

Countryside events around the Downs & the Low Weald

Egerton Farmers' Market - Egerton Millenium Hall, access via Rockhill Road or Elm Close - every Fri. 2-4.30pm
Wye Farmers' Market - Wye Green - first and third Sat. of the month
Boughton Aluph Parish Fair - Boughton Lees, next to the A251. Sat. 14th June from 2pm
Charing Church Fete - Clewards Meadow. Sat 21st June 12.00 onwards
Reptile Valley - King's Wood, main car park. Sun. 22nd June 9am-12. Friends of King's Wood £2 to non members. Further details 07523 203458
Egerton Music Festival - 4th-13th July. www.egertonmusicfestival.co.uk
Mini-beasts & butterflies - Charing Alderbed Meadow. Sat 5th July 10-12.00am KSCP 01233 813307
Pluckley Hog Fair. Sat 5th July 11.00am -11.00pm. Recreation Ground. Entrance & parking free. www.pluckley.net 01233 840044
Visit the Historical Rural Life Collection — King's Wood, main car park. Sun. 6th July 10.30am-12.30. Friends of King's Wood £2 to non members. Booking Essential. Further details 07523 203458
Butterflies & Wildflowers - King's Wood Car Park - Sat 19th July 11.00-1.00pm. Friends of King's Wood £2 to non members/KSCP. 01233 813307
Bats & Moths - Charing Alderbed Meadow, car park off Pett Lane. Fri. 25th July 8.30pm till late. Booking essential and further info. 01233 813307
Six Mile Ramble - King's Wood, main car park. Sun. 10th Aug 10.00-1.00pm. Friends of King's Wood £2 to non members. Further details 07523 203458
Woodland Art & Craft - Charing Alderbed Meadow, car park off Pett Lane. Fri. 17th Aug. 10am-12. Booking essential and further info. 01233 813307



The Kingfisher Club making woody things

Westwell Village Fete - Recreation Ground - 25th Aug. Bank Holiday Monday 2-5pm, Westwell - A traditional village fete with lots of attractions
Mersham Village Fete - Behind the Mountbatten Village Hall - Sat. 6th Sept. pm. Proceeds to go to the Pilgrim's Hospice. 01233 720446 for details
 Small Mammal Trapping - Charing Alderbed Meadow, car park off Pett Lane. Sat. 6th Sept. 10am-12. Booking essential and further info. 01233 813307
Challock Goose Fair - 14th Sept.
Dormouse Survey - King's Wood, main car park. Sat. 20th Sept. 9.30-12.30pm. Friends of King's Wood £2 to non members, Booking Essential. Further details 07523 203458

The KSCP will run the Ashford Green Corridor Kingfisher club again over the summer holiday. These bookable events are aimed at children 5+. For further details contact KSCP.

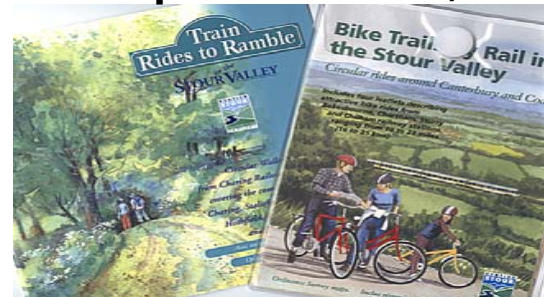
Volunteering

Come along and lend a hand with a variety of enjoyable and worthwhile practical conservation projects throughout the Stour Valley!
 For our detailed programme phone us on 01233 813307 or go to our website and click on 'get involved'.

Volunteer days

Wednesdays (Ashford area): Meet 9.15 at the KSCP Offices.
Thursdays (Canterbury & Wantsum): Meet 9.15 at KSCP offices or 9.45 at North Lane Car Park, Canterbury.

KSCP publications, for those who enjoy the countryside



Train Rides to Ramble (£3.99) & Bike Trails by Train (£2.50) Circular walks and cycle rides from railway stations in the Stour Valley. Full colour, clear maps and directions, packed with information and illustrations.



Stour Valley Walk & Elham Valley Way (£5.00) Recreational walks produced by Kent County Council with help from KSCP.



Wildsites (£1.00) A guide to 31 wildlife sites in the Stour Valley.

All available from local Tourist Information Centres, quality bookshops, KSCP, and Kent County Council (08458 247600 or env.publications@kent.gov.uk).

Stour View for Ashford & The Low Weald, Downs, Canterbury & Wantsum is produced in January, May and September. Stour View is printed on Elemental Chlorine Free paper from wood pulp from sustainable forests and includes recycled fibre.



The countryside & urban green space newsletter for people living in & around Ashford & the Low Weald

Stour View

Issue 40
Summer 2008

Ashford & The Low Weald

CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND PROMOTING THE COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREEN SPACE OF THE STOUR VALLEY

Once a traditional rural market town, Ashford is changing rapidly. The River Great Stour, being the only major river in East Kent, is a special asset, along with its green corridors running through the town into the countryside. Outside of the town are the pretty settlements at the foot of the downs, and of the Low Weald and Greensand Ridge. There is a good hedgerow network and many ponds on the clay soils. Views from the Greensand Ridge across the Weald are stunning.

If you would prefer Stour View to be emailed please provide your email address

South Willesborough - Nature on your Doorstep

During April and May KSCP ran almost 20 sessions of nature activities with local schools on Willesborough Dykes entitled - Nature on your Doorstep. Willesborough Dykes is the low lying area to the south of Ashford on either side of the Romney Marsh and Bad Munstereifel Roads. It is a large floodplain area of 250 ha (625 acres) with over half being designated as a Country Wildlife Site for its wetland interest to plants and birds.

Pupils learnt about the importance of the dykes for wildlife by carrying out pond dipping, and studying the grassland and trees. The activities form part of a bigger project concerned with improving the management of the dykes for wildlife and providing increased access. Although many people might view Willesborough Dykes as the wasteland on their way to work or shop, it is tremendously important to conserve and manage for the special wetland plants and animals it harbours. As Ashford develops it is important that its unique places, such as Willesborough Dykes, which also has a link to its agricultural past, are enhanced for people and wildlife.



Pond dipping

The Education Project is being supported by the Willesborough Dykes Steering Group and Ashford Cattle Market with financial support from the department of Communities and Local Government and CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England). Ashford Designer Outlet will house an exhibition concerned with the project in June. Schools taking part are St Simons, Oak Tree, Willesborough, Beaver Green, Kingsnorth C of E and East Stour.



East Stour Primary School

Millponds for landscape & wildlife

Bowley Farm millpond, located close to Lenham Heath dates back to the 11th century with reference to the site in the Domesday Book. As one of many millponds in the county of Kent that once supported thriving industries, Bowley millpond has become an important site for wildlife. With a dam wall made from locally sourced ragstone lined with clay and varying depths of water along the valley basin, the millpond has created areas of willow carr, reed bed and open water. However, natural siltation, accelerated by M20 motorway run-off, is causing this extensive water-body to diminish in ecological value. The landowner, Rail Link Countryside Initiative (RLCI) and the KSCP are currently working on a restoration plan for the site to remove large quantities of silt to ensure the millpond retains a diverse range of habitats.



The silting up millpond

Project Sponsors



Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate. The publishers can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Kentish Stour Countryside Project.



Ashford Green Corridor Interpretive Panels

KSCP has installed 12 interpretive panels in the Ashford Green Corridor. The Green Corridor is made up of parks, recreation grounds and other green spaces alongside the rivers that flow through Ashford. Funding for the panels was made available by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Rail Link Countryside Initiative. The panels interpret the history and wildlife of the area. For further information visit: www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk



Can you answer the 'where is it' questions below? Answers bottom opposite.

1. The water mill site that is recorded as having a mill in the Domesday book?
2. A Scheduled Ancient Monument?
3. At the time, the largest open air 'lido' (swimming pool) in the country?
4. A river crossing for deer?
5. A number of people were burnt for their religious beliefs in the 16th century?
6. The Hubert Fountain and where did it come from?
7. Cricket bat willows?
8. Anthony Gormley's (creator of Angel of the North) sculpture?

Ashford Green Corridor Education Pack



KSCP has produced an education pack for schools and youth groups about activities that can be carried out in the Ashford Green Corridor. There are activity sheets to download, teachers notes, site guides and special instructions for youth groups. Choose from 'It Makes Sense', 'Habitat Explorers', 'Marvellous Minibeasts', 'Who's Eating Who' and 'Down by the River'. Find out more by visiting www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk

An activity in the Green Corridor

BTCV on the move from Wye to Singleton

Kent BTCV have moved from Wye to the brand new 1.7 million Singleton Environment Centre in Ashford. Everything about the centre is eco-friendly – from the roof made from recycled aluminium drinks cans to the "Windcatcher" ventilation system and workshops made from timber clad second-hand shipping containers.

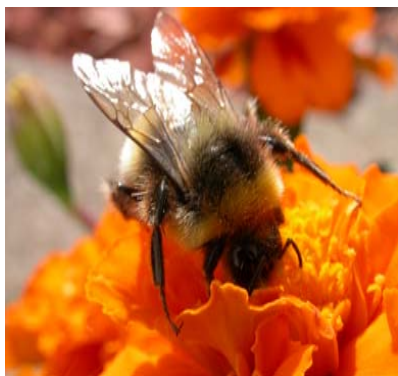


The centre will be run by BTCV and will provide imaginative activities for people of all ages from the local community and visitors. Activities will include environmental, conservation and educational activities, fitness classes, holistic health treatments, arts and entertainment and community events. There is also a café at the centre.

The Humble Bumble

They're cute and furry, defy gravity (everyone, except the bumblebee itself, knows that a bumblebee can't fly) and are possibly the most important pollinators in the countryside.

Britain's native bumblebees are under serious threat. The key reason for this mass decline (over 60% in some species) is the loss of wildflower-rich hay meadows that have been ploughed up and sown with rye grass grown for silage.



Buff-tailed bumblebee

Gardening for bumblebees requires providing a constant source of nectar-rich plants throughout spring, summer and autumn. Many modern hybrids flowers are sterile and lack vital pollen and nectar. The following are especially good: bluebells, bugle, rosemary, dead-nettle, geraniums, foxglove, honeysuckle and monkshood. It's also easy to provide nest sites, simply leave a few 'untidy' patches around the garden or keep areas of permanently tall grass around the bottom of a hedge. This will encourage small mammals to nest, and once abandoned, the old nest will make an ideal starter home for a bumblebee. For the more ambitious, take a tennis ball-size lump of moss or other similar dry natural material and put it at the end of a hole poked in a bank; in an up-turned flower pot with a hole in the bottom or under a piece of roofing felt in tall grass.

For free bumblebee ID chart, visit the Natural History Museum's website <http://www.nhm.ac.uk> and click on research and curation.

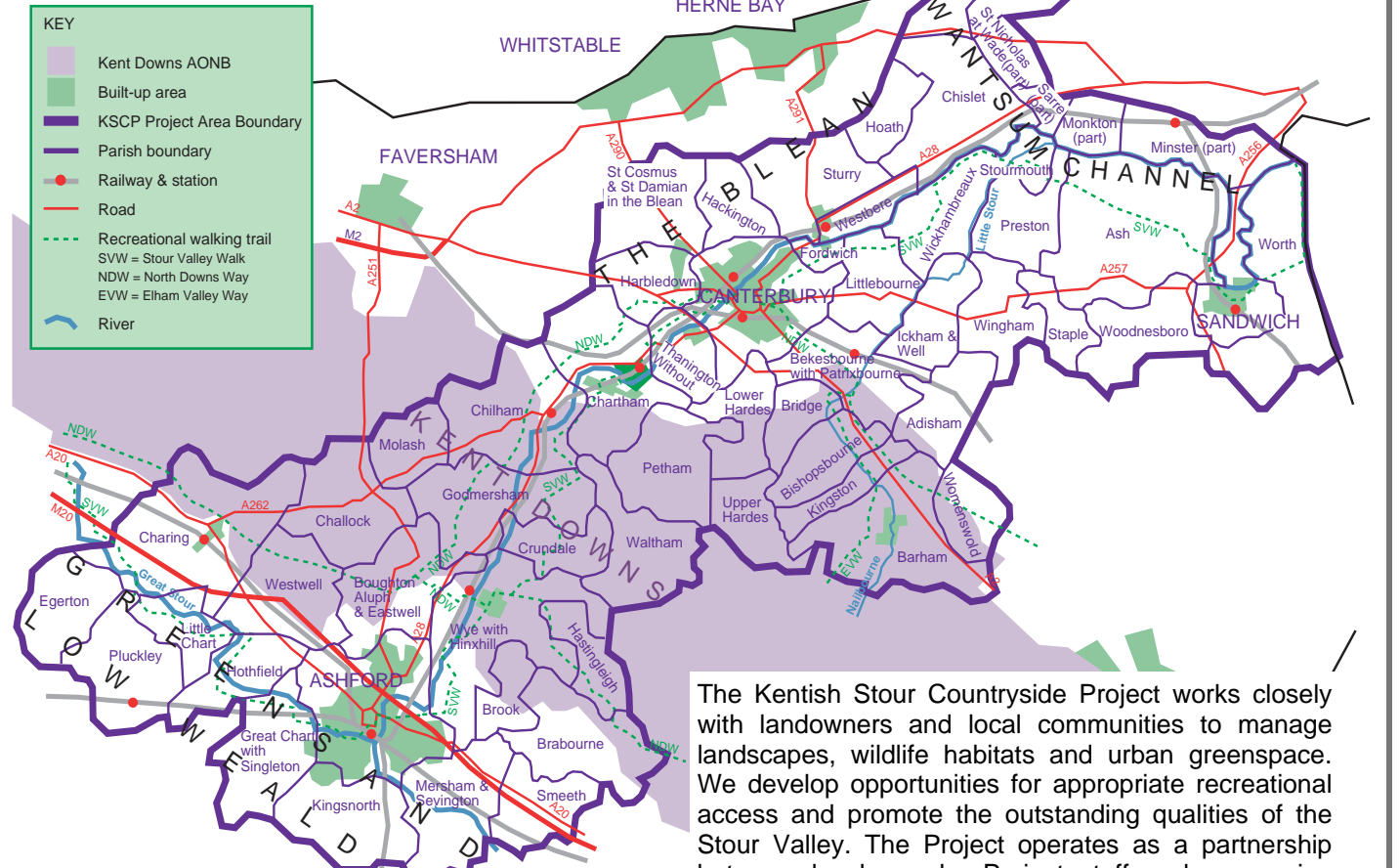
George Jessel (courtesy of www.leejorobinson.com)

Introducing the Kent Cheese Company

Penstock Farm, nestling at the foot of the Downs in Brabourne, grazes over 80 ha (200 acres) of downland with their herd of British Fresians. The environmentally sensitive farming methods applied through Countryside Stewardship and Entry Level Stewardship have enabled farmer and producer George Jessel to recently create a range of irresistible cheeses. Brabourne Brie, Chaucers Choice, and Kentish Crown are available from a host of local farm shops including Perry Court, Taywell, Evegate, MacKnades and Lower Hardes. George prizes his cheeses on their distinct characters and flavours. Supporting local produce will keep rural economies alive and celebrate local customs and landscapes. More information on the Kent Cheese Company is available at www.kentcheese.co.uk.



About the Project



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www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk

The Kentish Stour Countryside Project works closely with landowners and local communities to manage landscapes, wildlife habitats and urban greenspace. We develop opportunities for appropriate recreational access and promote the outstanding qualities of the Stour Valley. The Project operates as a partnership between local people, Project staff and sponsoring organisations.

Project Manager: Jon Shelton
Ashford Countryside Officer: Debbie Adams
Canterbury & Wantsum Countryside Officer: Matt Hayes
Project Officer (P/T): Diane Comley

Staff changes at KSCP, bye for now to Craig & welcome Diane Comley



Craig Edwards

Craig Edwards, long time volunteer and recent member of staff, completed his short-term contract with KSCP in April and ventured north to the Farne Islands for a 3 month stint with the National Trust. He's currently trying to avoid being harmed whilst monitoring the tern population! Diane Comley joined us in April for a 6 month part-time contract working principally on projects in Ashford and the Blean. Diane recently graduated from Hadlow College and teaches photography as her other job.



Diane Comley

The North Downs Way 1978 - 2008

The popular **North Downs Way National Trail** is celebrating its 30th birthday this year. One of 15 National Trails in England and Wales, the 153 mile route has given walkers, cyclists and horse riders from around the world plenty to enjoy over the last three decades. Celebration events are planned including a special birthday party on **September 13th** at Withersdane Hall near Wye complete with a Guinness Book of Records world record attempt and a series of guided walks. Find out more about the North Downs Way and the birthday celebrations by visiting www.nationaltrail.co.uk/northdowns Tel 01622 221525.



- Answers**
1. Pledges Mill on Mace Lane, now a nightclub
 2. Boy's Hall Moat, now a good site for grass snakes
 3. Bowen's Field, next to Victoria Park
 4. Bux(Bucks)ford – the origin of name given to the road and mill near Singleton
 5. Queen Mother's Park
 6. Victoria Park, previously at Olanthigh House and the Second Great International Exhibition in London in the 1850's
 7. Little Burton next to Ashford Rugby Club
 8. The sculpture of a heron at Singleton Lake