

FRIENDS OF HOCKLEY VIADUCT

NEWSLETTER No. 7

Since our last Newsletter to all you much-valued Friends we've had a great deal of "weather" – remember all the snow and ice at the end of last year? Quite like old times, wasn't it, and a chance for everyone to get out and about (carefully!) to see our environment in its full winter glory.

However Spring is now upon us and the Viaduct has gradually been taking its part in bringing back all sorts of wildlife to enchant us on our walks. A few weeks ago the Viaduct was given a drastic "haircut" by the County Council and as a result is looking wonderful. The bright yellow coltsfoot carpeted the southern end of the Viaduct and it won't be long before many other plants start to show their true colours. The birds are singing beautifully and of course the buzzards and kestrels are frequently to be seen overhead.

To accompany all this promise of brighter times ahead, your Committee has been taking some important people for walks along the Viaduct: firstly County and City Councillor Brian Collin and County Councillor Charlotte Bailey were brave enough to admit that they'd never been on the Viaduct before, and then our MP Steve Brine had to admit the same thing. However all 3 of them really enjoyed their walk and began to understand just how important our Viaduct is to the city and the environment generally. They've all pledged to do their best to ease any negotiations between the 2 Councils and Sustrans over the future of our structure. Your Committee has also had a meeting recently with the Sustrans officer for the Hampshire area and can report that discussions are still going ahead and that agreement has been reached on some of the necessary actions required to enable the inclusion of the Hockley Viaduct into the Hampshire cycle network – National Route 246.

This is excellent news, of course, though we still need to be patient since any work that's necessary will of necessity take some time and it may well be a year or more before the funding is in place for the restoration and re-usage of the Viaduct. As we said in our last Newsletter, we're in a period of cutback and squeeze so fingers must still be kept crossed. However many different groups are working really hard to move the situation forward and will, we know, continue to do so.

We've also re-designed our website: the other one was rather too "static" for our liking and we had little control over it so we hope you like the new one (with its new address) and will keep an eye on it as we hope to put more photos on now and then. Please do let us have any memories or photos you've got of our Viaduct – we all love to hear other peoples' experiences as it so often tips off our own!



Forgive this short Newsletter – you'll have to be content with another photo, I'm afraid! It's your secretary and treasurer Julia with Steve Brine, our local MP, and below, with FOHV Chairman Chris Webb



Till then, enjoy your Spring saunters along a resplendent Hockley Viaduct!



Don't forget to check out the latest news at www.hockleyviaduct.hampshire.org.uk

Steve Brine's visit to the viaduct was reported in the Hampshire Chronicle. You can see the report at

[http://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/archive/2011/04/20/++News+-++Latest+Headlines/8985142.Call for progress with cycle path/](http://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/archive/2011/04/20/++News+-++Latest+Headlines/8985142.Call+for+progress+with+cycle+path/)