



# WATCHET CONSERVATION MATTERS

For conserving our built and natural environment

Issue 14

January 2011

## Introduction from our Chair, Molly Quint:

Dear Members and Friends, A Happy New Year to you all, may it be a wonderful one. We are really looking forward to a great year for the Conservation Society, for a good AGM on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January when we hope, with an even stronger Committee, we can really do many new and exciting things in, and around, the lovely town of Watchet. Please come to the AGM; we hope to make it a friendly and relaxed evening, with the formal part kept to a minimum and the informal time with refreshments and drinks taking us through the rest of the evening. This is your Society so please help us to make it pro-active, interesting, and above all an organisation that will ensure the very best for Watchet's future.

Yours very sincerely

*Molly*



**On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November author ROBERT FOWKE gave us an illustrated lecture based on his book at the Methodist Hall in Harbour Road, Watchet**

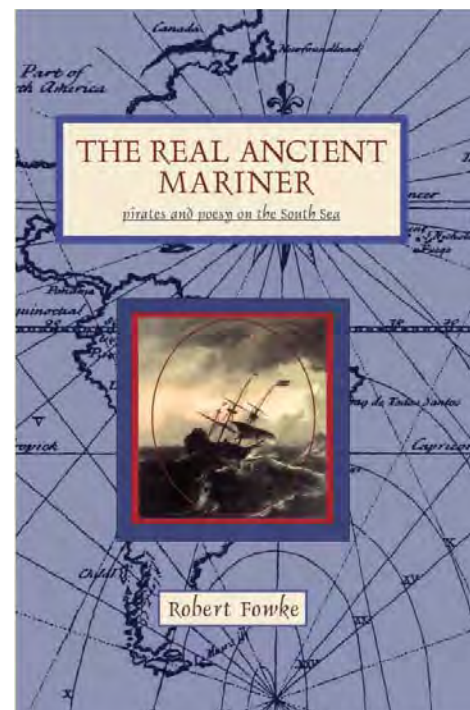
**Bob Fowke**

Robert Fowke enchanted and enthralled members and visitors with the story of his research and discoveries about 'The real Ancient Mariner', the character at the centre of his recently published book by that name.



He traced the ancestry and background of Simon Hatley, the mariner, and uncovered a life of adventure, privateering and piracy around the coast of South America in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, including imprisonment on 2 occasions by the Spanish Inquisition.

In 1719, on the Speedwell rounding Cape Horn, he shot an albatross 'in a melancholy fit' and his scheming captain George Shelvocke wrote about the incident. 78 years later Samuel Taylor Coleridge read Shelvocke's book and was inspired to write the poem we are so proud of in Watchet today. Robert Fowke has written a highly entertaining and accessible book,



'A fascinating combination of adventure yarn and literary adventure story' (Toby Green, on the back of the book), which gives a fascinating insight into the dangerous life on the high seas of our ancestors.

Highly recommended

*Liz Murphy*

(ISBN 9780954835149, Travelbrief Publications)

## 'Guerrilla Gardening'

It is pleasing that our efforts in Guerrilla gardening at the Anchor Street car park have been extended. Some pansies around the Millstone are clinging to survival on the colder more easterly sector, but on the northern corner with its sunny southerly aspect, pansies and forget-me-nots seem to be thriving.



As with all things done on the streets of Watchet, when passers-by see me struggling to bend low enough, they have taken pity on me, and in three cases became involved in the scheme to improve the look of the otherwise desolate spaces. They have even been generous with money to supplement the efforts of WCS with extending the selected flowers and shrubs as effective ground cover (preferably with a touch of colour). This is how we seem to work best in our town. So keep watching this space and indeed others which have the appearance of waste ground, to see how we can help make them blossom and bloom! The photographs show the progress in the various beds in Anchor Street.



We are still looking for a small piece of waste land where we might be able to do some planting of local apples in support of 'Apple Days' and even a local community orchard, so if you know of somewhere where we can get permission, please let us know!



*Eric Robinson*

## Signage

Our local Postman and WCS member Darren Scott has produced a wonderful hand-painted sign to show the way to West Street Beach and the Tidal Pool. We obtained enthusiastic support from both Watchet Town and West Somerset District Councils for our initiative to enliven the signage to the beach and pool. The sign has already been affixed to the car park walling at the start of West Street and is now pointing the way to the pool and beach for residents and visitors alike....



## Pebble garden, Esplanade Lane - update

We have written to West Somerset District Council and are negotiating terms under which we may be able to renovate this area. In the meantime we have a small sub-committee of Molly Quint, Jan Simpson-Scott, John Irven and

## Poemscape – a literary link with Watchet and Coleridge Country



### Literary Corner – with a large dose of Poetic Licence and inspired by *The Real Ancient Mariner* by Robert Fowke

An imaginary diary entry by Simon Hatley

October 1719. Trapped in the marine desert near the Arctic Circle I contemplate the path my life has taken. Why did I turn my back on the wealth of my home at Woodstock and replace its comforts with the tough life of piracy? After I moved to Bristol I became caught up in the stories of piratical roving. I gave little thought to its trials until my darkest experiences. I was lost at sea near the Galapagos Islands with only four days' supply of water. When I made land in Canoa I was arrested and imprisoned, after being saved from hanging by a kindly monk. Under torture I made a religious confession. Such privations conflict with my comfortable home and yesterday I made my biggest gamble so far, committed a sinister crime. In desperation, hoping for a fair wind, I shot a black albatross..... *Jan Simpson-Scott*

## Puzzle Corner – a Watchet mystery

If you walk along the Esplanade, past the Ancient Mariner and Yankee Jack Statues, turning right to go to the information office, at the corner of the building and to the right of the blue door have you noticed small projection from the wall above a double step with rounded edges about a foot high? Could it be a block for mounting small ponies, a base for a bust or vase? Is the projection the remains of a water pipe for a drinking fountain or animal watering bowl?

We have some ideas, but if you know the true history and origins please come along to the AGM and tell us all about it!

Watchet is home to many valuable people with your memories from childhood, who are not fazed by these historic relics which can sometimes puzzle we 'incomers' – so please come along and enlighten us!

*Eric Robinson*



## Notice of AGM 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010



**Watchet Phoenix Centre, The Esplande 7.30 pm**

This provides formal notification of the upcoming AGM to all members whom we encourage to attend. All members who have a current paid-up subscription are entitled to vote for members of committee and officers, and on any resolutions tabled at the AGM. Anyone wishing to be considered for committee is required to return to the WCS Secretary the attached nomination form at least 1 week in advance, or any resolution 2 weeks in advance. Nominations need to be signed by a proposer and seconder and the nominee confirming their willingness to stand for election, all of whom need to be paid-up members. Any resolutions need to be signed by the proposer and by 5 other paid up members.

So far we have the following confirmed people standing for election/re-election.

Molly Quint            Chairman  
John Irven            Treasurer & Membership Sec  
Jan Simpson-Scott    Secretary  
Mike Whetlor, Eric Robinson, Jan Simpson-Scott, Tim Prior, Edward Frewin, Theresa Harper for committee. Any others please complete the attached nomination form and return to me by the deadline. *Chris Danby, Secretary WCS*

Since the AGM in January, we have trebled our memberships, which now stand at 83, and with family groups this means that we have more than 100 members.



Anyone wishing to join or renew, please send your subscription cheques to John Irven, 3 St Decuman's Heights, Watchet TA23 0FL. Renewal forms will be available at next meeting, or on <http://www.watchetconservationsociety.co.uk/about.html> So far we have currently received 19 renewals for 2011, and would ask that your renewal subscription is paid to the treasurer by/ or at the AGM

*John Irven, Membership Secretary WCS*

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, Mike Whetlor, Jan Simpson-Scott, Tim Prior**

