis, and would like, once more, to offer my appreciation to the Friends of HWMT for their support.

Rose Cottage and the education and visitors centre

- **The Cottage** continued to function as the visitor centre, proving suitable for small groups of children and adults, but cosy for larger groups. Meetings, discussions and lectures are regularly held on the premises.
- **Internal display material** is complete and periodically reviewed. The flexibility allows for display material to be taken to events outside.
- **The planning application** for a stand alone education facility in the garden will soon be re-submitted, pending completion of the Flood Risk Assessment.
- **Publicity and the centre.** I acknowledge the volunteer input from Jan Fitzjohn and Lesley Wright in our educational and related initiatives and I am grateful to Mike Cowan and Tim Tatton-Brown for their work on publicity and publications and to Tim Kidner for acting as photographer.

Planning and Meadow Management

- **Higher Level Stewardship.** This application has been successful meaning that there will be reliable funding for meadow management, maintenance and improvement rolled out over a 10 year period. We should thank Sholto Moger (Strutt and Parker), Louise Stratton (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group), Robert Lloyd and Dr Kathy Stearne (both of Natural England) for their guidance, patience and professionalism in making this significant development possible.
- **The Trust's Framework Management Plan** is now complete (this assisted in producing the Farm Environmental Plan that is part of the above). It has been approved by the Management Committee and will soon be available on the website.
- **Bird Surveys.** I am grateful to John Vickerman who continues regular surveys and identifies issues relating to conservation that can be fed into our management.
- **Environment Agency.** Discussion continues in relation to improving the floating infrastructure for certain of the eastern meadows and improving length of time when irrigation is possible.
- **Salisbury District Council.** An application to fund a new sluice on Upper Seven Acres and thereby produce an area for irrigation demonstrations by the Town Path during winter will be decided in December.
- **Website.** I have assisted Mike Gallagher and Mike Cowan in updating. (www.salisburywatermeadows.org.uk). The service provider is Kirstie Looms of Sarum Web Design to whom we are grateful.
- **Drowning.** This winter enabled successful watering of parts of Martin's Mead, Seven Acres and briefly Sammell's Acre. Repairs and improvements to the infrastructure by work parties from Friends Provident, Sparsholt College, Friends Working Parties and British Trust for Conservation volunteers helped greatly. Mike Whitlock has

continued to repair the hatches while Tom Gainsford assisted larger-scale earth movements and ditching that greatly assisted drowning.

Outreach, publicity and public lectures

- **Public Events.** The Open Day for the community (15 March) and Family Environment Event (10 May) to which other organisations were invited were successful. On both occasions I lead guided walks.
- **Schools:** Since June 2007, 16 interactions including nice occasions when groups visited the meadows. Strong relations are now established with Harnham Junior, Bemerton St John Primary and South Wilts School; St Osmunds are now very interested. This includes supporting the annual Salisbury Schools Environment Day. Support by Jan Fitzjohn and Lesley Wright is gratefully acknowledged.
- **Local history,** community and other societies: 17 lectures and visits, including a large group of local government professionals organised by WCC, lecture and tour, South Wiltshire Industrial Archaeological Society, British Association of Local History (with Mike Cowan), Laverstock and Ford Watermeadow and Downland Trust, Sarum Over 50s and Wilton Historical Society. Of these, eight involved visits to the meadows.
- **Further and Higher Education:** Sparsholt, St Mary's UC, Saintes Agricultural Lycee and Plymouth University visited during the past 12 months.
- **Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.** The Museum has a new Director (Adrian Green) who is supported by a new and dynamic team. Several productive meetings are bringing my work for the Trust close to the Museum. In the first instance, we are collaborating in 'The Big Draw', a community artistic initiative.
- **Rural Futures Conference 2008.** At Plymouth University in April. I produced a poster and contributed to the proceedings.
- **History of the Harnham Water Meadows.** With Mike Cowan and Tim Tatton-Brown, (and Hobnob Press), this is in production.
- **Article for the academic journal *Landscapes*.** This concerns the evolution of the floodplain at Harnham. It has been accepted and is in press.
- **Article in *The Countryman*** is due out this month. It is by Jack Watkins and concerns the work of HWMT.

Future Plans.

The year 2007 was the year of the primary schools, 2008 that of community and interest groups. Form a firm base I will continue to work at reaching the secondary sector and expanding my further and higher education involvement on behalf of the Trust. It remains very much to oversee the appropriate implementation of the Framework Management Plan through using the Higher Level Stewardship payment and to work with the Environment Agency and their consulting engineers to improve drowning of the meadows. The result of the planning application should be known this year.

MANAGEMENT REPORT Sholto Moger (Strutt and Parker)

GRAZING and TENANCY

Butch Joint is in the 2nd year of his tenancy. A reduction of sheep due to overgrazing has left approx. 260 head and 175 lambs and a llama. The nettles have now been sprayed, although there was a considerable delay due to difficulty with the contractor, compounded by erratic weather. This is to be addressed in the autumn Management Meeting, to avoid similar problems in 2009.

SLUICES and HATCHES

Experimental flooding was undertaken by the EA and HC. ESA agreement meant that drowning can only take place between 1 October and 31 March. Works are due to be carried out to repair Sluices 7 and 9. Further works may be possible in due course dependent upon funding for capital works.

CHANNELS and DRAINS

HC is persuading students to assist with keeping channels and drains clear. This has been particularly effective this year with new groups adding to the volunteer task force.

COPSES and TREE WORKS

Copses maintained - thank you for efforts put in, in Rotary Copse. All copses to be strimmed; Joiners Belt has been recently done by Ray T. Extensive undergrowth clearance was undertaken in the winter, which has allowed for improved access to the copses, whilst maintaining habitat stacks has encouraged biodiversity.

HIGHER LEVEL SCHEME

The Meadows have successfully been admitted into the HLS Scheme. It is hoped that they will commence the term on 1st August. This will bring significant environmental benefits, as well as funding.

FISHING

Salisbury & District Angling Club have signed a new three year licence for the fishing on the Meadows. After requests to remove the rights opposite St Mary's Road, Harnham by some of its residents, it was agreed by the Trustees that it should become a term of the licence not to cause disruption when fishing that particular stretch. This has been adhered to, and specific mention made in the member's handbook.