

HASTINGS TRUST QUARTERLY

IRONS IN THE FIRE

Anyone dropping into the Trust's offices in Wellington Square – there are plenty who do – will see just how much is going on there: there is a real sense of purpose in the air. At present, around 20 altogether are engaged on Trust projects – evidence that the voluntary sector in Hastings is alive and working hard.

You could not accuse the Trust of apathy. It is very exciting to see the progress achieved on the majority of the Trust's projects each time we come to Committee Meetings. Indeed on many occasions I find myself asking for updates on specific topics during a normal working week. You will, from the different articles in this newsletter, know just what I mean. To get a clearer picture however, come and visit the Hastings Trust stand at the Environment Week Celebration Day in Wellington Square on the 21st May.

Self funding is still the goal to which I believe we must devote a lot of our thoughts and energies. We are inviting all new Borough Councillors to visit The Trust, and members of the Committee are hoping to meet with local County Councillors, in the hope of renewing an ESCC budget. The Director is negotiating for funds from four different charitable trusts. We are also still hoping that Mr John Lewis of VP Associates, under contract from us to explore sources of funding through Europe or the DTI, will come up trumps.

COMMUNITY ACTION IN HASTINGS

The Trust has been working with the Employment Service, the Civic Trust and BTCV Enterprises on projects for Community Action. So far we have seven volunteers working with us : 3 on the Hastings Area Recycling Project, 3 on the Stade Enhancement Scheme and 1 on desk top publishing. We hope to have another team up and running soon to work with Rob on the Walls. Anyone who has been unemployed for six months or more is eligible for the scheme. Participants get an extra £10 on their benefits and have to work 18 hours per week with a local charity, with 3 hours spent on job search. It can be a lot of fun working on projects outside, especially when the weather is good, and there is the satisfaction of doing something positive for your community.

CONSERVATION AREA PARTNERSHIP SCHEME (CAPS)

English Heritage and the Borough have finally reached agreement on the future of the partnership scheme, which is providing £800,000, and the task over the next three years will be to spend the money on upgrading and enhancing the Old Town and the sea-front. The Trust is a willing partner to the scheme and already has projects ready to launch. Following our long affair with "Steps" we are switching to "Walls" for '94, and the inaugural project will be the restoration of Hastings Wall. Robert Firth will be leading this project with a team of volunteers from Community Action and support from the Conservation Unit.

Later in the year we will be tackling High Street walls and All Saints walls; a little more tricky, as there are wild plants to be considered. However, thanks to Judy Clark, Hastings Urban Wildlife Group, all the plants have been identified and an agreed program for their conservation has been drawn up.

The Trust's 'Twitten Project' will start in the Autumn, after the Trust has undertaken a public consultation exercise.

Following the Borough's policy of public consultation there has been a meeting of interested parties for the 'Net Shops' and the Stade, and we expect significant developments to arise from this. (See next newsletter for details.)



BLIND GARDEN BORDER

The Blind Garden Border in St. Leonards Gardens is almost ready to greet the world. Planting has begun, the braille plaques are being manufactured by the RNIB and the last cosmetic touches are being applied.

The Trust is having a grand launch in June (see local press for details) and we hope that everyone who has played a part in this project will attend.

To enhance the experience for both the blind, partially sighted and the sighted, the Trust had been talking about a 'feely' sculpture within the border, but it remained no more than idle chat. Then we had a stroke of good luck – a young sculptor, Anthony McCue, joined us on Community Action, and responded immediately to the 'feely' idea. After discussions with Hastings Voluntary Association for the Blind and their clients, Anthony has drawn up sketches for figures to be placed at strategic points along the border. The cost of these sculptures is £300, which we need to raise immediately. Anyone feeling generous, please contact Christine on 446373.

STADE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The Trust has recently commenced the Stade enhancement project involving the refurbishment and repairing of the winch huts on the beach, the Rock-a-Nore miniature railway station buildings and the wooden barriers along the edge of the coach park.

The work is being carried out by the new team of 'Community Action' volunteers, children from Saxon Mount School on work experience, and the Trust's own volunteers. We were also particularly fortunate to have the services of The Territorial Army for two weeks in April, during which time the team of up to nine volunteers has made a tremendous start to the work. Thanks to all concerned.

The project has received good media coverage so far, having been featured in The Hastings Observer, Evening Argus and twice on Meridian TV. It had been hoped that Barclays Commercial Services would be able to provide a team of volunteers, but due to pressure of work this has not been possible so far. They have instead provided a second donation to the project.

To provide some variety of work, and also to allow for times when the weather is unsuitable for painting, we are developing a scheme to tidy up small abandoned patches of land around the town. As a pilot project we are discussing with Seeboard the creation of a garden on land owned by them adjoining their substation at the top of Harold Road. Other gardens in the pipeline include land adjoining The Roebuck Centre, The Bourne and by the newly restored steps in St. James' Road. Funding for these projects is currently being arranged.

WHEELS PROJECT UPDATE

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the 'Wheels Project', here is a brief overview.

The project involves the creation of a 'Trail Park' for the young people of Hastings and surrounding areas. The Trail Park is an enclosed area where people can ride mountain bikes and motorbikes in safety on purpose-built trails, whilst under the supervision of specially trained instructors.

At the moment the project is proceeding very well. As a result of all our efforts in the Trust's office we have a complete blueprint on how to set up and run a Trail Park.

Through negotiations with various top name mountain bike manufacturers/suppliers, such as Marin, Muddy Fox and Saracen among others, we have been able to secure some very good competitive quotes for an initial order of six. As yet no decision has been taken as to which offer to take up.

With regard to motorbikes we have come to the conclusion that Kawasaki 100cc Trail Bikes fit the bill for all our needs. Machine height is a crucial safety factor, bearing in mind the probable size of many of the youngsters the project is aimed at. We have three very good quotes for these machines, again for an initial order of six, but, as with the mountain bikes, have not decided which offer to take up.

The most important factor still to be decided is where the actual location of the Trail Park will be. There are, at present, two sites being investigated – the old power station site in Ore Valley, which the Trust and the Hastings Police will shortly be discussing with Powergen, and the Adams Fruit Farm in Ivy House Lane, for which a site visit is planned.

WHEELS FUNDING

As a kick start to fund raising for the project, the Trust has organised a big raffle with a total of 16 prizes. The top three prizes are:

- A Hot Air Balloon Ride
- A Leather Jacket
- An Hitachi Radio Cassette

Tickets are available at the Trust's office and most local pubs, price 50p each.

Anybody wishing to enter the raffle to support this worthy cause will have to be quick, because the Draw takes place on the evening of Celebration Day, Saturday, 21st May, at the WHEELS Benefit Concert which is being held in the Carlisle Function Room, 24 Pelham Street, Hastings sea front. The gig will be from 8.00 pm

HASTINGS AREA RECYCLING PROJECT

April 5th saw the start of the HBC recycling initiative based at the Borough's Bulverhythe depot. Grants from central government provided the project with the bare essentials, aiming to increase the amount of waste recycling in Hastings. A can sorter/baler, a paper shredding machine and a lorry were provided by the Borough under an SCA. Head Quarters were set up in the old ET craft training unit; six volunteers were provided by Employment Training and Community Action, with Hastings Trust providing the start-up manager and co-ordinator.

Within the first two weeks collections from the can recycling duo-bins had been organised. Paper collections from offices had also begun, and various other sites for collections of both cans and paper had been identified – all seemed to be going well!

That is until a 38 ton lorry ran amok in the Town Centre on the 20th April, three of the project operators were whisked off to hospital (no serious injuries) and our brand new lorry hospitalised at Hollingworths, seriously ill.

At present we soldier on (no pun intended, Mr Chairman) with the help of a hire vehicle from AVH. The number of cans and amount of paper collected continues to grow weekly, making a small, but significant dent in the amount of waste not recycled, but going into the landfill site at Pebsham.

Recycling collections planned for the future:

- Glass – already started
- Green waste – ie garden and vegetable waste
- Wellies
- Aluminium foil

STOP PRESS!!

Local charities, schools, youth organisations, etc – Hastings Area Recycling Project will pay:

- 40p per kilo of aluminium cans collected and delivered to Bulverhythe.
- 30p per kilo of aluminium cans if collected by HARP (minimum of six bags)

HASTINGS ENVIRONMENT WEEK – 20TH-30TH MAY

BT Environment Week is back, and here in Hastings the fun kicks off with Hastings Celebration Day, co-hosted by the Hastings Trust and Environmental Health Department and takes place on Saturday, 21st May in Wellington Square.

From 9.30 in the morning onwards, local voluntary groups and organisations will be manning stalls around the Square, where there will be food by the 'Hot Potato',

crafts, bouncy castle and the Fellowship of St. Nicholas' fun-bus for the kids.

Down below in the street, Andrew Griffin will be compering a whole host of entertainments.

- The official opening by the Mayor, Cllr. Richard Stevens will be at 11.00 am.
- There will be an 'Alternative' Dress Parade organised by HARASS - so start recycling and come at 11.00 am and join in.
- Keith Leech will be staging his 'Punch and Judy'.
- There will be Morris Dancing by Mad Jack's and Daisy Roots, and music from the Pullbacks, Bloco Liberdade and the Cinque Ports Corps of Drums.
- Keep a look out too for Hastings Borough Council's 'Happy Harold' Trolley Bus all day along the seafront between Wellington and Warrior Squares – donations will be given to the restoration of two further trolley buses.

All proceeds from the day's events will go to local projects – Hastings Trust and Environmental Health Department having chosen Broomgrove Adventure Playground – so please give generously.

Throughout the week also, there are a wide range of activities taking place and the Hastings Trust has been granted a £50 bursary award from the Environmental Health Department toward the cost of producing an 'Environment Week' programme listing all events.

Highlights include:

- A family day out at the Marline Valley Natural Reserve with guided walks, country crafts and family activities, organised by Sussex Wildlife Trust and Hastings Borough Council, on Sunday 22nd May. (Details in programme.)
- The presentation of the Environmental Bursary Awards for 1994, at the Town Hall on Wednesday, 25th May. Hastings Trust receives awards towards the cost of Broomgrove's Adventure Playground equipment, the restoration of St. James' Steps and the Environment Week Programme.
- Commencement of the Trust's 'Wild Corners' project.

STOP PRESS!!

BT Environment Week Awards

Hastings Trust has won £250 and 'Highly-Commended' award for Wild Corners, specifically the Harold Road Garden.

– midnight, featuring three live bands:

- The Addled Family
- The Amigos
- The Blackman Brothers

Tickets are £3.00 and are available from the Hastings Trust, 12 Wellington Square, and from the Carlisle. Capacity is restricted to 200, so to avoid disappointment make sure you get your tickets quickly. Other attractions on the night include a bar extension and a special 'in-concert' raffle: first prize is a nine gallon barrel of beer (a firkin lot of beer). Also there is a lucky ticket number prize draw for which a bottle of Whisky is on offer.

Hope you all enjoy Celebration Day!



COMMUNITY DATABASE

The Trust's Community Resource Centre will be greatly enhanced by the Community Database now being developed by a team of volunteers. The Centre already has a wide range of practical information for local initiatives in the library and a database on funders. Our own database is being designed as the pilot for a network of local community databases. This is being done in consultation with Hastings Voluntary Action and Robert Tressell Workshops. As funds permit we will test systems designed to connect different database programmes dealing with health and social well-being and with vocational training and employment directly, as well as through environmental activities. If practical, a networked system will make it much easier for groups to support each others' work, for community groups to get the help they need, and to form partnerships with Council departments and members of the business community.

As we are being constantly told through the media, we are on the threshold of a huge change in communications and information technology. We will have to learn how to drive on the 'information superhighway' or we will be passengers and at the mercy of those who do.

HASTINGS TOOL BANK

Spring is in the air, plants and weeds are burgeoning - where are the tools to keep them under control? In the Hastings Garden Tool Bank. Set up with a special Environmental Bursary Award last year, for the use of groups and organisations in Hastings. Any local group or organisation needing the wherewithal to undertake projects, but not having it, should hurry on down to the Trust and hire the equipment at extremely low rates. For further details catch our stall on Hastings Celebration Day or ring the Trust on 446373.

BROOMGROVE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

To date the Trust has raised enough money for two pieces of equipment, 'The Gibbon' and 'Castle Keep' (see last newsletter), thanks to an environmental bursary award and a grant from the Drugs Prevention Initiative. That means there is one more piece of equipment for Phase I to raise funds for, 'Tag City'. The Trust needs £2,500 over the next two months so that the playground can be erected during the Summer, and to this end we shall be making an intensive collection during Celebration Day on the 21st May.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE OLD HASTINGS TOWN WALL

Since Hastings Trust and Technical Services ran a course two years ago on repointing historical stonework, we have remained active in this specialist field. Hastings and St. Leonards are chock-a-block with old walls in need of attention but none so old as the original town wall which dates back to the 14th Century. The largest remaining section is situated at the rear end of our old offices in the High Street, in the yard attached Hastings Wall Flats. Even this has been repaired extensively in the past and in some areas with a hard cement rendering. The technical specification we have had to submit with the application for Scheduled Monument consent covers two sides, but some members may be interested to know that we will be using a lime putty based mortar.

Viewing the wall is not easy unless you happen to reside in the flats. However, it is at least out of harms way, and the proposed essential maintenance works should ensure its survival into the next century. Another small section may be viewed from the small beer garden attached to the Standard Public House (with the advantage of refreshment being available).

Some preparation work has already commenced and we expect repointing to start before the end of the month.