

# PROPOSED NEW WIGHTLINK FERRIES

The Solent Protection Society is fully aware of the considerable public anxiety over the new ferries and their introduction next year.

Since 2005 Solent Protection Society has taken an active interest in Wightlink's plans for replacement ferries on the Lymington-Yarmouth service. It has liaised with Wightlink, the major Lymington yacht clubs and the Lymington Harbour Commissioners and monitored the views of the statutory agencies to seek to ensure that the introduction of the ferries

has minimal environmental impact and the needs of river users are protected.

The Society will continue to liaise closely with the Lymington Harbour Commissioners, Wightlink, the yacht clubs and others, in order to monitor the situation and secure the application and enforcement by the Harbour Commissioners of appropriate operating conditions so that the environment of the Solent is conserved for all.

## Yarmouth Pier

Yarmouth's 609 foot pier which opened in 1876, is the longest wooden pier in the UK and a Grade II listed building. The pier is in need of restoration, its main greenheart piles being eaten away by gribble worms.

The restoration and associated works, such as creating an archive and community events, are likely to cost about £450,000. The Heritage Lottery Fund has made a grant of £350,500 and the Pier Appeal Fund, headed by Alan Titchmarsh, aims to raise money to support the restoration and to keep the pier open as a facility



for the public. One of the conditions of the Heritage Lottery Fund is the involvement of the community and hence there will be a number of events throughout the year, which people will be invited to attend, culminating in a reopening ceremony during the first half of 2008.

*Terry Gerald*

## Hurst View Caravan Park Planning Enforcement Appeal

The Appeal against The Planning Enforcement Notice concerning land adjacent to Hurst View Caravan Park, Lower Pennington, Lymington, was heard on July 3rd, 4th and 5th in Lymington Town Hall.

The result of the Hearing from The Planning Inspectorate in Bristol was to uphold the Notice and dismiss the Appeal subject to certain corrections and variations:

These were:

1. A children's play area with goal posts was accepted as part of the private garden area of the owner and not part of the site.
2. The Southern extension of The Caravan Park reflected a change of use which was accepted, as it had been commenced over 10 years before The Notice Order was imposed. However the Planning Enforcement against recent breaches in planning regulations of this area was upheld with requirements to remove the illegal alterations.

Solent Protection Society had written a letter in support of the Enforcement Notice and a member of Council attended the first day of the Hearing.

The overall result of the Hearing has been dismissal of the Appeal which should serve to prevent any further extension of the Caravan Site towards the National Park Boundary and the Pennington Marshes Nature Reserve.

*Chris Willard*

# Fort Gilkicker

Hampshire County Council, owners of the Fort, are very keen to appoint a developer to restore the Fort and relieve them of the £100,000 a year charge that they are presently incurring on security and repairs in order to maintain a safe environment to protect the public.



So far three organisations have considered the project, all of which would involve converting the Fort for residential occupation. The latest is Askett Hawke, who have a good track record for rescuing historic buildings and who are currently converting some textile mills in the north of England.



The SPS supported the original proposals, which foundered because the developer was unable to raise sufficient funds. We consider that there should not be a "do nothing" option. If left to the ravages of time and vandalism the Fort will become a serious safety hazard and then the only course would be demolition at considerable public expense. This would be a tragedy since the Fort is a Grade 2\* listed monument and one of the defences of the area. We can see no solution that does not involve some form of residential occupation and feel that a specialist organisation is best fitted to produce an acceptable result, which could preserve the structure, allow some public access and relieve the taxpayer of the considerable ongoing cost of preservation.

Askett Hawke propose to remove some of the earth banking to restore the sea aspect to the form in which the fort was originally built. This will allow conversion of the casemates to apartments.



In doing this they will have to take measures to protect a unique insect that lives only in this mound. The barrack block, which used to house Service families, could also be upgraded for use as apartments.

The Estate manager is Marie Percival and further information is available on the Hampshire County Council website.

**Roy Rolf**

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## Access to the Coast

The Society made a comprehensive response to the defra consultation on Access to the Coast. Whilst acknowledging the importance of access to the coast the Society considers that Natural England's current proposals would, if implemented, pose a risk to internationally important sensitive coastal environments. It also considers that rather than new legislation a better approach would be to support improvement plans by local authorities for access arrangements. The Society also has a number of other concerns including funding and the potential liability of landowners. A copy of the full response can be downloaded from the Society's website [www.solentprotection.org](http://www.solentprotection.org) or obtained from the Secretary.

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## Speakers to SPS Council

After some of our monthly Council Meetings, the Solent Protection Society Council hears from Speakers who update us on specific subjects relating to the Solent. Since the last Newsletter we have heard from:

**Celia Clark** of the Portsmouth Society re their plans to encourage Portsmouth to be considered as a World Heritage Site.

**Peter Swift** Managing Director of Intertanko, about latest developments in the shipping world.

**Tony Tutton** of the National Trust about their work in the Isle of Wight.

**Dr Simon Bray** Visiting Researcher at the Centre of Environmental Studies, University of Southampton, re anti-fouling.

# Cowes Week Flyer

The Society is always trying to attract new members to support our aim to protect the environment of the Solent for future generations. This summer we produced a 'flyer' about the Society, aimed at crews who come to sail on the Solent in Skandia Cowes Week. With the kind permission of Stuart Quarrie, of Cowes Combined Clubs, organisers of Cowes Week, the SPS Cowes Flyer was put in the Skipper's pack of each boat racing in the event – nearly 1000 vessels of all sizes. Further copies were also placed in the Red Funnel ticket offices.

The Cowes Flyer undoubtedly raised Solent Protection Society's profile as well as some new members and we thank Stuart Quarrie and Cowes Combined Clubs for giving us the opportunity to tell visiting yachtsmen about our work in protecting the Solent.



## East Head Update

East Head in Chichester Harbour is seen in this recent aerial photograph lying north south, with the Hinge at the bottom connecting it to West Wittering Beach. Records over the last three hundred years show that it has moved from west east through ninety degrees. The thorny question now is what happens next?



Following the answer to that, is the next question, what to do about existing outdated defences and what if any future defence work is sensible.

Latest studies may move this problem forward. A panel of experts has been working with the East Head Working Group (EHWG) studying how to satisfy the diverse interests involved in any future shore management plan. Members of the EHWG come from the Environment Agency, Natural England, The National Trust, Chichester District Council, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, West Wittering Estates and West Wittering Parish Council. The three panel of experts come from Portsmouth University and HR Wallingford. One of the latter is ex ABP Mer.

The expert panel's initial report acknowledges the complexity of the question about which a great deal had been written over the last 30 years. Their assessment is that it is really unpredictable but more likely to move landwards and perhaps extend north but that the main tidal flow into the harbour would stay roughly along the present route.

The Panel made some initial assessment of what might be done to address several concerns on its effect on the navigation and amenities of the harbour but left the detail to the next report due out this autumn.

The Panel's fees are being shared amongst interested parties and SPS has contributed £3000 towards Chichester Harbour Conservancy's share. Public money is certain not to be available for any intervention work.

**Martin Rhodes**

## Using the Society's computer and projector Chris Willard gave the following lectures so far this year:

### Royal Lympington YC Scow Division

Birds of the Solent (19/02/07)

### Keynes Park Cruising Club, Bristol

About the Solent Protection Society (28/03/07)

### CPRE Dinner at Keyhaven Yacht Club

Birds of The Solent (04/04/07)

### Sway Wives Group at Lympington Community Centre

Birds of The Solent (22/05/07)

### Crow Hill Residents Association near Ringwood

Birds of The Solent (10/09/07)

## Planning White Paper

Whilst the Society welcomed the general approach of the proposals in the Planning White Paper, in its response it expressed concern that any improvement would be dependent on the how the changes were implemented by the Government and the Independent Planning Commission (IPC).

In particular the Society is concerned at the potential loss of democratic involvement; that hearings will become simplistic due to the inquisitorial approach and that there will be sufficient relevantly qualified staff in the IPC. The full response can be downloaded from the website or obtained from the Secretary.

# New Council Members



**Brigadier H.R. (Rush) Dray** lives in Ocean Village, Southampton and is Past Commodore and now a Trustee of The Royal Southampton Yacht Club. After a distinguished army career in the Royal Engineers, he retired as a Brigadier in 1979. From 1979-1993 he was Managing Director of Earl's Court Limited and a Director of Earl's Court and Olympia Limited. Formerly a keen rugby player who played for his County of Somerset, Rush is now an avid Bridge player, enjoys watching most sports and supports Southampton Football Club. He has been an active sailor all his life and is a qualified Race Officer.



**Alan Inder** qualified in Urban and Regional Planning in 1972 and has spent his entire career as a planner within local government, mostly in Hampshire. He retired as Hampshire County Council's Coastal Manager in May 2007, and is now a part-time environmental consultant specialising in coastal management.

Alan has wide ranging hobbies and interests that keep him busy in retirement, including photography, railway modelling, and folk music. He has a passion for Victorian architecture and engineering, and our rich heritage of railways and canals. Another hobby is birdwatching, especially enjoying visits to the Solent's estuaries to see the wonderful array of wintering waders and wildfowl.

Alan runs a charity called African Footprints which sends containers full of donated goods to impoverished communities in the Overberg regions to the east of Cape Town.



**Dr Terry Langford** is a visiting Professor in Environmental Sciences at Southampton University and an aquatic ecologist, working both in fresh and tidal waters. Terry spent 26 years in the power industry, ten as head of the CEGB Marine Biology Laboratory at Fawley Power Station and the last three as Environmental Information Manager of National Power, based in London. He retired from National Power in 1991 to become a Visiting Research Fellow at Southampton University most of his work is research on rivers in the New Forest and the Midlands.

Terry, who lives with his wife Jean at Milford-on-Sea, was until recently, a keen and experienced amateur actor and has acted in a wide range of roles in various parts of the country. He is best known in Nottingham and Bournemouth for leading roles in large musicals, particularly his performances as Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, which he played four times in 30 years. For over 20 years he was also the chairman of the Cast-Offs, a real Old Time Music Hall which raised over £100,000 pounds for charity. Terry decided to hang up his tap shoes and gavel mainly because of his research and writing commitments. He and his wife, Jean, are trying to complete his third technical book on pollution by March 2008, a very full-time task.

## Legacies – Please think of the Society and its work

In addition to the very welcome donations over past years, from time to time we have also received very generous bequests from those who have had an interest in what we have been doing. If you are updating your Will and would like to remember the Society, this would be appreciated. Equally if you have already made a Will you can make provision for a bequest either by executing a formal codicil to the Will or by leaving a letter of direction to your Executors.

## West Solent

Following the first round of consultation and the academic research commissioned by the Society we have concluded that the proposal for a Marine National Park is not viable. However the Society considers that there is an on-going need for overall management of the Western Solent given the wide range of users and potential threats to the environment. In view of this a second consultation paper is being prepared setting out possible alternative approaches.



## GIFT AID – HAVE YOU COMPLETED A GIFT AID FORM?

Under the Gift Aid scheme for every £1 you give, either as a subscription or donation, we are able to recover 28% from the Inland Revenue (from the next tax year it will be 25%). It does not cost you anything – you simply declare that you are a taxpayer. If you have not already completed a declaration would you now be good enough to do so by completing this coupon, cutting it out and sending it to the Secretary – Mrs J. Davies, 2 Stambourne Lane, Wanswell, Berkeley GL13 9RZ.

### PLEASE TREAT ALL MY SUBSCRIPTIONS/DONATIONS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE AS GIFT AID.

I confirm that I pay an amount of income tax/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that Solent Protection Society (registered charity No. 236539) will reclaim on my subscription/donation.

Date...../...../2007 Signature..... Name.....

To join the Solent Protection Society, please contact The Secretary Mrs J. Davies, 2 Stambourne Lane, Wanswell, Berkeley GL13 9RZ. Telephone 01453 511175 email: [secretary@solentprotection.org](mailto:secretary@solentprotection.org) [www.solentprotection.org](http://www.solentprotection.org)