

The Shingle Issue



Autumn 2005
Newsletter of the Dungeness National Nature Reserve

No 1

THE SHINGLE ISSUE

WELCOME to the *Shingle Issue*, the newsletter for the Dungeness National Nature Reserve.

Read on to find out more about some of the exciting projects from Dungeness to Greatstone.

Lottery projects get under way in three year programme

THE Romney Marsh Countryside Project (RMCP) and the RSPB have successfully applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a series of projects to be implemented over the next three years from Dungeness to Greatstone.

Matched funding for these projects has been received from a strong partnership of organisations, councils and businesses. The Shingle Issue newsletter aims to keep residents and visitors to the Dungeness NNR aware of the projects and issues which affect this unique corner of Kent. Distributed to around 1,200 properties, plus local Dungeness businesses the newsletter will keep people informed.

Beach cleans help keep reserve sparkling

THROUGHOUT the summer, both British Nuclear Group and British Energy have carried out beach cleans in front of the power stations on a regular basis to help reduce the amount of rubbish found at Dungeness. This is in addition to the two beach cleans the RMCP organise each year.

The clean up held by the Romney Marsh Countryside Project in September collected 2,491 items of rubbish from a stretch of beach in front of the power station. The data has been sent to the Marine Conservation Society.



Boardwalks aim to bring new life to Dungeness shingle



NEW boardwalks have been installed at the New Lighthouse, Dungeness, and at Lade car park off Coast Drive, during the past six months.

These boardwalks are in two areas, both heavily used, and, with the exception of a few hardy sea kale plants, much of the vegetation has eroded away.

We hope people will find the new boardwalks easier to use and to avoid walking on the shingle as a result, leading to an increase in the cover of

vegetation but also improving access.

The boardwalks were funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Nature through DEFRA's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, the Environment Agency, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Community Action in South Kent (CASK). They were constructed by Stone Farms Ltd, Saltwood. For more details please contact the Romney Marsh Countryside Project.



Old barriers lifted in blockbusting exercise

EARLIER this year, British Nuclear Group removed a total of five concrete blocks, each weighing four tonnes, from Dungeness.

Three broken road barriers were also removed which were installed more than 30 years ago by the power station. These big structures had become redundant but they have been recycled as road barriers for security purposes within the power station compound.



Bitterns set to boom as reedbed site expands

ONE of Britain's rarest birds should benefit from habitat creation work on the RSPB reserve. The bittern is a small brown relative of the heron, which feeds and nests in reedbeds. It has a characteristic booming call.

Although once quite common in Britain, the loss of suitable reedbed habitat meant that by 2002 only 31 calling males were recorded throughout Britain. Wintering bitterns, probably mostly from the continent, visit Dungeness but breeding birds require a greater area of wet reedbed habitat than is currently available in the area.

The work taking place at Dungeness is part of a project supported by a grant from the EU LIFE fund which aims to develop a network of 19 sites across England that are suitable for bitterns. This exciting project is part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Project at Dungeness. The reserve's existing six hectare reedbed is being expanded to cover some 25 hectares to create one of the largest reedbeds near to the continent.

In 2002, extensive areas of shallow water were created

around the margins of a deep gravel pit. Reed has been planted and the last few autumns several hundred metres of ditches are excavated to create the ideal reed/waters edge habitat where bitterns prefer to feed, this being critical to the successful raising of young.

Once established the reed will also provide suitable breeding habitat for bearded tits, which already breed on the reserve in small numbers, and marsh harriers which are regular spring and autumn visitors to the reserve.

The Romney Marsh Countryside Project organises a number of conservation management tasks with the RSPB across the National Nature Reserve.

For more information on volunteer tasks, please contact RMCP on 01797 367934 or visit the website at www.rmcp.co.uk



Bittern ©RSPB



Bearded tit ©RSPB



Marsh harrier
©RSPB





Fence lines replaced near pits

ON the road from Lydd to Dungeness you pass between two large gravel pits and in the past, two old rusty fence lines either side of the road, which are owned by Folkestone and Dover Water Services Ltd (FDWS).

As one of the Heritage Lottery Fund projects at Dungeness, these fence lines have been replaced with financial help from the FDWS.

The shingle and the gravel pits beyond the fences are owned and managed by the RSPB at Dungeness, as part of the National Nature Reserve.

Owen and Heather take new posts

Owen Leyshon has been appointed the new Shingle and Wetland Project Officer.

Owen started his new role in July and is responsible for delivering on the range of Heritage Lottery Fund projects over the next few years in close partnership with the RSPB.

Owen can be contacted at the Romney Marsh

Countryside Project office in New Romney on 01797 367934 or email at mail@rmcp.co.uk

Heather Chantler is the new Lifelong Learning Officer at RSPB Dungeness. In this role she will be visiting local schools and community groups to promote the work of the RSPB at Dungeness.



She will encourage schools and community groups to visit the reserve to find out about the natural history of the area through education programmes and family events.

Heather is contactable at the Dungeness RSPB office on 01797 320588 or email at heather.chantler@rspb.org.uk

How to get in touch with us

Romney Marsh Countryside Project

For day to day issues on the National Nature Reserve from Dungeness to Greatstone, reports of 4x4 vehicles, motorbikes on the shingle, information relating to the HLF bid, volunteering, and film crews, please contact Owen Leyshon.

Tel 01797 367934

Email owenleyshon@rmcp.co.uk

Website www.rmcp.co.uk

educational group visits please contact Bob Gomes, Site Manager
Tel 01797 320588
Email bob.gomes@rspb.org.uk
Website www.rspb.org.uk

English Nature

For activities on the Site of Special Scientific Interest which require consent from English Nature please contact Brian Banks
Tel 01233 811212
Email brian.banks@english-nature.org.uk

Kent Police (Lydd police station)

For reports of vehicles driving over the shingle.
Tel 01233 611055

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