

The Shingle Issue



Spring/Summer 2008
Newsletter of the Dungeness National Nature Reserve

No 8

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.

Home in on our three guided walks to Sound Mirrors

THE Sound Mirrors, Concrete Dishes or Listening Ears have been in the national spotlight for a number of years now.

They were built in the 1920s and 1930s to detect enemy aircraft as part of an early warning system for Britain.

All three designs of mirror are at Lade, the only place in Britain, and the structures are also a scheduled ancient monument.

The mirrors are situated on an island at the back of Lade gravel pits, which is private and only accessible on these guided walks.

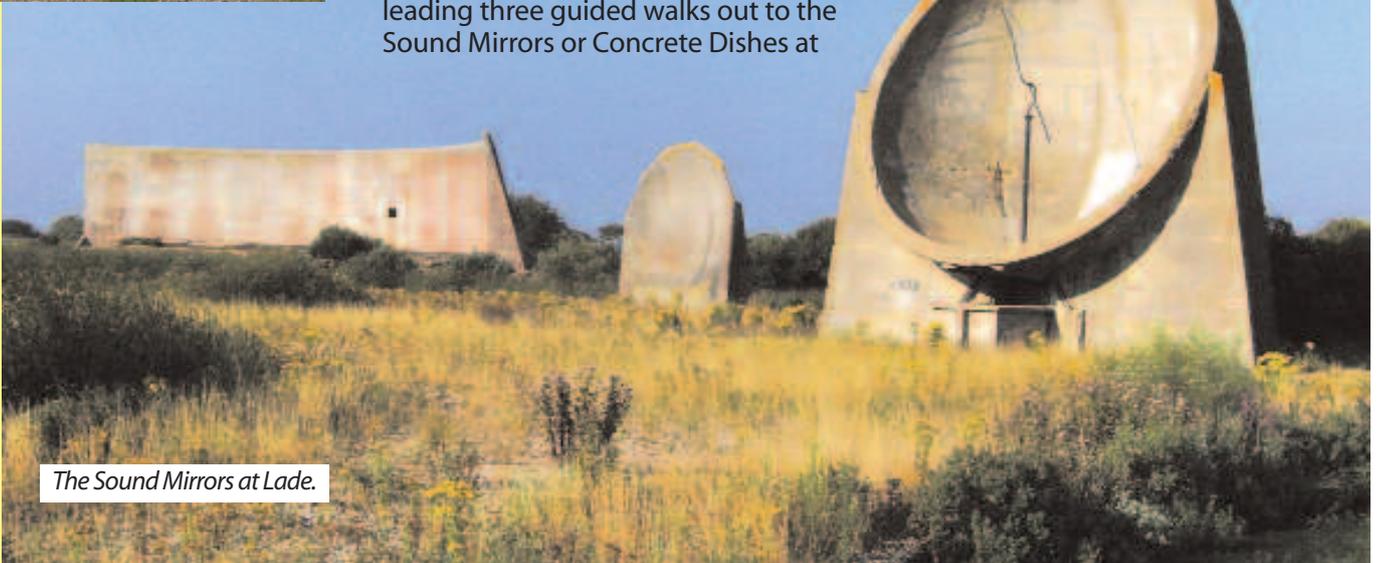
The Romney Marsh Countryside Project and Dr Richard Scarth have been leading guided walks out to the mirrors for 11 years now. We will be leading three guided walks out to the Sound Mirrors or Concrete Dishes at

Lade this summer. These guided walks are free and you do not need to book.

The walks are on **13th July, 17th August and 14th September.**

All three walks are on a Sunday and the meeting point will be the free Lade car park at 2pm. Lade car park is opposite Taylor Road on Coast Drive, about a mile and half north from the Pilot pub, Dungeness.

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



The Sound Mirrors at Lade.

Drivers warned to stay off shingle

ACROSS Dungeness Point you can see the damage caused by 4x4s which have driven across the National Nature Reserve over the decades.

These tracks last for years and damage the wildlife and habitats which make Dungeness unique.

Over the last five years a total of 108 4x4 registered drivers have been sent warning letters by Natural England through the DVLA and the police after driving across the shingle on Dungeness.

All these incidents have been logged and out of the 108 cases in the last five years 72% of these drivers were anglers.

In the letters sent out, they were reminded any repeat offences on Dungeness could see them taken to court and fined up to £25,000 through the Special Nature Conservation Order.

This SNCO also applies to motorbikes and quadbikes and the Romney Marsh Countryside Project works closely with all the agencies and organisations to



tackle this problem.

For more information, please contact Owen Leyshon, Dungeness Shingle and Wetland

Project/Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934 or owenleyshon@rmcp.co.uk

Making parking easier at Dungeness



In autumn 2007, minor improvements to the car park and laybys at Dungeness were made.

The work involved lowering the height of sleepers to prevent cars and vans hitting them and fixing strapping bands to strengthen them. Two new small bunds, to discourage lorries and coaches driving into the corners of the car park, were also installed.

Contact Owen Leyshon, Dungeness Shingle and Wetland Project for more information on 01797 367934.

Cleaner Point than 10 years ago thanks to warden's work

DURING the last year, the part time litter warden on Dungeness has collected 568 bags of rubbish.

This rubbish has been collected from the tideline, private fence lines, car parks and laybys.

This unique partnership is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, conservation bodies (like Natural England), Shepway District Council, Dungeness Estate, the Dungeness Angling Association, neighbouring businesses such as Magnox South plus the tourist attractions of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway and Dungeness Old Lighthouse.

We hope residents and visitors notice the vast improvement to a cleaner Dungeness Point from 10 years ago to now, with the massive reduction in the amount of rubbish across Dungeness.

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



Two Beachclean dates planned

THE next beachclean at Dungeness Point will be on **Sunday 13th April 2008.**

Please meet at the stripy Dungeness New Lighthouse. This will be a session up to the Dungeness Lifeboat Station.

The Marine Conservation Society beachclean at Dungeness Point will be on **Sunday 21st September 2008.**

Please meet at the red and white barrier just beyond the black Dungeness Old Lighthouse.

If you arrive late, just walk down to the beach and find us along the tide-

line in front of the power station.

The data collated from this beachclean will be sent as part of the National Beachwatch organised by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) www.mcsuk.org.uk This will be the 13th year of the Romney Marsh Countryside Project conducting this beachclean, with data on the level of rubbish across the beach stretching back over this time.

For both beachcleans we will provide the bags, gloves, litter pickers and also the refreshments for this event.



Marsh harriers are ones to watch this season

AS many of you will know from the local press marsh harriers bred at the RSPB part of the Dungeness National Nature Reserve for the first time ever last year.

There were two nests and at least three young successfully fledged. Visitors to the reserve have been treated to fantastic views of these majestic birds throughout the winter months flying across the gravel pits in front of the visitor centre and above the newly improved reed beds on the reserve in search of food.

During April and May we will be looking out for signs that the harriers are going to breed again such as aerial displays and nest building.

Join us for our Harrier Watch on **Sunday 25 May 2008** from 11am to 1pm, when, with the breeding season in full swing we should be able to see marsh harrier activity as well as many more species of summer

For more information, please contact Owen Leyshon, Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934 or owenleyshon@rmcp.co.uk or look

Go on line for latest news

If you wish to find out more about what wildlife has been seen across Dungeness, there are several excellent websites which specialise in the wildlife of Dungeness, Lydd-on-sea, Lade and Greatstone.

For general information on Dungeness, use the Romney Marsh Countryside Project website www.dungeness-nnr.co.uk

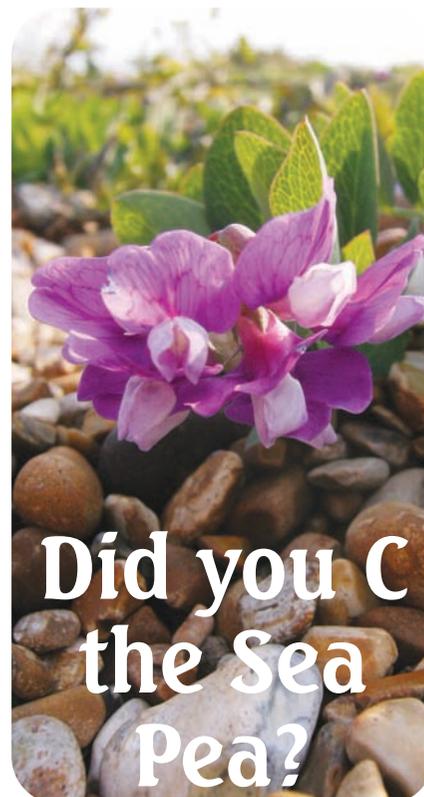
Male Smew © RSPB Images



Sussex Emerald Moth © Bob Gomes

For daily wildlife updates, especially the bird sightings use the Dungeness Bird Observatory website www.dungenessbirdobs.org.uk

For moths across Dungeness plus Lydd and New Romney, use the excellent website which is called www.mothsofdungeness.co.uk



Did you C the Sea Pea?

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 or www.dungeness-nnr.co.uk

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

General reports of 4x4 vehicles driving across the shingle on the RSPB reserve including end of Dengemarsh Road, information relating to HLF projects, volunteering on the RSPB reserve and educational group visits please contact

Bob Gomes, RSPB Site Manager
Tel 01797 320588

Email bob.gomes@rspb.org.uk
Website www.rspb.org.uk

The contact for the educational groups is Heather Chantler, Lifelong Learning Officer 01797 320588 or 01797 322666.

Natural England

For activities on the Site of Special Scientific Interest which require consent from Natural England please contact Jo Dear Tel 01233 811216 Email jo.dear@naturalengland.org.uk

Kent Police (Lydd police station)

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

ON the Dungeness Point is a number of patches of the uncommon plant called Sea Pea.

The plant is low growing and hugs the shingle floor close to the high water mark. The plant suffers badly from trampling and disturbance, but with the new boardwalk installed at the Point, the aims are to help this plant and encourage people to avoid private dwellings as well.

We hope with better management, the patches of Sea Pea will increase and spread.

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