

The Shingle Issue



Summer 2006
Newsletter of the Dungeness National Nature Reserve

No 3

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.

Chris Packham at the launch of the new Visitor and Education Centre in Dungeness.

Chris opens new multi-purpose visitor and education centre

TELEVISION naturalist and broadcaster, Chris Packham visited the new RSPB Dungeness Visitor and Education Centre at a special event in late June when, with local school children, he put the facilities through its paces.

The centre features a spectacular glass-walled classroom with full computer equipment for pupils use and a range of new materials to enhance learning in and out of the classroom. As well as being used as a classroom, it is hoped local groups will also use the new facilities for meetings, exhibitions and other similar events.

The new centre was built as part of the Dungeness Shingle and Wetland Project, an initiative to help more local people and visitors to this part of south-east Kent experience and enjoy the unique wildlife found across Dungeness's bizarre landscape.

The RSPB and the Romney Marsh Countryside Project launched the Dungeness Shingle and Wetland Project in 2000 and is supported by a wide range of organisations. The construction of the new centre was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Brett Environment Trust, the Environment Agency and the Tory family foundation. The Countryside Agency helped to equip the centre through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

The purpose built classroom and exhibition area can easily accommodate classes of pupils from all Key Stages and our team of fully qualified Field Teachers are able to deliver a range of curriculum subjects using the indoor and outdoor classrooms. During holidays and at weekends the education centre will be the base for a range of events and activities ranging from family pond dipping days to adult bird watching courses to name just two.

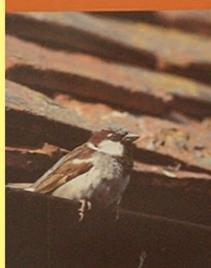
The classroom and exhibition area is also available for hire for talks, art displays and local events. Please drop into the visitor centre to view the facilities or call the reserve on (01797) 320588 for more details.



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www.rspb.org.uk/south

Wild in the city



Bringing a new edge to parking at Dungeness

In the spring, the general parking area on parts of Dungeness near to the Railway Cafe and Old Lighthouse, plus four laybys near to the power station, the Britannia pub and the Sanctuary were reprofiled and edged to create better parking facilities and access.

We recognise there is an ever increasing number of visitors to Dungeness. Improving existing laybys and car parks will hopefully reduce the pressure of visitors have on residents and on the wildlife which is protected under the National Nature Reserve.

Funding for this project has come from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Nature. For



more information contact Owen Leyshon, Dungeness Shingle and Wetland Officer on 01797 367934.

Goodwill move is a sign of the times

British Nuclear Group removed 14 rusty signs and metal posts, along with 18 concrete posts and some chain link fencing, which were close to the Old Lighthouse in the early part of the summer.

These were installed more than 30 years ago by the power station and this goodwill gesture has helped in the removal of redundant items which are found across Dungeness.

This follows on from five massive concrete blocks and three road barriers which were removed in autumn 2005 again on Dungeness Point by British Nuclear Group and reported in Shingle Issue No 1.



Countryside fair date

Over the weekend of Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th August, the Wildlife and Countryside Fair at Dungeness will be held on the RSPB reserve at the new Visitor and Education Centre.

There will be a range of stalls,

and events like pond dipping, face painting and guided walks, with the whole weekend free for everyone.

For more details of the weekend, phone the RSPB at Dungeness on 01797 320588.

NEW LITTER WARDEN SET TO MAKE CLEAN SWEEP

The Romney Marsh Countryside Project, in partnership with a number of organisations and businesses, has appointed a part time litter warden for the Dungeness Point who started work in July.

This is an important issue as the volume of rubbish found across the Point from a number of sources, namely, shipping, tidal and visitors, can be quite considerable.

The tonnage of rubbish collected by the litter warden on Dungeness Point will be monitored and the individual is employed by the Romney Marsh Countryside Project.

The post has been funded by Shepway District Council, English Nature, Dungeness Estate, Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, Dungeness Old Lighthouse, Dungeness Angling Association, Fiona Naylor and Peter Marlow (residents).

For more details of this project, please contact Owen Leyshon, Dungeness Shingle and Wetland Officer on 01797 367934.



Conservation tasks will help flowers, newts and insects to thrive

The Romney Marsh Countryside Project (RMCP) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has organised a small

number of conservation tasks on the RSPB reserve of the Dungeness National Nature Reserve this early autumn. These tasks will involve cutting back the scrub in the wetland areas to allow rare flowers, great-crested newts and unusual insects to thrive.

The dates this autumn are Wednesday 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th of September.



Please meet at the Dungeness Environment and Education Centre on the RSPB reserve at 11am or pop in the centre for further details if arriving

later.

Just turn up and the RMCP will provide the tools, help, biscuits, tea and coffee. You will need to bring old clothes and a pair of wellies. Any help is greatly appreciated.

For more information, please contact Owen Leyshon, Dungeness Shingle and Wetland Officer 01797 367934 or email owenleyshon@rmcp.co.uk

Rubbish pickers ready for counting

The National Beachwatch beach-clean for Dungeness will be on Sunday 17 September. The meeting place for this will be at the Old Lighthouse at 11am.

The aim is to pick up and count the rubbish as we have been monitoring the amount along the sea frontage of the power station now for nine years. We will provide the bin bags, litter pickers, gloves and refreshments!

For more details, please contact Owen Leyshon, Dungeness Shingle and Wetland Officer on 01797 367934.



Viper's bugloss adds colour to reserve

One of the most colourful plants found on the Dungeness National Nature Reserve in the summer is the viper's bugloss.

This tall, blue flower with protruding red stalked stamens which poke out of the funnel shaped flowers, give the impression off a viper's tongue.

The name bugloss comes from the Greek word for ox-tongue, and describes the plant's rough, tongue shaped leaves.

Viper's bugloss prefers well drained and light soils and also thrives in areas which have been disturbed. Bumble bees and a range of other insects enjoy feeding on this plant during the summer.

Elegant avocet chooses to breed at Dungeness reserve once more

The avocet has again bred on the Dungeness RSPB reserve part of the National Nature Reserve.

The elegant avocet with its black and white plumage, long upturned bill and blue legs is a distinctive wading bird of the shallow margins of some of the muddy pits at Dungeness.

The bird is the symbol of the RSPB and nearly became extinct as a breeding bird in Britain.

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

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, 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.

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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