

Solent Protection hosts briefing meeting on new ferries for Lymington to Yarmouth Route

Following the announcement last December by the Solent Protection Society that it has registered its objection to the introduction of the proposed larger ferries on the Lymington to Yarmouth route, the Society organized a Briefing Meeting of principal parties to further consider the situation.

The meeting, held in Lymington on 22nd April 2008, was attended by over 60 invitees and chaired by Mr Peter Nicholson, President of the Society. Introducing the meeting he said "We have been regularly consulting with the various parties concerned and felt that a meeting of all the key players to discuss the BMT SeaTech Ferry Operations Risk Assessment, Phase 1, and associated issues would be appropriate".



Presentations were made by Mr Peter Griffiths, Chairman of Lymington Harbour Commissioners; Dr Ian Dand of BMT SeaTech; Mr Andrew Willson, Chief Executive of Wightlink; Mr Geoff Holmes, Commodore of the Royal Lymington Yacht Club; Mr Robin Dent, on behalf of Lymington Town Sailing Club and Mr Geoff Bowles, Head of Marine Development Control at the Marine & Fisheries Agency. Mr Antony Matusch, an SPS Council Member reported on the concerns in West Wight and Mr O'Flynn made a statement on behalf of the Lymington River Association.

Peter Griffiths set out the background to the current position and also the Commissioners' legal duties and powers with respect to the harbour. He confirmed that the Commissioners had made the information from the BMT SeaTech report available for the Appropriate Assessment prepared by ABPMer for Wightlink. This presentation set the scene for the presentation by Ian Dand on his report "Ferry Operations at Lymington, Phase 1". This presentation set out the scope, methodology and conclusions of the Phase 1

report. The key conclusions and recommendations are:

- Make ferry waiting in the river the exception and unhindered passing the rule.
- In peak season, increase the Harbour Master's patrols in Short Reach, especially near the passing place.
- Ensure that ferries continue to make sound signals on leaving the terminal when junior sailing is in progress, and make it common practice to give similar signals when inbound at the Cocked Hat navigation post.
- Ensure that the navigation posts in the river mark the limits of the navigable channel and provide a visual indication of the channel in all conditions, including fog.
- Install visual tide boards on navigation posts.
- Ensure that a structured programme of trials is undertaken with the new ferries. (A preliminary template for such trials is suggested in the report).

This was followed by a presentation by Wightlink who confirmed that two vessels of the three vessels on order had been launched and would be delivered to Wightlink, in Croatia, towards the end of June/early July and arrive in the UK in mid to late July. They accepted the findings of the Risk Assessment and stated that they would work closely with the Harbour Commissioners and their consultants to resolve outstanding issues. In addition they reported that there had been additional modelling and tank testing of waterflows from the Voight Schneider units and that shore works had commenced in Yarmouth. These would be completed before the Old Gaffers Festival. Work was in hand on the Appropriate Assessment and it would shortly be delivered to Defra. **(Continues on page 2)**



Portsmouth World Heritage Bid

(Continued from page 1)

The Royal Lymington Yacht Club and Lymington Town Sailing Club were particularly concerned about wind disturbance, particularly the effect of wind shadow; safe passing in the river; the hydrodynamic effects of the new vessels particularly turbulence, wash, and drawdown; sidethrust and the potential environmental impacts. The Lymington Town Sailing Club was also particularly concerned that the interests of small boat users such as dinghy sailors and canoeists were taken into account and that the perceived risk presented by the ferries would have a deterrent effect on river users.

Antony Matusch made a short presentation on West Wight concerns, with particular reference to traffic marshalling in Yarmouth.

The final briefing was by Geoff Bowles who explained the complex area of the consents system relating to environmental matters, described the process and how it applied to the introduction of the Wight class ferries. He focused on the Food and Environment Protection Act (FEPA) and the Coastal Protection Act (CPA). FEPA applies from MHWS and controls the deposit of substances in the sea which is equivalent to planning permission on land. Harbour authorities also have powers and the CPA applies to both deposit and removal of substances where there are no other powers.

Geoff Bowles also explained the legal basis for requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment and the impact of the Habitats Directive. If there is a potential significant impact on a special protection area an Appropriate Assessment (AA) has to be carried out. Unless it can be proved that there is no adverse impact on the integrity of the site then mitigation has to be carried out. It had been decided that an AA was necessary in this case and should cover the relevant effects of the introduction of the new vessels. MFA concluded that the proposed works do not trigger the need for a formal EIA. MFA accept that there may be localised effects from changing the vessels and these should be assessed by the AA. MFA also has to have regard to other users of the sea in reaching their decision on granting consent. He emphasised the importance of the sea trials in reaching a final decision.

A number of points were made during a lively question and answer session in which all the speakers participated. There was general agreement on the need for a modern, safe ferry service. Wightlink confirmed that the current ferries would be operating for the summer season. It was agreed that the scope of the sea trials for Phase II of the report was critical for both safety and environmental matters and the Harbour Commissioners confirmed that there will be consultation with river users on this issue. Concerns were expressed about the potential increase in lorry traffic; however Steve Porter, a haulage operator also representing the IOW Chamber of Commerce, stated that the Lymington/Yarmouth route was not favoured by hauliers and he did not envisage an increase in lorry traffic with the introduction of the new ferries. Wightlink also confirmed that they were in discussions to find a solution to the marshalling problems in Yarmouth.

The Society will continue to play an active role in monitoring the situation and there will be a further report in the next newsletter. There will also be regular updates on the society's website www.solentprotection.org

The Working Party is assembling the bid to get Portsmouth Harbour on the Tentative List of UK World Heritage Sites. This is the list from which sites can be nominated by the UK Government for designation as World Heritage Sites by the World Heritage Committee. The bid is led by Dr Celia Clark of the Portsmouth Society and Peter Goodship of the Portsmouth Dockyard Heritage Trust, with the five local authorities and civic societies.



This is the first bid to designate a seascape as a World Heritage Site and includes the whole of the Harbour, with its surrounding land and the part of the Solent between Bembridge and the western bank of Wootton Creek, and on the mainland shore from Hill Head Salterns to Fort Cumberland. Portsmouth Harbour has been the home of the Navy since mediaeval times and has provided the force which built and sustained the largest empire the world has ever seen. The Romans built their largest sea fort here at Portchester. Encircling this seascape are a chain of over 20 fortifications, including the 4 sea forts. The seabed is home to many significant wrecks, over 400 in the greater area of the Solent, but in this part there is the Mary Rose site, the Invincible, the Royal George, the Boyne, and a recently discovered and unidentified 19th century warship together with many from the 2 world wars. Portsmouth is home to three important ships HMS Victory, HMS Warrior the first iron warship, and the Mary Rose.



In the 18th and 19th centuries the Royal Dockyard was the largest industrial complex in the world and still contains many globally important inventions. Brunel's Block Mills were the world's first mass production facility. Froudes test tank at Haslar, still in use, was the world's first. The caisson, for enclosing the entrance to a dry dock, was another first. There are many others including Haslar Hospital, in its day the largest brick building in Europe and home of many medical firsts including the cure for scurvy, a disease which could reduce a ship's crew to a level where they were unable to work the ship. The bid is at a very early stage and much remains to be done. If successful, any future development would then need to be of high quality and recognise the existing heritage of the site.

Roy Rolf

What future for the Solent's Saltmarshes?

SPS CONFERENCE, 17th SEPTEMBER 2008

The Solent's saltmarshes represent one of the area's most important habitats, supporting a unique range of flora and fauna, and helping to protect the coastline from the effects of the sea.

It is commonly known that saltmarshes have been disappearing at an alarming rate in the Solent, but the causes are shrouded in controversy. The loss of saltmarshes has been attributed variously to: dieback of *Spartina* (a major component of their vegetation); sea level rise and increased storminess; eutrophication; dredging; and other reasons. Because the Solent's shorelines are so built up and lined with hard defences, there are very few places where saltmarshes can evolve inland naturally through coastal processes, as the sea advances. For similar reasons, the opportunities to form new saltmarshes through 'managed retreat' (the planned setback of defences) are very limited. The future of our saltmarshes is uncertain, to say the least.



HCC Land North West Hayling



North Hayling

The debate about what is happening to the saltmarshes, and why, is resumed with renewed vigour whenever proposals for change come forward, whether it is port development at Dibden Bay or the introduction of larger ferries between Lymington and Yarmouth.

The Solent Protection Society considers that the time is right to hold a one-day conference about the Solent's saltmarshes and their future, and is taking the initiative in organising one. It will be held at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, on Wednesday 17th September 2008. The main elements of the programme are:

- The importance of saltmarshes for biodiversity and coastal defence;
- What has been happening to the Solent's saltmarshes, and why;

- What is predicted to happen over the next 50 to 100 years, and what are the policy implications;
- A panel discussion, involving representatives of key authorities and agencies, about future policy and actions, and whether the current institutional arrangements will be fit for purpose.



North Eastoke Langston Harbour

SPS Members are invited to attend the Conference for which there is a charge of £50 per person, to include, coffee and tea on arrival and during breaks, buffet lunch and a copy of the Conference Proceedings. If you would like to attend the Conference please complete the attached booking slip and send with your cheque for £50.00, made payable to Solent Protection Society, to the Secretary at the address below.

Alan Inder



To: Mrs J Davies, SPS Secretary, 2 Stambourne Lane, Wanswell, Berkeley, GL13 9RZ.

I wish to attend the SPS Conference on Saltmarshes to be held on 17th September 2008, and enclose my cheque for £50.00

Name..... Address.....

Postcode..... Telephone..... E-mail.....

East Head – The Current Position

East Head survived the storms of February and March this year in relatively good condition. The beach recharge, undertaken in 2005, at the main point of erosion at the Neck and Hinge of the feature, did not take the full brunt of the storm or the tidal surge, about 1 metre above the predicted high tide, and it stood up well. The long term management of East Head is still being considered as part of the Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy. The Strategy is due out for public consultation at the end of May and it is not, therefore, possible to give the detailed proposals contained in it at this stage.

Over the last year a Working Group consisting of the regulators (Environment Agency, Chichester District Council and Natural England) and the key stakeholders (locally elected bodies, landowners, funders and the Harbour Conservancy) has been working to develop an agreed Strategy at East Head for the next 100 years.

The aim of the Strategy at East Head will be to preserve the social, economic, environmental and amenity value of the feature for the life of the strategy. The Working Group has been developing an 'Adaptive Management' approach involving monitoring the feature and responding to changes with a suite of measures to preserve that value. These may include further beach recharges, the insertion of a barrier sill to prevent a catastrophic breach and the management of existing sea defences. The emphasis will be on preserving the current value of East Head to the wider harbour community and not necessarily trying to lock it into its present size, shape and orientation.

It is most unlikely that any government funding will be available for the strategy at East Head and its implementation will depend upon private funding. It will be important, therefore, that the public accept it and, to this end, the Chichester Harbour Conservancy has resolved to support the Strategy for East Head.

*John Davis
Manager & Harbour Master Chichester Conservancy*

West Solent

It had been hoped to finalise our proposals this Spring. However in view of the publication by the government of the Marine Bill in the first week of April, it has been decided to defer this until the working party has had a chance to study the 600-700 pages of the Bill, which will be relevant to the management proposals from SPS. Initially the Society was proposing a Marine National Park but, in view of the issues raised in the consultation, it decided that this would not be feasible.

Undoubtedly the Marine Bill is a very important milestone for the British marine environment, particularly the Solent waters. It deserves careful study, but it is overly complex and may lead to unforeseen consequences. Comments have been requested by 26th June and the Society is currently considering its comments. Anyone wishing to read The Marine Bill can find it online at: www.gov.uk/marine/legislation

Chris Willard

Chilling/Brownwich Gravel Extraction

The Solent Protection Society has registered its objection to the proposal by Hampshire County Council to extract up to 8 million tons of aggregates from this area which is one of the few remaining areas of undeveloped coastline in Hampshire.

We are very conscious that there are also other parts of South Hampshire which are under the same threat, but their locations mean that they are outside the Society's remit.

We believe that the County Council should challenge the Government requirement for the County to provide more aggregate than is reasonable, and they should seek to increase the recovery of marine aggregates where there is some scope for this.

The Society was formed in 1956 to protest at the proposal by Texaco to build an oil refinery at Chilling. We were successful, although Caltex had bought Chilling and operated it as a livestock farm for many years, sending their animals to Fareham market. It was eventually bought by the County Council and the leader, Mr Emery Wallis, is on record as stating that the intention was to preserve it as agricultural land.

Supporting this is the Fareham Borough Landscape Assessment Landscape Character Area 4 of May 1996, which you can read on the web. Search on Google for Chilling and you will find it quite easily.

This says, amongst other things that:

"this area is an undeveloped coastal plain, with steep cliffs of national geological significance, with extensive views out to sea and a windswept natural and generally unspoilt character."

It is **"one of the most extensive remaining areas of undeveloped coastline in Hampshire and maintenance of this rural character must be the highest priority. This should be achieved by avoiding potentially intrusive activities such as mineral extraction and landfill..."**

There is more about protecting the ancient woodlands of Chilling and Thatchers copses and the Brownwich Valley.

A recent public meeting at Locks Heath was attended by over 600 people, twice the number that could be accommodated and, in order to avoid a riot, two meetings were held back to back so that all those present could attend. No one supported Hampshire's proposal.

Hampshire County Council's proposal to reinstate the area as wetland is the current politically correct approach, but we already have two nationally recognised wetlands directly adjacent at Hook and Titchfield Haven Reserve, which provide exactly that environment.

The time will surely come when our descendants will curse us for allowing the destruction of good quality farmland.

Roy Rolf

Acronyms Explained!

Acronyms and abbreviations relating to environmental protection can be divided into three categories which reflect their origins which can be multilateral treaties; European Directives or national designations.

The key multilateral treaties relating to the Solent are, using their 'shorthand' names:-

Bern: The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. Its principal aims are to ensure the conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats. This convention was the inspiration for the EC Birds and Habitats Directives.

Bonn (CMS): The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals came into force in 1985. Contracting Parties work together to conserve migratory species and their habitats.

Ramsar: The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance was adopted in Ramsar, Iran in February 1971 and covers all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use. The UK ratified the Convention in 1976 and sites designated under the Convention have the same legal protection as sites which have been designated under the EC Birds and Habitats Directives (SACs). www.jncc.gov.uk

World Heritage (WHC): The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The Convention is unique in that it seeks to protect both cultural and natural heritage. The key consideration for being designated is that a site must have 'outstanding universal value'. www.whc.unesco.org

The key European Union environmental provisions are the 'Birds Directive' and the "Habitats Directive". These are implemented in the UK through the Wildlife and Countryside Act and associated secondary legislation. www.jncc.gov.uk

SAC: Special Areas of Conservation These areas are designated under the Habitats Directive and carry the most stringent obligations relating to the selection, designation and protection of a network of sites. They also carry the highest level of protection as there must be no net loss of value whatever development takes place.

SPA: Special Protection Areas. These are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with the Birds Directive. They are classified for protection of rare and vulnerable birds, listed in the Directive, and for regularly occurring migratory species. With SACs they form the Natura 2000 network.

SEMS: Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) is a collective name for the internationally important areas in the Solent. It includes SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites. www.solentforum.hants.org.uk/SEMS/homepage.html

National designations include :-

AONB: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a designation arising from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949, where selected areas were designated for their beauty and unique qualities. "The primary purpose of the designation is to conserve natural beauty."

LNR: Local Nature Reserve – These are areas of local value designated by Local Authorities on the advice of Natural England – the designation has a statutory role in land use planning.

NNR: National Nature Reserves – Areas of the highest nature conservation value, largely managed by Natural England SINC & SNCI (these are the same but different counties use different acronyms) Sites Important for Nature Conservation – Sites of Nature Conservation Importance – Areas designated by local authorities as they have some conservation value but the designation is advisory and carries no statutory responsibilities.

NP: National Park – The purpose of a National Park is to conserve and enhance landscapes within the countryside whilst promoting public enjoyment of them and having regard for the social and economic well-being of those living within them. The National Park authority must have regard to nature conservation.

SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest. These sites provide statutory protection for the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features. They also underpin other national and international nature conservation designations. Most SSSIs are privately-owned or managed. The SSSI may extend into intertidal areas out to the jurisdictional limit of local authorities, generally Mean Low Water in England.

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 greatly 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.

Shipping in Solent Waters

Single Hull Tankers

Your Council still strives to minimise the risk of oil pollution in the Solent by securing the agreement of the tanker owners and their cargo receivers not to transit the western Solent via the Needles in a laden condition. Coastal tankers, many only with single hulls, loaded with up to 7,000 tonnes of highly pollutant fuel oil often use this route.

The sensitivity of a grounded tanker was headline national news on 10th March when "Astrell" carrying about 10,000 tons of highly pollutant refined product ran aground off Bembridge in a storm, but tugs were able to refloat her without any oil spilt.



Shipping Air Emissions

With environmental issues high on the political agenda, we are pleased to note that emissions from ships are under increasing scrutiny from regulators and we are carefully watching the policy developments.

The International Maritime Organisation has made a significant announcement recently that ships trading worldwide must cut the sulphur content in their bunkers to 3.5% by 2012 and 0.5% by 2020 which is down from the present level of 4.5%. In designated Sulphur Emission Control Areas, emissions will have to be below 1% in 2010 and 0.1% five year later. These areas include the English Channel and therefore Solent waters which, of course, is good news for residents in the area.

The requirements are subject to the IMO board ratification in October 2008 and will require significant investment in desulphurisation capacity. As a guide, the International Energy Agency estimates ship-owners consumed 150 million tons of bunkers in 2005.

Tom Young

New Council Members



Antony Matusch

Antony Matusch lives in Yarmouth and has sailed on the Solent for 50 years. Trained as a Chartered Accountant, Antony was Chairman of his family manufacturing business for many years until retirement and Vice-President and then President of the Industry Association in Brussels 1998-2005. He is a Member of the Royal Yacht Squadron (past Rear Commodore), Royal Thames and Royal Solent Yacht Clubs and Chairman of a commission of the International Sailing Federation (ISAF).



Graham Rabbitts

Graham Rabbitts trained as a Naval Architect and joined Associated British Ports, initially as Business Development Manager. For the last 12 years before retirement, he was Environment Manager for the ABP group of 22 ports around the UK, and was involved in responding to the flood of European and UK environmental legislation during the 1990s and in setting up seven European Marine Sites including the Severn, the Humber and the Solent. As a Director of ABP Research (now ABP Mer) he was involved in the development of the Dibden Bay proposals, and established the machinery for dialogue with the environmental community, including Natural England and NGOs such as RSPB.

Graham lives in the Southampton area and, now retired, keeps a yacht on the Solent and is a co-opted member of the British Marine Federation South committee.



Philip Couchman

After a sales and business management career in London, Philip Couchman moved to the south coast to join Chichester Harbour Conservancy in 1974. Philip worked as Environmental Manager, dealing with the complexity of coastal zone management and later as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB) Manager.

Philip has a Master's Degree in Environmental Change and was an early full Member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management in which he retains an interest as a retired member. Following his retirement in 2006 Philip was awarded an MBE for services to conservation. He continues to monitor the current debates regarding Coastal Zone Management which, because of the changes likely to come to the coast through climate change, are highly relevant to the management of the Solent.

A keen sailor for over 30 years, Philip also enjoys walking in the Lake District and spending time in France.