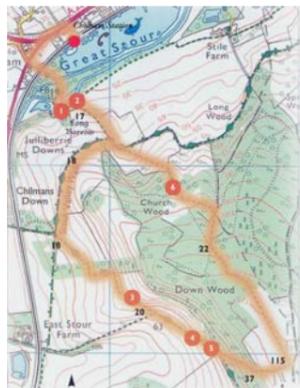


Walk off the winter blues

Why not enjoy one of the KSCP Train Ride To Ramble Walks this winter. Train Ride to Ramble walks leave from the villages of Pluckley, Charing, Wye, Chilham, Chartham, Bekesbourne, Sturry and from Grove Ferry Picnic site. The 4 mile 'Down Walk' leaves from Chilham Railway Station and takes about 2 hours. It crosses the River Great Stour at Chilham Mill, climbs up downland, passes through Down Wood, and returns via the Kent Wildlife Trust Reserve at Broadham Down.

There are usually 4 walks in each booklet. The walks are checked every two years by KSCP volunteers. Booklets are available from KSCP £1.50 each or a pack of 4 for £4.



Terry

It is with great sadness that the Project reports the passing away of Terry Feeny. Terry was a volunteer with KSCP for 10 years. With his witty anecdotes and sharp wit he was usually the centre of attention when it came to break times out on task. He provided much laughter over many years. He will be missed by many.



Art in Bridge Bridge Village Hall Saturday 4th Oct. 11-7pm Sunday 5th Oct. 11-5pm
www.artinbridge.org.uk

Farmers' Markets in the Stour Valley

Chartham Farmers' Market - Chartham Village Hall, every Thurs. 2.30-6pm, inc. a special celebration of British Food 2nd October & Xmas Market Sat. 6th December 10-12.30 also in the hall

Egerton Farmers' Market - Egerton Millennium Hall, access via Rockhill Road or Elm Close - every Fri. 2-4.30pm

Sandwich Farmers' Market - Guildhall Forecourt - the last Sat. of each month 9-1pm

Whitstable Farmers' Market - St Mary's Hall, Oxford St, 2nd & 4th Sat. of the month 9.30-2 pm

Wye Farmers' Market - Wye Green - first and third Sat. of the month

BTCV Tree Warden Scheme

Are you interested in trees and do you want to volunteer to help protect trees in your patch? If so, find out all about becoming a Tree Warden for your local area by attending a free introduction day. The day is led by inspirational speaker, Jon Stokes, who is director of The Tree Council and who also appears on the TV programme, "The Trees That Made Britain". You will also get the opportunity to visit some amazing hornbeam pollards. Smeeth County Junior School on Saturday 11th October 10am-3pm, to book a place 01233 666519 or M.Phillips@btcv.org.uk



Volunteering

Come along and lend a hand with a variety of enjoyable and worthwhile practical conservation projects throughout the Stour Valley!

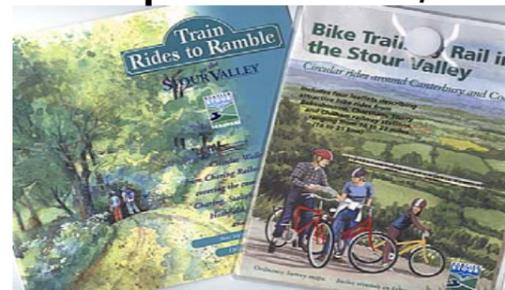
For our detailed programme phone us on 01233 813307 or go to our website and click on 'get involved'.

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

Stour View

Kent Downs AONB

Issue 41
Autumn/Winter 2008

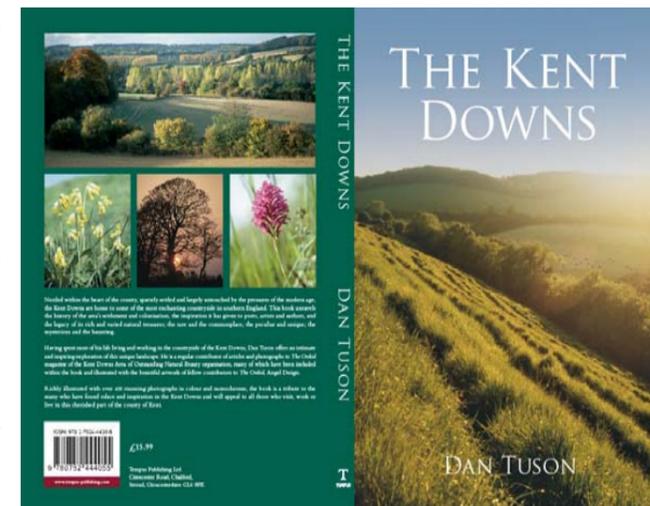
CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND PROMOTING THE COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREEN SPACE OF THE STOUR VALLEY

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 Journey Through The Kent Downs

In his wonderful book, local author Dan Tuson writes about the wealth of history, agriculture and wildlife that thrives on the Kent Downs. The detailed book walks you through the many beautiful aspects of the downs, from the dry valleys and chalk escarpments to the downland flora and fauna. The book describes in simple detail the intricacies of the landscape. What may be mistaken as natural undulations may often be signs of lynchets, historic cultivation patterns or Iron Age pits. This book is a fascinating read containing history and superstition alike. The Kent Downs is available from all good book shops and can be ordered from Amazon.

Dan Tuson is an expert in his field, gaining experience and knowledge through his job as a stewardship advisor for farmers across east Kent.



The North Downs Way is 30!

The North Downs Way National Trail celebrated its 30th birthday with a special event at Withersdane Hall near Wye on Saturday 13th September. The celebrations included a series of guided walks highlighting the wonderfully varied scenery to be discovered along and around the North Downs Way. Visitors also had the opportunity to attempt to break two Guinness World Records. 115 people took part in a "simultaneous cartwheels" record attempt, and the second challenge involved people trying to beat the record for the "most snails on a human face". This raised a lot of excitement and one intrepid youngster managed to keep 20 on her face, just missing the current record of 25. Other fun events included an enormous acorn shaped birthday cake, face painting, live music and storytelling. The wonderful autumn sunshine made it a day to remember for all. The successful celebrations helped to promote the profile of the 153 mile National Trail and Kent's countryside.



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.

That old Chestnut

Kent is lucky to be one of the country's most wooded counties. Much of this woodland consists of traditional coppice. Coppicing involves cutting trees down close to the ground, leaving the stumps. The tree then re-grows from the stump. This is done in rotation allowing the trees in one area to regrow whilst others are cut. This technique provides a long-term sustainable supply of wood, and in allowing more light to the ground it encourages more woodland plants to flourish.

Coppicing used to provide many products, from hurdles to hop poles. This has declined in recent years, however, there are a few people making use of the coppice and continuing the traditional management. The KSCP try to use local materials and suppliers wherever possible, one such material we use is sweet chestnut fencing stakes for stock fencing. By using these materials we don't have to use heavily treated tanalised or pressure treated softwood posts, and the materials have not travelled miles to get to us. If you would like to know of a supplier of chestnut stakes near you please contact KSCP.



Fencing with chestnut



Recent coppicing

Oh deer, deer, deer



Fallow deer at Hatch Park, near Ashford

When deer are mentioned, many people will think of classic haunts such as Scotland or Exmoor. However, you can see some of Britain's biggest wild mammals on your doorstep throughout the Stour Valley and East Kent.

Of all the deer that can be found in Britain only the Red and Roe species are indigenous. It is thought Fallow deer were introduced after the Norman Conquest in 1066. They have been joined in the last 100 years by the Muntjac, Sika and Chinese Water deer following escapes and deliberate release from deer parks and private collections. In fact, in most of the country today, deer are rapidly expanding in numbers and territory, causing problems for farmers, drivers, foresters and even wildlife habitats. East Kent has yet to suffer the sort of problems being faced in other parts of the country but the problems are likely to arrive, with the deer.

Autumn is the ideal time to look for deer as it's rutting season and the old hunting forest of King's Wood is one of the best places to see wild deer in the area, but it's always worth keeping your eyes peeled when taking a walk through the countryside as you never know what you might find just around the corner! For more information on deer, visit the British Deer Society website: bds.org.uk

Autumn Activity Watch

Many people may think of the autumn as nature shutting down for the winter. Look closely and you will find a lot going on in the countryside. Perhaps the most spectacular places to visit in the autumn are the wetland reserves such as Pegwell Bay, Stodmarsh, Dungeness, Oare and Elmley. These offer fantastic views of wildfowl and wading birds arriving to spend the winter. However, even arable fields can play host to thousands of Lapwing and Golden Plover, and estuaries and coastal fields can see a thousand Brent geese and other wildfowl. Even close to towns one can see many thousands of starlings doing aerobical displays. So when you're out and about this autumn keep a look out for all this activity.



Lapwing

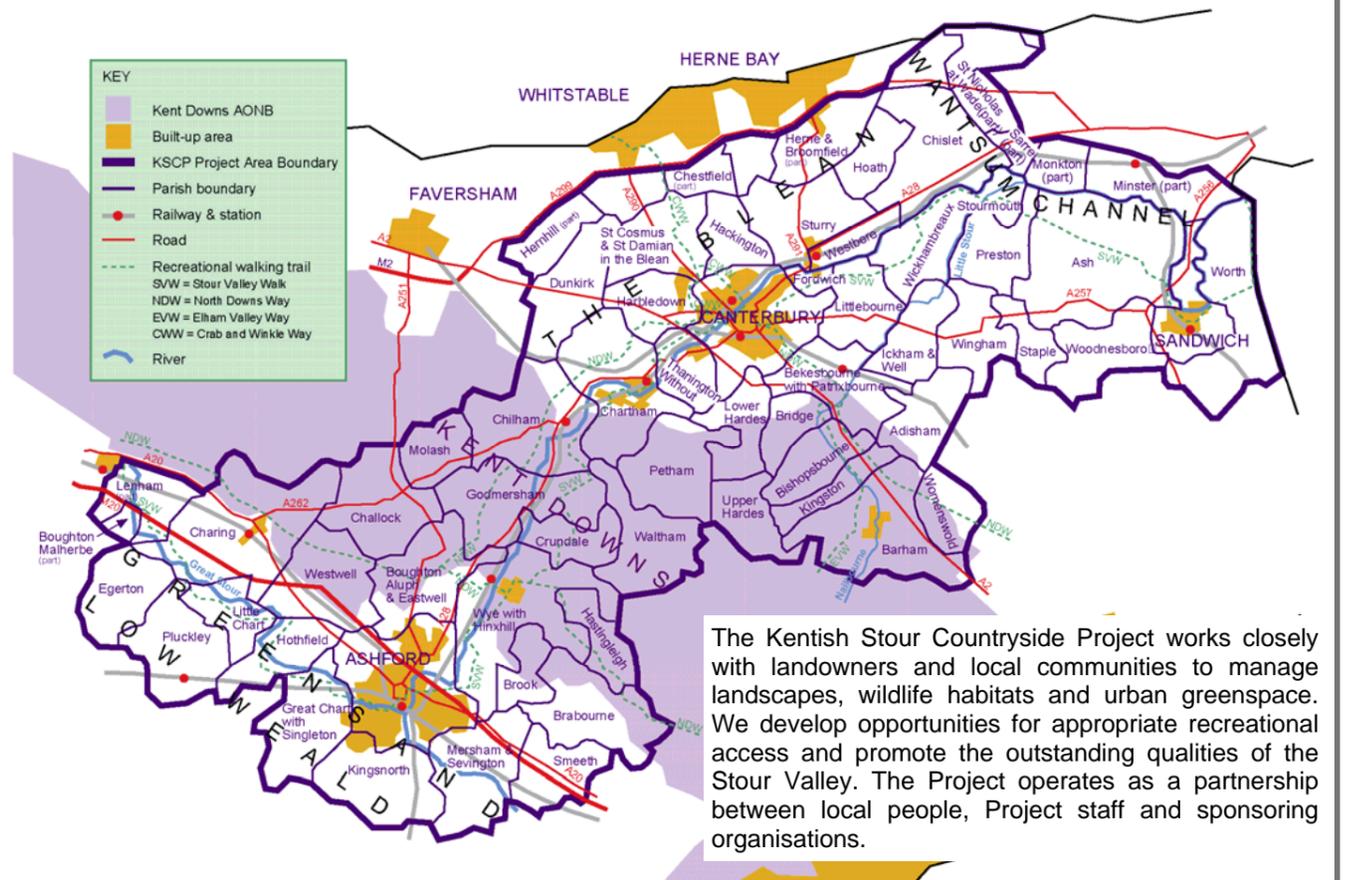
Are You Cross Compliant?



Fieldfare enjoying winter hawthorn berries

In England, farmers claiming the Single Payment and other direct payments are responsible for understanding and meeting cross compliance (CC) requirements. These requirements are met by securing Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions across the farm. Of particular note at this time of year is hedge cutting. Hedges provide essential nesting, roosting, sheltering and feeding sites for many birds. A requirement of CC is to leave hedgerows uncut through the bird nesting season 1st March – 31st July. Many farmers leave hedge cutting until deep into the winter months, ensuring wildlife is able to feed on the fruits, nuts and berries produced by the plants. In a domestic context, can we be seen to be managing our environment for wildlife? Domestic gardens are full of opportunities to support wildlife through selective pruning, mowing and provision of water. If you would like any help or advice on how to make your garden more environmentally friendly please contact us at the KSCP.

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

Sidelands Farm
Wye
Kent TN25 5DQ
Tel: 01233 813307
E-mail: kentishstour@kent.gov.uk
www.kentishstour.org.uk

Project Manager: Jon Shelton

Ashford Countryside Officer: Debbie Adams

Canterbury & Wantsum Countryside Officer: Matt Hayes

Project Officer (P/T): Diane Comley

Assistant Project Officer: Craig Edwards

Charing Alderbed Meadow

Charing Alderbed Meadow is an important site made up of damp meadow and semi-ancient wet woodland. Managed by a local community group, this small site supports a huge variety of wildlife of all shapes and sizes. To share this special and delicate site a number of free events have been hosted by the Charing Alderbed Committee in 2008. A morning of birdsong, wildflower walks, mini-beast and butterflies, bat and moth evenings and woodland art and craft days have all encouraged a range of people to enjoy the site. A hedge planting event is being held on Saturday 15th November. If you would like to join in the fun whilst creating a valuable wildlife corridor for birds and small mammals please contact the KSCP.



An evening moth trapping



Mini-beasts in the meadow

Restoring farmland habitat on the Downs

Food shortage post WWII led to huge changes across our landscape. Farmers encouraged by Government and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) legislation ploughed vast areas of land and grubbed out hundreds of miles of hedgerows to ensure that the food production satisfied population requirements. In a turn of events, South Hill Farm is using Environmental Stewardship to restore many of the hedgerows that have been lost. KSCP volunteers have spent many blustery days planting native mix hedge plants and trees along exposed field boundaries. In conjunction with wide field margins, this farmed landscape is fast becoming a valuable habitat for Kent's flora and fauna once again.



Planting at South Hill