



A conifer block adjacent to the new heath areas showing the existence of heather.

More heath creation at Covert Wood

Through its European funding the KSCP has helped the Forestry Commission to create a second area of heath at Covert Wood near Barham. This builds on the two hectare (5 acre) block created in 2003. These areas have been cleared of conifers because the trees have not been growing well, heather is growing in the area and there is a need to restore heathland to Kent as the habitat has been largely lost to the county. These heathy areas will be good for species such as nightjar and adder. Volunteers have helped to pull birch in the open areas and bracken needs to be sprayed off until the heath has established. Over 2ha of ride widening also took place which will encourage more wildflowers into the wood.

Out on the Downs

Children from Adisham Primary School spent a day learning how to survive in the wilds of Kent. With the help of Natural Pathways from Woolage, near Canterbury class 4 built debris shelters and made cordage and dreamcatchers from natural fibres.

The day took place at Jumping Downs and was organised by the KSCP as part of the 'Out on the Downs' Project. It was the final event of nine that have taken place since August 2006. The 'Out on the Downs' Project has taken minority groups or groups from the downland villages in the Canterbury District out into the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to introduce them to the area through activities such as walking, survival skills, nature games and even painting. Groups that have participated are the Swalecliffe Community Church Youth Group, Finding Your Feet Refugee Youth Group, Kent Centre for Addictions, Alternative Curriculum Project, Canterbury Community Art Group, Whitstable Umbrella Group, Riverside Children's Centre, and Adisham Primary School.

Comments from two of the children from Class 4 are:

'The best part of our school trip was when we built shelters. Our team name was the 'Mighty Squirrels.' We all got dirty! Our team leader was a very nice person. It was fun and if I was you I would go there!'

'That was the best school trip I have ever been on because we did exciting things. My favourite part was when we went up the hill because it was really peaceful!'



Adisham School children enjoying shelter building at Jumping Downs.

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 & North Dover: Meet 9.15 at KSCP or 9.45 at North Lane Car Park, Canterbury.
- Sundays:** Projects in Canterbury and Lower Stour: Visit the website for details.

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).



The countryside newsletter for people living in & around the Kent Downs AONB close to Ashford & Canterbury

Stour View

Kent Downs AONB

Issue 38
Autumn 2007

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

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a nationally protected landscape. It is special for its dramatic chalk escarpments like the Devil's Kneading Trough at Wye, secluded dry valleys, networks of tiny lanes and sunken byways, historic hedgerows, ancient woodlands, oast houses, unique and precious wildlife and sites of historic and cultural interest.



A bank vole, one of the species found on the community small mammal survey day.

Take a seat at Charing Alderbed Meadow

Volunteers from the KSCP joined Martin Pym of the Charing Alderbed Meadow Committee to construct an ecological bench! The seat, which Martin put forward from a magazine article he had seen, is constructed of logs and soil with a sawn piece of oak for the seat itself. Work placement students from Homewood and Highworth Grammar Schools constructed a table to go with the bench! Meanwhile the annual small mammal survey found all seven species of vole, mouse and shrew previously found on the site. For details of future activities on the site contact the KSCP.



Activities at Jumping Downs Local Nature Reserve

Four activities aimed at young people were organised at Jumping Downs LNR over the summer. The KSCP also helped out at a fundraising event for the local church in May by leading a guided walk for about 30 people. The chalk grassland site at Barham looked particularly good in the summer with many wildflowers, partly due to the hard work of the KSCP volunteers who have been busy repairing fencing.



Jon Shelton leading a guided walk at Jumping Downs.

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.

Get out and about with the Canterbury Festival

The internationally renowned Canterbury Festival runs from 13th-27th October and the KSCP is offering a number of walks and one cycle ride as part of the programme. Visit www.canterburyfestival.co.uk or ring 01227 378188 to find out more. Get fit, stay healthy, learn about your surroundings or just simply enjoy your beautiful countryside!



A walk along the North Downs Way.

More ponds for Brabourne



Another pond was created by the KSCP last winter in Brabourne bringing the total to five for this Parish since 2004. The pond was created with the help of one of KSCP's Conservation grants. All five ponds are at the foot of the downs.

Construction, February 2004.



May 2007.

Path work



KSCP volunteers have been ensuring that the Train Rides to Ramble walks are easy to follow by carrying out surveys and improvements. Surveys this year focussed on Chartham & Bekesbourne with overhanging vegetation being cleared and waymarking discs being attached as the paths were surveyed. The Canterbury part of the beautiful Elham Valley Way was also surveyed and work will be carried out in the future to improve access structures along this route.

A relaxing break after completing some new steps on one of the Chartham Train Ride to Ramble Walks.

Hares Farm Hedge Planting

A total of 353m of hedge was planted in the spring at Hares Farm near Shottenden. The hedge was planted with a KSCP Conservation grant and links a large woodland to other hedges. A further 290m was planted with the help of KSCP conservation grants at two other sites on the downs in Bridge and Boughton Aluph.



'All hands to the Recreation Ground'

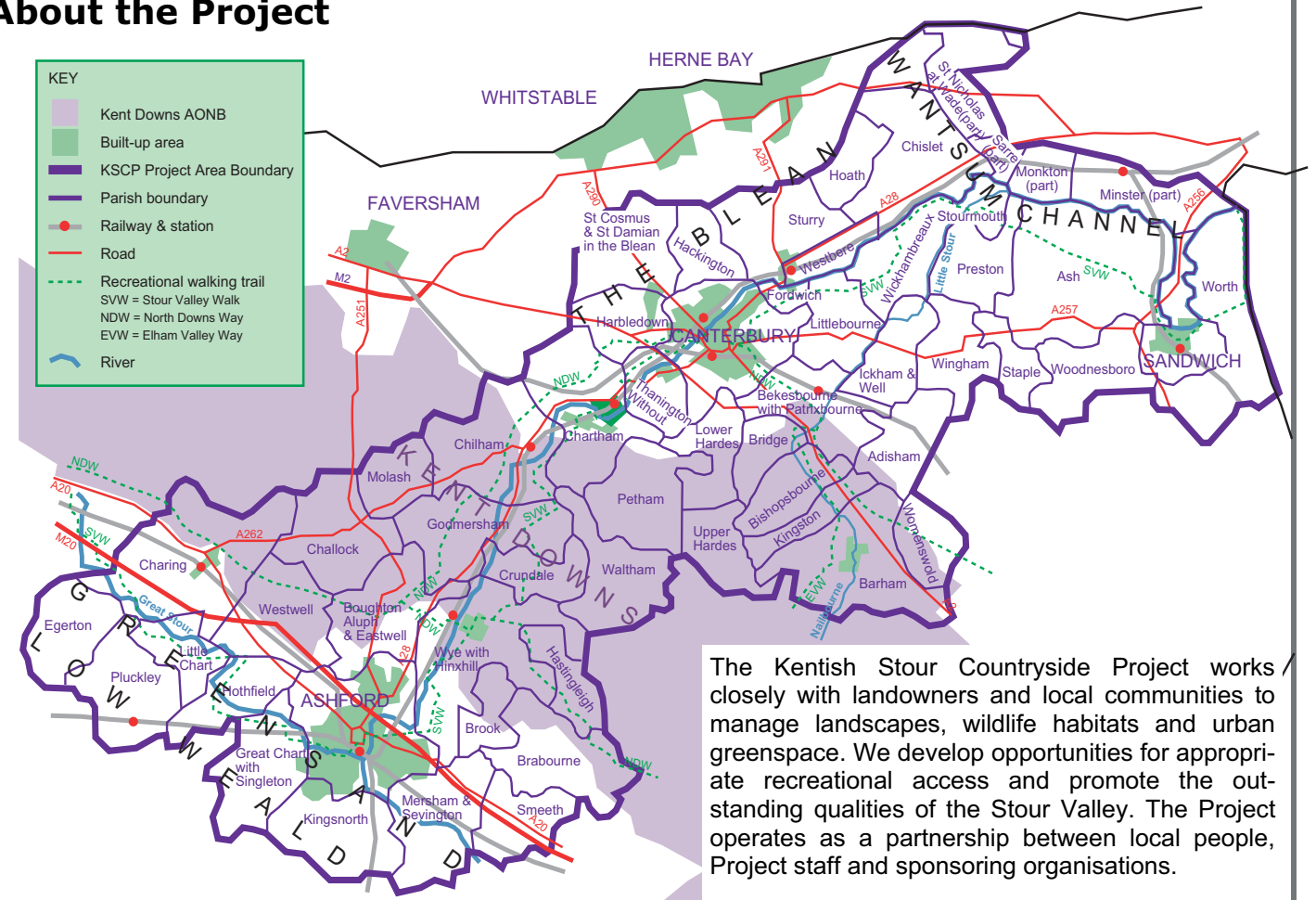
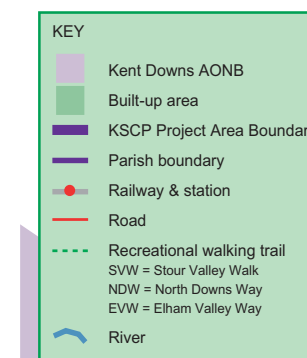
Children from Bridge and Patribourne CE Primary School and local volunteers helped to create a wildflower area at one end of the recreation ground in Bridge. The work took place at the beginning of April but unfortunately not only was some of the work vandalised but also it did not rain for five weeks after the planting! All 400 children from the school were involved, along with teachers and parents. If the plots don't establish then another attempt to create wildflower areas will be made in the autumn.

Footpath improvements around the North Downs Way in Wye

KSCP volunteers helped to make a permissive path off the North Downs Way in Wye safer with the construction of some steps down what was a slippery slope. They also removed a fallen barb wire fence along the North Downs Way, built a step over a stile, and helped to install a rustic seat overlooking the Stour Valley.



About the Project



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.

Kentish Stour Countryside Project
Sidlands Farm
Wye
Kent TN25 5DQ
Tel: 01233 813307
E-mail: kentishstour@kent.gov.uk
Web: www.kentishstour.org.uk

Project Manager: Jon Shelton
Ashford Countryside Officer: Harri Goldsmith
(covering secondment)
Canterbury & Wantsum Countryside Officer: Matt Hayes



An activity in Kingston.

Canterbury Greenspace Project Officer

After over four years of financial support, principally from Brett Environment Trust, European Regional Funds, and the lottery, the Canterbury Greenspace Project Officer funding has drawn to a close. Some key achievements with the help of local communities were:

- Designation of three Local Nature Reserves
- Improved management of sites, including fencing of Jumping Downs and No Man's Orchard Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
- 36 events that involved 1620 people
- Erection of interpretative panels at four sites
- Interpretative leaflets for two LNRs
- Surveys, usually involving local communities, of amphibians, bats, dormice, invertebrates, plants, reptiles, and small mammals
- 18 young people activity days that involved 457 children
- Installation of access structures such as gates, seats, steps and stiles
- Two art projects involving schools resulting in commissioned sculptures, and
- lots of practical conservation days involving volunteers.