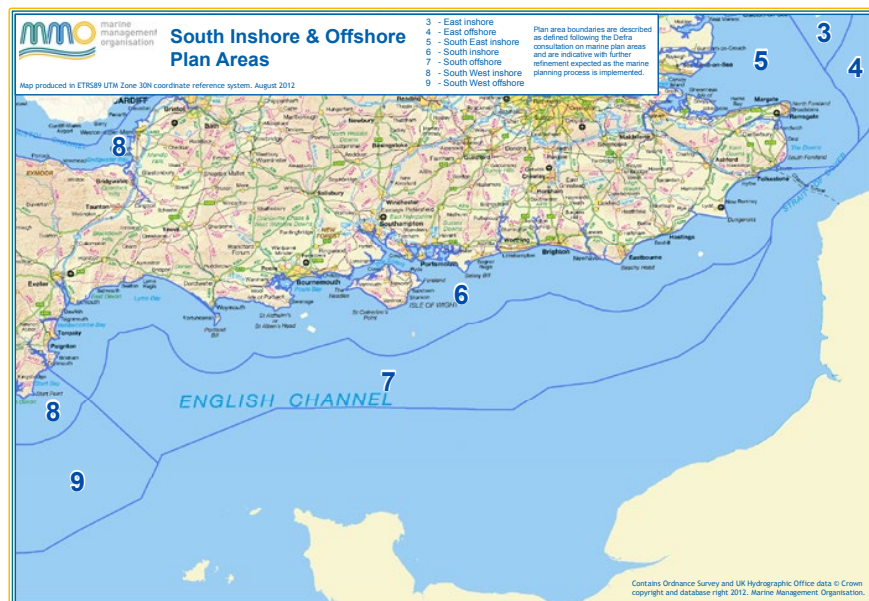


South Marine Plan nears final approval



The impact of Marine Plans on land development goes further than tidal overlap. Marine employment is, for instance, just one example of the plan's objectives. So a proposal need not fall below MHWS to need consideration against the Marine Plan.

SPS welcomes this as it has long been concerned about both physical and environmental impacts of land based development on the sea.

The plan has an overall vision of "Beautiful, busy and beneficial for all" and then twelve objectives covering Co-Existence, Infrastructure, Diversification, Employment and Skills, Displacement, Access, Climate Change, Heritage Assets, Seascape and Landscape, Marine Protected Areas, MSFD and WFD (Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Water Framework Directive) and finally Space for Nature.

The South Marine Plan, which covers the Solent within its overall length from East Kent to Devon or more precisely Folkestone to the River Dart, is expected to receive final government approval at the end of the summer.

The draft document was issued at the end of 2016 and The Solent Protection Society (SPS) commented fully on it, making a number of suggestions to improve it. In particular SPS tried to make sure the plan was appropriate to the Solent which has many potentially conflicting uses which need to be balanced. Indeed the Solent, together with its tidal estuaries, is probably the most significant area on the South Coast in which the relevance of different policies is at its highest due to the intensity of use.

Marine Plans are the flesh on the bone of The Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009), which was enacted in response to the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU) and there will be eleven such plans around the coastline of England.

They are rather like Local Plans for land based planning applications, but cover the sea out to 12 miles from the shoreline. Indeed the plans overlap with land based plans as they go up to Mean High Water Spring (MHWS); while land based plans go down to Mean Low Water (MLW). To this extent there is a requirement for Planning Authorities on land to take account of the requirements of Marine Plans in making decisions.

Within each Objective are various policies designed to ensure the objectives are met; over fifty policies in total. These policies, when considered together, are designed to try and balance, for example, the environment and biodiversity with leisure and commercial use.

So the document is long and complex but it is clearly laid out and SPS are largely supportive. The plan is designed for a twenty years life and there are provisions for reviewing it from time to time.

We are pleased that at last there is a formal document that can be used to assess potential new uses or issues when proposals come forward for either land based planning applications or sea based Marine Licence applications.

We look forward to the Draft South Marine Plan reaching its final approval soon and to see if any of our comments have been taken on board. In the meantime the draft plan is already a 'material consideration' and all coastal planning applications and planning authorities must take it into account.

Brexit will of course have an impact, but SPS would hope that there is no change to the proposals and that after Brexit the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the Marine Plans will remain as part of UK law.

The full draft plan can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/south-marine-plans>

MCZs in the Solent: the broader context

Our seas are home to some of the most species rich and biologically diverse habitats in Europe. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are areas designated as such in order to protect the marine environment, whilst enabling its sustainable use, ensuring that the marine environment remains ecologically healthy and continues to contribute to our society for generations to come. Inshore MPAs are called Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). Defra, when designating MCZs is obliged to take local economic and social interests into account. The maintenance and encouragement of a sustainable fishing industry, as well as economically viable coastal communities, is an essential aspect of the decision making process.

The MCZ initiative has its origins in the UN Convention on Biodiversity 1992 (often termed the Rio Earth Summit). The declaration was signed by over 170 of countries worldwide and underpins much of UK Conservation Law. Consequentially there is a UN requirement for the UK to establish an “ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas” by 2020. The UN initiated OSPAR Convention is responsible for the effective and sustainable management of the North East Atlantic, and it is the mechanism by which 15 governments and the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North East Atlantic. As a signatory to OSPAR, the UK is required to protect a list of habitats and species set out by the OSPAR Commission. The list can be found on <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/bdc/species-habitats>

The Marine Protected Area programme was transposed into UK Law by Part 5, Chapter 1 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009). Designated MCZs are managed under the legal framework of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010 amendment) and are enforced by the Inshore Fishing and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). The local Southern IFCA website address is <http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/>. As much of the damage to the more fragile seabed ecology is perpetrated by towed fishing gear, certain areas of the Solent Recommended MCZs (rMCZs) are already covered by Southern IFCA regulations appropriate to the site.

In the Solent, the Needles MCZ was designated in the second tranche on the 17th January 2016. There are three other Recommended MCZs in the Solent Area, all of which hold a number of species or habitats of conservation value.



Bembridge rMCZ

The Bembridge rMCZ is both the largest and the most diverse. The Norris to Ryde rMCZ holds seagrass beds of exceptional quality, and there is an interesting community of species under and around the seabed boulder terrain in Thorness Bay which lies within the Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ. Each rMCZ holds many different, fascinating habitats and species all of which would reward further study by layman and scientist alike.

Before designating the third tranche, Defra must assess whether the current set of MPAs and MCZs forms an effective “ecologically coherent network”. It is important to understand this phrase. It means that that each unit must not stand alone and there must be effective connectivity between protected areas for species movement. A variable gene pool is essential for the continuing health of each species community and the viability of the ecosystem as a whole, therefore there must be sufficient movement to ensure genetic transfer between protected areas. Breeding grounds often differ from feeding grounds so there is little point in conserving one small area if, as soon as a species moves out of it, perhaps to feed, it is at risk. That risk might be from predators, starvation, loss of shelter, or loss of habitat due to anthropogenic (eg. fisheries and pollution etc.) damage. When a potential MCZ is to be considered for designation there is also the need to consider each one in the ecological and geographical context of other potential MCZs in the area. For these reasons it is difficult to assess how many of the Solent Recommended MCZs will be chosen for designation in the final tranche without greater research into the species and habitats in the rest of the region.

Money is short, and the management of MCZs requires funding, so Defra will be considering the success and viability of their previously designated network in the context of their budget. As this is the last tranche to be designated, the OSPAR commission will be looking over Defra’s shoulder with a view to the viability of the UK network as a whole.

Research has been ongoing over the past two years, involving many trained volunteers led by marine scientists. Their findings will furnish the decision making process. Meanwhile we await the Consultation.

Watch our website for news of the consultation or any other updates on MCZs.

Thorns Beach House finally wins planning approval



Concept sketch of the proposed replacement dwelling as viewed from the Solent.

After four applications, and three appeals the latest scheme from the owner of Thorns Beach House has won conditional Planning Approval from New Forest National Park.

It is important that the conditions attached to the approval are implemented and complied with over the years to come.

Thorns Beach House occupies a significant water’s edge site overlooking the Western Solent, midway between Lymington and the Beaulieu River. There is an existing ‘tin’ bungalow on the site, which is of little architectural merit and in need of modernisation or rebuilding, so the principle of some development on the site was never in doubt.

What was in doubt was the scale and size of the proposed replacement, most of the early schemes being substantially in excess of the National Park planning policies, as well as spreading along the coast rather than front to back. In addition the architectural quality and the impact on the cumulative effect of buildings along this relatively undeveloped stretch of coast were important factors. The principal view of the site is from the Solent.

The Solent Protection Society (SPS) opposed all the relevant early applications, both as applications and at appeal, and while being encouraged by the latest scheme which was a big improvement architecturally, remained opposed unless further reductions in the amount of building presented to the waterfront were agreed.

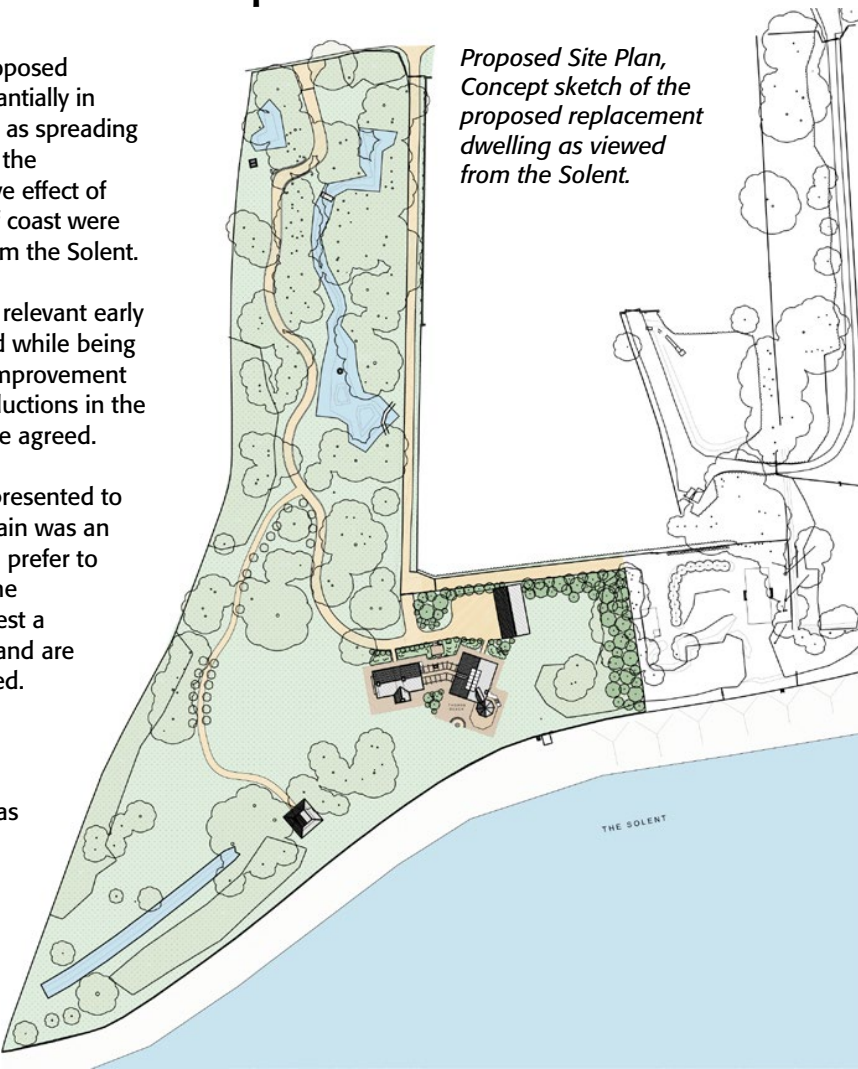
The new scheme did, however, break up the mass presented to the foreshore into three distinct elements, which again was an improvement on earlier proposals. While SPS would prefer to have seen a further reduction, it did serve to keep the overall scale down. We did therefore go on to suggest a number of conditions, should approval be granted, and are pleased to see that most of these have been included.

- These include:
- Removal of permitted development rights
 - No increased use or daylighting of mezzanine areas without approval.
 - No habitable use of summerhouse and garage
 - No external lighting without approval
 - Extensive landscape and tree planting conditions

While we are pleased to have helped achieve a better scheme to which the above conditions apply, SPS is trying to hold a line about the cumulative effect of development along the coast and so it is right that we make it difficult for development to occur without very careful thought. We think we, along with others, achieved that in this case.

No doubt any members out and about on the water in future years will keep an eye on how the scheme develops!

Proposed Site Plan



Isle of Wight Update

During the last year two planning applications on which The Solent Protection Society (SPS) has commented remain unresolved or at least still in limbo – Bembridge Harbour and the Red Funnel terminal at East Cowes.

Bembridge Harbour

In the case of Bembridge Harbour the lack of progress is largely a result of an impasse over the use of any profits, the scale of profits and which ‘company’ receives the benefits. These issues have rightly been brought to the fore by local residents and the Bembridge Harbour Trust.

SPS have not been involved in this debate but are clear that the only reason for the additional development is as “enabling works” for the benefit of the harbour. Trying to calculate potential costs, sale values and profit of any development is notoriously difficult which is why developers often go bust – though people generally only talk about the successful ones.

SPS would prefer to see the rate of housing being built clearly linked to a programme of proposed improvement works and maintenance so that further development cannot proceed before certain harbour improvements have been completed, In this way the development risk is left with the owner and exact prices are not relevant. The other long term aspect is ongoing dredging of the harbour which should be the subject of an enforceable legal agreement.

Even so, the planning conditions and legal agreements will need to be tightly drawn and are inevitably complex.

New groyne at Bembridge?

North Easterly longshore drift along Bembridge Beach has built up a large sandbank on the East side of the Harbour entrance. The continuing movement of sand threatens the Harbour entrance channel and contributes to the silting of the Harbour. Sand has been entering the Harbour, increasing the height and size of the central sandbank between the Sailing Club and Fisherman’s Wharf.



There is an ongoing initiative by local residents and the Bembridge Harbour Users Group to work with Bembridge Harbour Authority to re-establish the broken groyne on Bembridge Point.



Red Funnel – East Cowes

Over the last year or so Red Funnel have made two applications for their new terminal arrangements at East Cowes – both were recommended for approval by Planning Officers, both were refused by committee largely on the grounds of loss of employment space. Red Funnel went to appeal on the first application and were successful.

SPS attended the Planning Appeal hearing and made representations. While supportive of many of the things in the first application, SPS were concerned about the uncertainty of the ‘outline’ nature of the proposed development of Trinity Wharf and the loss of employment space before suitable alternatives were available at say Kingston further up the Medina River. We also drew attention to the new South Marine Plan which should now be a material consideration in dealing with these issues.

Although Red Funnel now have an approval they cannot implement it as proposed because they do not yet, if ever, own the properties in Dover Road. It remains to be seen if compulsory purchase powers can or will be used. These properties are not without character though their desirability, and hence long term viability, is compromised by the ferry terminal.

The second application showed that fewer vehicles need to be stacked than originally proposed and so some kind of compromise may well be possible that will leave standing the big shed adjoining the Columbine Works. This will limit the amount of alternative employment space needed. The houses on Dover Road were also left standing in the second application. There are options to extend the quayside further into the river.

So we anticipate an eventual third application as some form of rationalization of the terminal as its effect on East Cowes in the short and long term is clearly needed. We would expect a future application to pay much greater attention to the marine employment space and we would wish to see a detailed application for the whole site, not a hybrid application, to ensure a quality development in this important riverside location.

Other Issues

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)

At the beginning of the year DEFRA announced the new sites to be considered for a third Tranche of MCZs. There are three on the Island; Yarmouth to Cowes, Norris to Ryde and Bembridge and these cover the shore line which is of particular interest to SPS coupled with the already designated MCZ of The Needles.

An informal consultation was held at the Riverside Centre in March which a representative of SPS attended. The formal consultation is expected soon with designation in 2018.

MCZs form part of a ‘blue belt’ around the coast though this is a bit of a misnomer as it is not continuous in any way but serves as a way of describing the network of Marine Protected Areas around our coast.

There are implications for both commercial and leisure use within these areas as they are designed to protect the natural environment and species such as seagrass which can for example, be subject to damage by anchors. In practice, however, the designation at The Needles has shown that really sensitive areas can be identified more specifically within the MCZ and so such use is unlikely to be prohibited completely.

Time will tell and SPS will seek to get a balanced view taken, as these Tranche 3 areas are more intensively used and include popular mooring spots such as Newtown Creek and Osborne Bay. Comments and assistance from members with specific local knowledge would be appreciated as we get to the formal consultation.

There is in this issue a more detailed article about MCZs.



MCZ sites under consideration (recommended - Tranche 3) in the Solent area

Cowes Floating Bridge

At the time of writing at the beginning of September the Cowes/ East Cowes floating bridge has been taken out of service indefinitely and is liable to be the subject of legal action. This is a huge disappointment to all who use it. The new ‘bridge’ looks good and holds more cars, though covered passenger space is more restricted.

The time to get on and off is longer due to the bigger capacity and the ever increasing need to separate cars and pedestrians for safety reasons, this perhaps affects the draft as the tide runs out. In general SPS welcomes the new bridge and sincerely hopes the practical and legal issues can be resolved quickly.

Marine Licence Applications

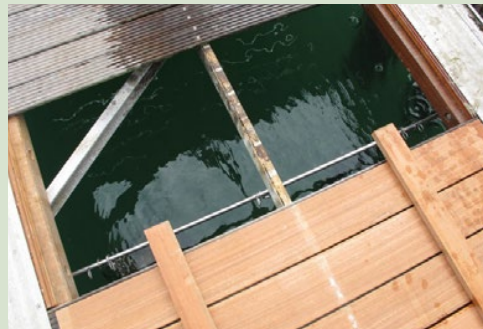
The Marine Management Organisation licences, regulates and plans marine activities in the seas around England and Wales so that they're carried out in a sustainable way. It has recently started to post on its website a public register of Marine Licence Applications. This register shows the details of each application and decisions made. In some cases applications are opened for public consultation, enabling us and others to comment on the application and thus influence the decision.

Unfortunately these applications are not categorised by regions such as the Solent and the location of the proposed work is not always obvious. Therefore, to inform our Council and

provide a service to our members, we have searched the Public Register, extracted those applications which affect the Solent and published them on our website. You may access these by going to www.solentprotection.org/marine-licensing. It is planned to publish an update every month.

We hope you will find this both interesting and useful. Some may wish to comment, as a private individual, on applications open for public consultation. If you do so we would appreciate it if you would send a copy of your comments to the Secretary, Solent Protection Society.

Solent Oyster Project



Marina pontoons are modified



A cage is recovered



Cage/Oyster inspection

This restoration project is led by The Blue Marine Foundation in conjunction with local partners including Solent Protection Society. The project aims to restore native oysters to the Solent with the goal of improving water quality, providing habitat and increasing ecosystem health. Native oysters are also a huge part of the heritage of the Solent which was once the largest oyster fishery in Europe.

During the spring and summer the project has expanded the broodstock cage system to six locations across the Solent including sites in Southampton Water, Chichester Harbour and Hamble. Since research began these locations have seen high survival rates of native oysters with expectations of good spat production. Representatives from Blue Marine and Portsmouth University have

also visited the US to learn from restoration activities taking place in Chesapeake Bay with valuable experience being shared.

In order to promote and publicise the project Blue Marine were present at the Lymington Seafood Festival in August generating great interest in the project.

Latest news

The project has secured around 2 million 5-15mm oysters from spatting ponds which will be delivered in September. Unfortunately no sites are ready in the Solent so these will be kept at a site in Kent until they are bigger and ready for transfer to sites in the Solent next year.

Away Day 2017

In contrast to the rural scenes of past years, our "Away Day" this time took us to the urban domain of Southampton City Council. Members and their guests boarded the spacious MV Solent Scene which conveyed us along the River Itchen to Northam Bridge and to the upper reaches of Southampton Water as far as Eling Tide Mill to view the many redevelopments which are taking place. Members were fortunate to have aboard Mr Darren Shorter who is Southampton City Council's Planning Team Leader and who, together with our ship's captain, provided a most interesting commentary along the way.

One of the main features of City development will be the emphasis on waterfront public walking access. Land reclamation in the Mayflower Park area will enable the Southampton Boat Show to occupy one site uninterrupted by roads.



Blue Funnel's "Solent Scene" and the new five star hotel in Ocean Village.

There was always something to claim one's attention including an ample buffet lunch which was served at midday. The weather remained fine which added to a most enjoyable and instructive event.

Close encounters with the third kind – PhD research on an alien lugworm in the Solent

Dr Peter Barfield is carrying out research at the University of Portsmouth on the ecology of non-native species in the Solent. His work is supported by The Solent Protection Society and here is his latest progress report.



Gelatinous egg mass of an introduced lugworm.

The gelatinous egg mass pictured here initially struck me as unusual because of its size. The tide had turned that day and was pushing me off the shore but not before I had taken a few pictures and formed several questions. What produced this substantive balloon? Was this a gap in my knowledge of UK fauna? Were there more? These questions demanded attention not least because one-way or another, it was clear I was looking at something new.

On the same shore, I had recorded very similar, in terms of the shape, reproductive products earlier in the year. Those had been produced by the small bristle-worm *Scoloplos armiger* and a paddle-worm, both common to the shore. The most obvious difference was that those structures had been no bigger than my thumbnail and this one was 6 or 7 centimetres in length. When I got back to my desk later that day I searched until I had a candidate species. It was a pivotal moment, both for the research and, on a personal level. Over the next few days and weeks, with subsequent visits to shore, the uncertainty reduced and I knew I had found a species of lugworm new to UK shores, living in the Solent. I recorded multiple egg masses across several months, some of which were up to 12cm in length and, collected a small number of specimens of the worm itself.

There are two native species of lugworm in the UK both of which are found on the same shore as the new arrival. The native species are the blow lug (*Arenicola marina*) and the black lug (*Arenicola defodiens*). Neither of these species produces an egg mass. In terms of precise morphological identification, the UK species are characterised by having 19 bristle and 13 branchial (gill) segments.

The introduced species has 17 bristle and 11 branchial segments. There are two candidate species with these features, the Pacific or southern lugworm *Arenicola cristata* and, the closely related *Arenicola brasiliensis*. Because of the visual similarity between these two possibilities molecular analysis in the form of 'DNA-barcoding' is in hand to help identify which species is now present in the Solent. Based on other characteristics such as the shape of the egg mass, the colour of the worm, its consistency and habitat and the fact that it produces a cast, the latter species is suspected.

Fieldwork is underway to record the presence of the egg masses this year in a systematic fashion and a more detailed habitat map is being produced to identify the lugworm populations across the shore and the mosaic of associated habitats. Novel methodologies including use of an unmanned aerial vehicle are also being tested. In future years' the PhD will focus on the associated benthic communities to assess the structural and functional aspects of these assemblages. Lugworms are referred to as 'ecosystem engineer' species in that they have the ability through for example, their burrowing activity, to strongly modify the sedimentary environment and hence dictate, to a degree, the community of organisms that lives in the beach.

So, the central focus of the research has remained the same but because of this serendipitous encounter the chapter structure has been modified. The presence of the lugworm offers the possibility of obtaining clear, robust data with which to test the questions and hypotheses at the heart of the research concerning the ecological effects of non-native species in a changing world. (as touched on here and outlined in the Autumn 2016 SPS Newsletter).

In addition to this work I have also had a Short Communication published in the Journal of Conchology in August this year which details another find from the preliminary survey work and another first for the Solent and for the UK. That species was more easily named as the poorly ribbed cockle, *Acanthocardia paucicostata*. It's presence in our waters is either a range extension or an introduction.

The bursary provided by the Solent Protection Society to aid this research in its first year was a great help and I would like to thank the Society, very much, for this support.

Peter Barfield, PhD
Institute of Marine Sciences, School of Biological Sciences,
University of Portsmouth.



Lugworm (*Arenicola defodiens*) with insets (A) shiny bristles, (B) red gills (or branchiae)

Aircraft Carrier Queen Elizabeth arrives at her home port



By courtesy of BAE Systems

Five years ago, the six thousand ton forward section for the first of the Royal Navy's new generation of aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth, left the shipbuilding hall in Portsmouth Dockyard on the back of a massive barge bound for Rosyth where final assembly of the ship was to take place. This was the first of several such shipments, taking further sections of both HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales to the final assembly yard north of the border. It was to be the first time that major ships for the Royal Navy would be built in sections in multiple yards around the British Isles.

On Wednesday 16th August 2017, 'Big Lizzie' as she is already affectionately known, arrived at her home base in Portsmouth for the first time, greeted by a large crowd of well-wishers who had turned out early to line the waterfront between Southsea Castle and Old Portsmouth. At least two members of the SPS Council were up before 5:00 am on either side of the Solent to be sure of a close up view as she rounded the Nab tower and entered Portsmouth Harbour.

Preparations for the ship's arrival saw more than 3.2 million cubic metres of sediment dredged from the harbour and approaches to enable access for the vessel. During the dredging, more than 20,000 items were removed from the sea bed including eight cannons, an aircraft engine, 36 anchors, a British torpedo, a German sea mine, five large bombs and a human skull.

Preparations at the Naval base have cost £100 million, including new jetties and a new power plant to meet the electricity needs of the ship which is set to be joined by HMS Prince of Wales, the sister ship currently under construction.

It will be at least another eight years before the full planned complement of American F35B fighter jets are operational on the carrier. Until then, it is likely that the ship may be deployed carrying US Marine personnel and aircraft.



URGENT: WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

The Solent Protection Society's postage costs continue to increase at an alarming rate. Please help your society to save costs by simply emailing your name and address to our secretary now at: secretary@solentprotection.org

LEGACIES – PLEASE THINK OF THE SOCIETY AND ITS WORK

In addition to the very welcome donations over past years, from time to time we have also received very generous bequests from those who have had an interest in what we have been doing. If you are updating your will and would like to remember the Society this would be appreciated. Equally if you have already made a will you can make a provision for a bequest either by executing a formal codicil to the will or by leaving a letter of direction to your executors.

GIFT AID – HAVE YOU COMPLETED A GIFT AID FORM?

Under the Gift Aid scheme, for every £1 you give, either as a subscription or donation we are able to recover 25% from the Inland Revenue. It does not cost you anything – you simply declare that you are a taxpayer. If you have not already completed a declaration would you now be good enough to do so by completing this coupon, cutting it out and sending it to the Secretary – Mrs R. Payne, Driftwood, 4 Tides Way, Marchwood, Southampton SO40 4LB

PLEASE TREAT ALL MY SUBSCRIPTIONS/DONATIONS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE AS GIFT AID.

I confirm that I pay an amount of income tax/capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that Solent Protection Society (registered charity No. 115317) will reclaim on my subscription/donations and on all other donations to charities or community amateur sport clubs.

Date...../...../2017

Signature.....

Name.....



To download a copy of this newsletter to your mobile device, please scan this code.

OUR NEW SECRETARY – CASSIE STRANG

Bobby Payne is retiring at the end of 2017 after many years as Secretary of The Solent Protection Society. The Society has recruited Cassie Strang as Bobby's replacement and she will be in post as from the AGM on 4th December. Cassie is an experienced office manager and trained professional secretary who lives in the New Forest area and knows the Solent well. Her skills will be a great asset to the Society.

To join the Society, please contact the Secretary at PO Box:
DRIFTWOOD, 4 TIDES WAY, MARCHWOOD, SOUTHAMPTON SO40 4LB Tel: 07715 177629
email: secretary@solentprotection.org www.solentprotection.org Registered charity No.1154317