



Ponies sporting bracken necklaces *Photo P Roberts*

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New Forest Association**

Any contributions should be sent to The Editor

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NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Summer/Autumn 2010



Photos P Roberts

More FOREST FACTS

There are more than 600 listed buildings and 200 ancient monuments within the National Park boundary



Horses drinking at East End

Photo G Babey

There are approx 100 miles of cycle routes in the Forest



The New Forest is the only place in Britain where the Wild Gladiolus grows



Looking towards Vinney Ridge.

Photo G Babey

An area which once rang with the call of herons who nested in the tops of the tall beeches on the ridge

The New Forest is the smallest and most densely populated of all the National Parks



The National Park consists of approx:
1.5% coast,
25% farmland,
34.5% Open Forest,
39% woodland



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Diary Dates 2010

NFA stands at: Ringwood Festival - Sat 10th July - 10am-4pm

New Forest Show - New Park, Brockenhurst, Tues 27th,
Wed 28th and Thurs 29th July

Burley Show - Sat 7th August - from 1pm

Hamptworth Country Fayre - Sun 15th August - 10am-5.30pm

Nomansland Fête - Mon 30th August (Bank Hol) - 2-4pm

Romsey Show - Sat 11th September

Member's Event Day at Foxlease - Sat Oct 23rd

More details of all the above events, with latest information and
timings, on the Association website:

www.newforestassociation.org

LETTERS PAGE

Dear Editor

Congratulations on another excellent newsletter. I meant to write in after one of your earlier editions to the lady who felt that slow worms were not as common as they used to be. They are certainly around in our garden, as well as grass snakes and adders - and I even weeded out an adder with a handful of chickweed in my veg garden in the summer! Fortunately it turned out to be a dead one but it certainly made me jump. I had seen a rather sluggish one a few days earlier, with the same reddish colouring and the same bulge half way down - the bulge was a mouse as my three year old grandson and I discovered when we cut it open with scissors. Perhaps it had bitten off more that it could chew...

I had a bit of time to spare recently in London for a meeting and wandered into Fortnum & Mason in Piccadilly and was interested to see, in the Food Department, New Forest fungi being sold for £44 a kilo! Is this Mrs Tee from Lymington I wonder? So much for the ruling that commercial picking is not allowed. They weren't even good specimens - just a rather tatty, mixed, chopped selection which I wouldn't have touched.

We are so lucky here being able to pick, for personal use, but I do not think this should be abused. Nothing quite beats the thrill of finding a perfect Cep, or spotting a group of Chanterelles or stately Parasols. Even Fly Agarics, though certainly not edible, are quite stunningly beautiful. If commercial pickers were allowed to rake through our woodland floor much of these gorgeous sights would be lost, not to mention the disturbance to all other flora and fauna.

I'm having such a lot of fun,
I've found a Cep, or Penny Bun!
Steinpiltz is their German name -
Grey-brown flints look just the same.
They're little pigs in Italy,
Porcini, that's the name for me!
Firm and fat and hard to see,
Nestling there beneath that tree -
There's another, and another,
Just beneath the bracken cover!

What a feast we'll have for supper,
Sautéd fast with garlic butter...

Alison Riddell
Hightown Common, Ringwood
Copyright ©AR



Ed - Poem and photos copyright of Alison who is working on a cookery book in which they both might appear.

A BRAND NEW MEMBER'S EVENT THIS AUTUMN



Following on from the success of hosting the National Park Society's Annual Conference in 2008 at Foxlease Girl Guide Centre in Lyndhurst, NFA members now have the same opportunity to experience the ambience of this remarkable building. Firstly some archive Forest footage will be shown, then a talk on the history of the building and a tour of some of the rooms, will be given by Suzie Moore, Education Officer at the New Forest Centre, who has been associated with Foxlease for most of her life. A superb buffet lunch of local food will be on offer, as well as a chance to mingle with other NFA members; and finally, a tour of the grounds, weather permitting. Many council members - experts in different fields - will be on hand for question or comment on various aspects of the Forest.

Please return your booking forms (enclosed) ASAP
SATURDAY OCTOBER 23rd 2010

PLANNING REPORT

The change of government probably puts off the threat of Dibden Bay development for a long time. Associated British Ports have been working on their target of utilising this area for some time, including recent discussions with Natural England. The previous government's attempt to bring in a new 'quick fix' Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) for major applications such as this has now been lost. With it has gone the opportunity for 'steam rolling' over local concerns without an adequate hearing. The new government however intends to set up a 'democratically accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects.'

The previous enquiry method, costly but democratic, may well serve to make ABP think long and hard before attempting to reverse the Inspector's ruling. That Inquiry, held in 2001/2, took a long time to digest and eventually resulted in a 744 page report in which it was clear that the environmental cost would be extremely high. Whilst Dibden Bay is not in the National Park there is no doubt that the impact of any such development on the Park would be huge.

Regional Spatial Strategies will also disappear returning the organisation and implementation of housing needs to local (rather than regional) government offices.

Granting permission for the largest size commoners holding possible under present regulations at Culverley, complete with stables, conservatory, outbuildings and all the trimmings may well produce a negative public response to the development of commoners' housing in the New Forest. The much lower key housing provided at Anderwood by the Forestry Commission, in a perfectly acceptable location, using modern 'green' technology provides an interesting contrast of how things could be done. Public perception of one rule for us and one for the commoners is likely to cause future difficulties.

We have written to the Inspector about our concerns regarding the Core Strategy produced by the National Park Authority and intend to present our views on this at the inquiry.

The Planning Committee has written in support of the Solent Protection Society's views on the North Solent Management Plan.

Good contact with the NPA remains an important part of the way we work. Apart from regular meetings with the Directors of the NPA including Steve Avery, the planning supremo, we invited the new head of Development Control, Rob Ainslie, to one of our recent monthly planning meetings.

Peter Roberts
June 2010



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

ALL CHANGE AT THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

In the last newsletter I referred to the fact that following the resignation of Lindsay Cornish Mr Barrie Foley had taken over the position of Chief Executive on an interim basis, and that the recruitment process to find a new, permanent replacement had started.

This process is now complete and Alison Barnes officially took over as Chief Executive of the Authority on the 1st June. Her biography on the NPA website reads "*Alison joined the Authority from Natural England, the Government's countryside adviser, where she was Regional Director for London. Alison knows the New Forest well, having grown up in Wimborne. Earlier in her career Alison worked for English Nature and advised Government on engaging with local and regional partnerships. She has also worked for Dumfries and Galloway Council and the RSPB in Scotland. In her spare time, she enjoys sailing and walking, especially around the Solent... She plays the flute and joined Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in the first 'Hampshire Rusties' project.*"

Along with Peter Roberts and Michael Chilcott, I had the opportunity of meeting her on the 4th June and spent what I believe was a fruitful two hours with her. It is of course too early to say, but we are hopeful that the NFA will develop a good working relationship with her.

In addition to this change, Steve Trotter, the NPA Director of Conservation, Recreation and Sustainable Development, with whom we had enjoyed a good working relationship, left in February for pastures new and has been replaced, on an interim basis, by Paula Freeland who had been head of Environmental Services.

We have now heard, too, that both Clive Chatters, Chairman of the NPA and the Vice Chairman, Barry Rickman are also standing down. At the time of writing we do not know who their replacements will be. I have known Clive for many years and can only hope that who ever replaces him holds the New Forest and its future as close to their heart as he does. His has been a difficult job in troubled times, and the stick he has taken, much of a very personal nature, and often from uninformed and self interested parties, was totally misguided. I wish him all the best for the future.

For news of legacies please turn to page 19.

William Ziegler
June 2010



CNP MEETING, 16th MARCH 2010

Peter Roberts and I represented the NFA at the Campaign for National Parks meeting in Euston, London on 16th March at which the Chief Executive Kathy Moore gave an overview of recent events from National Parks across the country. Liason and support for the South Downs Society, during their long campaign to become a National Park, has finally culminated in their official designation, on 31st March. This ousts the New Forest from the title of ‘Britain’s Newest National Park’. Ms Moore also reported that funding is continuing for Ofgem’s policy of undergrounding power lines in AONB’s and National Parks.

Helen Phillips, Chief Executive of Natural England, gave a presentation entitled “*A Meaningful Collaboration between National Parks and Natural England*” in which she outlined her hopes of fostering social and economic well being, advancing Environmental Stewardship and one day being able to

walk from the north to the south of Britain on National Park land!

Mohammed Dhalech gave a presentation on the Mosaic project. Mosaic is a national initiative, led by CNP, which was set up around ten years ago. The aim of the project is to change the stark statistic that only 1% of the 100 million visitors to Britain's National Parks are from minority groups. We were asked what NFA were doing, as an Association, to encourage Black and ethnic minority groups to use the Forest. I felt that, as worthy as the aims undoubtedly are, as a conservation organisation relying entirely on volunteer assistance, this could, and indeed should not be, a primary remit of the Association. The problem is being addressed, and appropriately so in my opinion, by the government-backed National Park Authority.

The formal meeting was followed by a very interesting talk on the work of the Woodland Trust given by Planning Casework Manager, Graham Bradley. The Trust was started in 1972 and now boasts 200,000 members, an income of £26m and employs 290 staff. As can be imagined, these figures were the envy of all the National Park Society representatives present. The New Forest's 9314.78 hectares of Ancient Woodland received more than an honorary mention and Graham asked that any potential or actual losses of Ancient Woodland be reported to him, via the Trust's website (Ancient Tree Forum). They have also begun a 'Tree for All' initiative whereby 8 million trees are being planted by children all over Britain, every year.

It is always useful to spend time with members of Societies and Associations similar to ours, from other National Parks, to exchange views and problems, and discuss possible solutions, to our mutual benefit.

Georgina Babey
June 2010

Important notice from the Membership Secretary

We have now introduced a category of joint membership. If you and your spouse are both members of the NFA you will currently be receiving your own copy of each newsletter and every other mailing. If you would prefer to receive only one, and become joint members, please do contact me. **With many thanks, Mrs Hilary Harper, Membership Secretary, Manor Farm, Plaitford, SO51 6EG, 07966 528406, hilary@harper.net**

FOREST KEEPERS - DO WE NEED THEM?

Peter Roberts

It has been rumoured that, in this age of cuts, Forest Keepers may go

The New Forest Keepers have a recorded history back to Domesday when Herbert the Forester was looking after Lyndhurst on behalf of the king. For more than seven centuries they were under the authority of the Lord Warden's department looking after the vert and vension. In other words they provided the local expertise that took care of the deer and their habitat. In 1851 the Lord Warden's department was abolished and the various old offices associated with it were removed - except the Keepers. Their position was re-evaluated, they lost their lodges, many of which were taken over by pen-pushers in the Deputy Surveyor's office, and their numbers were cut. But they were essential to the upkeep of the Forest, even to an organisation that was dedicated to producing timber for the nation above everything else.

In an age before the word ecology was thought of these men understood the natural world that makes up the Forest, how it was balanced, what effects their actions or non-interventions would have and generally got on with the job of protecting the area for their lives and those yet unborn.

The modern 'Ranger' is a misnomer. When the term was re-invented I will wager that there was no-one in the Forestry Commission that knew that Ranger was the name of a Forest Officer under the old system, whose job was to drive the deer from the Purlieus back into the Forest. The modern Ranger is an interpreter, guide and teacher. They provide a worthwhile service in assisting the visitor and, with experience, can help the public appreciate what is valuable about the New Forest. They are in no way interchangeable with the Forest Keepers, whose work is essential and whose experience cannot be bought.

For 750 years the Keepers were helping to maintain the Forest under the recreational arm of government. They were then taken over by the commercial forestry division for the next 150 years and maintained their position. Now we have a clear change towards a non-timber producing policy led by a recreational Deputy Surveyor who seems not to have

discovered the Keepers' worth.

Some years ago there was a joke going the Forest rounds that, after three years in post, the then Deputy Surveyor had 'discovered' the Keepers. I hope that the present incumbent appreciates their true value before he makes a disastrous decision.



NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION - 50 YEARS AGO

The advert below appeared in the *Echo Rambler's Guide to the New Forest*, c1960 when the Annual Subscription was 2/6d and Life Membership was £2/10/0. Our aims, though, remain unchanged

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION

The New Forest Association was founded over 90 years ago, the aims being the preservation of the general picturesque aspect of the Forest and the old woods, and the protection of the rights and privileges of the Commoners and of the Public in the enjoyment of the Forest.

A council of 45 members manage the day-to-day affairs of the Association, ensuring that any Council decision is well-informed and enabling responsible representation to be made to other authorities.

In addition to trying to prevent or amend proposals injurious to the New Forest at large, the preservation of the fauna and flora has always received special attention. Today this need is greater than ever, and the support of a wide membership is paramount.

At least one General Meeting will be held each year, at which all members will be invited to discuss any matter affecting the New Forest. The annual subscription is 2/6- Life membership, £2/10/0.

PLEASE JOIN NOW — by writing to the Hon. Secretary (Major G. St. J. Le Marchant), Forest House, Bartley, Southampton.

OF BRICKS AND BRICKWORKS

Anne Biffin

It was an ideal spring day to look for a brick kiln. Cushions of primroses were strewn along the riverside path from Beaulieu to Buckler's Hard, and there was a faint touch of green on the trees. Until the early 1930s there was a brickworks along this route, at Bailey's Hard on the Beaulieu Manor Estate, and I hoped to show the Ramblers some traces of the old industry.

Brickmaking has a long and interesting history. Introduced into Britain by the Romans, the industry lapsed after their departure, to be revived in the 14th century by refugees from Europe. Bricks have proved to be the strongest and most durable form of building material. They are good insulators, are fire resistant and require little maintenance. The introduction of coloured bricks and decorative designs also made them visually attractive. In the 18th century a tax per thousand was levied on them to assist finances in the American War of Independence. This encouraged the making of larger bricks, but the Government duly amended the tax rates!

Towards the latter part of the 19th century there were about 100 to 150 brickworks in Hampshire, most of the bricks being hand made. In the New Forest area nearly all closed in the 1930s, and others in the county during the WW2 blackout when lighted kilns would have created a bombing risk. This article attempts to bring just a few of them to the reader's notice.



Two cottages stand at the top of Bailey's Hard. The twin gabled cottage has an unusually tall industrial style chimney (*left*). The occupant explained that it had been the machine shed where the clay was mixed, or puddled.

Down by the Hard the domed roof of a circular brick beehive kiln could be seen, partly screened by the trees near the river. (*see top of page 11*). It is a most interesting building, and in a fairly well preserved condition. This is due mainly to the work undertaken by Waterside Youth Enterprises, who in the 1980s gave a group of unemployed



teenagers the task of freeing it from dense undergrowth, and rebuilding parts which had collapsed using the original bricks. Iron banding and concrete buttresses help support it.

There are ten stoke holes around the outside where kindling and fuel were placed before being ignited and sealed up with clay. Inside, the walls above the stoke hole areas are blackened by years

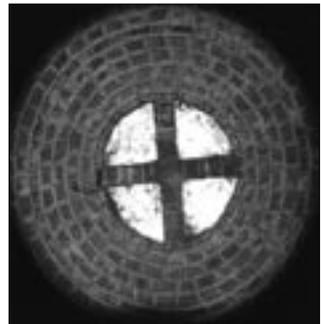
of intense heat. There are small vents in the roof and a central pit connected to a free standing chimney at the rear by an underground tunnel. It was a ‘down draught’ kiln, the circulation of air allowing for better distribution of heat. An arched doorway allows access to the kiln (*right*). I had a couple of torches with me, essential for inspecting the interior, so we were able to marvel at the beautifully domed Victorian brickwork (*below right*).



The brickyard was established in 1790 producing white bricks. It was originally leased to a private company, but was taken over by Beaulieu Manor in 1828. Most estates had their own yards, the colour of the bricks being determined by the type of clay. This would account for the similarity of buildings in a particular area. A considerable number of Bailey’s bricks were used to build Southampton Docks and the old Eye Hospital in Bedford Place. Tiles, flower pots and drain pipes were also made there. Coal was brought in by barge along the Beaulieu river, and the bricks carried away. In 1855 a tramway was laid from the clay workings, the line cutting diagonally across the existing path.



The yard was leased or rented several times over the years. In 1878 W. Beauchamp Marshall took it



Photos: G Babey & P Roberts

over for an annual rental of £50 plus £1 per year for the cottage until 1890. Despite the natural advantages of the site, it was not profitable. Supervision at the yard was lax allowing the men to bring in small casks of beer during their working hours. In 1905 it reverted to the Beaulieu Manor Estate, and finally closed in 1934.

At nearby Lower Exbury a Mr. Wood operated a brickyard at the head of St. Catherine's Creek. When Henry Holland made alterations to Broadlands House at Romsey in 1788, Exbury bricks were used. The yard was in decline by 1905.

Langley brickworks was opposite Whitefield Farm near Blackfield. The kiln had twenty four stoke holes, and in the 1920s was still 'fuzz' fired with faggots of gorse cut from Mopley Heath. Towards the end of its life it was run by Braziers. Today the whole area is covered by a self generated copse.

Nothing but signs of old clay pits and the manager's residence remain at the Victoria Brick and Tile Works at Brockenhurst. Called Victoria Tilery Cottage, it lies at the end of the long gravel track behind the Balmer Lawn Hotel. This brickyard was connected with the building of the Southampton and Dorchester rail link.

At the yard in the appropriately named Claypits Lane at Dibden, the clay was puddled by donkey power. The donkey was harnessed to traces connected to an iron stand to which an arm was fixed. A large paddle at the end of the arm mixed the clay in a trough as the animal walked round. The kiln had twenty four stoke holes. Bricks made at Claypits were used to build St. John's Church, Hythe. The cottage, once called Kiln Cottage, has been renamed Three Horseshoes, and is a guest house. The yard was latterly run by Mitchells, and closed in the 1930s.

Thorney Hill near Bransgore had a number of brickyards in the 19th century. Sand and gravel in the area is of an especially good quality. Many Thorney Hill bricks were used in building the new town of Bournemouth. A brickmaker still operating at the outbreak of WW2 had loaded his kiln but was unable to obtain coal for firing. He was sent to Salisbury for other work during the war, and on his return found the kiln, still loaded with its bricks, and his cottage, had been used by the military for target practise! He was unable to prove exactly when it happened, or by whom, and no compensation was paid.

Hand or machine made bricks follow similar principles. First the clay is 'won' from the pit, taken in hoppers to the pug mill or trough where it is mixed or puddled, fashioned into bricks, which are then dried and fired or "burnt" in a kiln. The overall time varied from one to three weeks, or if fired in a clamp,

several months. The mix is approximately 75% clay to 25% sand. Clamp fired bricks had ground charcoal added to literally burn them through. The length of a brick is a stretcher, and the end a header. In the burning process a brick may have a multi- coloured finish, perhaps a black header and a red stretcher. In the hand making process, which can amount to as many as 6,000 bricks a person per week, a brick sized piece of clay is cut from the main lump with a cockle, a bowed blade set between two handles. A wooden mould is sanded and the clay thrown in with some force so that all corners of the mould are filled. A wishbone shaped piece of wood with a wire across called a bow, is drawn along the top to remove the surplus clay, the mould gently tapped and the brick placed upside down on a pallet for removal to the drying shed. Bricks dried naturally in the open were covered with 'hacks' to protect them from the rain. This slower method took several months. Heated drying sheds often utilise waste heat from the kilns which reduces the drying time to a few days. A 'green' brick weighs approximately 8lbs, but before burning must lose 1.5 lbs of water or it would shatter in the kiln.

In machine making the clay is mixed, extruded in a continuous length, cut by wires into brick sizes, pressed solid and indented with a 'frog', a hollow in the brick where the maker's name or initials is marked. A hand brickmaker has a 'mouse' on the wood block at the base of his mould which serves the same purpose. The bricks are taken to the drying shed before being transferred to the kiln, nowadays by fork lift truck, but previously by barrow.

The old, much slower method of burning was by clamp. A pyramid of green bricks was built and covered with burnt bricks to retain the heat. The bottom layers were honeycombed, the spaces filled with fuel which was ignited at one end allowing the fire to gradually burn through the pile. Modern kilns used in Hampshire were mainly of the Scotch or Hoffman type. A Scotch kiln was a rectangular building with a removable roof and an entrance at one end. Parallel walls supported a floor stacked with green bricks, and a stoke hole at the rear of the kiln allowed the firing to fill the spaces between the walls below the bricks. Herr Friedrich Hoffman patented the Hoffman kiln in Germany in 1858, though it was not used in Britain until many years later. This versatile kiln allowed several functions to take place simultaneously in its twelve or more chambers. They could be filled, warmed, fired, fan cooled and emptied. By a system of flues, dampers and vents, the fire was drawn from one chamber to the next. The draw was provided by a tall chimney outside the kiln which also dispersed the waste gases. Each chamber held about 18,000 bricks. Modern day kilns can take up to 1 million. In the past kilns were fired by wood, charcoal, coal, and oil. Today most are gas fired.

The hardness of the bricks is determined by the way they are stacked in the kiln, and the temperature. Much of the success of this is down to the skill of the master brickmaker. With the coming of the railway, engineering bricks of greater strength were developed for use in bridges, viaducts and tunnels, and provided much work for the industry. For example, one mile of tunnel used almost 14 million bricks, and a road bridge 300,000. Fire resistant clay was used in the manufacture of bricks for lining industrial chimneys.

Victorian architects used decorative bricks in new churches. A fine example is at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Lyndhurst. Designed and built in the mid 19th century by William White, great nephew of the naturalist Gilbert White, the exterior and interior are attractively arched and banded with locally made coloured bricks.

Most of the bricks used in the county today are from the London Brick Company, Bedfordshire which produces up to 20 million bricks per week. One remaining Hampshire firm in operation since the mid 19th century is the Michelmersh Brick Company Ltd., near Romsey. They produce speciality hand made bricks in a wide variety of colours. The little brickyards have gone, but the legacy of the brickmaker's craft is all around us, in their buildings, and in the names connected with the industry. Roads, pubs, and cottages are still called Kiln Lane, Brickmakers Arms, Brickfield Cottages etc., and are permanent reminders of their skill.

2010 AGM FIELD TRIP



Council
Members
Peter Frost
and Neil
Sanderson
engage with
members
on the field
trip to Acres
Down,
following
the AGM
at Minstead
Hall on
April 17th

A WALK THROUGH PYLEWELL ESTATE

Graham Baker

Distance – 4 miles. Recommended footwear – wellingtons or waterproof walking boots. Walking is flat and easy but there are several muddy sections. The walk has only been possible for the last few years thanks to the generosity of the Pylewell Estate in allowing new paths, and in the erection of a footbridge on the foreshore.

The New Forest National Park was formed from the Crown Lands and the old South Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which comprise the large estates on the North Solent foreshore. The remit of the New Forest Association now extends to this area and this walk is intended as an introduction for those more familiar with heath, lawn and enclosure. The walk is in and around Pylewell Park Estate, which is situated about a mile east of Lymington River.

Since the end of the last ice age, the southern half of Great Britain has been slowly sinking and the sea encroaching on the ecologically valuable salt marsh and mud flats. Nothing can be done to stop this happening, and current debate centres on where the coast will be protected and where nature will be allowed to take its course. The former means sea walls, and the latter allowing salt marshes to form in inland areas some of which have a high ecological value in their present form. The sea's encroachment seems to be accelerating. The marshes have noticeably shrunk in my lifetime; trees alongside Solent creeks have died and salt water is about to be let through the toll bridge into Lymington River. If further proof is needed, it is provided by this walk.

Park your car at the end of Shotts Lane where it joins Lisle Court Road - there is room on the left. The OS reference is 346954. Ahead on the left are the present entrances to Pylewell House and the gardens. The Park is not generally open to the public but the gardens are occasionally for charity events. The gardens are very large and of botanical interest, dating from 1900 and containing fine trees, flowering shrubs, rhododendrons, with walks beside the lakes and the seashore. In the early part of the 20th century, Pylewell Park was the childhood home of the famous plantswoman, Lady O'Neill of the Maine.

Walk straight on towards the sea on a muddy track. Part way down on the left is a permissive path. This is the best route to take if you are wearing Wellingtons. The path goes through a first large paddock and onto the far right hand (bottom) corner of the next. It then enters a copse and for the next hundred yards is likely to be difficult, despite the imaginative use of steel grids. The path reaches the shore and runs along it, ending before Tanners Lane. It is a pity a few hundred pounds of the millions spent on developing the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 were not used in making this path permanently usable.

From the foreshore the whole of the Western Solent can be seen, from the Needles to Cowes, and from Lymington's ferries to the car transporters turning into Southampton Water off Cadland. Turn left and walk along the shore with marsh, or sea, depending on the tide, on your right. The area is grazed by New Forest ponies which roam right up to the ferry terminal. To your left are inland lakes, pasture and copse. The signs warning off dogs in the copse are of unknown origin but suggest ground nesting birds and the Estate office confirmed the existence of Woodcock and Snipe. Several avenues radiate from Pylewell House to enable views of the Isle of Wight and having passed the first of these, cross a stile on the left and join the permissive path mentioned above; the foreshore east of this point being impassable for a stretch. Turn right through the woods, crossing another cleared avenue, this time allowing views from the House across to Newtown Creek, and follow the path back to the shore. Cross the bridge over Plummers Water and rest on a pleasing memorial bench further along. There is plenty of wildlife interest, both on the marshes and in the fields adjoining the shore. On the bright February day I last walked here, the field behind the bench was shared by flocks of linnet, curlew and oyster catcher. Carry on to reach the end of Tanners Lane.

The main problem of being on the NFA planning committee is that one becomes over-sensitive to planning horrors. This terracotta and glass erection before us replaced an inconspicuous shepherd's cottage and is a continual source of annoyance to me whether I see it as now, from the sea, or in recurring dreams. Indeed it is No.2 on the list of houses in the National Park I would buy and knock down if the lotto millions ever roll in. The end of Tanners Lane seems to have become more popular of

late. Litter bins and notices have arrived, the latter suggesting conflict between residents, rights' owners and visitors. To the east of Tanners Lane the foreshore (above the high water mark, of course) is private.

Walk up Tanners Lane past a pleasant assortment of cottages that have so far largely avoided the attention of the developers so prevalent in other parts of Boldre parish, and carry straight on along Sowley Lane. Keeping an eye out for hares in the arable fields, turn left at the road junction and cross a cattle grid. Pass the disused Pylewell Home Farm on the left and, where the road sweeps right, carry straight on along the Solent Way and into the 1500 acre Pylewell Park Estate. Cross a stile and walk alongside a fishing lake.

The large building opposite is the listed Pylewell Mill (*right*). This is one of several buildings and farms on the Estate that are no longer needed and are too expensive for the Estate to maintain. In the case of the Mill House planning permission has been granted for business units with conditions intended to



enable the restoration and re-use of the building without giving rise to any unacceptable impacts on the countryside. It's not entirely satisfactory as the remoteness of the site will generate a good deal of extra traffic along little used roads. Indeed this area is one of only two sections of the National Park that enjoy the highest tranquillity rating. The Estate is seeking finance to restore other redundant buildings, including Home Farm, and has suggested limited residential development. NFA are not likely to support this, but the direct re-developing of these valuable old farm buildings for mixed market and affordable homes and business use, as occurred at Carter's Farm, may be acceptable.

Pylewell Park seems to be an unplanned jigsaw of large arable fields between areas of overgrown swamp. Having passed the lake, we walk through an isolated avenue of trees, (the result no doubt of some uncompleted grand plan), and it is no surprise when we see the best of

the Estate's farmland is reserved as a cricket pitch. The Pylewell club is flourishing and runs eight teams, including youngsters, from its thatched clubhouse. Forget the honeypots of Burley and Balmer Lawn, nowhere beats the unchanging peacefulness of Pylewell as a location to sleepily watch the exertions of a younger generation.

A little further along the Solent Way we are as close to the Grade II* listed Pylewell House (*below*) as the path takes us. A house existed on this site before 1600 and the present structure can be recognised in drawings from the early part of the eighteenth century. An early owner and one who warrants more research was Ascanius William Senior who bought the estate in 1780 and enlarged it over the next decade. Mr. Senior was of humble origin and, having made his fortune by accepting 'gifts' in return



for political favours in India, was appointed High Sheriff of Hampshire for the year 1777/8. The property was bought and sold several more times, eventually being acquired by the Whitaker family in 1873. In 1988 the estate was inherited by John Roper-Curzon, Lord Teynham, through

his mother Elspeth Whitaker. The house is described as: *Brick, partly plastered, with slate roof. Cellars and basement of stone, considerably older construction. 3 storeys and attic in main block. 2 storeys and attic in wings. 11-window front. Doric pillared porch with pediment, Roman-Catholic chapel once built into house destroyed in 19th c.*

Walk across the front of the House and along a field's edge to its corner. The Solent Way follows the field to the right but this way is often flooded and it seems normal practice to walk straight on to an estate track and follow it to the right until turning left where the Solent Way rejoins. A brisk walk between piles of decomposing vegetation brings us to Shotts Lane. Turn left and walk down the lane to your car.

LEGACIES

Mrs Joan Thelma Brett

The Association is hugely indebted to the late Joan Brett who had the forethought to leave a legacy of £1,000 to us in her will. Mrs Brett's executors have told us that she had a great love of the New Forest and always had great admiration for the work NFA did on its behalf. She enjoyed attending our annual meetings, and keeping up-to-date with what was going on.

Miss Viola Winn

In the annual report there was reference to the fact that the Association was to be the beneficiary of a substantial legacy. We have now received the sum of £41,818.20. Our generous benefactor was Miss Viola Winn, who was a retired Open University librarian. We have no record of her as a member, and she lived near Oxford, but she was a frequent visitor to the Forest where she loved walking her dogs. In 2003 she made contact with Jude James who was then librarian at the Christopher Tower library in Lyndhurst. If anyone reading this recognizes the name, and knows a little more about Miss Winn, we would love to hear from you.

Mrs Brett's and Miss Winn's legacies will be used to help us confront the many challenges that face the future of the Forest.

NFA Logo Merchandise

Be proud of your membership of the New Forest's own conservation organisation, and wear the logo on your chest!

A fantastic new line of Forest Green polo shirts, fleeces, waterproofs etc., all carrying the New Forest Association embroidered logo, and produced by Trekwear, can now be purchased from our stand at summer shows and events

(see Diary Dates on page 1), by visiting

www.trekwear.co.uk/new_forest_association/c-571.html

or by following the link on the New Forest Association website:

www.newforestassociation.org

COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE

The **deadline** for copy to be included in the Winter 10/Spring 2011 edition of the newsletter is **31st October, 2010**. Please send letters, articles and views to The Editor, Georgina Babey, Sirius, Hatchet Close, Hale, Fordingbridge, SP6 2NF **email:** geebabey@tiscali.co.uk

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