

HURSTPIERPOINT SOCIETY

Charity No. 263520

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2006

WATER – OR THE LACK OF IT

Now that 'Aprille with his sweet showers' has come and gone and made little impression on the drought of March and its preceding months, it gives pause for thought. 'Water shortages could last for two years', said Elliott Morley, the Environment Minister in the Times of 21 April, as he defended the introduction (and continuation) of hosepipe bans by water companies. We are facing the worst drought variously since 1976, 1933-4, or for a hundred years in parts of the South East, but the net result remains the same. The RHS advice in January on retaining some green space in front gardens to combat flooding problems associated with excess run off from paving provided for parking seems somewhat off-target, though of long-term value. 'As soon as there's rain people think the problem has gone away' (West Sussex Connections, April 2006). 'That's not true. What is needed are weeks and weeks of constant rainfall to top up reservoirs and aquifers to normal levels. Pilot projects to investigate harvesting rainwater and grey water recycling are also under way. Grey water is the wastewater from baths and showers, which can be used again for flushing lavatories. The Council is lobbying what was the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now that of the Secretary for Local Government and the Regions, Mrs Ruth Kelly) to demand tougher regulations to introduce water efficiency measures in new homes. Government targets for 58,000 more new homes in West Sussex within the next 20 years will place an immense strain on an already overstretched water system.' Yes, the five water companies in the South work together and have the matter in hand, we are told, but are always playing catch-up. A reservoir planned now would take up to 2020 to come on stream. After the summer of 1976 the same concerns surfaced, but obviously not enough capacity or a supply to fill it has been provided. Suitable provision and financing of infrastructure never seem to be first planned and put in place for the inexorable tide of imposed housing.

THE SOCIETY'S A.G.M. TUESDAY 18 APRIL

As a small return for the efforts put in thrice yearly by them, the chairman and committee invited the collectors and their partners to a fish and chip supper prior to the meeting. Over 30 joined in a very pleasant prelude to the main meeting, being greeted with a glass of wine or fruit juice, and enjoyed the chance of meeting fellow collectors and the committee (many of whom are also collectors). Later all adjourned to the Club Suite for the A.G.M. to hear the chairman Mrs Maxine Tyler give a comprehensive account of the year's activities. This covered attention to planning matters; the success of the Christmas cake stall, supervision of the Millennium Trust's work on the Ladies' Walk land and undertaking repairs or replacement of village signs. The Society had received legacies from 2 formers members and were setting up a website, making a photographic archive of the village conservation areas, and working on a booklet that would give guidance on maintenance to those buying property in these areas. This would dovetail with the Village Design Statement. The Chairman also gave advance notice of a Family Outing to Woods Mill on 17 June. Not least she thanked the collectors for continuing their work on the Society's behalf, and also the members of the committee.

Patrick Haworth presented the audited accounts. Last year's figures showed a loss of £479, brought about by a handsome donation of £1220 to the Village Centre, and quite costly tree felling operations to make the Ladies Walk woodland safe. This year subscriptions were up slightly and without the very generous bequests the surplus for the year would have been £1210. The treasurer was thanked for his financial skills and the Examiner of Accounts, Mr S.C.Coleman, was reappointed.

In the election of Officers and Committee that followed the Chairman was delighted to welcome Mrs Verity Calder to fill a vacancy. Those appointed were:

Patron – Mrs Judy Parfitt

President – Lady Barnes

Vice Presidents – Mr Geoffrey Bowles & Mrs Wendy Rogers

Chairman – Mrs Maxine Tyler

Hon Treasurer – Mr Patrick Haworth

Hon Examiner of Accounts – Mr S C Coleman

Clerk – Mr Andrew Hair (employed by the Society and neither a member
of the Executive not subject to election)

Committee -

Mrs Susanna Kemp
Mrs Jackie Milton
Mrs Verity Calder
Mr Ronnie Duncan

Mrs Rosalind Mead
Mrs Shelagh Wadman
Mr Alan Higgs
Mr Michael Naillard

We were very fortunate to have as speaker Dr Tony Whitbread, Chief Executive of the Sussex Wildlife Trust. He gave an illustrated talk on 'Local Development and its Effect on Wild Life'. He gave some vital statistics about the Trust, its guardianship of a wide range of territories including coastal, Downland and ancient woodland in autonomous trusts, and the effect on these of human intervention. Particularly interesting was an insight into the habits of several varieties of bats in or near Ebernoe Common in West Sussex. They roosted communally in a comparatively contained area, but spread out nightly to forage quite widely from this base. Hence any housing development nearby would seriously affect their survival. One would not suspect that the dormouse required 50 hectares of contiguous woodland to survive. Smaller areas situated nearby were not sufficient. Shelagh Wadman warmly thanked him for his talk.

OUTING TO WOODS MILL, 17 JUNE, 10.30 a.m.

A family outing to Woods Mill is being arranged for the first 40 parents and children to apply for tickets. The cost will be £7.50 for parent(s) and child or children, with an opportunity to spend an hour in pond dipping, to be followed by equal time in 'forest school' activities, or vice-versa. **Only 20 children** can be safely supervised, but other family groups are welcome to explore the Mill grounds and picnic there. Tickets are on sale at the Mint House.

BIODIVERSITY STUDY

The Woodland, Flora and Fauna Steering Group decided that there needed to be a modification to the structure of their organisation, establishing its own entity to satisfy financial and insurance provisions. A general meeting was held on 2 May with about 40 people attending. The constitution was approved and a chairman, treasurer and secretary, along with a committee of seven were appointed. 'Progress reports, feedback from our surveyors and short wildlife presentations' on dragonflies, bats and countryside flora were presented. (Information given in the Biodiversity News Sheet No 3). A programme of 3 parish walks was also planned. The first coincided with the Cup Final on Saturday 13 May and was sparingly supported but greatly enjoyed. The next 2 are:

Saturday 17 June - Parsons Withes, Jackson's Pit and Green Crescent

Saturday 15 July - Furze Field, Sayers Common

All interested should assemble in Trinity Road car park at 2 p.m., and transport will be arranged.

PLANNING

Hurstlands, Chalkers Lane - An application for Velux windows, a porch and car parking for these premises seemed hardly appropriate for what was an agricultural building. This was refused.

Ruckford Mill - Planning permission was applied for by Hurstpierpoint College, either to build an additional house or for a row of 5 cottages in open countryside. This is strategic gap land and the application was refused. (There are vacancies in the recently completed housing developments in the village.)

VILLAGE MATTERS – SIGNS AND FINGERPOSTS

Success! The new fingerpost at the Cuckfield Road/High Street crossroads is in place behind the repaired stone wall, and is a credit to all those involved, especially to Richard Lechmere, the Parish Maintenance Officer. The Parish Council and the Society shared the cost of the replacement and a suitable ceremony will be held in due course to mark its arrival. Concurrently the Society is adopting Derek Rogers' drawing of the fingerpost as its logo on both the Newsletter and letter paper heading. The fingerpost at Langton Lane has also been replaced but is minus its cap at present.

A new enamelled sign for WEST TOWN has been obtained from an English company using French expertise. The Society plan to experiment on the old sign to see if suitable repairs can be made to the other existing blue enamel signs to halt rust and decay.

VILLAGE CENTRE

Acoustic panels have now been installed in the main hall along with new Public Address and infra-red hearing systems. The latter replaces the older technology of the hearing loop and sends out a waveband that is received by a collar worn by those with serious hearing problems. These improvements were financed by grants from Transco and MSDC. Coat hooks have been provided for the Club Suite. There are still 3 items of the redevelopment to be pursued and then a policy of undertaking necessary improvements will be followed to avoid creating the need for a major update. The Museum Group have taken possession of the 2 display areas in the main foyer and have already staged 2 shows, the current one being on a agricultural theme. They also have displays in the former Parish Office.

TRUMPKINS, THE HEALTH CENTRE AND BROWN TWINS CAR PARK

The architect and builders are to be congratulated on the completion of the Trumpkins development (and their retention of an old village name). The housing is now being occupied and the provision of the footpath to the Brown Twins car park is a great asset and allowing access to and from the High Street. The Health Centre portacabins are already parked and the onerous process of moving surgeries, records etc. will soon be underway, with the facilities being fully operational by mid June. Building operations on the present site will then begin. The telephone number for health enquiries will remain the same. Dr Hugo Wilson, the doctor replacing Dr Bob Jeffery, will be in post at the beginning of June. Dr Jeffery's retirement party and gifts were a true representation of how much his care has been appreciated.

THE NEW PARKING ARRANGEMENTS

When I left for New Zealand at the end of January the new parking plans were just being activated; a choked short-term section in Trinity Road car park and daily gridlock in the High Street, due to illegal and totally inconsiderate parking on double yellow lines, were customary. I returned 2 months later to find spaces readily available in the short-term area (though the long term section is usually full), and a High Street generally passable except when large vans or buses and vehicles making a delivery coincide. There have been consequences; the unrestricted roads adjoining the car park are full of parked cars, with some continuing exasperation for local residents; the timing of the Health Centre's resiting has largely cancelled out immediate increased use of Brown Twins car park brought about by the Trumpkins footpath. The Parish Council is exploring an increase of spaces in South Avenue (as was possible during the closure of the High Street for the gas main replacement, but needs the co-operation of residents for such an extended period. The parking attendants are doing a good job; if the MSDC is advised in advance that large numbers of cars are expected to be in the village for a wedding, funeral or other assembly, the attendants will act with discretion. If readers have views or suggestions to relate the Parish Council would welcome your letters and emails: Hurstpierpoint.pc@btinternet.com

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Hurst 2000 has ended and a new group has come into being under the competent chairmanship of Michel Oszewski, with a committee of 8 representing various aspects of village life. It was ushered in at the Parish Council AGM; it is/has to be/ separate from the Council and has access to Government money through Mr Leslie Ampstead, the Rural Towns Development Officer for AIRS (Action in Rural Sussex). Its aim is to support local rural communities. If this sounds a trifle nebulous, it is proposed to hold an open day when local people will be invited to put forward proposals and start to present a case to prove the need and the demand. The subjects being suggested are Environment and the Economy, Transport and Accessibility, Social and Community, and Tourism. As with all tantalising funds, there is a catch. The village will have to raise an equal sum to be able to release the Government funding – providing it is granted. (Watch this space!)

THE TWINNING ASSOCIATION AND THE ARTS FESTIVAL

In addition to all the U.K. visits outlined at the Association's AGM – Flower Show and Secret Gardens, 23-4 June; St Lawrence Fair 1-2 July; Golf 9-10 September; The Festival visit of 30 Sept-1 Oct mentions C.H.A.T. (Community Hurst Arts Twinning Project) (congratulations on having a recognisable acronym – Ed.). This is a workshop for cultural exchange with youth groups from each community. A local playwright and a composer will work with the groups, prompting them to point out the similarities that unite the 2 peoples and the peculiarities or differences that divide them, and how each views the other. Somehow this will be forged into a production that will be developed for next year's Festival. These groups will also stage a 'Village Showcase' this year.

A rather special feature of this year's Festival will be the Exhibition in the Parish Church of the paintings of Norman Clark FRWA (Saturday 16 September for one week). He lived in the village most of his life, was a remarkable painter of its life (and a large number of the village children had their first taste of education in Mrs Clark's house). Other highlights include The Messiah from scratch (2 sessions); a rarely performed work for Hurst College by the organist and composer Christian Vidor; a special show by the Shine Theatre Group; Saturday Morning Cinema; a Fashion Show and readings from Thomas Marchants Diaries with the actors in period costume. All that and much more in the printed programme and on the website www.hurstfestival.org As most of the events will be taking place at the Village Centre the organisers are appealing for many more people to come forward to help. If you are able or interested please contact John Wilkinson on 01273 832772 or email through the website.

THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE, CONSERVATION BOOKLET AND PHOTO ARCHIVE

The committee had agreed to set up a Website for the Society and a sub-committee has prepared a brief for the designer, Simon Goodwin. A conservation booklet is also to be created and 4 committee members have met and established the framework. There will be more about this in the next Newsletter. In the meantime, the Society is appealing to **members to search their shelves and albums** for any pictures and postcards of the village in days gone by. These would be scanned and returned and would help to build a comprehensive record of times past. Please contact Andrew Hair, 01273 832366, with your discoveries. Thank you.

HURSTPIERPOINT SECRET GARDENS OPEN SUNDAY 25 JUNE from 1 – 5.30 p.m.

You are warmly invited to bring friends and family along to this very English afternoon, visiting lovely gardens, having delicious tea, and taking home a few plants and maybe an idea or two for you own garden. Tickets can be bought at any garden gate on the day. Eight gardens are open this year at a cost of £4 per person for all 8 gardens, children free, with all proceeds in aid of St Catherine's Hospice.

26 Orchard Way. A cottage style garden with mature shrubs and trees, a pond and various seating areas giving different views of the garden.

Culver Croft, Policeman's Lane. A garden with two main areas, lovely views to the South Downs. David Gold, Chairman of Birmingham City Football Club, will be in the garden, signing his autobiography *Pure Gold* and giving all proceeds to St Catherine's.

Culvers, Churchfields. A partly walled, exposed garden, with fine southerly views. Created by the current plantaholic owner. Roses, shrubs, climbers and herbaceous plants jostle for position amongst the weeds. **Plants for sale.**

12 & 13 Manor Cottages. Reached via a footpath, two tiny gardens with no room for lawns as plants, pots and vegetables take pride of place.

Thurles, 7 Hassocks Road. A large walled garden created entirely by the current owner. This is a plantsman's paradise with many unusual plants arranged with an artist's eye. Mixed shrub and herbaceous borders, formal garden with pond, pergola. **Teas for sale.**

9 Randiddles Close. A surprise just around the corner. This year the owners have created new steps to their pond area, incorporating an enlarged rockery with an oriental theme. To one side are a mini orchard, cutting border and sweet pea/runner bean archway. The main lawn has a rose/lavender ring and long herbaceous border. Sorry, this garden is unsuitable for small children and the disabled.

Lynton Corner, 23 Lynton Close. A tiny corner cottagey garden with pond and ferns.

A detailed map will be found on the High Street Notice board nearer the time, or further information can be obtained by telephoning Jan Salter, the Co-ordinator on 01273 833693.

Donations of cakes or plants would be much appreciated.

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