New Forest DISTRICT COUNCIL

SeaView

The New Forest coast 2020

The next stage

Special Spit

Transmitting pebbles

Castle calamity

Chairman's report

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Welcome to the 2020 edition of SeaView magazine

This year we have been involved in some exciting new projects for the coast, such as the transmitting pebbles research, and further investigations at Barton on Sea.

Read about coast protection works we have undertaken at Milford on Sea, and our work to manage the Brown Tail Moth caterpillar.

Elsewhere in the magazine, read about storm damage affecting the historic Hurst Castle, and about how special Hurst Spit is.

We hope you enjoy this year's edition of Seaview.

General Housekeeping

As beach huts are exposed to the elements, it is important that they are well maintained, to protect from sun, rain, wind and sea. Well maintained huts add to the overall appeal of our coastline.

Please help us to help you, by keeping your hut secure and well maintained, thereby complying with your license agreement. We will make contact with owners whose huts are in a poor state of repair, and we will follow up where there has been a breach of license conditions, for example with regard to subletting a hut.

Beach hut owners should ensure that they have good security in place. Padlocks and door brackets should be robust. Occasionally, it may be necessary for us to contact owners quickly, so please ensure we have your complete and up to date contact details, you can do this by emailing coastal.team@nfdc.gov.uk

It is important that we are kept informed if and when an owner decides to sell their beach hut, please use Appendix 1 in your license agreement to notify us of a change in ownership.

Finally, barbecues are permitted, but please extinguish throroughly after use and dispose of in the litter bins provided.

Bonfires are not permitted on the beach.

Your coastal management team are:

Steve Cook
Coastal and Public Facilites Service Manager

Peter Ferguson
Coastal Projects Engineer

Catherine Eastick
Coastal GIS Analyst

Judith Lacey
Coastal Administrator

Steve Wood and Peter Johnston
Keyhaven River Wardens

You can contact the team using the email:
coastal.team@nfdc.gov.uk and
keyhavenriverwarden@nfdc.gov.uk

Milford on Sea
Shingle top up

We undertook works to increase beach levels at Milford on Sea in summer 2019.

The works involved delivery of 4,000 tonnes of shingle to the beach over a period of four weeks from June.

The public were still able to access the lower promenade and beach huts from all access steps apart from the central set adjacent to the public conveniences where the shingle was delivered to the beach. Public safety was managed by banksmen and there was provision for the public to walk around the perimeter of the compound.

Machinery was located on the beach to spread the shingle to fill up the groyne bays that require a top up, above the level of high water.

On this occasion the shingle is from unwanted dredging, rather than from a quarry, which means it originates from a marine source. This means the material is being re used rather than being disposed of and there are significant savings and environmental benefits.

The works were undertaken before the summer holiday period, to avoid disturbance when the area was busy.

Photo courtesy of Wessex Paragliding

The next stage

We received a £200,000 grant from the Environment Agency recently to research the groundwater drainage system in the cliffs at Barton on Sea with the ultimate goal of making them more stable. Currently excess groundwater causes slumping and sliding of the weak geology, and leads to cliff losses of up to 1m per year. The trial we will carry out will be important as it will shape options for a future full scale scheme to try to protect nearby homes and businesses.

This new trial will use the latest drilling technology and the insertion of a long section of perforated pipe. The pipe will extend to the bottom of the cliff, targeted to pass horizontally between specific layers of underlying rock to intercept and help drain some of the groundwater. The equipment is due to be installed in the autumn followed by a year of monitoring to assess how the water levels respond and affect the environmentally designated lower cliff.

This trial will build upon the ground investigations that we undertook in 2013 into the cliff's stability and erosion, reported on in "Going Underground" in last year's Seaview magazine.

Hordle coastal erosion

Due to unprecedented erosion of the beach, 22 beach huts have had to be removed at Hordle Cliff.

The beach has been steadily eroding over time, especially after storms and reached a critical level with the huts overhanging the disappearing beach. A section of seawall has also become exposed at the eastern end of the beach. The coastal team is intensively monitoring the situation, but unfortunately due to the coastal policy in this location cannot undertake coast protection works in this area.

Doggy reminders

We don't have any restrictions on dogs on our beaches in the New Forest, and owners are free to walk and enjoy the coast with their animals.

Our dog wardens can regularly be seen making visits to the coastal areas reminding people to clean up after their dogs, and they are happy to report that the majority of people do take this responsibility seriously.

Dog mess on the beach is not only unpleasant, but also potentially harmful, so please don't let your enjoyment of our lovely beaches spoil someone else's, but set a good example to others by always cleaning up after your dog. Our litter bins are designed to take dog waste as well as other litter.

The thin blue line

We renewed the painted lines on the concrete promenade at Milford on Sea this year.

Abrasion by shingle and salt water had caused the existing lines painted when the concrete beach huts went in to become tired and worn. The new lines were painted by a local firm, Rickman Decorators, and can be used as an aid by the partially sighted when out on the promenade.

Brown Tail Moth caterpillar

The Brown Tail moth can be found throughout Europe, and historically outbreaks have been found in London, Paris and Berlin dating back to the 1500s. Some outbreaks were so severe as to strip all the leaves from infested trees. The hairs from the caterpillars can cause irritation to skin with a severe rash that can last several weeks.

Throughout December and January inspections of the coastal vegetation have been taking place to manage the population of the Brown Tail Moth, which is now widely distributed along out southern coastline.

Coastal officers have identified locations where the webbing nests, or "tents" are situated, and in which the larvae hibernate during cold winter months.

Due to the unexpectedly mild weather this winter, the larvae are not hibernating but are still leaving the nest to forage.

Removal of the nests will take place when weather conditions are more favourable and reduction of this pest species will be most effective.

Mystery Buoy

In late January, a mysterious navigation buoy washed up on the shores at the Naish and Barton boundary. After contacting various agencies, it became apparent that no one had reported a buoy missing. It is therefore possible, that the buoy has come from further afield, and it is not uncommon for buoys to wash up on UK shores from as far a field as North America. Anyone with any information can contact coastal.team@nfdc.gov.uk.

Hurst Spit is an environmentally important area, and has a total of four environmental designations. One of the reasons for this is its important vegetated shingle species, which grow on the rear and crest of the spit. Many plants can be found flowering in the summer season, and add interest to the landscape.

Special Spit

The coastal team undertakes a yearly survey of this vegetation to look at health and growth of the vegetated areas.

Species found include the rare Little Robin and the Sea Pea, and other perennials including the Yellow Horned Poppy, Sea Kale and Sea Beet. Growing on the crest and front face of Hurst Spit is the Spear Leaved Orache.

On the saltmarshes only specialist plants that are able to live in both the air and under saltwater can survive. Glasswort, much prized as a food grows closest to the sea. At the top of the saltmarsh Sea Purslane dominates whilst Sea Lavender and the rare Golden Samphire provide colour in the height of summer.

There are also Spartina marshes and a range of brackish habitats such as reed beds, lagoons and the grazing marshes. The Spartina marshes are covered in a spiky, untidy grass known as English Cord Grass historically known for its speed of growth and ability to stabilize mudflats, but now unfortunately dying out in many places.

There are also a huge variety of insects that have adapted to life on the saltmarsh and beach, including butterflies such as the Meadow Brown and the Common Blue as well as summer visitors like the Red Admiral and the Painted Lady who come regularly in the spring and breed here.

Flourishing in the coastal grasslands are an abundance of grasshoppers and bush crickets, such as the lesser marsh grasshopper and roesel's bush cricket, a rare species.

Many other invertebrates have surprisingly adapted to life in maritime habitats besides those actually living in the water or mud. The high tide line on shingle beaches is home a to a number of specialists residents living beneath driftwood or other flotsam. For example, at least one species each of woodlouse and pseudoscorpion is confined to this habitat in Britain. Spiders too, are specialized creatures, there are more than a dozen kinds living on our coasts. The wolf spider clings for hours to the submerged stems of Spartina at Spring tides and waits for the ebb. On shingle beaches, tiny jumping spiders can also be seen.

Little Robin

Yellow Horned Poppy

Rock Samphire

Sea lavender

Golden Samphire

Sea beet

Brent Geese

Buff tailed bumble bee

Small Copper

New Forest Beach Hut Owners' Association

Chairman's Annual Report

It was a reasonably hot summer along the four beaches, with the weather we expect on the South Coast. Owners have enjoyed the use of their huts especially during the mini heatwaves. Christmas Day 2019 was surprisingly warm and sunny. The cliff tops were busy with walkers and swimmers were still splashing around in wet suits on Boxing Day.

The Owners' Association Committee has continued to be active in checking the beaches after storms and when advised of anti social behaviours which continue to spoil beach hut ownership. We experience mindless damage to huts as well as litter, left by late night party goers. A reminder that if you are affected by vandalism, to report the crime to the police in order to receive a crime reference number. This helps the local force build up a picture of any criminal damage and to reflect this back in their reports to their managers.

Padlocks on huts at all sites might additionally benefit from some lubrication through the winter period as well as checking as often as possible for water ingress into huts.

Thank you to the NFDC for supporting the hut owners by providing Kestrel Security Patrols where the need has been identified.

Barton Beach and the western part of Hordle have experienced unwanted fishing waste including hooks which have caused injuries to dogs. Please support us by picking up and binning, hooks and lines that you find on our beaches to help keep dogs and children safe.

All the Committee are ardent litter pickers but special mention should go to Pauline – the Calshot Rep, for organising frequent beach cleans on our most eastern beach.

The autumn and winter storms have been active in continuing to throw large amounts of sand and stones onto the promenade at Milford. Occupiers of the concrete huts are reminded to check that there's no long term build-up of shingle on the promenade blocking the hut's ventilation at the bottom of the door.

2019 was a difficult year for many hut owners at Hordle as the early Spring storms significantly moved shingle and undermined the east end of the beach, resulting in many huts being dismantled. The heavy winter rains have recently dislodged the clay cliffs in the same area and huts above the beach, backing on to the cliff, have now been cordoned off, for safety.

Calshot had a quiet summer, suffering none of the severe effects of the winter storms which caused such devastating beach erosion at Hordle Cliff. Summer weather was generally good so that hutters were able to enjoy long days at the beach. One notable exception was the end of Cowes Week in mid-August when rain and the absence of a Red Arrows display rather dampened enthusiasm for viewing the traditional end-of-regatta fireworks from Calshot beach.
A number of hut replacement and refurbishment projects have progressed at Calshot during the year and quite a few huts have changed hands, showing that demand for huts at this beach remains high.

On a brighter note, the Association's committee decided on a new venture in 2019, a members' photographic competition rather than the boat trips and other social events enjoyed in previous years. The entries were encouraging and the final winners produced memorable images. The entry qualification was to be a member of the Beach Hut Association and to include part of the beach your hut is on, in the shot. Winners were presented with their photographs on an item of their choice : cushions, mugs or a canvas photo print. See the winning entries on the Members only pages under 'Social Events'.

In April we said 'Goodbye' to Shirley Taylor who had been the Association's very successful Chairman for a few years. Shirley has moved to Devon and the Association said thank you and goodbye at the AGM. We presented Shirley with a lovely handmade mirror which was surrounded by tiny, fused glass beach huts.

The 2019 AGM was supported by 2 local craftsmen who specialise in keeping our huts up together. The visual appeal of standing on a beach and looking at the huts, holds a fascination , not only for the owners, but for the hundreds of visitors to these beaches.

The 2020 AGM will be on 28th April at Lyndhurst Community Centre, 6.30 pm for a 7.00pm start. This is an Association members only event. Membership of the New Forest Beach Hut Owners Association is £5 per year. If you are a hut owner, do consider joining.

The membership year runs from 1st April and forms can be filled in or downloaded from our website: www.newforestbeachhuts.com.

This year we hope to have representatives again from businesses that support hut ownership such as the insurance and repair services.

We also plan to have representatives from the NFDC Coastal Team and the local police.

We have currently been unable to replace Shirley although the committee has continued to keep on carrying on, in the hope that a Chairperson might come forward. We welcome any enquiries about the post and the committee will fully support any hut owner who wishes to take on this voluntary role.

Our meetings rotate the Chairman's role and we will continue to do this so that the association continues. If you are interested in the position, please contact the group secretary, Jan at hon.secretary@newforestbeachhuts.com.

Enjoy the 2020 hutting season. May it bring good things to you and our beaches.

Jan Wise - Hon Secretary
On behalf of the NFBHOA Committee

Barton Gate Reminder

Barton hut owners are reminded that the gate is open on set days of the month to enable vehicular access to the huts. Please do not follow the cleaners van, or attempt to go down on any other dates even if you see the gate is open, as you are liable to be accidentally locked in !

Step repairs

In 2019 we were busy repairing five sets of our coastal steps at Hordle cliff. The repairs were wide ranging, from complete refurbishments to just repairs of individual steps. The works were undertaken during the summer months to enable maximum daylight hours to be utilised. Local contractors were used, and the refurbished steps should last for many years to come.

Down the drain

Because of the unique geology of the Barton cliffs, ground water can be a problem, and we have a network of cliff drainage to help drain the water away from the cliffs. In January we carried out jetting of the cliff drains to remove trapped debris and to keep the pipes free from obstructions thus enabling the ground water to flow freely through the pipe network.

Transmitting Pebbles

We are involved in an exciting new venture to measure sediment transport along Hurst Spit.

The objectives of the study are to investigate sediment drift patterns and rates along Hurst Spit and around Hurst Castle, understand the influence of rock structures such as the breakwater on sediment movement and highlight where material may be being lost to the sea offshore.

The tracer study method utilises radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to track the movement of material along the beach frontage. The system comprises three main components; passive induced transponder (PIT) tags which broadcast a unique ID number when detected; an antenna / reader used to scan the beach and a data logger used to store the ID number and recorded location.

A total of 700 pebbles of a specified diameter will be collected from six sites along the Hurst Spit frontage. In each pebble, a 6mm diameter hole will be professionally water jetted and a glass encapsulated PIT tag will be inserted in the pebble. An epoxy resin mixed with mineral filler will be used to secure the PIT tag in place. Each pebble will be weighed, measured and catalogued forming a baseline dataset.

Retrieval surveys will be conducted by 2 people who will walk the beach at low tide with the RFID antenna equipment. The surveys will be conducted over a 1 year period to allow for the calculation of annual drift rates.

CASTLE CALAMITY

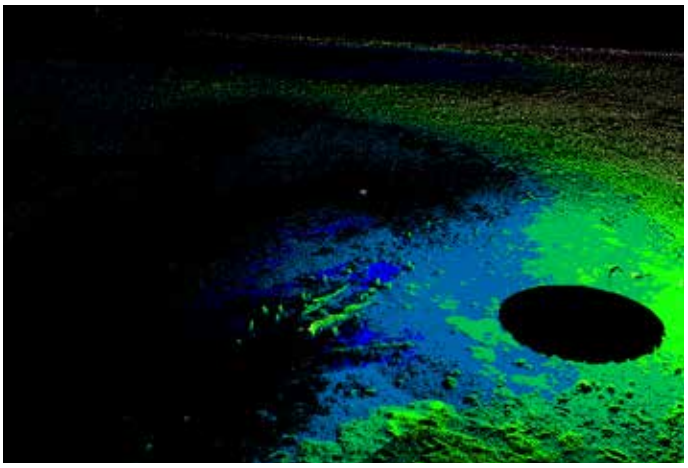
Following a storm earlier in the year, Hurst Castle has suffered some damage to its structure.

It has been necessary to close the WWII room, the laundry room, the searchlight room and the Friends of Hurst Castle rooms to visitors while work takes place to strengthen the shingle bed on which the Castle was built. This is the latest in a series of events in which the ancient castle has been damaged by bad weather and coastal erosion. Earlier in the year it was discovered that parts of the fort previously underpinned by shale had been left exposed and unsupported, and large cracks had appeared in the walls and ceiling. A planned programme of work to strengthen the sea defences at Hurst Castle is already underway, but this sudden deterioration means that works have to be re prioritised.

Calshot's Roman Road

During an extremely low tide, a timber structure appeared to protrude from the beach at Calshot. The Maritime Archaeology Trust got involved, and undertook a preliminary photographic survey, followed up by a series of regular monitoring visits.

The structure consists of two rows of approximately 35 vertical timbers varying in diameter from 5-20cm which runs parallel to the current shoreline. Between the upright timbers are a number of horizontal timbers as well as possible wattling, suggesting that the feature may represent the remains of a timber trackway. It is only exposed on an extreme low spring tide and only for around 30 minutes. The timbers protrude from a layer of grey clay, surrounded by a sandy shingle bank. The hollow is approximately 20 m across, however, later visits have shown some more timbers protruding above the sandy shingle to the east and west which, if all part of the same structure, suggest it could be at least 70-80m in length.



Dating

The feature's location relative to the shoreline suggest it could be of some antiquity. Samples were sent off for radiocarbon dating and results have shown that the feature dates to probably between 86-242 AD. It is possible that this was a trackway built across a marshy environment at a time when the shoreline was several hundred metres further out than it is today.

Important

The Solent would have been an important area during the Roman period, not only allowing for trade along the coast and across the channel but also in the exploitation of marine resources such as salt and fish. Calshot lies at the entrance to Southampton Water and other significant sites have been found in this area.

Perhaps the trackway was part of an industrial landscape allowing for the exploitation of marine resources or the production of salt. More research is required on the trackway, and it will continue to be monitored, and as the fragile remains are exposed and at risk of being destroyed by bad weather, this makes further work to understand the site all the more important.