

Notes on Searches/Discussions with personnel - Ems

Phil Maber - Ems

Used to be bailiff from 1975 through to 1990s.

Seen Sea Trout spawning at Constant Springs several times.

A salmon was found in Slipper Pond when drained.

Does not have contacts for Southern Anglers.

No knowledge of stocking for either sport or following pollution or drought.

Notes on file indicate Oct 13-15th 1998 dead fish (trout), sickly roach and trout reported by Mr Portwin for the lower Ems – very low flows implicated.

Phil and Paul Newman note salmon u/s Peter Pond and also in Slipper Pond when drained (2000) 1995 new culvert under Old Flour Mill causes major migration problems for fish.

Paul Newman – Ems

Known river for over 20 years – seen diminish over that time, but especially in recent years.

Used to live backing on to the mill stream d/s of Westbourne Mill where he raked gravels every autumn and observed both trout and sea trout spawning.

He has seen trout and redds in the Ems in the Brook Meadows stretch but not sea trout, even though gravel limited – problem getting through culverts? At garage and old Flour Mill?

Agrees stream below Westbourne Mill is a fab stream and potentially good for sea trout – used to see sea trout here. Paul used to rake gravels and see trout and sea trout spawn here.

He noted sea trout have been seen both dead and alive below Westbourne Mill when cannot go through sluice (undershot).

Reports that old timers reported that in the ‘old days’ sea trout regularly travelled up the Aldsworth stream and were poached at the sluice on the road d/s of the pond. Therefore confirms Nick Rule’s comments that they can pass through under the sluice. When moved to village, old people used to say river flowed healthily before abstraction – **not borne out by flow gauging though!!**

In 2001 (probably – period of high flow!!) a one-off electro-fish was done for Southampton University to determine genetics of sea trout. They caught a surprising number of relatively large fish: c10 from Lumley to A27; c12 up to 10/11lb at Hampshire Bridge and couple more in meadow stretch d/s Westbourne Mill – scales and fin tissue taken for analysis, but did not hear back. **EA requested to access information for discussion, but not obtained.**

Paul reports that in the 1950s and early 60s ‘old poachers’ caught loads of sea trout every year near the cress beds on the Ems

Phil Petts – was responsible for operational side of both Ems and Lavant from 1987-2003, and saw two of the worst floods and drought. Now left, but visited at home to discuss historical management of the watercourses.

In 1994 dredged Westbourne Mill Pond and Lord’s Fishpond – silt dried out quickly. Regular shingle removal at Sheepwash/Broadwash. Said couldn’t get at the river to the west of Westbourne for the trees (best/only semi-natural bit of whole river. He worked well with Nick Rule but parents did not let on land. Dredged flat bottom right through as far as possible on MR to make weed cutting easier. Said seen loads of sea trout in channel d/s WB Mill (i.e. the bit he could not get the dredger to).

EMS Confirmed massive silt removed from Westbourne Mill Pond, the Canal and Lord’s Fishpond in 1994 following the flood. Interesting said worked well with Nick but parents did not let in to touch the river. Confirmed the channel d/s Westbourne to gauge ± left alone as ‘couldn’t get at it

for the trees'. Flooding in Ems greater extent in 1993/4 due to lack of bund along Canal- says would be at risk now due to gaps. Saw loads of seas trout in back channel d/s Westbourne Mill.

LAVANT Confirmed in his time dredged right through the Lavant from Chichester to Preston Farm. Main purpose was to create a flat bed to the river to make machine weed cutting easier. Most flooding u/s of Chichester is due to groundwater, not fluvial, flooding. Concerns that bridges such as Sheepwash a concern for conveyance, and gravel accumulating by restrictions.

Neil Edden – Mitchmere Farm – Records well levels u/s of Walderton. Water levels can rise more than 3m in a week. Not just driven by rainfall. He has the water-meadow area d/s of Mitchamer Pond. River not flowing in Dec 2006. Flowing late January – first time for three years – Jan 2003 flowed, and were puddles in Jan 2004. Summer 2005 well was dry – 2006 well did not dry.

Jan Glue – 2 Mitchmere Cottage – Born 1960 As very young child took toads, newts, frogs, fish and eels out of pond and kept as pets. Remembers the 1962/3 winter so recollection of pre-abstraction conditions good. Has not seen a fish since she was about 10 (i.e. 1970). Wet meadows between Stoughton and Walderton were flooded every year as he recalls-she used to go through them in her wellies to see her gran, and mostly arrived with them full of water!! Had pewits by the hundred. Used to swim in the summer holidays in the pond.

Still get frogs occasionally in pond. Never had sticklebacks.

Ian Briffett – Walderton - known Ems for most of life – came to live at Walderton only in 1995. Noticed clean gravel/pebbles on bed – concerned now too much silt and this is being held by grass etc. (may be cleaning of gravels occurred in big flows of previous years, and recently not been any other than 2001?).

He observes the river flowing and drying, but has not taken any formal records. Emails and conversation reveals he, and many others, delight in the return of flows to the river. Interested in seeing sympathetic FD management to maximise clean gravel bed (noted where narrowest gets cleanest bed).

David Todd, School Lane, Westbourne - 62 year old lived all his life in village (born and bred!!) – his father had been here since 1912, and name is cited in Rudkin's book. He reported too that scouts and guides camped near Broadwash – 4ft of water all year. Had fishing and shooting interest in Aldsworth Pond. According to father, had only dried once before 1962/3 time (assumed 1949?) As a child he tickled trout out of the river as far upstream as Mitchamer pond.

Says before pumping station the canal never dried, and was much clearer. Racton Park Dell and Cressbeds never suffered loss of flow.

He confirmed stories of others that sea trout regularly ran to Aldsworth Pond and were poached. When good flow had very good brown and sea trout breeding in the river.

He noted that as kids they counted as many as 6 kingfisher nests from Ellbridge to Racton

Brickkiln now much smaller due to silting and edge invasion of shrubs etc.

Guy (& Jo) Schofield, Watersmeet - Lived at Watersmeet for 8 years. Cannot give historic perspective, just recent. Very concerned that been bad in recent years, and augmentation, that he feels is admission that is perennial, does not work effectively, and river been bad in recent years.

Very sad that when needed through autumn of 2006 the augmentation was not on until November, when river virtually dry. Therefore way augmentation releases made feels is big issue, especially in 2006 when not discharging when should have been, and discharging when not needed – confirmed by EA and PWCo subsequently. Very keen to promote better river environment – had already had visits from EA re this potential that could be linked getting FD gains. Had plans drawn up: we discussed and came up with modifications that have been taken further, and discussed with EA FD, DC and FRB – see main text and Annex 7. Been mindful to do things for long time, but priority has been the house.

Concerned about way river managed, and told EA FD does not want them on his land to manage the MR.

Flooding impact from over-topping bank a concern – the post-flooding ‘bund’ (thought to have saved floodwater going due south to school etc.) is now eroded (pictures). Canal seriously silts up. His proposed plans would create improved river habitat and set back embankment giving greater protection as not made of silt, trodden by cattle on the rivers edge. Thinks should not be a planning problem

Nick (and Carol) Rule – Westbourne Mill

Born in 1958 and was brought up there as a child, and returned after dried time at University and London. His father had lived there for many decades before him.

Reported millpond dropped to mere puddle in 2004,5 and 6 (has photos) – in 2006 just a trickle ponded from dribble from Canal reach at Watersmeet. Says augmentation quantity is not enough – would just like a bit more in low-flow years as heartbreaking to see recovery over several years go to waste. When good recovery millpond teems with water voles, fish (trout, pike, miller’s thumb, eels, stickleback and roach), frogs and newts. Weed includes starwort and Canadian Pondweed.

2006 mink observed and this has resulted in loss of water vole and coot (moorhen OK as roost in trees?).

Neither he nor his father recalls the millpond ever not maintaining level prior to the 1980s. His father was the main protagonist who fought for the augmentation (he did not check, but he was under the impression the augmentation was not operating all summer). Despite more water taken in the 1970s (my info, not his) he says the millpond was OK because the augmentation was greater than the legal minimum – in the 1980s the metre was installed and the absolute requirement was augmented.

In 2005 wrote to MP as so concerned, and had many in the village sign a petition in 2004.

He knows nothing about reason for cressbeds stopping commercial operation.

Reports that springs always maintain at least a trickle of water in both channels d/s of the mill.

Records of milling at the site were lost in a fire. The mill head is also reported to have been used to pump water to Stanstead House.

In the 1960s the millpond was full of weed that was pulled out – this teemed with baby trout, roach, stickleback, pike eels and miller’s thumb (says so much weed and prolific fish as did not dry or shrink to puddle).

Father had stocked with some trout in the past, but not for commercial fishing.

Reported that several of his father’s contemporaries report that recent drying of the river upstream of Watersmeet never ever occurred until the last c25 years (i.e. spring flow from here maintained mill pond levels) – this was confirmed by statements from 72 year old Doreen Pearson, of Ford Villas who has lived all her life in Westbourne, and 92 year old Sidney ?? The former recalls the river often being ‘black with trout’ in the stretch upstream of Watersmeet, whilst the latter said played in the mill pond from before the 1920s and never dried until recent decades, and downstream there were so many trout that poachers were a problem, even the local doctor!!

Nick provided many interesting historical photos – see Annex

Mrs Rule; father of Nick, Westbourne Mill – Reported lived there many years before the abstraction started, and never a failure of flow. With abstraction, and no augmentation, in poor recharge years there was loss of water and drying/puddling of millpond – Nick supplied photos. When augmentation switched on, usually got benefit, but slow to respond, and needed before started to get bad.

Reported very healthy roach population previously, and also trout (even brown trout tried to jump the weir in summer). Sea trout migrated through undershot structure when high flows in winter when sluice open – helped silt management. Self-sustaining trout were so numerous had great problems with poachers – used to confiscate the tackle of youngsters caught. When came to house intended to stock with trout – did not need to as bred so well. Had loads of roachj in early ywears there. Also saw lots of eels.

She and father fought the applications for abstraction, and in particular the increase granted in 1968 (cited as objectors – see other files). Mrs Rule noted representation at County Hall in December 1965 where application for pump testing was being heard.

Interestingly she reports asked for 0.5mgd and got 0.25 – **the original amount might have been just enough?**

Mr and Mrs LaFosse – Lumley Mill

Been there since 1972.

Said last two years shortage of trout, but lots of dragon/damselflies.

Regularly see water voles in the area, especially Brook Meadows – concerned low water increases predation risk.

Operation of structures below them can result in them loosing water.

Feels Mill Stream should run more than it does (NOTE was v v low on Nov 29th 2006, but OK on 18th December) – thinks gravel in bed d/s of the gauge reduces flow and board not used

Does not know why cress farming ceased east of Westbourne – think was due to fluke – this is area of Paul Newman's pond where the spring is present that feed the old cressbeds either side of the mill stream.

Says land to north is owned by the Everall family – Ted has died and Mrs Everall (now 94) has the land managed through Henry Adams (Simon Lush) with tenant farmers.

Mr La Fosse says previously gravel had been taken from the river and used for roadways and tracks – now lots of weed. Used to be good trout water – Mr Everall used to electro-fish it, sold all the coarse fish and returned the trout – not commercially fished, but let to two gentlemen from London.

Provided map of watercourses, showing the massively complicated arrangements at the Mill and downstream. Agreed a management plan for operation of them, with arrangements for sea trout migration would be good.

Was interested in idea of perhaps making a natural channel in the Ems between the A27 and the sluice above the Mill.

Simon Lush – Henry Adams, Agents for land u/s Lumley Mill – Mrs Everall's Agent (01243 533633)

Simon was contacted on several occasions regarding potential modifications of water levels, and removal of weirs, in the stretch of river between Lumley Mill and Westbourne (Hampshire Road). This land is in the ownership of Mrs Everall; the sluice management is in undertaken by Mr Denman (a long-term friend of Mr Everall before he died), and the fields are grazed under tenancies. When the ideas that were being considered were explained, and he was aware Mr Denman was party to them, he was extremely supportive and suggested we progress the ideas and

then went to discuss them with the tenant, through him if necessary. He envisaged nothing but support from the tenant; and representing the landowner he was giving support to the ideas..

Henry Denham – Sluice operator for Mrs Everall (01243 372095)

Henry was contacted, and visited, on several occasions regarding modifications of water levels, and sluice management, in the stretch of river upstream of Lumley Mill. We also visited the stretch of river upstream of the A27 (which is adversely impacted by the current management), as well as the weirs in the stretch further upstream. This land is in the ownership of Mrs Everall. The sluice is normally operated as open in winter (allowing free flow of high water) and then closed to create ponding as flows recede. The influence of the sluice backs up beyond the A27 where a potentially good chalk stream habitat deteriorates through the summer as water is ‘unnecessarily’ ponded. In November 2006 he was requested to open the sluice gradually, and then leave it open. This was done, and the effects were dramatic upstream, but will only be most influential from spring/summer 2007.

Mr Denham was happy for the new operation to remain as suggested, and supported of the removal of weirs upstream. He, like Mr Lush, envisaged nothing but support from the Tenant.

Mr Denham also pointed out the failure of the A27 siphon to work (taking high level carrier flows to Lumley Mill); this was clearly demonstrated through the 2006-7 winter when flows upstream of the siphon flooded over fields in to the Ems, yet there was minimal flow downstream of the siphon.

Mr Shannon – lives in Westbourne immediately adjacent to Flow Gauge/Lumley Bypass off-take.

He and his wife have lived there since the 1960s. In 1976, flow did not fail, but it did fail to flow down the Mill Stream to the east. Following good flows in 2003, saw 50-60 large trout, with half a dozen around a foot long. He observed them being very territorial. Also used to see many many eels- but now very very rare – some were 2-3 ft long, and used to observe them accumulating at the weir. Also noted ‘loads of stickleback and bullheads’, but not now.

Andrew Elms – farms much of land upstream of the Canal. Owns Lord’s Fishpond and Dell. He recognises the very high ecological, landscape and ‘special’ nature of Racton Park Dell. Greatest wish would be to have Lord’s Fishpond hold water at all time. Very keen on having environment enhanced. Not keen on having the river managed – cannot see the point.

Brook Meadows Conservation Society – very positive and keen group – spoke to Frances Jannaway (Chair), Brian Fellows (still active, previous Chair and fabulous website) and referred to Fred Portwin re fishery interests.

Water voles regularly seen. Concern that less in 2006, and acknowledgement that population is small and isolated, therefore vulnerable. New letters keep people informed of sitings coordinated by Brian Fellows. 2005 much better than 2005

Good river birds, including green sandpiper. Changes in river management, developed with the EA, believed to be improving the habitat. Prefer banks left uncut, but if reeds get too thick in main channel, like to have them cut.

Concern that Industrial site poses WQ threat.

Common message, as reported elsewhere, that trout seen in very poor numbers in 2006. Said historically loads of trout in river that used to be better policed for poaching. Large sea trout often

seen and brown trout always present. Common story of less eels also reported. Flat fish come up the Ems in small numbers and loads of stickleback in Peter Pond also enter Ems.

Concern that recent structure in Meadows may have impacts when high tides. A sluice is padlocked and purpose and trigger for management not clear. The site is affected by how others operate sluices – either too much or too little can cause adverse impacts for many – would like to see a water level management plan in place.

Dog erosion of river banks is a problem that cannot help water voles either.

Portsmouth University did pollution index study within the Meadow site and reported high quality water. EA thought to have done similar study – requested information be forwarded to the Chair.

Newsletters report status of water voles etc.

Within site Harvey (2005) did a survey of invertebrates and found two nationally scarce taxa – a crane fly of wet woodlands (*Limonia trivittata*) and a solitary bee (*Lasiglossum pauxillum*). Harvey M C (2005) *Invertebrates of Brook Meadows Lumley Meadow SINC*, Emsworth, Hants, in July 2004. Report to BMCS by Hants and Isle of White Wildlife Trust

Maurice Pollock – Old Post House Singleton - logged time at which river has flow and when not in village. Moved in late 1993. Neighbours told him dry for at least two years before he came. From his information constructed flow character for the reach – see elsewhere.

Happy to have channel cleaned for conveyance,. But would like them to be as natural as possible.

He says NEVER EVER seen a fish in the reach.

Bill Spence – neighbour of Maurice Pollock, Singleton. Interested in river and makes observations, but not in formal way as Maurice Pollock. Been there since 1984. Flow starts c100m u/s of the pond, and gradually spreads down. Takes much longer to flow upstream. Thought dried for some time in all years, but pleasantly surprised that Maurice's records shows not always. Said was dry for over three years in 1989-93. The problems of over-flowing sewers during very high re-charge periods was cited, but confident recent work should have solved historic problems.

Keith Stanley – EA – does structures. Lots of knowledge of the grills and structures inside Mill at Emsworth (MR Baker's)

File Notes from anywhere

Maber – came to Ems in 1977

Had fish mortality at Fordwater – stickleback and eel elvers – tank washout – early 1990s.

Newman _ Ems

Raked gravels, saw spawning ST and BT

Saw trout redds in Brook Meadows

Strechh d/s WB Mill – fab stream seen ST redds here

Richard Horsefield did genetic study at Lumley – 2001 when big flow – scales and fins. At Hamphsire B had c dozen ST up to 10-11lb

Early years of Walderton augmentation was via fir hydranth. Several objections for 1968. Hamilton withdrew as PWCo said would 'sort it out' with clay liner and 500,000 gpa. Water-cress farmers compensated (1975), but not if payment seen as acceptance of guilt of causing problems.

LEAP Says main area for wolveroles is Chichester Plain.

Flood defence meeting with Malcolm, Kevin (30yrs) Mark (2001) and Barry. Used to cut weed all way down from Preston Farm. Left or washed down. Farmers often cut what left. Now Lavant contracted out. Residents complain about rubbish in Chichester in WC. Said used to see wolveroles in mid Lavant – not now (Charlie confirmed). Confirmed moved from historical hand cutting to machine; BED LEVELLED 10-12 YEARS AGO TO MAKE EASY. H&S prefers machines. – 10 weeks by hand, very quick by machine, especially if can track down bed.

On Ems more selective and more by hand. Kevin has used bradshaw.

WQ EMS Rob Cornell – EA report Wren Centre – Poll Prev Plan following visit. Potential problems for washings reaching river – more serious as dilution so small. No records of serious pollutions. Surface water drains most concern. Had a problem with some paint. Ind Estates always have potential, but nothing serious has happened yet. Oil potential problem. Peter Pond had some dead fish a few years ago – roadwash? Pig farming a concern in Ems catchment

Surface water outfalls seem most prevalent cause of concern for NIRS. Greatest incidents is d/s in catchment. Many of causes of incidents not known. Prevalence of incidents in autumn suggest low flow at least contributory.

WQ – Lavant – Lisa Marie-Ashmore

CSO problem – at Singleton. Even in recent years still have problems. Inverts killed. Legal case prepared, but not taken further as river dry then

No one knows of flow failure past college. Mid Lavant some Industrial Units pose threat, but no actual problems yet. Chichester bigger potential. Oil and paint have caused water pollution problems.

NIRS mostly in Chichester, but not exclusively – primarily 'Containment Control Failure'.

Apuldram Ortho-P c0.1 to 0.15 mg/l – so above small watercourse target for high quality (0.06). Jan 04-Dec 06 = monthly samples

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Start-up meeting with Water Resources and ENTEC's new study.

Old Halcrow report and conclusions not rubbish – but new data and methods will help determine if correct, and so study builds upon, and refines, the old study.

Entec's 2006 study was to model flows to the SPA/SAC harbour.

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Adrian – DC Old Lavant file info.

Surcharging of sewers in W Dean occurred in 1974. Singleton had very high flows in 1960 – locals said worst for 60+ years; lasted 2 weeks; seeped up through floors, but not fluvial flooding. Report said history of GW flooding, but not from Lavant. Charlton had worse floods in 1974 than 1960 – but no properties – up to 1960s a ‘lengthsman’ kept the culverts clear. In 1975 maining to source was being considered.

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Abergail Ems ± compliant - marginal failures in DO in its RQO RE2 standard due to ponding in low flow periods. Minimal sampling as compliant.

File note for 1995 – Brickkiln Pond stocked by 30 plus pike to 18 and half pound – algal bloom and high Do at surface and low below 60cm

Ortho-P at Westbopuirne c0.02-0.068 – therefore very good.