

The Shingle Issue



Spring/Summer 2010
Newsletter of the Dungeness National Nature Reserve

No 11

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.

Five year plan aims for 35 per cent cut in bushes and scrub

The Long Pits/Crane Ponds which are owned by gravel company CEMEX covers an area of around 120 hectares stretching from the top of the power station approach road, to the entrance of the Dungeness estate and down close to the Old Lighthouse.

The area is well used by dog walkers, anglers and birdwatchers and is now heavily scrubbed over in bushes and brambles.

The Romney Marsh Countryside Project has written a five year management plan for the area which has many wildlife designations. Working in partnership, the RMCP, Cemex and Natural England have secured funding through Higher Level Stewardship for the plan. We will keep you informed.

The main thrust is to reduce the scrub and bushes by 35% during the next five years. Only 50 years ago the complete landscape had not a single bush or tree and although the grazing animals have

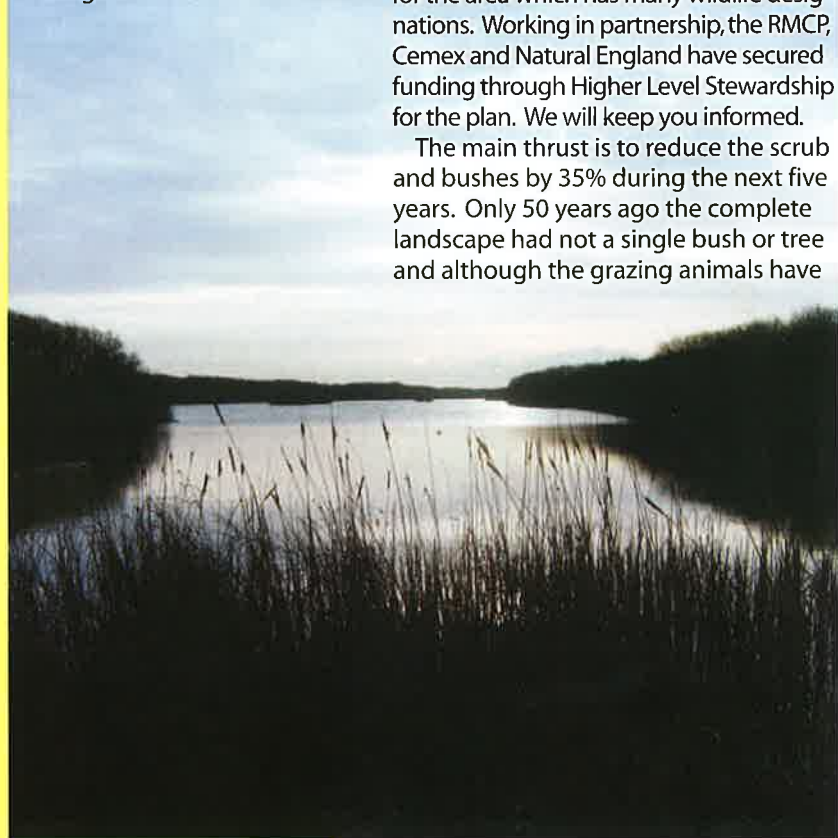
gone, the Romney Marsh Countryside Project wants to return some of the landscape to what it was to encourage some of the rare wildlife to return.

The project hopes for local involvement whether through helping on site, keeping an eye out or reporting any problems or by informing it of any interesting wildlife sightings.

RMCP held a number of volunteer tasks in winter 2010 and will be back later this year for a series of new ones to reduce the scrub.

For further information please contact Owen Leyshon, Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934 or mail@rmcp.co.uk or visit websites www.rmcp.co.uk or www.dungeness-nnr.co.uk

Long Pits at dusk



Rachel and Brendan helping out.



Make a date for Sound Mirrors day

After organising and leading the ever popular Sound Mirror guided walks for 13 years with Dr Richard Scarth, the Romney Marsh Countryside Project is pleased to announce it is organising an **Open Day on Sunday 18th July 2010 between 10am and 5pm.**

Make your own way to the mirrors. Follow the signs from Lade car park. Donation appreciated.

Free guided tours on Sunday 8th August and Sunday 26th September 2010. Both will start at 2pm.

Meet at Lade Car Park. No need to book, but a donation is appreciated.

The Sound Mirrors, Concrete Dishes or Listening Ears were built in the 1920s and 1930s to detect enemy aircraft as part of an early warning system for Britain. All three designs are at Lade, the only place in Britain, and the structures are also a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Please park in the Lade Car Park off Coast Drive at Lade. This car park is a mile north from the Pilot pub on Dungeness and has no height barrier, it has toilets and parking is free.

For the Open Day - Walk down Taylor Road which is opposite and take the signposted signs across the shingle



The Sound Mirrors - 200ft wall, 20ft dish and 30ft dish.

and along the track to the bridge – where staff will be waiting to provide information throughout the day.

The event is free, but we rely on donations to cover our costs for these events and suggest at least £2 per person donation.

For more information contact Owen Leyshon, Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934 or mail@rmcp.co.uk or look on the website www.rmcp.co.uk

Dr Scarth speaking on a RMCP guided tour.



Bird challenge off to flying start on Dungeness

Dungeness B power station has got off to an exciting start in the BTO-EDF Energy Business Bird Challenge 2010. In the first two months of the year 63 species of birds have been recorded on their land holdings, including Bittern, Long Eared Owl, Red necked Grebe and Black Throated Diver.

This fiercely contested competition attracts a wide variety of companies from quarries and oil refineries to power stations and reservoirs. The business sites are all keen to demonstrate their



Common Tern.

active involvement in the conservation of birds and other wildlife for the benefit and enjoyment of the local communities in which they work.

"Sustainability is at the heart of the

way we do business and in the United Nations' International Year of Biodiversity, the Challenge provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm and celebrate our commitment to biodiversity," said Christine Blythe, Biodiversity Manager for EDF Energy.

Dungeness B is hoping to repeat its success of 2008 when it was joint winner with Heysham Power Stations of the Birds Award in the power station (under 100ha) category recording 160 bird species on the power station site.

We need your help for beach cleans!

The Romney Marsh Countryside Project will be organising two beach cleans for Dungeness Point in 2010.

The first will be on Sunday 11th April. Meet at the New Lighthouse at 11am. We will be clearing from the board walk around to the lifeboat station, past the fishing boats.

The second beach clean will be part of the Marine Conservation Society cleans organised nationally. This will be on **Sunday 19th September. Meet at the Red and**

White Barrier just beyond the Old Lighthouse at 11am. We will be clearing a section of beach in front of the power station.

Just turn up, we will provide the litter pickers, gloves and most importantly the refreshments through the day. For more information, please contact Owen Leyshon, Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934 or mail@rmcp.co.uk

Partners' support vital in ongoing battle to keep litter down on beaches

Sea angling rubbish.

A part time litter warden was first appointed on Dungeness Point in summer 2006.

This initiative has been only possible by a wide range of partners who have supported this project. In 2009, a total of 437 rubbish bags were filled by the litter warden and these were then removed as part of Shepway Council's litter bin clearing service. This was just from the Dungeness Point area, along the tideline, laybys and car parks.

The funding for this project has come from Shepway District Council, Natural England, Dungeness Estate, Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, Dungeness Angling Association, Wasp Financial Management, Dungeness Old Lighthouse plus Peter Marlow, Fiona Naylor and Brian Johnson.

On top of this a further 176 bags

were filled at Dungeness by the Romney Marsh Countryside Project staff, residents, Magnox South and British Energy part of EDF, giving a grand total of 616 bags of rubbish.

Hopefully residents and visitors can see the tremendous difference on Dungeness compared to 10 years ago on the Point.

Although there has been a 13% decrease of rubbish removed compared to 2008, we are becoming more effective in cleaning the Point.

The poor mackerel season and the grey summer weather kept visitor numbers down in 2009 and this in turn kept rubbish levels down.



Sea Buckthorn targeted for removal at Greatstone Dunes

The majority of Greatstone Dunes is owned by Shepway District Council and is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

In 2009, SDC and the Romney Marsh Countryside Project have tackled patches of sea buckthorn and the gradual process of removing up to 85% of the sea buckthorn over the next five years is planned.

There will be volunteer days organised in the autumn 2010 and we will be also surveying the rare plants – Sand Catchfly and Autumn Ladies Tresses.

Removal of garden rubbish dumped in the dunes and better enforcement of dog fouling which is blighting the area are also planned as part of the overall Greatstone Dunes Management Plan for the site.

For further information or getting involved in the future of the Dunes please contact Mark Tuson, Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934 or mail@rmcp.co.uk

Alien plants being tackled again

Certain exotic, garden plants which have been spreading out from gardens onto the Dungeness National Nature Reserve over the last decade. The Romney Marsh Countryside Project, Natural England and Shepway District Council are targeting again certain areas during this year.

Whether it is digging them up or weedwiping them, we are carefully choosing the worst plant species - as this work is labour intensive and costs money, and we don't want an impossible task in the years to come.

Russian Vine, Silver Ragwort, Red Hot Pokers, Yucca plants and Red



Red Valerian.

Valerian are the species we will be tackling on The Parade, Greatstone along Coast Drive, Lydd-on-Sea.

For more information, please contact Mark Tuson, Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934.

Latest creepy crawly discoveries on Dungeness NNR

Harlequin Ladybird

An alien invader which first appeared on Dungeness in 2005, but arrived in Britain in 2004. They are a large ladybird, with orange legs and a variety of patterns. They originate from SE Asia and have spread across Europe and into Britain from the horticultural trade which released them to tackle pests. There is concern they will eat our native ladybirds. They are found everywhere now!



Western Conifer Seed Bug

The third record for Britain was found at Dungeness in July 2008 with a cluster of records following in that year. This large squashbug comes from Canada and they hopped a lift on a ship carrying timber to Italy in 1999 and have spread right across Europe. They are classed as a pest in coniferous woodlands in North America.



Sickle Bearing Bush Cricket

Found by Owen Leyshon at the Dungeness Old Lighthouse in September 2009. This impressive creature is spreading across Europe and this record might suggest a new colony has started this side of the English Channel in Kent. Completely harmless and a welcome addition to our British fauna, so keep an eye out for it in your gardens in the late summer.



Project set to take on new base



The Romney Marsh Countryside Project is close to agreeing terms to become the new tenant at Lloyds Cottage, Dungeness. It is one of the closest homes to the power station perimeter fence and the actual house is owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

Working closely with both power station companies over the last 13 years, it is a great opportunity to use what has been an empty property for five years.

The plan is to use the house as a base for volunteers and for tackling the workload generated by the volume of visitors who use the Point.

There is plenty of work to do around the house, garden, garage and out around the Dungeness NNR over the year so please feel free to drop in and give us a hand this summer.

Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934 or mail@rmcp.co.uk or try looking at the websites www.rmcp.co.uk or www.dungeness-nnr.co.uk

How to get in touch with us

Romney Marsh Countryside Project

For day to day issues on the Dungeness NNR from Dungeness to Greatstone please call the Romney Marsh Countryside Project first.

Owen Leyshon 01797 367934

owenleyshon@rmcp.co.uk

Website www.rmcp.co.uk

www.dungeness-nnr.co.uk

Reports of 4x4 vehicles, motorbikes, quadbikes, flytipping, rubbish, management work, volunteering, film crews, group bookings and wildlife sightings.

Other useful numbers

Dungeness RSPB – Part of the Dungeness NNR. Site manager – Bob Gomes 01797 320588. Educational Groups – Heather Chantler 01797 322666

Natural England

For permission and paperwork for any works on the Dungeness NNR and the wider SSSI land, please call Jo Dear, Natural England 0300 060 4776.

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