



# Ringwood Natural History Society

## Stanpit Marsh

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
Walk Leaders: Pat and Malcolm Cox  
Weather: Light to Heavy Cloud  
Temperature: 12 degrees  
Attendees: 16

Stanpit Marsh is situated on the north side of Christchurch Harbour, just below the confluence of the rivers Avon and Stour. The 65 hectare site has an unusual combination of habitats including salt marsh with creeks and salt pans, reed beds, freshwater marsh, gravel estuarine banks and sandy scrub. The marsh and surrounding area was originally purchased from Gordon Selfridge in 1930 by Christchurch Borough Council and is managed by Christchurch Countryside Service. It was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1964 and in 1986 as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Marsh is home to over 300 species of plants, 14 of which are nationally rare and endangered. The diversity of plants supports a strong community of wildlife, invertebrate fauna includes a great number of butterflies and dragonflies and there have been 313 bird species recorded, some of which breed on Stanpit but most arrive with the spring or autumn migration. A maximum of 20 New Forest ponies and 10 cattle are used for land management purposes, they are owned by a local person.

Stanpit Marsh has a 7000 year history of human activity, from Mesolithic coastal wanderers to The Doomsday book entry for Stanpit village which reveals that Stanpit was once known as 'Stanpeta' (meaning 2 estates with meadows). More recently, in the late 18th Century, Stanpit Marsh was notorious for smugglers. Contraband was landed at Mudeford Quay, brought across the harbour and up the narrow channels that still criss-cross the marsh to this day. Mother Siller's channel used to stretch as far as the Ship in Distress pub, the then time landlady Hanna Siller, was known as the protecting angel of smugglers. The climax of smuggling was the locally famous battle of Mudeford on 15 July 1784. Today the scout hut on Stanpit Recreation Ground is named 'Orestes' in memory of the customs 'lugger' sent to confront the smugglers.

Our walk took us in a circular walk on the marsh which uses a prototype Bailey Bridge to cross Mother Siller's Channel, which is now silted up.

<b>Birds</b>	<b>Birds cont.</b>	<b>Flowering Plants</b>	<b>Others</b>
Little Egret	Dunlin	Dandelion	Rabbit
Black-tailed Godwit	Oystercatcher	Ivy	New Forest Ponies
Chaffinch	Wren	Common Gorse	
Goldfinch	Grey Heron	Tansy	
Cormorant	Starling	Daisy	
Mute Swan	Pintail	Lesser Hawkbit	
Black-headed Gull	Carrion Crow	Common Mallow	
Great Black-backed Gull	Rook	Smooth Sow-Thistle	
Herring Gull	Water Rail	Yarrow	
Curlew	Moorhen		
Wigeon	Little Grebe		
Mallard	Magpie		
Teal	Common Jay		
Lapwing	Blackbird		
Redshank	Rock Pipit		



*Stanpit Marsh - Curlew by Gerry Traves*