

Sippewissett Association

Newsletter

A History of Sippewissett Highlands and Beccles Road

Lynn and Andrew Lees

The communities of Sippewissett Highlands and Beccles Road are located on opposite sides of Sippewissett Road, south of Wood Neck Beach (see map on page 7). They are appropriately treated together as they originated from related land purchases and still share certain community amenities. The land on which these communities are sited rises unevenly from the coast to the top of Swift's Hill, one of the town's higher points at elevation 153 ft., and is marked by vernal pools and steep slopes. The area combines beach, coastal marshes, and upland forest. The landform here is a dramatic example of Cape Cod's now marine-flooded recessional end moraine formed by a glacier 18 millennia ago.

These neighborhoods are late-comers to Falmouth. Well after summer colonies and resorts multiplied in the late nineteenth century from Penzance Point north through Silver Beach, this land remained undivided and undeveloped. Stone walls still marked farm field lines, and as late as 1940, few houses had been built along this part of Sippewissett Road.

Change began when two men linked to the Marine Biological Laboratory bought adjoining tracts that stretched from the bay inland to what today is Beebe Woods. Merkel H. Jacobs, a professor of Cell and Developmental Biology at the University of Pennsylvania and a Member of the National Academy of Sciences, joined the MBL in the early 1920s, serving as its director between 1927 and 1938

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Saga of the Sippewissett Steam Crane

Arthur G. Gaines

On November 18, 2018 the ground trembled on Haynes Avenue, Sippewissett, and the air filled with a roar that hadn't been heard in years. A sleeping giant, the size of a dinosaur, shook to life in a cloud of rust and crept out from the woods where it had slept for 40 years. The steam crane was on the move again!

Built by Industrial Brownhoist Corp. in Bay City, MI in 1928, the steam crane made its way from the mining and bulk cargo loading endeavors, for which it was designed, eastward to Boston where it was used in such projects as construction of the Prudential Center in 1960. It found further work at the Munro Shipyard in Chelsea, where ships were serviced from the

The 1928 Brownhoist steam crane aboard Dan Clark's snow-covered barge at a WHOI dock. Seen on the deck is Dan Clark along with a cradle built for the manned research submersible DSRV Alvin. Alongside Dyer's Dock in the background is the ship R/V Crawford.



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Improving Safety on Sippewissett Road

David Margaretos, Chairman

Over the past year the Sippewissett Association Traffic & Safety Committee has met with its counterparts in the Quissett Association to discuss shared concerns regarding traffic and safety on the roads that go through our neighborhoods. We have concluded that Quissett Avenue and Sippewissett Road would best be considered as one corridor and that with our combined resources we will have a greater likelihood of success working with town officials to effect solutions.

Our discussions have led to a proposal of actions to be taken on the Sippewissett-Quissett Corridor. Following discussion with our respective associations we will ask our boards to jointly take our proposal to Falmouth Town officials.

The key aspects of the joint proposal are summarized below:

Awareness

As motorists enter the Quissett - Sippewissett Corridor (heading north from Woods Hole and heading south from Palmer Ave.) there should be signage indicating SPEED LIMIT 25 MPH - STRICTLY ENFORCED. Posting of certain upgraded and new traffic signage by the Town had already been achieved in 2018.

Prevention

There should be installed electronic speed display signs along the Quissett -Sippewissett corridor which will measure and display vehicle speeds for both northbound and southbound traffic. The location of the speed display signs should be determined or approved by the Town of Falmouth to ensure that they meet all legal and regulatory requirements, and that their performance will be highly accurate.

Enforcement

Despite all of the foregoing, there should be periodic speed patrols by Falmouth Police Department along the Quissett – Sippewissett Corridor. Enforcement requires direct apprehension of speeders, not just electronic records of speeding vehicles. These speed patrols should occur once per week during the peak tourism months of June, July, and August and once every-other week during the off-season months of April, May, September, and October. The patrols should occur at various time of the day when excessive speeds have been already been electronically documented.

All Association members are urged to attend our annual meeting on June 29, 2019 to learn more about this proposed actions and next steps, and to record their support.

Sippewissett Association Traffic & Safety Committee

Karl Audenaerde
Christie Chilton
Susan Cohan
Arthur Gaines
Bob Gould
Marianne Gould
David Margaretos*
Merle Mizell
Polly Sturm
Kevin Tobin
* *Chairman*

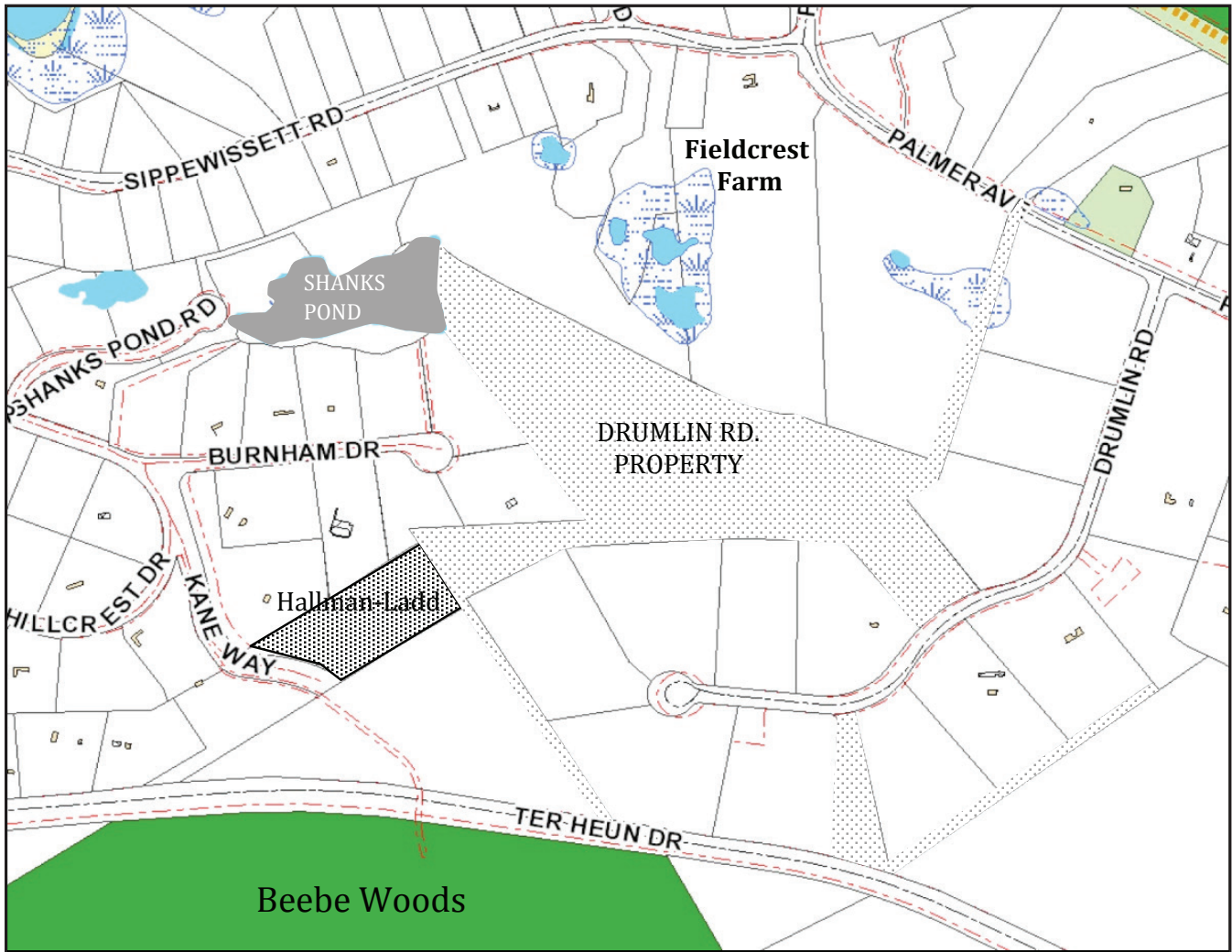


Open Space ~ Hallman/Ladd Property

The preservation of open space in our neighborhood is a high priority of the Sippewissett Association. Of the options to achieve this goal, private initiative can be an effective one. In 2018 the Sippewissett Association helped expedite the purchase of 3.4 acres near Ter Heun Drive slated for imminent development (see map). The property, now owned by Laurel Hallman and Larry Ladd, abuts their residence on Hillcrest Drive and is accessible by Kane Way, a paper road which

for many years has been a bridle path connector from Fieldcrest Farms to Beebe Woods. The parcel abuts open land (10 acres +/-) owned jointly by the Drumlin Road Property Owners as common land.

The Hallman/Ladd family has been working with The 300 Committee Land Trust and The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. to put Conservation Restrictions on their property. We intend to be watchful of this process to be helpful when we can.



Improved Management of Wood Neck Beach

MaryKay Fox

Wood Neck Beach, the only Town beach within the Sippewissett Association bailiwick, is the major local access to the water's edge for many of our constituents, and is heavily used by many other town residents and summer visitors. A diminished supply of sand resulting from updrift coastal armoring, sea level rise, and ineffectively guided foot traffic has resulted in degradation of the beach berm, dune habitat and general beach ambiance. This applies also to habitat and breeding success of a federally protected endangered species, the Piping Plover, vulnerable to predation, harassment by domestic dogs, and chick mortality from human foot traffic.

The Sippewissett Association Wood Neck Beach Working Group is working to improve beach management and public information. A plan was prepared and, in 2018-19, we have met at the site and in offices of several Town, State, and NGO bodies legally responsible for stewardship of Wood Neck Beach.

Some of our progress is reflected in a recent meeting with Mark Kasprzyk of the Falmouth Conservation Department. Foot passage through the dunes to the seafront will be further clarified and constrained to three places along the parking area, and delineated with snow fencing where appropriate. Foot traffic crossing the dunes elsewhere will be discouraged with snow fencing along the dune crest and "virtual" fencing (posts connected by rope) surrounding the northern dune area. A small, unvegetated dune section sometimes used for nesting by Piping Plovers will be blocked to human foot traffic by split rail fence rather than snow fence, which is seen as a better option for the birds and still effective in discouraging human passage.



An information kiosk will be installed at a margin of the parking area to explain the natural history and processes of this beach area and rationale for protection of the dunes. Town rules regarding use of the beach will be posted.

The Sippewissett Association will arrange for construction and management of the kiosk, and will contribute to costs of needed fencing, which will be installed by the Town.

The procedural process of achieving better management and protection of the beach is by no means a simple one, involving numerous departments and personalities. Patience and persistence as well as accommodation of other people's constraints, timetables and priorities are required.

Sippewissett Association Wood Neck Beach Working Group

Karl Audenaerde *
 Nan Denton
 MaryKay Fox *
 Arthur Gaines
 Betty Jameson
 * Co-Chairmen



MICHAEL ALEX HUGHES

Wood Neck Beach

Organizations Responsible for Stewardship of Wood Neck Beach

Falmouth Conservation Department

Elizabeth Gladfelter, Conservation Commissioner
Mark Kasprzyk, Conservation / MES Tech.
Brendan Lynch, Conservation Agent
Jennifer McKay, Conservation Administrator

Beach Department

Bruce Mogardo, Superintendent

Department of Public Works

Personnel

State Natural History & Endangered Species Program

Amy Hoenig, Endangered Species Review Biologist

NGO Mass. Audubon Society

Lyra Brennan, Asst. Dir. Coastal Waterbirds Program

Sippewissett Highlands *(continued)*

and, later, as a trustee. A summer resident, Jacobs commissioned Royal Barry Wills, a noted Boston architect, to design a two-story colonial revival-style house for him and his family on the slope of Swift's Hill, a property which survives as part of Sippewissett Highlands. After Jacob's death, his estate sold off his large holdings to Donald LeBlanc, who was purchasing nearby sites for coordinated development.

George H. A. Clowes was the second notable scientist linked to Sippewissett Highlands. Clowes was born in Beccles, England, attended university in England and earned a PhD in Germany. He came to the US in 1900, to work at the Gratwick Laboratory (University of Buffalo) which specialized in cancer research. Following a rise to international prominence in his field (with summer research appointments at MBL in Woods Hole), Clowes became the Director of Research at the Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly Co. in 1920. His especial talent was in putting academic researchers together with a corporation equipped to work out industrial scale purification, production and marketing of useful biomedical products.

Recognizing the medical importance of insulin, he guided the Lilly company into collaborating with scientists from Toronto, buying the patent for and then purifying and mass producing insulin, the first treatment for diabetes, a once-deadly disease. This turned Lilly into a pharmaceutical giant and Clowes into a wealthy man. It provided Clowes the financial underpinnings for a lifetime of magnificent philanthropy in the arts, sciences, and social services. His new position at Lilly enabled Clowes to expand his support of and summer participation at the MBL. He and his family settled into Woods Hole during summers, with a new house in 1927. He brought in Lilly company money to finance a new and enlarged biochemistry lab at MBL's Lillie (no relation)

building. Clowes' long association with MBL helped make it the world renowned research institution it is today, with participation by some 58 Nobel Laureates to date.

On the side he turned his administrative talents and capital to land acquisition. By the mid-1940s, Clowes owned acreage on both sides of Sippewissett Road south of Wood Neck Beach, and he arranged for its subdivision. Beccles Road was the first result. Early subdivision buildings facing Sippewissett Road included three historical homes from Cambridge and Bridgewater that Clowes had flaked, the pieces numbered and reassembled. Old timers referred to them as "Clowes Folly" since they didn't sell for a few years. Other houses multiplied during the 1950s and early 1960s. According to one account, several residents of Beccles Road, Frederic W. McKinnon and David Cowles among them, gave the name, "Sippewissett Highlands" to a real estate trust, which they planned to launch.

A new chapter in the history of the area began in 1983. Donald LeBlanc, a Falmouth businessman and real estate developer, bought both beach rights and land from the Jacobs and Clowes families (George H.A. Clowes died in 1958), after 10 acres bordering Deep Pond (Punch Bowl) had been given to the Town. LeBlanc arranged for planning, laying out and selling lots in "Sippewissett Highlands," now comprised of 77 lots in an "open-space community." The Highlands grew in three stages: 1) Clowes Drive and Clear Pond to just beyond Beechwood Drive; 2) Clear Pond to Ter Heun; 3) Gregory Lane, Punch Bowl, and Kinghorn. Roads curve around Swift's Hill, their design following the contours of the land. Lots are large, and houses nestle into the rising ground. Large, environmentally sensitive open spaces are set aside and protected. LeBlanc constructed one house, now owned by Dr. Paul DeMeo and his family, as a demonstration property, but virtually all the

rest were built individually by contractors and owners. As a result, there is stylistic diversity. Among the more notable early residents was John Collins, a retired mayor of Boston, who lived on Clear Pond not far from its intersection with Clowes Drive.

The subdivision plan avoids several problems that still plague older developments. To regulate

the community development, LeBlanc set up the Sippewissett Highlands Homeowners Association (and then elected himself as its President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer!). Under his leadership, the Association approved by-laws and a covenant, which set rules for building and land-use for all who bought property. The covenant imposes restrictions on owners' freedom of action.



Delineation of Beccles Road development (dotted line) and Sippewissett Highlands (dashed line), showing open water (gray filled) and protected open space (stippled areas). Ownership: SHHA-Sippewissett Highlands Homeowners Association, T3C-The 300 Committee Land Trust, SHBT-Sippewissett Highlands Beach Trust, and Beebe Woods-Town of Falmouth. All representations are approximate.

Sippewissett Highlands *(continued)*

Buildings are limited to single-family residences, which, if two story, have to be a minimum of 2000 square feet and include a garage; designs have to be approved by an Architectural Review Committee. Owners may not remove trees over four inches in diameter without permission, and they even pledge to protect lady slipper orchids! The Association, which is a non-profit corporation, owns all the roads in the area (except for Ter Heun Drive, which belongs to the town), and can levy annual fees to maintain the roads, a community tennis court, woodland paths, and multiple flower beds. Association members also belong to the Sippewissett Highlands Beach Trust, which owns and looks after the beach shared with the Beccles Road community.

Just how Sippewissett Highlands should be integrated into the Falmouth road network has been an issue since the community was founded. After Clear Pond linked to Ter Heun the neighborhood offered an easy route from Sippewissett into the center of Falmouth, which local drivers soon discovered. Upset about mounting traffic and speeding cars, in 1987 the Highlands Association constructed a gate, that Falmouth's Building and Zoning Department branded an "illegal structure," and unsuccessfully tried to have it removed. Eventually the Falmouth Planning Commission granted permission for the gate to be closed and locked, but fire, police, and ambulance services had keys to use as needed. Private property rights trumped arguments about public access, although it took several years to resolve the issue.

The question of through traffic flared up again in 1991 and 1992. Ter Heun Drive, a public road, allows entry to the neighborhood, but it comes to an abrupt dead end in the woods and wetlands on the southeast side of Swift's Hill. Residents of the Highlands, as well as other parts

of Sippewissett, consistently opposed pushing through Ter Heun to Standish and Sippewissett Roads. While the Falmouth Enterprise argued strongly that it was "basic prudence" to allow access to the hospital from both sides of town, residents raised safety issues and complained to the state's Department of Environmental Protection. In the end, voters soundly rejected the proposal to extend the road, probably swayed by concerns about costs more than a wish to protect vernal pools and spotted salamanders.

Residents of the Highlands voted to extend the covenant in 2014, binding themselves again to modest limitations on property owners in the interest of maintaining the community ambience. The Association's Board of Directors and its committees work hard on neighborhood projects: recently the padlocked gate was replaced by an electronically powered one, and gas mains were laid under all the streets. Looking to the future, the Association will need during the next several years to repave its roads. Residents rely on the competent and conscientious Board of Directors to identify the best options and funding strategies. We benefit from their expertise and dedication.

The authors wish to thank Jack Whitehead for providing access to Sippewissett Highlands Association records and to him, Brad Butman, Tom Duncan, Ed Fortini, and Carol O'Loughlin for sharing stories and memories.

The Sippewissett Association is comprised of members from 14 subdivisions bordering on the 2.8 mile-long Sippewissett Road, plus homes built directly along Sippewissett Road. We intend to publish short histories of all the subdivisions in future newsletters.

Steam Crane *(continued)*

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI). With its 68 ft. boom the crane could lift 15 tons.

The crane was acquired in 1966 by Jonathan Leiby of 15 Haynes Avenue, who was employed at WHOI as a Naval Architect. Although used for important projects at the Institution, the crane was actually personal property of Leiby and used in private marine construction projects at nearby sites.

Aficionados of steam cranes are captured by the power provided to mere mortals to move monstrous loads and engage in audacious projects, all of which is enabled by elegantly harnessing the power from a container of boiling water. The crane sits and rotates on a 6 ft.-diameter ring gear mounted on the crane frame and treads. Effective use of the crane depends on the skill of the operator to allocate power among five separate functions, all clutched to the steam-driven flywheel: crawl left, crawl right, boom left and right, boom up/down, bucket up/down, and bucket open/close. The core of expert engineer

operators who understand and love steam power is surrounded by devoted acolytes who gain expertise and manhood through exposure to this technology. Our local core of steam buffs was but a tiny subset of an international brotherhood of advocates.

The zenith of steam technology came during the Theodore Roosevelt administration, when, to address an ailing economy, the President committed the nation to construction of a Panama canal, showcasing steam technology. Roosevelt was famously pictured in 1906 aboard a Bucyrus steam shovel, manned by a crew of four with a ground crew of six to move track. Seventy-seven of these machines chewed their way across the Isthmus of Panama in 8-ton bites, to connect the two oceans in 1918. Locally, August Belmont pursued a parallel project, at a smaller scale (but using some of the same engineer staff and steam technology) in creating the Cape Cod Canal, that opened in 1914.

Jon Leiby had many years of experience with



Kevin Stuart, from the Antique Gas Engine Association museum in Schoharie, NY, drives the crane under compressed air power onto Sippewissett Road. The boom and boiler had been transported earlier. November 19, 2018.

steam engines, beginning in 1950 at age 16 when he crewed aboard steam tugboats serving Philadelphia. Later he worked in the engine room of oil tankers before earning a BS from MIT in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering in 1958. When he joined WHOI in 1959 his talents were soon put to good use planning and supervising construction of the new steam-powered R/V Atlantis II (A-II) launched in 1962, replacing the original Atlantis, a sailing ship.

Over 10 years the steam crane was used for many projects at WHOI and in local waters. Though designed to burn coal, the firebox could also be fed with wood, such as remains of dismantled dock structures. Alternatively, if desired, the engine could be run on compressed air. Stationed aboard the floating barge of a Woods Hole marine contractor, Dan Clark, the crane was moved from site to site: Naushon Island, Cuttyhunk, Martha's Vineyard and, locally, for construction of the east dock at the Woods Hole Yacht Club. With the crane on his barge, Dan Clark moved several prefabricated cottages from the Woods Hole town dock to the Vineyard. For several months in the 1970s the crane was transferred onto a pier at WHOI where it served as a stationary steam plant for the A-II, while her boilers were rebricked. For a spell the crane served to lift and place granite slabs at the residence of the late- David Graham on Upland Avenue. Graham was one of several young men, most now retired or dead, who learned the art of steam crane operation on this very equipment.

One time, just before the WHOI Trustees spring meeting, the crane moved under cover of night down Water Street to the Woods Hole Yacht Club parking lot. Reportedly, then President Paul Fye was concerned that the crane was an embarrassment to WHOI's image.

Leiby family members recall summer picnics at Woods Hole, when waterman friends of the

Leibys rafted alongside the barge and the crane's steam plant was used to cook lobsters. A 6-pack of beer could be refrigerated using the discharge of a CO-2 fire extinguisher. Another recalls creating the proper ambiance for this technology by adding an old tire to the firebox to produce the desired color and volume of stack effluent....

In the 1970s the steam crane found its resting place at 15 Haynes Avenue. A generation of neighborhood youngsters grew up with the familiar sight of the crane, its lowered boom stretching into the woods, ever more obscured in thickening vegetation, and eventually enclosed by it.

Jon died in 2015. But a hard core of Leiby family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues never forgot the ballad of the steam crane. In February 2016 Kevin Stewart and a team from the N.Y Historic Steam Engine Association museum in Schoharie, NY, visited at the invitation of Hartley Hoskins to inspect and evaluate the equipment. This new generation of steam buffs brought enthusiasm and expertise and incredibly—unbelievably-- they decided this rusted equipment could be rejuvenated to run again. They accepted ownership.

Vegetation was cleared away by Hartley Hoskins and for months an oil mixture was repeatedly applied to gears and levers and bolts. All five of the controls were freed up. The boom was removed and trucked to NY. On August 4, 2018 the boiler was extracted and carried by trailer directly to the Troy Boiler Company, in Troy, NY, for repair.

Under compressed air power, on November 18, 2018, Kevin Stewart and team walked the crane tractor out of the woods and driveway to Haynes Avenue and down to Sippewissett Road. The next morning the crane crawled onto an industrial low-boy trailer. A crowd of devotees and admirers stood by with mixed emotion.

Coffee and home-baked goods were provided. The steam crane departed under accompaniment of two Falmouth police cars with flashing lights. Incredulous observers along the roadside watched as the convoy made its way to the Bourne Bridge on its long trip to New York. The police circled and returned to Falmouth with lights extinguished.

Afterword: As the steam crane crossed the bridge it was passed by an astonished Steve Clark, headed the other way. Clark is among the last of the hard core who had operated the crane 50 years ago, and is likely the only person along the way to know its long history.

Acknowledgment

Dr. Hartley Hoskins, an apostle of steam technology, provided much of the technical detail in this account, and personally knew most of the central players in the Saga of the Steam Crane. Ms. Eva Reed provided valuable files documenting the steam crane's history and Jon Leiby's career.



*The 1928 Brownhoist steam crane loaded aboard an industrial low-boy trailer for transport to the steam museum in Schoharie, N.Y.
Left to right: Carolyn Leiby, Rosemary Hoskins*

Audenaerde Rides Again!

Sippewissett Association Treasurer Karl Audenaerde joined 241 other bikers in the 12th annual Buzzards Bay Watershed Ride last autumn. Audenaerde, a seasoned bicyclist, along with 84 others, chose the 100-mile route option from Little Compton, R.I. to the MBL in Woods Hole. Through personal subscriptions the field of riders raised \$162,000 for the Coalition for Buzzards Bay (CBB) in support of their education, conservation, research and advocacy work.

Audenaerde's time for the 101 miles was 6 hours 45 minutes, about 15 minutes slower than he hoped for. "Felt pretty good, but still, I'm getting too old for this..." he says. The 13th annual Buzzards Bay Watershed Ride will take place on Sunday, October 6, 2019. Start getting into shape now!

Board member Debbie Hutchinson Gove has participated in another CBB fund raising event, the Buzzards Bay Swim, a 1.2-mile open-water swim across outer New Bedford Harbor. The 26th annual Buzzards Bay Swim this year will take place Saturday, June 22, 2019.

The Sippewissett Association has long supported CBB's water quality monitoring program, under the supervision of Vice President Maureen Conte, and long made annual unrestricted monetary contributions.



Washed Ashore

Historically, primitive peoples at remote sites have sometimes had their first glimpse of the larger outside world as flotsam and jetsam appearing on their beaches. These days we can still be surprised and puzzled by what washes up on our shore.

On September 22, 2018 Polly Sturm photographed a dead seal, with massive head injury (too gory to show) on Gunning Beach. The seal was later identified as a possible Gray Seal, although no expert determination of identity or cause of death was made (the stranding was reported to the International Fund for Animal Welfare in Yarmouth Port, MA [(508) 743-9548]). No authority could be identified that would remove the animal from the beach. The carcass was later observed in varying stages of deterioration over many successive months, finally as a dismembered skull.



The Gray Seal is a year-round resident of Massachusetts waters.

On September 23, 2018, Larry Bohn reported some large items on the beach near Gunning Point that must have fallen off a ship or boat, including a large fiberglass panel, a Garmin RADAR unit and a blowup bag. These were later identified as possible evidence of a high speed accident involving a 25-35 foot center-console outboard boat: the fiberglass top with mounted RADAR unit, and associated baggage onboard. Neither the Falmouth Police, the Harbormaster, nor local Coast Guard could provide any further information.



Large Plexiglas panel found near Gunning Point



Garmin RADAR unit, typically used on mid-sized outboard boats

Sippewissett Association Newsletter

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Calendar

June 29, 2019 (Saturday)

Annual Meeting

10 AM, All are welcome
Falmouth Public Library
Hermann Meeting Room
Coffee at 9:30 AM
11 AM Discussion
"Climate Change: Local Response"

August 11, 2019 (Sunday)

Summer Social

2 - 5 PM, All are welcome
Venue to be determined

Sippewissett Association

P.O. Box 501
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