



Fleet Pond Society Winter Newsletter



Patron: Chris Packham
Charity No: 290637

Issue 172
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SAD LOSS OF OUR PRESIDENT, PETER MARTIN



We were deeply saddened at the news of the death of Peter Martin, our President. He will be greatly missed. Peter was invited to become President of the Society in 2007, in recognition of over 30 years of involvement with Fleet Pond and the Society. Colin Gray has written a tribute to Peter on page 4 of this Newsletter.

Peter was a regular contributor to this Newsletter, passing on his knowledge and expertise of the Reserve, butterflies and the weather, as well as all those 'Did you know...' facts. Two of his articles have been reprinted on page 13.

NOTICE OF FLEET POND SOCIETY AGM

**THURSDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY
2021 AT 7PM**

The Annual General Meeting of the Fleet Pond Society will take place at 7pm on Thursday, 25th February 2021

Due to government Covid restrictions, this will be an AGM held on Zoom. Please see page 12 for details.



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The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of Fleet Pond Society.

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

THE VERY SAD LOSS OF OUR PRESIDENT

We were extremely saddened at the news of the death of our President, Peter Martin. Peter had been a stalwart of the Society since its initiation in 1976, and a great friend to Fleet Pond. Sincere condolences have gone out to Barbara and his family on your behalf.

Colin's commemoration of Peter can be found on page 4. We are currently considering an appropriate way to mark Peter's contribution to the Reserve and the Society.

PLANNING APPLICATION SHOCK

For many months we've been working with Hart Countryside Service (HCS) on the aspects of the Green Grid Project which will affect the Pond, particularly the access track, car park and NW path.

You will have read in previous newsletters that we've made good progress, and they have taken into account a number of significant concerns that we had.

We were taken aback when Colin Gray spotted on Fleet Town Council's agenda that a planning application had been submitted and we only had a week left to comment. We had not seen the contents of the application and when we had our last chat with HCS there remained a number of aspects to still be resolved/confirmed.

See page 7 for our comments, which needless to say, involved us in a lot of hasty and unplanned work.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

I nearly fell off my chair when Frances, the Society Secretary, contacted me at the end of November to say that she was resigning her post. Frances joined us in Spring 2019 and has done a fabulous job as Secretary. She's been a real asset, so I popped round and presented her with a small gift to say 'thank you' for all the hard work she's put in.

We swiftly mobilised all our comms mechanisms to replace Frances, and had an even swifter response from Jane Pango who is now our new Secretary. Jane was formally co-opted into the position by the Committee on 9th January.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY AT 7PM

The latest lockdown guidelines have confirmed that we cannot hold this meeting in person. The rules for charities have been amended to allow

online AGMs, so we'll be holding a simplified meeting courtesy of Zoom. We had a great speaker lined up but we'll save them for another time.

You'll find the info you'll need for the AGM on page 12 of this issue, as well as the Zoom link. We will also email it to members and post on our website and social media platforms. We'd love as many of you as possible to join us.

There are some practicalities we need to cover to keep operating, eg appointing the members of the Executive Committee. There will be chance for you to raise questions.

Please contact the Secretary by email if you need a nomination form: secretary@fleetpond.org.uk

We hope to be able to hold a bit of a social evening when things have improved and restrictions have been eased

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

It was good to see Vice-chairman John lay our wreath on your behalf this year.

The pandemic meant the ceremony was a very toned down affair and no local organisations could be part of the official proceedings. I was helping on 'crowd management' and can confirm that the ceremonies were still pretty emotional and a lot of organisations laid wreaths after the official proceedings had been completed.



VOLUNTEERING

The Last of the Summer Wine and Island Management teams had just been getting back into the swing of things within Tier 3 restrictions, when work had to stop again. Fugelmere Marsh is looking so much better.

Needless to say that the latest lockdown has dramatically restricted what we can do, just litter picking when we exercise and perhaps a little trimming of vegetation at path edges too. We're not allowed to go to the workshop.

AN AMAZING LEGACY

Our good friend, Patsy Welford sadly passed away in the summer of 2019, and we were able to remember her with a plaque on one of the picnic benches.

An Executor of Patsy's estate notified us that Patsy had wanted a substantial donation from her estate be spent on something to benefit the users of the Pond.

We explained our idea of laying a zig-zag path down the slope towards Lions' View to improve access for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs. The idea for this great facility came from LoSW Project Leader, Terry (Compo) Austin who spotted a need for it a long time ago.

The Executors liked the idea, and our chum Steve Lyons at HCS was able to give us a rough price that was acceptable to them. We now have the money in the bank and Steve is going to get contractors to build it for us.

This will be a fantastic legacy for Patsy, who was a stalwart of our Conservation Sundays.

LOCKDOWN STOPS US PUBLISHING AGAIN

Once again, the lockdown will prevent us getting printed copies of this newsletter to you. The government rules do not allow us to deliver it. We'll email it to those for whom we have email addresses, as well as publishing it on our website.

If you know someone who normally gets a printed copy then please could you pass the message on. We'll deliver it when the rules are relaxed like we did the last time this happened.

Jim Storey, FPS Chairman

FPS NEW SECRETARY



I am delighted to take up the position of FPS secretary. I moved to Fleet a few years ago and enjoy walking around the Pond, particularly early morning as the day breaks and the light changes.

I am looking forward to contributing to the work of the Society in preserving the varied habitats that make up the Pond and Reserve.

Jane Pango



Fleet Pond Society New Members

A very warm welcome to:

KRISTINA OUZOUNOGLOU

KENNETH MOLYNEUX-CARTER

STEVE RICE

HUW EVANS

RAY & ANN CHIAPPINO

PAUL, ALI FAZAKERLEY & FAMILY

PHIL EKINS



2021 SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

If you usually pay your annual subscription by cheque or cash (£10 per household) it is now due for renewal please.

Please make cheques payable to 'Fleet Pond Society' and kindly send to me at: 25 Brookly Gardens, Fleet GU51 3LL

If you would like to set up a Standing Order to take care of future subscriptions you can download a form from the FPS website: www.fleetpond.org.uk

Any queries regarding your subscription: please telephone me on: 01252 617893 or email me at membership@fleetpond.org.uk

Edith Evans, Membership Secretary

PETER MARTIN, SOCIETY PRESIDENT



With regret we have to report the death of Peter Martin, who was elected the Society's first life President at the 2008 Annual General Meeting.

Peter has been closely involved with Fleet Pond since he was invited to become a voluntary Warden by Freddie Tuck in 1975. He took over as Warden Co-ordinator in 1977, continuing in that role for fifteen and a half years.

Peter joined FPS volunteers in the construction works that included installing the Brookly Stream and Flow Arch bridges and building the northern footpath along the railway embankment side, completing a circular path around the pond. Peter is pictured right, a member of the team of volunteers who dug out the silt between Sandy Bay and Fir Tree Island - by hand!



Joining FPS committee, he was a member for over thirty years and served as newsletter editor for twelve years. He was always to be seen working hard at the conservation management tasks that became the principal work of FPS volunteers from 1982 onwards. He is well known for his love and expertise of butterflies and was author of "Blackwater Valley Butterflies" published in 2005.



Peter was author of the book "Fleet Pond Society - the First 30 Years" a very comprehensive record of the society's formation and history. Copies are held by the British Library and the Hampshire Records Office.

Peter's other interests include the weather, having spent years in the Meteorological Office before becoming a local government officer in Hart and Rushmoor. He always included an article on climate in the FPS newsletter.

Peter had a keen sense of humour and was renowned for his one-line jokes. Barbara tried, not very successfully, to ration how many he told whenever Mavis and I joined them for a meal or a coffee and chat, which we always enjoyed.

Peter was a lovely man, always a gentleman and a great character and will be very much missed by all who knew him.

Peter's family has requested that any donations in his memory should kindly be made to the Fleet Pond Society through the Just Giving page they have set up. The live link is below, as well as on our website and social media platforms. Click on link:

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/karin-wright-22?utm_id=1&utm_term=DjxvBbaR4

FPS Committee members send our most sincere sympathy to Barbara and their family.
Colin Gray MBE



JOHN HIMBURY



The Society was very sad to hear that John Himbury had died.

John has been a very keen volunteer at the Pond and a dedicated and long-time supporter of Fleet Pond Society.

John and I helped Adam Green install three metal seats overlooking Hemelite Bay. These were the first to be offered for sponsorship by local families. They have since been replaced by timber seats.

John helped monitor water levels at the nine monitoring points across Wood Lane Heath and Fugelmere and Coldstream Marshes, a quite difficult task in winter when water levels made the tasks a wet and very muddy one. John had to retire reluctantly from voluntary work when his health made things difficult.

John and his wife Margaret lived in Honister Gardens, so the Pond was their local joy for walks as well as for the voluntary help they both gave. John moved to Hill Brow in January 2018 to be close to Margaret who had just moved to Hill House Nursing home when she was too ill with Alzheimers to continue being cared for at home.

John's sons Michael & Mark remember fondly the days when the family enjoyed visits to Fleet Pond. Mark said:

“Dad was very keen on Fleet Pond Society and the work you do. As a family we were regular “beneficiaries” walking Tess the dog, cycling to the station! Mum loved the walk around with us whenever we visited. In her latter years when she was no longer able to speak, a shared half hour walk around the pond raised her spirits for the rest of the day. Mike’s children, adults now, remember Fleet Pond with great fondness on visits to their grandparents. In fact, they said they would like to visit the Pond whenever they are ‘South’!”

Colin Gray MBE

APPLYING PRESSURE



We have been extremely fortunate to receive a £485 donation from the Virgin Money Foundation. This generous grant was applied for by Fleet Pond supporter, Sarah Green who works with Virgin Money.

We bought a petrol powered pressure washer. This extremely useful piece of kit can be used away from normal water and power supplies. It is ideal for use on wooden structures, reducing the rate of decay. Sarah is pictured above testing out the new equipment with Terry. *For a video of it in action:* <https://www.youtube.com/c/FleetPondSociety/featured>

There are a number of bridges, boardwalks and jetties around the pond. How many exactly you may ask? Actually, there are 14 bridges, eight jetties and two boardwalks. All have a finite life due to the natural process of water breaking down the wood.

Its inevitable that the boardwalks and bridges get wet, but it's the staying wet which accelerates their decay. Mud, moss and other vegetation accumulates between and around the boards, holding water for days and weeks after the wood would normally dry. Due to the vast number of boards on all these structures, it is not practical or effective to clean the accumulation by hand. Without cleaning, there would be the effort and cost of replacing the boards or structures.

So far (in between lockdowns and priority work) we have cleaned the long boardwalk leading away from Chestnut Grove and ‘Monet’s’ bridge over the Brookly stream. The top surfaces of the boards are cleaned, at the same time removing the ingrained mud and reducing the slipperiness.

A huge ‘thank you’ to Sarah and Virgin Money for enabling us to buy this excellent piece of kit. Its use will extend the life of the boards and structures by several years.

Terry Dunford, Volunteer

RESERVE MATTERS



The COVID-19 restrictions have had a significant impact on our volunteering from March throughout 2020. No Sunday working has been permitted as it would be too difficult to organise into groups of six, each on a different work site, given the numbers from which we usually benefit.

From July to November we were able to continue the Last of the Summer Wine Fridays, working in teams of six.



This was working well with good results achieved on Fugelmere Marsh clearing scrub, thinning gorse in the Gelvert Glade section and removing willow and alder trees and scrub from the reedbed edge. All came

to another grinding halt with the second lockdown in November. We were just able to meet in twos for mainly litter picking and some footpath edge trimming.

December saw a temporary return to teams of six but the sudden surge in a new virus strain meant we were back in lockdown and this is likely to continue into March 2021 at the earliest. A very frustrating situation for our keen and dedicated volunteers but essential for our health. At the time of writing, the roll out of a vaccine is slow which is likely to mean our volunteer opportunities will be limited for some months to come.

Some of us are meeting in socially distanced twos to clear litter or trim vegetation from footpath edges. You will read elsewhere in the

newsletter about our new “toy”, a pressure washer to clean bridges and boardwalks of accumulated mud to prolong their life span. A generous donation from Virgin Money Foundation made this possible.

John Sutton leads the Monday Island Management volunteers. He reports the following activity:

Island management work has been limited so far this winter. Before lockdown we were able to carry out important scrub management work on islands 1,2,17 and 18. Great to see our transplanted bogbean has established well on island 2.



It's worth emphasising that the activities we carry out on the islands are to promote healthy reedbeds and wetland habitat. This helps improve water quality and provide habitat for a wide range of species.

Colin Gray MBE, Volunteer co-ordinator

FPS OBJECTIONS TO NW PATH PLAN

These are the objections submitted on behalf of FPS by our Chairman, Jim Storey:

I am Chairman of the Fleet Pond Society, a charity with many members who live in Fleet and Hart and/or visit Fleet Pond.

Fleet Pond Society would like to register its opposition to application 20/03004/FUL to Hart District Council for the widening of the north-west path at Fleet Pond in Hampshire on the following grounds.

1) The timing of the proposed works is unacceptable.

The proposed HDC Construction Environmental Plan (Section 4) Indicative Construction Programme suggests works will be carried out between March and July 2021. This is the breeding season for fish and birds in and around the lake. Disturbing them would be in breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

2) The ecological mitigation proposed for the path works is not sufficient and is unacceptable.

Natural England's response makes reference for the need to protect wet woodland, a UK BAP priority habitat. The Habitat and Botanical Baseline survey carried out in July 2020 identifies wet woodland habitat in areas 2 and 4 of the scheme. These areas should be protected. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 all local authorities have a statutory duty to conserve biodiversity. Wet woodland is a key habitat type included in the Fleet Pond SSSI. The site is currently in *unfavourable recovering* condition. Damage to wet woodland will adversely affect its progress towards favourable status.

3) The edging design for the path is unacceptable for Fleet Pond SSSI and badly thought out.

Natural England's letter to Paul Howe of HDC (23 April 2020) states *'The use of hard engineering is generally advised against by Natural England. The ideal outcome for us is that the site remains as natural as possible, with as little impact both physically and visually.'* The plans show sheet piling will replace the existing wooden sleeper bank protection. This measure should only be used as a last resort if an appropriate soft engineering alternative is not available. There are well-established methods to get a much better ecological solution. Sheet piling is ugly and not in keeping with the

character of where the footpath runs. It is also ecologically unsuitable for use on a SSSI. It can be mitigated to some extent by the use of bioengineering techniques such as shoreline terracing created by wood faggots or coir backfilled with natural materials. Alternatives such as brush bales could also be investigated.

4) The general design of the footpath is poor and could be made more acceptable for visitors.

The existing footpath is popular with local residents and many visitors to the site. The barren and uniform construction of the proposed footpath shows a lack of creativity and sensitivity by its designers. The new footpath should attempt to mimic the semi-wild character of the existing path and protect the priority BAP habitat identified in the habitat and botanical baseline survey. This could include cantilevered sections.

5) No control of the loss of trees is being offered.

The trees along the existing path do add value to its ambience and amenity. The application refers to the loss of trees to allow the proposed path to be built and made wider than the existing one. Whilst some loss seems to be inevitable the application does not give any real detail of the scale of loss or how this will be controlled to avoid excess tree removal.

6) The application does not comply with planning policy.

Fleet Pond is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Reserve. The principle of Biodiversity Net Gain is part of the National Planning Policy Framework. The latest update to the forthcoming Environment Bill includes a requirement for all future schemes including the development of land to deliver a mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain. No information is provided in this application to demonstrate any Biodiversity Net Gain. Indeed, the only conclusion that can be drawn from the information provided is that there will be a net loss of biodiversity as the plans currently stand. This is unacceptable for a nationally important site such as Fleet Pond.

Jim Storey, FPS Chair

9th January 2021

LATE AUTUMN & EARLY WINTER BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

It has been a rather dull and wet few months. Temperatures were at or above normal particularly in November, before turning colder in the last week of December and on into early January. Rainfall was generally above average, especially in October, with plenty of strong winds crowned by Storm Bella in late December.

Birding-wise it was a rather uneventful few months. October yielded few autumn migrants of note, other than the continued presence of the male **Garganey**, first seen on August 6th and last seen on October 21st, a late date for this summer migrant.

Good numbers of **Shoveler** remained into mid-October, with 40 logged on October 9th. Most moved on thereafter, with only a handful reported in November and a December high count of six on 23rd.

Other notable wildfowl included several reports of:

- **Pochard**, with two on October 4th and counts of three on December 2nd and 11th.
- **Wigeon** with two on November 6th and December 28th.
- **Teal** numbers peaked at 17 on November 15th.
- **Gadwall** at five on December 9th.
- **Mallard** at 82 on December 13th.
- Roosting geese were ever present with winter high counts of 130 **Greylag Geese** on December 19th and 205 **Canada Geese** on December 24th.
- A lone **Shelduck** was an unexpected visitor on December 28. (*Illustrated below*)



Great Crested Grebe numbers disappointed all autumn, with up to three present to mid-January. This suggests that August's fish die-off has rendered Fleet Pond less attractive for this avid fish eater for now. We should be expecting counts of between 10-20 at this time of year, so we will be monitoring this species carefully this year and hoping for a return to form.

A **Little Grebe**, a scarce but expected autumn visitor, was present between October 31st-November 2nd.

GOOD NEWS

Better news included a count of 12 **Water Rails** in the reedbed circling the Pond at the end of October/early November. Equally pleasing was the good numbers of **Common Snipe** wintering this year with 55 logged on December 13th and 37 on January 2nd.



Highlight of the period was a female **Marsh Harrier** (*illustrated above*) observed hunting at the reserve mid-morning on December 8th, becoming the second record for this rare raptor at Fleet Pond in 2020.

On October 20th, a male **Cetti's Warbler** announced its presence from the station car park reedbeds with its distinct and loud song; it was still being heard at the end of November. Spring 2020 saw the first establishment of a breeding territory of Cetti's Warbler at the reserve, so optimism prevails for a repeat performance in 2021.

Similarly, **Firecrest** (*illustrated at top of next page*) is now becoming a regular in these reports, with two observed in woodland at the end of Wellington Avenue in early December and another (or the same) coming from the Brookly Wood on January 1st.



Reports of **Stonechat** included pairs at the MoD fields on November 9th and in Wood Lane Heath on December 8th.

Winter finches were present in average numbers with up to 300 **Siskins** and smaller flocks of **Lesser Redpolls**, favouring the Brookly Stream alders, at the end of December and into January, and other reports were received from Sandy Bay. More notable were a flock of four



Crossbills (*illustrated above*) and a further single overflying the reserve on December 9th and 10th, respectively.

Encouragingly there were several reports of **Kingfisher** and **Green Woodpecker** at the reserve too. Green Woodpecker used to be a regular sight here until 2018, when it is suspected the very cold 'Beast of the East' spring weather that year extirpated the local population, so it is good to hear they are recovering and returning!

Finally, autumn and winter roosts included peaks of 250 **Redwing** on November 22nd, 420 **Jackdaw** on October 26th and 320 on December 30th, 115 **Magpie** on December 30th and one or two **Little Egrets** inconsistently through to the end of the year.

Looking forward for us avid birders, the good news is that we only have a few more weeks until the spring migration gets underway in early March. By that time I hope COVID-19 will be well in retreat and a return to more normal times in sight. Good birding!

William Legge

Contributing Observers: David Buckler, John Clark, Martin Pitt, P. Rowse, Graham Stephenson and Gary Watton

WEBSITE UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who took part in our website survey. It is very helpful to us in ensuring that the information people want is there, and easy to find.

It is five years since we had the major rebuild on our site, and it was extremely gratifying to see that visitors were very satisfied with the website as it is. Respondents felt able to easily find all the information that they were looking for.

These were considered the most useful features:

Trails, the videos, the history, the App, the ease of finding info, the history section, the maps and up-to-date info on things going on around the Pond.

Our current challenge is incorporating an interactive membership form into the website. Geoff Dee, our go-to IT man on the committee has written an excellent programme. However, Covid-19 restrictions have put a hold on the next stage for the time being.

Carol Dunford, our webmaster, and myself took part in a short online training course for Google Analytics. This will help us to analyse the usage of our website, enabling us to expand on areas which are very popular, and improving those areas which are not accessed as much.

Cathy Holden

**If you love Fleet Pond,
then join the
FLEET POND SOCIETY**

It only costs £10 a year.

Your membership will support the work of our volunteer groups and help us conserve this beautiful site for the community.

A quarterly newsletter will keep you in touch with all that is happening at the Pond.

www.fleetpond.org.uk
membership@fleetpond.org.uk

RANGER'S ROUND-UP

Winter is always a busy time on the Reserve, it's what we call our, 'practical management season'. The wildlife is more dormant, enabling us to carry out work whilst causing the least disturbance.



Over the past few months the Rangers, with help from our volunteers when allowed, have been clearing Fugelmere reedbed. This promotes healthy reed growth by preventing the build-up of nutrients and decomposing plant material.



We have also removed scrub in Fugelmere Marsh, Wood Lane Heath, and the car park area. This preserves the unique habitats we have on site and promotes a greater diversity of species.

WORKING WITHOUT VOLUNTEERS

It's been an odd few months with the pandemic preventing our regular lively cohort of volunteers coming out to help us. They have been sorely missed and we haven't quite got as much conservation work done as we normally would. I hope you are all keeping safe and well.

As outdoor exercise has become such an important part of everyone's day, our focus has turned to keeping the site safe and in order. Tree inspections have been completed across the site, and our tree team will soon begin work removing hazardous trees. We also swept the paths last week using our BCS commander and leaf blower.

We're not done yet! The bird nesting season doesn't start until the end of February, so upcoming jobs in the work calendar for Fleet Pond include: bramble bashing in Coldstream, tree felling/scrub clearing in Fugelmere Marsh and ditch clearing across the site.

Thinning out dense bramble patches and tree density will slow down the rate of succession within these habitats thus benefitting our wildlife species during the spring. Ditch maintenance will ensure they are able to function effectively over the year.

DOG FOULING

I hope you have also seen the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) signs around site for dog fouling. If you aren't picking up after your dog around the pond you are now breaking the law.

You can find out more about this here: <https://www.hart.gov.uk/the-council/news/new-fines-irresponsible-dog-owners>

Sam, Fleet Pond Countryside Ranger



#BACKTONATURE COMPETITION RESULTS

In November we held a photo competition on our Facebook and Twitter pages to win a copy of the book our Patron, Chris Packham, had co-written with Megan McCubbin.

We asked people to submit photographs along the theme of #BacktoNature. Entrants what the image meant to them on the theme of escaping lockdown to the natural world outside.

Thank you to everyone who submitted entries. As we were sent two signed copies of the book, we were able to award two prizes. The winners were:



Lucy Boshier, who said of her image above, showing her Mum and her son:

"Bramshot in particular is a very popular destination for families to see each other, even now in this second lockdown. What I love about this photo is the joy on their faces and how natural it is. For my mum to not be able to see her grandson grow up as much as she'd like has been a terrible thing, as it has for many situations and relationships affected by covid Getting #BackToNature meant we could create more precious moments despite the circumstances"

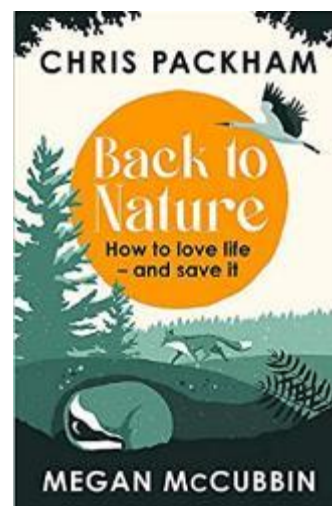
Angela Stephens, who said of her image above right:

"#BackToNature With lockdown came more opportunity to have time to look and appreciate nature and it's changing seasons and colours and



the reassurance of the circle of life continuing around us."

Congratulations to each of our winners, who were both delighted to receive a copy of the book from our Chairman, Jim Storey—all socially distanced, of course.



Chris and Megan can currently be seen on the BBC 2 programme Winterwatch, as well as on FB and Twitter.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p012msk2>



Cathy Holden



FLEET POND SOCIETY AGM

THURSDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY 2021, 7PM

The Annual General Meeting of the Fleet Pond Society will take place at 7pm on **Thursday, 25th February 2021** as an online Zoom Meeting. This is in compliance with current Government Covid-19 guidelines.

We encourage members to attend the AGM, as this is your chance to put questions to your Executive Committee and to share your views on the future of the Fleet Pond Nature Reserve.

To help with the orderly running of the meeting, we ask that you let us know you are attending in advance, and submit any questions you may have by email to secretary@fleetpond.org.uk. You will also be able to ask questions on the night. The meeting link is posted here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84324484161?pwd=aC9kT0tFZXM2V1RYVUZxZjIjL1UrQT09>

Full information will be emailed to members by the end of January. It will also be available on our website and FB page.

Prior to the meeting, nominations are requested for the election of Officers and Members to the Executive Committee. Current committee members are required to stand down at the AGM but will be eligible for re-election. For further information on current members, and to submit your nominations, please email secretary@fleetpond.org.uk



MEMORIES OF PETER

Peter Martin was editor of this Newsletter for 12 years, remaining a regular contributor, with his weather article appearing in the Autumn edition 2020.

To honour Peter's great contribution to the Newsletter, I republish the pieces he wrote on the Society's 40th Anniversary, Spring edition 2016 and his weather article after all the snow in Spring edition 2010.

HALF A LIFETIME

With Fleet Pond Society's 40th Anniversary occurring on 28th April 2016, I suddenly realised that I have been a Member of the Society for 40 years. Being 80 years of age at the time of writing this article that's "half a lifetime".

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

A great deal has been achieved by our volunteers over those 40 years. In the early days, under the leadership of our first Chairman, Terry Sims, we concentrated on providing a circular route all the way round the Pond, so that people could fully enjoy the peace and tranquillity that Hampshire's largest freshwater lake could provide. It was hard work making a suitable footpath and installing two bridges, but the Society had completed the circuit with provision of the second bridge by 1979.

CHESTNUT GROVE JETTY



Building the landing stage at the end of Chestnut Grove was a major task, but there were no shortages of volunteers to manhandle the bags filled with wet cement delivered by two Premix lorries one cold February morning. By the time the second lorry arrived, we had realised that, if the cement was released slowly down the chute, it could run straight into the bags, which saved a lot of shovelling. Bill Wain (Society Secretary) and I were the only two volunteers with waders, so we were the ones who had to lower the bags into the icy-cold water.

The landing stage not only provided a facility for launching licensed boats, but has also become a favourite spot for children (and adults) to feed the

wildfowl. It has also provided an ideal platform for gazing over the water. On one occasion, I was trying to take a panoramic picture of the Pond from that spot and the glint from the lens must have attracted dozens of gulls. They all flew round my head (like a scene from Hitchcock's film *The Birds*) and I had to make a hasty retreat.

CONSERVATION

When all the early construction tasks around the Pond were completed, David Jones, who had taken on the Chairman's role, changed the emphasis to "conservation" but that's another story. More about this can be read in my booklet "Fleet Pond Society -The First 30 Years" available from the Society.

Peter Martin, President Fleet Pond Society

EARLIER SPRING CHANGES, BUT NOT THIS YEAR

According to ecologists, spring is getting earlier each year and, until 2010, the seasonal changes were taking place a week and a half earlier than in the 1970's. Although daffodils in my garden have still to bloom this year (March 9th) in recent years they have even been seen in January. Swallows have arrived in February, rather than March, and other creatures have been seen much earlier.

Scientists from the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology studied 726 species of plants and animals, from tadpoles to oak trees, to see how they have been affected by year-to-year weather changes. They concluded that the seasonal timing of reproduction and population growth had moved forward by 11 days since 1976. It is not surprising that 2010 has not followed this trend, as January this year was the coldest since 1987. According to statistics for Central England, mean temperatures were only 34F (1.1C) 5.6F (3.1C) below 1971. The winter, as a whole, was the coldest in Britain since 1978/79, which had followed the driest autumn on record.

In the Fleet area this year, snow fell from late afternoon on 5th January and continued all day on the 6th, when a depth of just under a foot (28 cms) was recorded at Odiham and more than 16 inches in some other parts of Hampshire. That night the temperature fell to 0.5F (-18C) at Benson in Oxfordshire. A few more snow flurries occurred locally on 10th January and one inch fell overnight on the 11th, followed by another light flurry on the 12th. Three more inches fell on the 13th, before rain during the following two days helped to wash some of the snow away.

**Peter Martin, President Fleet Pond Society
(Spring 2010)**

SEND YOUR PHOTOS TO THE MEMBERS' GALLERY

We are delighted that members are sending us their favourite photographs taken in and around Fleet Pond nature reserve. This tranquil image was taken by Chris Marney



We will aim to update the photographs on a regular basis, at least monthly. Send your photographs membersgallery@fleetpond.org.uk together with your name and a short caption to accompany the photograph, including the date. We look forward to seeing more of your photographs and sharing the beauty of Fleet Pond with others.

Check out the gallery on our website, along with the Gallery rules at www.fleetpond.org.uk.

We were recently contacted by the U3A who are updating their website and wanted to use two of

our photographs. You will soon see two fabulous views of the Pond taken by Chris Marney and Liza Toth on their site. Chris and Liza were both delighted when asked.

FPS EDUCATION INITIATIVE REQUEST FOR EXPERTS

FPS Committee member, Wolfgang Hamann is working on an education initiative based around the flora and fauna found throughout the Reserve.

This initiative is in its very early stages, but Wolfgang is keen to speak to people with expert knowledge of bees, water, trees, birds, butterflies or other aspects of the environment.

Wolfgang's aim is to tie in with local schools, colleges etc, but he needs some expert help to set up projects.

If you have ecological experience in these fields and would like to know more, or be interested to help Wolfgang look at projects he would be very pleased to hear from you. Please email him at:

wolfgang.hamann@doctors.org.uk

Thank you.

DON'T FORGET THE *FREE* FLEET POND APP AVAILABLE ON IPHONE AND ANDROID





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The RSPB is a registered charity in England and Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654.
356-0315-20-21 Starlings by Ray Kennedy (rspb-images.com) R411027

Contacts for Fleet Pond Society



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Secretary: Jane Pango
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For membership enquiries only:

Membership Secretary Edith Evans
email: membership@fleetpond.org.uk

Please email newsletter articles to: Cathy Holden at editor@fleetpond.org.uk

The Deadline for articles for the Winter Newsletter is 04 April 2021

Photographic credits

Bird illustrations—RSPB www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/

Remembrance Sunday—Jim Storey

Reserve Matters—John Sutton, Cathy Holden

Ranger's Round-up—Countryside Ranger, Sam and Cathy Holden

Pressure Washer—John Sutton

AGM—Cathy Holden

Fleet Pond Society Office Bearers 2020

<i>President</i>	Peter Martin	<i>Chairman</i> Jim Storey	<i>Vice Chairman</i> John Sutton
<i>Secretary</i>	Jane Pango (Co-opted)	<i>Treasurer</i> Katharine Higgins	<i>Manager, Projects</i> Terry Austin
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Edith Evans	<i>Publicity Officer & Newsletter Editor</i>	Cathy Holden

Committee Members Colin Gray MBE, Nick Keeley, Geoff Dee, Michelle Salter, Mandy Saxby, Carol Dunford, Wolfgang Hamann

Volunteer Tasks Co-ordinator for Fleet Pond Society: Colin Gray MBE, email volunteers@fleetpond.org.uk

Task Leader: Hart Countryside Service Tel: 01252 623443;

email: countryside@hart.gov.uk **Please register with the Rangers if you wish to join a task.**

Webmaster Carol Dunford

Hart District Council Representatives: Councillor Sharyn Wheale, Councillor Jonathan Wright

Fleet Town Council Representatives: Councillor Peter Wildsmith and Councillor Grahame Chenery

Volunteer Observer for Hampshire County Council: Councillor Steve Forster

Hart District Council Contacts: Sam Kerr – Fleet Pond Ranger, Liz Vango-Smith, Senior Ranger - Hart Countryside Rangers, email countryside@hart.gov.uk Tel: 01252 623443. Adam Green - Ecology & Countryside Manager, Tel: 01252 622122.