

## TO THE FRIENDS OF THE HARNHAM WATER MEADOWS:

As I collated articles and photos for this newsletter I could not stop remembering sitting with Jenny Bowen in Rose Cottage proof reading the last newsletter just two weeks before her sudden death. In September 2010, I felt very honoured when Jenny asked me to take over as Chairman on her retirement, planned for September 2011. Anticipating a smooth handover with the benefit of Jenny's great experience and knowing that she would never retire, her death in February 2011 was a great shock. She had so many interests – especially a love of music and her encouragement of the young; a formidable character, very kind and with a great sense of humour. She loved life and travel and achieved so much in her lifetime. Jenny is missed by all. We remember with thanks her great contribution to The Harnham Water Meadows.

This year we combined the Environment Day with the interesting garden at Fisherton Mill House, home of Tim Tatton-Brown, raising about £450. After a sudden torrential downpour at 11am it remained a dry day, but extremely windy. Around a hundred visitors came and refreshments were served by the capable Friends team in the kitchen. A highlight for the children was river dipping; our thanks go to Tim and to all the stall holders who made the day a huge success. Of interest to those who came: the swan who sat firmly on her nest at the end of the garden can now be seen with a flotilla of cygnets.

In June we were treated to a wonderful evening. Beautiful singing by the Cathedral Junior Choir, you could hear every word and foot tapping excitement was created by Jazbytes, who were led by a true jazz enthusiast. Our thanks to everyone who took part.

Also in June, Tim Wilcox, a world-acknowledged expert on Constable, whose wonderful book is on sale in the Museum, gave a talk to a 'full-house' at the Museum, we were all privileged.

The Meadows have been appreciated by many visitors this year, both cold and wet enthusiasts at Drowning Demonstrations and by those enjoying an informative, pleasant walk, in all cases ending up in Rose Cottage for soup, tea or coffee. I have lost count of the Walks on the Meadows, but certainly 12 this year, not counting the Drowning demonstrations or the 16 school visits! So we have been walked off our feet! The numbers on public walks were down this year, but many came to the 'Drownings' a new experience. It was suggested that perhaps there was visitor fatigue, yes maybe we need to think up more new attractions, but how encouraging it is to have had so many visitors.

A letter arrived at Rose Cottage from an American visitor, Anita T.Sullivan, who has a collection of poetry published in the USA

([www.airliepress.org](http://www.airliepress.org)), I quote - 'Our visit coincided with one of the Trust's guided walks through the restored area of the water meadows. This brief experience with the beauty and history of the area came to rest in my mind and resulted in two poems upon my return.'

See the poem printed below. The other is about the Town Path.

The Purpose of the Friends was set out in the first Newsletter Spring 1992: To assist and support the trustees of The Harnham Water Meadows - hard work, enthusiasm and determination to achieve the purpose set out has resulted 20 years later in the restoration of this historic area in the centre of Salisbury, leading to a greater understanding and conservation of the farming and engineering revolution that took place over the past 400 years.

Your Committee are determined to carry on with our part in maintaining and improving the Meadows. Effort and hard work are not enough, we need to raise money and to do this we need more members, more volunteers, more ideas – now is a new beginning, please help us.

*Jan Fitzjohn.*