



Sonic Postcards

Wells-next-the-Sea

School's Out

As a teacher I was well placed to engage Wells Primary School, Year 3, with coastal change and develop a sonic postcard. I helped the class understand how to 'paint a picture' using the five senses and how sounds might express changes to their town. We explored the history of Wells, present-day Wells, and developed an understanding of the future needs of people and the environment. We focused on community, transport, climate/nature, and landscape. The children created sound banks and learnt interviewing skills. They then went out into the community to record the sounds of Wells and to interview residents and business owners. The resulting postcard represents their chosen theme: How can we make Wells and its ocean a better place? The *School's Out* sonic postcard expresses the class's enthusiasm and excitement about life in their local context.

Kirsty Webber-Walton

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Sea Change

The Sounding Out Wells team spoke to Robert Smith MBE, the Wells Harbour Master for the Port of Wells, and Jaap Flikweert, a Flood and Coastal Management Advisor, about sea-level rise, flooding, flood defence options and the future of Wells. The two speakers have different kinds of knowledge about these. Robert has over 30 years' practical experience of working at the harbour. Jaap's knowledge is based on scenario mapping and computer modelling that he uses to look at various flood scenarios along the North Norfolk Coast. The *Sea Change* sonic postcard explores some of the challenges involved in predicting how sea-level rise will affect Wells-next-the-Sea and other places along the coast. It also addresses ideas of managing uncertainty and facing the daunting prospect of adapting to coastal change.

Kim Hammond and Chris Bonfiglioli

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Living Well with Dunes

This postcard explores a nature-based solution to coastal defence - a highly controversial issue for locals and planners in the region where hard engineering solutions have frequently been deployed as a matter of common practice. The centre of the piece is an online workshop discussion with researchers from Sounding Coastal Change, collaborators with expertise in coastal management from Norfolk Coast Partnership and Norfolk County Council and a sound artist. Sand dunes are living entities that continually change – sometimes quickly over weeks and months, and sometimes slowly and imperceptibly over decades and centuries. It is this very flexibility that enables dune structures to absorb the sea's power, providing an organic coastal defence from flooding. The work evokes the vitality of the natural sand dune systems, as well as voicing the key species that dwell there: the marram grass, the natterjack toads and the skylarks. These constituents are fundamental to the dune's health and to the region's flourishing biodiversity.

George Revill

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Wells Past

As with all history, this sonic postcard is a reconstruction, a distillation; a partial, incomplete fiction. I used recordings from the Wells Local History Group oral history archive. These were recorded just before or after the Millennium. I have constructed what could have possibly occurred as a conversation, had the speakers all been present at the same time and place. The voices were chosen primarily because of their accent and timbre. Sound effects prompt visualisation of the stories in the listener's mind. Each listener will bring their own life experience to the interpretation of the words they hear. Many stories could have been told from these recordings. These are just some.

Mike Coombs

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Lifeboat Horse

When you visit Wells one of the first things you see as you look out onto the harbour is the horse sculpture. This appears to be a reference point for the tides which slowly cover and reveal the horse. In fact, the sculpture was inspired by the horses that used to pull lifeboats out across the sands to rescue boats in trouble. The *Lifeboat Horse* sonic postcard explores what the horse means to the town, to its sculptor, Rachael Long, and to visitors. The team recorded the sounds of the harbour and Rachael's workshop, and interviewed both Rachael and the Harbour Master, Robert Smith MBE. All these recordings come together in this sonic postcard. The horse is removed for the Winter and when it is put back in the Spring it often seems slightly rotated. Does this reflect the passing of time and tide? Has the horse moved since we were here last year?

Chris Bonfiglioli and Kim Hammond

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Living with Terns

The Sounding Coastal Change project had two key partners: the Norfolk Coast Partnership, who manage the North Norfolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and The Wells Maltings. We asked these partners to suggest an issue that they felt was important for Wells as a topic for a sonic postcard, and to propose people we could approach for a variety of views. The resulting *Living with Terns* sonic postcard presents the issue of dog walkers in Wells. Specifically, it explores the need for dog owners to be aware of why they might be asked to keep their dogs on leads to protect beach-nesting birds such as little terns during the breeding season. Wells is a popular dog-friendly destination, but to live well with little terns, dogs must be kept away from bird nesting areas.

Kim Hammond and Chris Bonfiglioli

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Lobster Catch

Standing on Wells harbour quayside you will experience a vibrant fishing port: colourful trays stacked ready for the next fish catch, the sounds of the fishing boat engines as they enter and leave the port, fishers talking about the day's catch, the lobster and crab pots, and visitors trying their hand at crabbing. To the right is a new addition to the fishing community, a lobster hatchery.

Have you ever wondered how lobsters reproduce? We hadn't until we visited the lobster hatchery in Wells and spoke to Simon Cooper from the Harbour Office. In this sonic postcard you can hear some of the sounds from the hatchery, as Simon explains the amazing life cycle of lobsters. How many eggs does a lobster lay? Why are baby lobsters kept in separate cells? What does a lobster hatchery sound like? How big can a lobster grow? *Lobster Catch* answers these questions and explores why the Harbour Commission started the lobster hatchery.

Kim Hammond and Chris Bonfiglioli

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Fishing for Life

In the UK, fishing directly or indirectly sustains the welfare of many coastal regions and supports livelihoods beyond the catching sector. Inshore fisheries are under severe pressure from many quarters, including climate change, coastal development, rising costs, and unsuitable regulation. The sonic postcard *Fishing for Life* explores some of the many difficulties facing the fishing community in Wells-next-the-Sea. It also voices some of the strategies that these fishers use to cope. The postcard illustrates how people in the sector work hard to make themselves resilient and adaptable in ways that help them respond to current and future challenges. *Fishing for Life* features the voices of fishers from Wells and others working in the sector along this section of the Norfolk Coast who recount their experience of environmental, economic, social, and technological change.

George Revill and Liza Griffin

Follow the QR Code to listen to the sonic postcard.



Chris Cook – Sound Artist

I joined the Sounding Out Wells team in 2022, shortly before the first of two field trips to capture the soundscape recordings needed to bring the sonic postcards to life. Focussing on featured sounds for specific postcards and ambience recordings in key locations, my aim was to ensure that we would have enough recorded material to be able to bring detailed, expressive arrangements of recorded sound together in the finished works. There is a range of close-up and more distant sounds chosen to represent the complex sound worlds around each of the postcards' subjects, and of necessity, sometimes these sounds are not what they seem... For example, many of the 'lobster' sounds in the *Lobster Catch* postcard are actually the sound of trickling water and tumbling charcoal filter pieces in the hatchery's various water tanks!

Chris Cook

Follow the QR Code to listen to the sonic postcard.



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Little Terns by Paul Eele, Vintage Postcard – Wells Maltings



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