



# WATCHET CONSERVATION MATTERS

For conserving and promoting our built and natural environment

Issue 10 April 2010

## Introduction from our Chair, Molly Quint

Dear Members and Friends of Watchet Conservation Society, Spring is here and everything is waking up and beginning to move forward and so is our Society. We have a very active committee and lots of helpers with wonderful expertise to assist us all, especially myself, who as you know loves Watchet, but have not a lot of knowledge on Conservation !!! However, knowledge can be learnt and gleaned from many sources and I intend to do just this, with the help of our Members and friends. We have some lovely and interesting talks organised for our Meetings and we would so like you to come along and bring a Friend or new comer to the town with you. We would so look forward to seeing you on the 25<sup>th</sup> May in the Methodist School Room at 7.30pm if you can make it.

## Watchet Festival of the Sea

We participated in Watchet's first Festival of the sea, where we had a stand by kind permission of the West Somerset Hotel. The event was organised by Helen Chave. We had many visitors, including over 20 people who expressed interest in our upcoming "talks programme" and the activities and projects which we are trying to promote. This resulted in the feature photograph below appearing in the West Somerset Free Press article about the event. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April, a similar event to publicise the society was staged on St. George's day on the Esplanade, Watchet, and we will also be present at the same location for the "Fun Day" on Mon 31 May from 1.00pm.



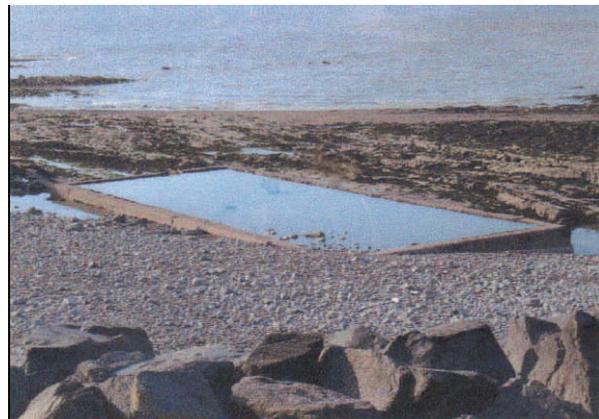
The festival helped to showcase local groups, including the Watchet Conservation Society. Volunteers Jo Watson and John Irven are pictured with their display.

## Boating Pool, West Street Beach, Watchet

We are delighted to be able to tell you that WCS has kindly been given permission by Watchet Town Council to clear out and clean the Pool on West Street Beach.

We feel it is a great asset to the town for the use of both local and visiting children and their parents and hope in the near future to be able to organise fun days with competitions for boats etc.

If you are able to help with the clearing of the pool you would be very welcome. Please give me a call, Molly Quint on 632592 or John Irven on 631083.



## Society Talks

On 23 March, Neil Wilson gave a fascinating talk entitled 'Radio GaGa', about the life and times at the BBC radio station Washford, from its inception in its Grade II listed building in 1933 as the first transmitter for the South West, anecdotes about its use during the war years, and its modern incorporation in the radio museum within Tropiquaria at Washford Cross. Neil also gave us a spirited rendition of some of the key highlights of Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner'. Neville Gosling of the WCS gave a very interesting update on the discovery of who the Ancient Mariner is based on, which is revealed in a newly published book by Robert Fowke, and he has arranged for the author to talk about these incredible discoveries. (see the November talk).

We had about 20 members attending the event, and hope to see more of you at our future 2010 talks, all at the Watchet Methodist Hall.



### **19.30 Tues 25<sup>th</sup> May — 'Watchet Flora and Fauna – potential effects of a Severn Barrage' by Dr. John Crothers**

John, who has been involved in some of the evaluations undertaken to date, will illustrate the potential effects, both positive and negative, of a barrage across the Severn in terms of renewable energy generation with particular reference to its impact on the local ecology and wildlife.



### **19.30 Tues. 27<sup>th</sup> July — 'The Holnicote Estate - conservation in a changing climate' by Nigel Hester**



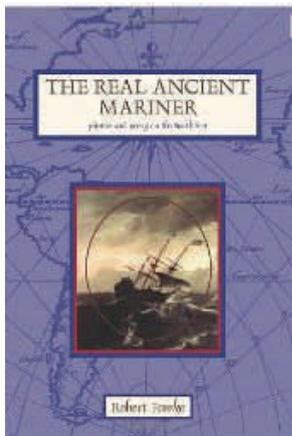
Nigel will talk about landscape, habitat and vernacular building conservation in our uncertain times and changing climate from his position as Countryside Manager, National Trust Holnicote.

### **19.30, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September - 'Sometimes you have to stamp your foot' William Wake, National Trust, Dunster Castle.**



William will talk about the challenges of preserving an ancient castle building whilst conserving wildlife like their protected bats, and bringing the estate into the 21 century through initiatives such as their rooftop solar power system.

**19:30 Tues. 23rd November — 'The Real Ancient Mariner' by Robert Fowke**



Most people know that the Ancient Mariner was written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge when walking in the Quantock Hills from his home in Nether Stowey with William and Dorothy Wordsworth, in the Spring of 1798.

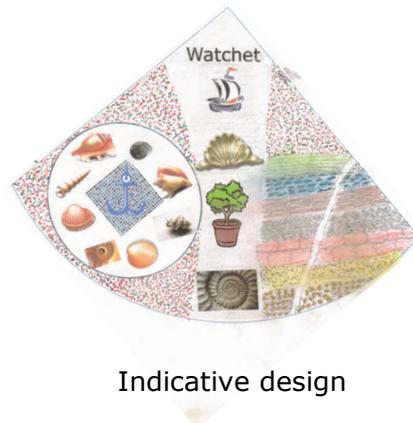
What not everyone will know is that the author Robert Fowke has recently undertaken very painstaking research into the history and origins of the character, travelling extensively and inspecting the original records of the time in England, Spain and the new world, publishing via Travelbrief 'The Real Ancient Mariner' (ISBN 9780954835149).

His discoveries have shown who the Real Ancient Mariner was, where he came from, his sailing adventures and on whom Coleridge based his famous poem. This is of great interest to all of us in Watchet and our history!

**Pebble Project, Esplanade Lane.**



Photo of area



Indicative design

We have applied to West Somerset Council for permission to make a Pebble Mosaic at the far end of Esplanade Lane where there is a small triangular area, which often looks untidy and unkempt and could be made into a much more attractive 'Welcome to Watchet'.

We hope to do something similar to the pebble story of St. Decuman which is by the Library, combined with a geological indicator of the area. Having spoken to WSDC on the phone it seems to have received favourable comments, but we are awaiting formal written confirmation. We hope to be able to tell you more in our next Newsletter.

If you have ideas for a better design, please tell us!

**Membership** Your new committee has continued to promote the society and its activities, and



as shown in the trend graph, we have now have 59 members who have renewed their subscriptions for 2010. There is still an opportunity for many prior members to renew their subscriptions, (please see the link to the application form on our website) <http://www.watchetconservationsociety.co.uk/about.html>

We would love to see you participating in upcoming activities of the society, as members, volunteers to help on projects, or just coming along to interesting talks!

[www.watchetconservationsociety.co.uk](http://www.watchetconservationsociety.co.uk)

Chair Molly Quint - 01984 632592

Treasurer and Membership Secretary - John Irven - 01984 631083

Secretary - Christopher Danby - 01984 631232

Committee: Neville Gosling Eric Robinson Tim Taylor Sam Westmacott Mike Whetlor