

# Muddy Waters

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Exciting new projects for the coming year.

## A great year for estuaries!



# Welcome

to this first ever edition of Muddy Waters, a newsletter designed to spread the word about the Isle of Wight Estuaries Project and its activities.

2007 was a great year for the Estuaries Project with a wide variety of excellent work being completed. Several successful bids for external grant funding plus the recruitment of our Project Support Officer have enabled us to take great strides in the amount of project work undertaken. The quality of publicity, display materials and educational resources that we have been able to produce in house has increased. Hopefully there is a lot more to come in 2008!

This newsletter provides a summary of recent projects and, as always, further information is available from Estuaries Project, Enterprise House, St Cross Business Park, Monks Brook, Newport, IW, PO30 5WB or email [estuaries@iow.gov.uk](mailto:estuaries@iow.gov.uk).



# medina

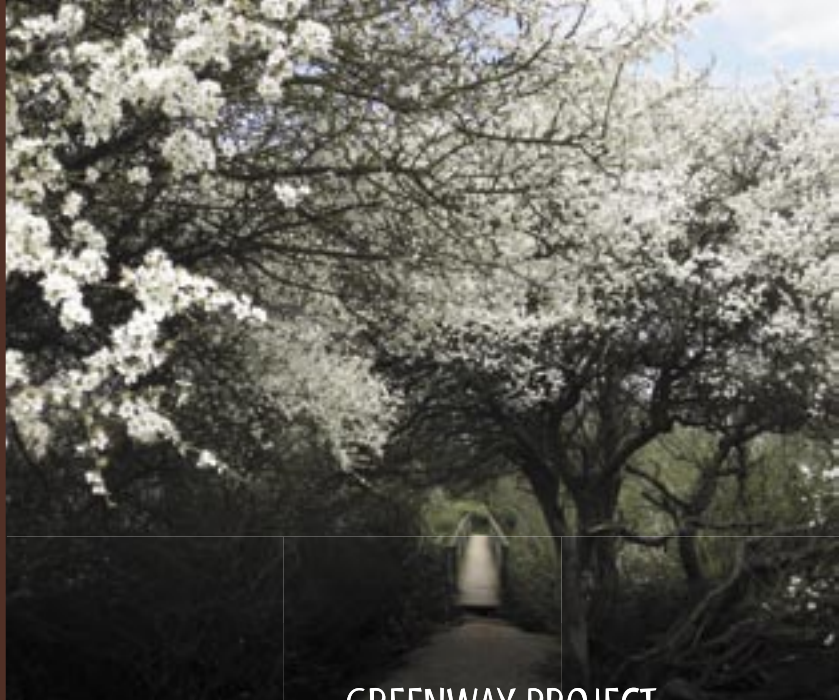
## MEDINA VALLEY PROJECT

In 2007 the Estuaries Project completed a programme of work in the Medina Valley, funded by the Area Investment Framework (AIF). The value of the project over the last three years was £375,000. In the first two years it involved extensive surveys and research on the Medina's physical and historical environment. It also funded a sewage pump-out facility for Cowes and an environmental education project with local schools. Over the final year the following activities were completed.

- \* Improvements to Medina Riverside Park creating an attractive picnic area and countryside site in the heart of the industrial estate.
- \* Interpretation board and sculpture trail installed at Medina Riverside Park, raising awareness of the environment and highlighting the issue of sea level rise.
- \* Geophysical surveys and detailed audit of the Medina Valley's archaeological assets.
- \* High and low water bird surveys and a review of the last ten years of bird data for the Medina estuary.
- \* Improvements to the bridges and footpath on the eastern bank of the estuary.
- \* Completion of a set of assessment tools, including hydrodynamic and sediment modelling, to assist statutory authorities assess development within, and adjacent to, the European site.

Huge thanks to SEEDA, Isle of Wight Economic Partnership and the project partners for supporting this project.

The value of the AIF project over the last three years was over £375,000.



## GREENWAY PROJECT

The Estuaries Project has been working towards the provision of a 'greenway' between East Cowes and Newport. This would connect these towns, providing both a sustainable transport and recreational route for a wider variety of user groups. Ideally the greenway will combine access and nature conservation interests by moving people away from the most sensitive areas and the wet and muddy sections. The greenway would have an improved surface for cyclists whilst retaining the character of a rural path.

## BARRAGE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Estuaries Project was asked by the Isle of Wight Council to commission and oversee a desk study on the feasibility of a barrage structure across the Medina estuary. The conclusions showed it was unlikely to be a successful scheme due to nature conservation issues, other environmental constraints and a lack of benefit in terms of power generation.



## RIVER WARDEN SCHEME

The Estuaries Project instigated and funded training for a Medina estuary 'River Warden' scheme. This was the first of its kind on the Island and was based on the successful 'pond warden' scheme run by the Footprint Trust. Similar projects have since been requested for other locations and the Medina scheme could also be extended. There is a waiting list for training so funding will be sought to enable the Footprint Trust to continue the scheme. Next stop the Western Yar?



The Estuaries Project has completed many projects on the Western Yar estuary this year, working in collaboration with Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners, the Isle of Wight AONB and Leader+ funding.

## HARBOUR USERS RECYCLING SCHEME

A recycling scheme for recreational yachtsmen and boat owners is currently being piloted at Yarmouth Harbour before introduction for visitors in 2008. The scheme encourages boat owners to separate recyclable items from their waste whilst on board, making it easier for them to use the new recycling facilities ashore. Every mooring holder has been given a recycling bag plus information about the project. It is hoped that this will remove recyclable material from the general waste stream, leaving less to go to landfill.



## YARMOUTH PIER AND SOLAR ENERGY

The Estuaries Project was involved in the successful Heritage Lottery funding bid to restore Yarmouth Pier (£355,000 from the HLF) and compile a living archive of information. We also helped to secure a Leader+ grant to install solar panels at Yarmouth Harbour. These will preheat the water for the shower facilities and reduce non-renewable energy requirements.



## VALUING THE WETLANDS

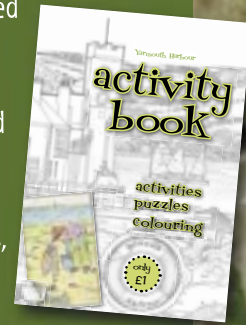
The Estuaries Project successfully managed the Leader+ and AONB funded Valuing the Wetlands project this year. Outcomes include:

- \* Revision and reprint of a booklet promoting the Island's birdlife.
- \* High and low water bird surveys of Norton Spit.
- \* Raising awareness of wetland habitats and birds through displays and events.
- \* Promotion of birdwatching as one of the Isle of Wight's many attractions, particularly out of the main tourist season.
- \* Training for tourism businesses to promote their local wetland areas and encourage bird watching.



## DISCOVERING THE WESTERN YAR

Our activity book was produced to provide entertainment for younger children and to encourage them to explore the surrounding area. The book, which has proved to be very successful, includes a range of activities onboard and outside. It includes information about local countryside sites, the estuary, wildlife... and pirates!



An interpretation panel has been placed at the southern end of the estuary and the Western Yar Circular Walk leaflet has been reprinted. Both provide information about the estuary with an easy to follow map.



A large 'sliding 8' puzzle was created for Yarmouth Harbour reception. It shows local environmental attractions and information about key issues in the area including the AONB, rare and interesting wildlife, estuarine habitats, Yarmouth Pier and problems of beach litter.



## THAT'S NOT ALL!

Further work with Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners led to a 'Gold' award from the Green Island Award scheme! Employees took part in a 'canoe safari' around the Western Yar to explore the estuary's habitats and wildlife. The Estuaries Officer led a number of guided walks on both estuaries and participates in regional and national coastal management initiatives.

western yar



# projects 2008

**T**his year the Isle of Wight Estuaries Project will be working on a number of different and interesting projects. Most of the work depends on available funding and the Estuaries Project partners are always keen to hear about new opportunities of partnership working and joint funded initiatives. Below are some of the projects that will be taken forward in 2008.

## Saltmarsh monitoring

Over the past few years the Western Yar saltmarsh monitoring programme has been in place. This will be reviewed to see what changes have occurred and if any further management is needed.

## Medina Greenway feasibility study

Completion of the study will highlight any improvements that can be made in 2008.

## The Big Green Project

This year the focus at Yarmouth Harbour will be to take a close look at energy use, small scale energy generation, purchasing, ensuring good practice in all new projects and encouraging the use of new and innovative technology.

## Yarmouth Harbour Recycling Scheme

The scheme will be extended to all visitors to Yarmouth Harbour this year with improvements identified in the pilot project.

## Interactive beach litter display

The new display will raise awareness of the problems of beach litter and what we can do to reduce it.

## Wash down facility in Yarmouth

The potential for a new wash down facility in Yarmouth Harbour will be investigated. The scheme would be a collaborative project to reduce run-off into the Western Yar estuary and improve water quality.

## Sustainable dredging plans

Developing sustainable dredging plans for the Medina and the Western Yar estuaries may be a long process but the Estuaries Project hopes to progress this during 2008.

## Recycling at Cowes Harbour

Recycling facilities for yachtsmen in Cowes Harbour will be improved and publicised to encourage their use, particularly during Skandia Cowes Week.

## Research and information

This year we'll work with partners across the Island to improve access to quality information about the estuaries. Information gaps will be identified for future research and over the course of the year, the Estuaries Project website [www.iwight.com/estuaries](http://www.iwight.com/estuaries) will be developed to include reports and educational resources.

## Habitat creation opportunities

With natural changes and increasing pressure for development in the Medina Valley, it is really important to ensure that a balance of habitats is maintained. Investigating opportunities for managed realignment may help to allow new areas of intertidal mud and saltmarsh to develop, thereby offsetting loss due to development or natural change such as sea level rise.

## Sensitive area signage

The most sensitive areas of the Medina estuary are under threat from our recreational activities. New signage and publicity will raise awareness of the most sensitive areas.

**And finally...** we will produce another edition of Muddy Waters to update you on the progress of our exciting projects!



The Isle of Wight Estuaries Project aims to promote and co-ordinate the integrated use of the Island's estuaries through partnership and develop understanding of estuarine features and processes. It is a partnership project supported and funded by Cowes Harbour Commission, Environment Agency, Isle of Wight Council, Natural England and Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners.

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