

**Total number of visitors to the Centre  
for 2009**

**88,288**  
**+**  
**5,068 school pupils**  
**=**  
**Grand total: 93,356**



**Forthcoming Events for your Diary**

NB. All lectures will take place at the Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre.  
Tea will be available from 3.30 pm. Lectures start at 4.00 pm.

**Friends Annual Lunch**  
**Highlands End**  
**Thursday 25th February 2010**  
**12.00 for 12.30 pm**

**Lectures**

**Thursday January 21st**  
**Peter Prichard -**  
**Lyme Bay Sector Manager of the Maritime Coastguard Agency.**

**Thursday March 25th**  
**AGM - 4pm at Centre**  
**Followed by a talk by Phil our Warden - 'Whale Evolution'**

Newsletter of The Friends of Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre  
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## Chris Horton Chairman of the Friends writes:

Welcome to our first Newsletter of the decade and to those who I have not met this year "A Happy and, hopefully, a Healthy New Year"

As reported elsewhere the Centre has had another very successful year with a record numbers of visitors and improved finances. All of this is due in a very large measure to the work and enthusiasm of Members of The Friends - as has been said many times in the past the Centre as we know it could not have developed without them. Hence many thanks to those who spend time at the desk meeting and greeting visitors, to those who turn out to help with visiting School parties and public walks, to the Work Party who do so much during the winter period renewing, renovating and installing the displays and facilities which the Centre offers and to anyone who helps in any way. I would also like to thank those volunteers who help with the distribution of the Newsletter and the Desk Rota forms – it is much appreciated.

Unfortunately there are times when there is a shortage of volunteers and help is needed to encourage more recruits. If you are able to persuade friends or new neighbours to join us please do so.

We are also pleased to have a group of supporters, both local and around the country, who support us by making a financial contribution. All of this money is used to fund new projects for the Centre (none of the members get a bonus!!) and it is, therefore, extremely useful and important. We are approaching the end of the financial year so for those who have not contributed recently a donation would be appreciated. The Treasurer is Geoffrey Sell, at Chimneys, Higher Sea Lane, Charmouth, Dorset, DT6 6BD.

The Annual General Meeting, also regarded as our "Beginning of Season" meeting, is approaching and will be on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>. March. At this meeting half of the Committee have to stand down though they can be re-elected but there is also a vacancy which we would like to fill. The position does not have any particular responsibility so there is a good opportunity for someone to join and simply observe the proceedings. The meeting will be followed by a lecture from Phil (our Geology Warden who joined the Centre team early last year and has already made a significant contribution) on the development of whales, and then a cup of tea and cakes will be served.

## Chairman of Trustees

A Happy New Year to you all, even if it has started on the chilly side!!

2009 seemed to go very quickly but we have had a very good year at the Centre, with a record attendance of nearly 88,000 and school visits of about 5,800, we must be doing something right. Due to the Centre being so busy last year it was necessary to call upon the volunteers more than usual and I thank you for your help. Some volunteers have done more than their share, they know who they are and a very special thank you to you for turning out, often, at the last minute.

raven, goldcrest, long-tailed tit' great-spotted woodpecker and goldfinch.

Here is our outings, weather permitting for the coming year:

**Tues 19th January** 9.30 am - 'Chard reservoir' for the birds.

**Tues 16th February** 9.30am - 'Escott House estate' for wild boar.

**Tues 16th March** 9.30am - 'Kimmeridge' for the rock pools and a walk.

**Tues 20th April** 9am - 'Dawlish Warren' for the crocus and birds.

**Tues 18th May** 9am - 'Stourhead' for the lake trees.

**Tues 15th June** 9.30am - Kingcombe for the flowers, picnic lunch and arrange tea there.

**Tues 6th July** 7pm - for 7.30 pm at Ryall Road carpark 'Hardown' for glow worms and Night jars.

**Tues 17th August** - 9am 'Tyneham' for the flowers, picnic lunch

For all of the above please contact for final meeting point, Kate Stapleton on 560255 or any enquiries about the group. Please join us it's great fun!

**Kate Stapleton**

## From Our Treasurer

Apart from the good folk who pay their subscription by 'Standing Order' (bless them), and the other good folk who support the Centre by giving their time and expertise, I have to say a lot of Friends have given nothing for some time. Obviously, if you have paid your sub this year (a modest minimum of £5 per person), then this does not apply to you, but if not, then kindly send your sub. to Geoffrey Sell at 'Chimneys', Higher Sea Lane, Charmouth, DT6 6BD.

Should you wish to discontinue your membership, please be good enough to tell us.

**Geoffrey Sell**

## Your Editor writes:

A happy New Year to one and all!

In an effort to cut down on postal and stationery costs, this Newsletter will also appear on the CHCC website at [www.charmouth.org](http://www.charmouth.org) in the form of a . pdf file. This means that you are now able to download and print the newsletter off, if you so wish.

For those of you who would like to use this facility, if you would let the CHCC at [info.charmouth.org](mailto:info.charmouth.org) have your email address, we will be pleased to notify you each time a new newsletter is published. Alternatively you may send your email address to [john@berridge-online.com](mailto:john@berridge-online.com)

**Of course, if you change your email address and fail to inform us of that change, your notification will cease to exist!**

**John Berridge**

## **Jacky Martin – Rota Organiser**

As a Centre desk volunteer, you will have received a blank rota form with this newsletter, please note that the deadline for returning the form has been extended to Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January '10.

## **Jurassic Art Exhibition - November 09**

It seems a long time ago since I was watching the weather hoping that the wind would drop, and the rain stay away, for the November Art Exhibition. We were fortunate and the weather, although dour was not too extreme. This was our Fifth exhibition, and, one would have thought easier to organise than ever. Unfortunately, Helen, my key assistant was unable to offer more than moral support as she had to go into hospital for an operation. Luckily, my appeal for helpers was answered and we coped, just about, without her.

My thanks go to those who helped ferry the stands generously loaned by the Lyme Art Group, take in the Art and hang it, those who volunteered to man the exhibition and help at the preview, and the warden team who filled in whenever I was desperate!

As ever we were well supported by the artists and potters who gave us the material for a bright, lively and varied exhibition. This year, we were joined by three of the professional artists from the Artwave West Gallery at Morecombelake, who helped maintain our high standards.(This is well worth a visit, particularly if you like contemporary art.) Despite the adverse economic climate, and the even worse meteorological climate, we had healthy numbers of visitors and buyers so the event was a resounding social and financial success.

We had more visitors, sold more pottery and almost as many paintings as last year. The profit, of around £600, will go towards the Centre's running costs.

A week after this exhibition we helped St. Andrews Church with their ' Art from the Attic' two day sale which they ran in conjunction with Charmouth Traders Late Night Christmas Event. We provided the stands and one or two artists asked for their unsold works to be displayed at this innovatory event. I can report that this was also very successful, raising over £550 for the participating Churches funds,

One picture sold had particular local interest. It was a 1920's view of Old Lyme Road looking towards Lyme, showing a car on the part of the road, which, within a few years was to slip seawards.

**Bob Hughes - Administrator**

## **Charmouth Natural History Group**

Due to bad weather we only had one autumn / winter outing last year, which was to Thorncombe and Hardy's Woods looking for fungi. We saw shaddy ink cap, common earthball, russula aeruplinea, ganoderia adspersur and pasattyrella. The birds spotted and heard were nuthatch, green woodpecker,

During the last year we have had several new friends join us but because of the workload at the Centre, we need more. Please encourage your friends and acquaintances to join, word of mouth to likely volunteers is by far the most effective way to get new members.

The Centre was open between Christmas and New Year, when the Warden team were on leave, over 600 visited and over £600 was banked so the effort was worthwhile, special thanks to Bob and Jacky Martin who did the lion's share of the shifts.

In 2010 a few improvements will hopefully be noticed, our new film, the new microscope, the new mural by the children's area, the scelidosaurus revamp, the new website and the work done by Clive Hunt and his working party team which keeps our Centre spick and span.

This year I am not certain that we can expect another big increase in visitor numbers, the School visits list is virtually full and walks are nearly at the maximum. To increase our income further we have to concentrate on publicising the film, try to increase our sales and donations, so plenty of work to be done. Thankfully we have a very good team of Wardens, in Meirel, Nikki and Phil who will be researching other possible income streams and activities for the future.

**Richard Salisbury**

## **Meirel Whaites—Senior Warden**

2010, I can't believe it really, this will be my eighth year here at the Centre and how the years have flown by! Before I get into the news from the Centre I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all the best for the year ahead and hope that Father Christmas visited everyone over festive season. The Warden team took a break over the Christmas and New Year period, but my thanks must go to all the Friends who helped to man the Centre over this time. I especially would like to thanks Bob and Jacky Martin as they covered the main bulk of the shifts on some extremely cold and windy days!

Once again the winter seems to be flying by and the February half term is only a few weeks away which means that the Centre will have its usual buzz of families and children again. New additions to the Centre this Spring will include the new digital video microscope, fully operational at last after a few teething troubles (my thanks to the Work Party for solving the problems of where to put all the associated IT equipment!) and new interpretation and displays will be in place, but this year it is the domain of the other wardens Phil and Nikki, so I will let them tell you all about those in their reports.

Our new film show which was in place for October half-term 2009, is going well with extremely positive feedback from teaching staff, school children and general visitors alike. Although the winter months are always quiet over 250 visitors and 305 school children have viewed the film already in the Jurassic Theatre, which is a marked increase compared to the numbers for the previous

year. The local WATCH group also watched the film as part of their Christmas party visit and the feedback from these smaller members of our local community was very favourable also! Ha ha.

With so many things going on in the Centre over the winter months, I can't believe that it has swung round to the time where we need to interview for seasonal warden posts for the summer season. Although we usually have two new members of staff on the team for the busy summer season, there will only be one position to fill this year as we have three wardens already, as Nikki stayed on after the summer as full-time Marine Warden. We will have held interviews on the 7<sup>th</sup> January so by the time this newsletter reaches you... decisions will have been made so to speak, but I will give you an update on the outcome in the next newsletter. School bookings are also going very well with over 2,000 schoolchildren booked in for the season...and it is only the beginning of January! On that note, as always my thanks to all the Friends for their support throughout the year and roll on 2010!

## **Phil Davidson - Geology Warden**

The winter storms have been stirring up some interesting fossils on the beach, so most of my free time before Christmas was spent on the beach. I went back home to St Albans for Christmas and saw lots of family and friends. I would like to say I'm well rested, but at least the recent cold snap has definitely woken me up!

The Rocks and Fossils weekend at the end of January is almost fully booked. I am really looking forward to it and it will be good to catch up with my old friend Tim Ewin from the Natural History Museum who is doing a talk on the Charmouth dinosaur *Scelidosaurus* on the Sunday morning.

Talking about our village dinosaur, the new display I am putting together about *Scelidosaurus* is going well. I remember making displays about dinosaurs when I was about 6 or 7 with all my toys, so for me to do it for real is very exciting. My brother, who is a scenic painter for the Royal National Theatre, is painting a new picture of the dinosaurs for the display too.

Before Christmas I was invited to go to Dorchester and have a look at the enormous pliosaur skull that was recently discovered near Weymouth. I met up with Richard Edmonds and Dave Martill, an old lecturer of mine from Portsmouth University. There was a lot of head scratching and heavy lifting as we tried to work out how this giant beast had died and how best to display it in the Dorchester County Museum. It will probably take around two years for it to be prepared ready for display, so watch this space.

Also before Christmas I got a chance to put together the 'Recent Finds' cabinet at the Centre. This has been a project I have wanted to do since I started here as I want to show the public what fossils look like before and after they are prepared. The star attraction is Bob Martin's ichthyosaur jaw which he has kindly let us display in the cabinet. I will have to spend more time on the beach looking for fossils for the cabinets!

## **Nikki Hills - Marine Warden**

In the last newsletter I was saying farewell to you all as my summer as a Seasonal Warden was coming to an end. I was very sad to be leaving and so jumped at the chance to become the third warden at the Centre. As many of you now know I was appointed as Marine Warden at the start of November. I will be working with the team on the fossil events and activities as well as organising a programme of marine events.

Over the winter months I am working on some new marine life interpretation for the centre. Darrell Wakelam has already been in to paint a sea-life mural on the wall by the small rockpool tank and I will be adding display panels to this area. The work party have done a fantastic job in making a sand box which I will use to create a seashore discovery tray.

We hope to start up the Junior Warden scheme again this year. We aim to run an after school club to get children from the school in Charmouth more involved at the Centre.

This year the Centre will also be working with the Lyme Regis Aquarium. In doing this we aim to provide a new and improved school visit including rockpooling and a trip to the aquarium.

I wasn't expecting to still be working here in 2010 so it's already a pretty good year for me! Hope you all have a great 2010!

## **Jacky Martin – Senior Administrator**

I am delighted to report that the shop at the Centre has had a successful year. We have had a greater number of visitors to the Centre during 2009, and subsequently spending in the shop and donations were up on last year.

We now have a larger range of books, including 2 new titles on Mary Anning, good quality children's gifts with the Natural History Museum branding, and a good selection of blank greetings cards crafted by local artists.

Please consider visiting the Centre to check out our new stock and, of course, bring a friend. If you are looking for a gift we would, as always, be happy to help you make your choice.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my best wishes to you all for 2010.