

Free Trees in North East Kent

The KSCP delivered 2462 trees as part of its Free Tree Scheme with about 70% given out in the Canterbury District and 30% in Thanet. 107 people ordered trees. The lucky recipients will be able to watch them grow to full size. The scheme is sponsored by National Rail, Kent County Council, Tilhill, National Grid, Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council. Individuals and/or organisations could apply for up to 25 native trees. It is hoped to run the scheme next year if sponsors can be found.



Distributing the trees at UKC

Canterbury-Chartham shared use path update

Canterbury City Council requested more detailed information before making a decision on the proposed shared use riverside path between Canterbury and Chartham. A planning application will be submitted in February by Kent Highway Services.

Events

The changing face of Blean since 1870 – Sat 18th & Sun 19th April 10-4pm. Photographic exhibition, village hall, School Lane, Blean. Tel: 01227 472337

Blean Woods events National Nature Reserve, RSPB, Rough Common 01227 455972 or michael.walter@rspb.org.uk £2.50/£1.50 unless stated otherwise. Meet in car park TR122594 All walks last about 2 hours

Blean Woods Dawn walk - Sun 26th April 4.30am. A guided walk through the wood to listen to the dawn chorus. Enjoy hot sausages and a coffee afterwards. £4/£3 Booking essential.

Blean Woods Kids' night out - Fri 1st May 7.00pm. Especially for children, a guided walk through the wood. CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.
Blean Woods Dawn walk - Sun 3rd May 4.30am. £4/£3 as above.

Blean Woods Evening walk – Sat 16th May 8.00pm. A guided walk to see bats and roding woodcock, and hear nightingales and the first returning nightjars.

Blean Woods Evening walk - Fri 22nd May 8.00pm. A guided walk to see bats and roding woodcock, and hear

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'.

nightjars and the last of the nightingales.

Blean Woods Evening walk - Sat 30th May 8.00pm. A guided walk to see bats and roding woodcock, and to listen to nightjars.

Blean Woods Evening walk - Sat 13th June 8.00pm. As above

Blean Woods Heath fritillary walk - Sun 21st June 2.30pm. See Kent's rarest butterfly and learn about the management being carried out to encourage it.

For more events go to:

Spokes (cycling)
www.spokeseastkent.org.uk

KSCP events
www.kentishstour.org.uk

Wildwood (Herne)
www.wildwood-centre.co.uk (Herne)

Canterbury Environmental Education Centre
www.naturegrid.org.uk

Denge Wood Butterfly Project
www.dengewoods.org

Farmers' Markets in the Stour Valley

Chartham Farmers' Market - Chartham Village Hall, every Thurs. 2.30-6pm

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

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.



The countryside & urban green space newsletter for people living in & around Canterbury & the Wantsum area

Stour View

Canterbury & Wantsum

Issue 42
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CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND PROMOTING THE COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREEN SPACE OF THE STOUR VALLEY

Canterbury is surrounded by special ancient woodland and protected landscapes and has the only major river in East Kent flowing through the city. The River Great Stour is a beautiful asset for the area and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. The most important wildlife site along the river is Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve, being a premier reedbed habitat. Between Canterbury, Reculver and Sandwich is the old Wantsum Channel, reclaimed from the sea, with pretty villages lining what used to be the old shoreline.

Explore the Blean



The new leaflets

The Blean, between Canterbury and the coast, is one of the largest areas of ancient woodland in England. Not only is it nationally important for wildlife, but it has a rich and unusually well recorded history. The Blean Heritage & Community Group has published two new self-guided walk leaflets to help you explore this special landscape. The group also have a leaflet focusing on the fascinating history of The Blean appearing very shortly. Walk 3 - Dunkirk & Denstroude and the longer Walk 4 - Broad Oak, Tyler Hill and Herne are available from Tourist Information Centres and local libraries. Alternatively email blean.initiative@canterbury.gov.uk or telephone 01227 862015.

Comma Trust Grant for Hambrook Marshes

Thanks to £7,500 received recently from the Community Aggregates fund via ACRE, Canterbury and District Enterprise Trust (CADET) is running a series of community activities to improve biodiversity management at Hambrook Marshes on the River Stour in Canterbury. The grant will run conservation activities for school groups and organisations in the area from now until the end of June, with some help from the KSCP and volunteers. Tasks include cutting back the scrub to preserve the old Elham Valley railway mound, planting basketry willow, litter-picking and pulling out ragwort to keep the hay good for grazing. This is an opportunity to let people know that they can use Hambrook for walking and volunteering, ready for the proposed shared use path from Canterbury to Chartham that runs through Hambrook.

To volunteer or join Friends of Hambrook Marshes: 01227 265 899
hambrook.marshes@enterprisetrust.org



Hambrook Marshes



Buy and Burn Local!!

Our Kent woodlands have been cut and managed as coppice by local woodsmen for hundreds of years. The last two decades have seen a rapid decline in the demand for coppice products but our woods must still be cut if the wildlife and landscape we see today is to remain! The best way to conserve your woodlands is to buy local and burn local. For logs, chip, stakes, fencing, bespoke garden furniture, wood stoves and much more – visit www.theblean.co.uk for details of local products from sustainably managed local woodlands. Alternatively email blean.initiative@canterbury.gov.uk or ring Liz 01227 862015.



KSCP publications, for those who enjoy the countryside



Train Rides to Ramble (£2.00) & **Bike Trails by Train** (£1.50) 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 - 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.

Partnership 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 Partnership.

Windmills – living and lost

Everyone loves a windmill - they're picturesque, historic and each one is different. In the KSCP area, by our reckoning, there are eight mills that are more or less intact, including some of the finest examples in Kent. In addition there are a number of other windmills that are either ruined (Bekesbourne, for example) or altered and adapted so much that they no longer resemble mills (Lenham Heath).

While the area we cover is certainly blessed with some magnificent mills, these are but a fraction of the number that used to exist. Our surviving mills are all 19th century, and at this time most villages would have had their own mill; many had two. In the 1930s, historian William Coles Finch found evidence of over 400 windmills in Kent.

All intact windmills are clearly marked on Landranger and Explorer series Ordnance Survey maps, so it couldn't be easier to plan a walk to see your nearest one. If you want to go inside a mill and even see one working, a number of them are open to the public. Herne, Sandwich, Sarre, and Willesborough windmills all welcome visitors, mostly between Easter and September. For precise opening times and other information go to http://kentwindmills.homestead.com/Open_times.html. The other 'intact' mills in our area are at Charing, Reculver, Westwood (near Bossingham) and Whitstable. Please respect the fact that they are privately owned.



Willesborough windmill



Planting a shaw at Cold Blow Farm with Les Blongios

European Funding comes to Kent

A consortium of environmental organisations in the South East including KSCP, have once again joined forces with environmental organisations in Northern France to successfully bid for Interreg funding. There are many geological and ecological similarities between our regions, including chalk downland, marshes, broadleaf woodlands and coastal features. This funding makes a whole range of projects and exchanges possible, so that we can learn and benefit from our different experiences and management techniques.

KSCP volunteers went over to France in October to work with Les Blongios on one of their conservation projects, and in November they came to Kent, braving the freezing winds and snow, to help us on a woodland re-creation project just outside

Wye at the aptly named Cold Blow Farm. We all appreciated the steaming cup of venison stew the farmer Crispin Beale served up at lunchtime!

Fascist winter palaces for wildlife

What connects Joseph Stalin with King's Wood near Ashford? The answer is 'Super Kingdom', a new artwork by London Fieldworks (namely artists Bruce Gilchrist and Jo Joelson), commissioned by Stour Valley Arts. This impressive piece consists of three large structures inspired by the palatial residences of Stalin, Ceausescu and Mussolini. It is hoped that the structures will provide overwintering sites for wildlife. The piece has been nominated by the Architects' Journal for their 'small projects award' and features on the cover of the latest edition.



'Superkingdom' structures

London Fieldworks' work explores the relationships between art, science and nature. For more information go to www.londonfieldworks.com. 'Super Kingdom' is just the latest in a long line of contemporary environmental artworks commissioned for King's Wood by Stour Valley Arts. For details of the location of 'Super Kingdom' and other pieces, go to www.stourvalleyarts.org.uk.

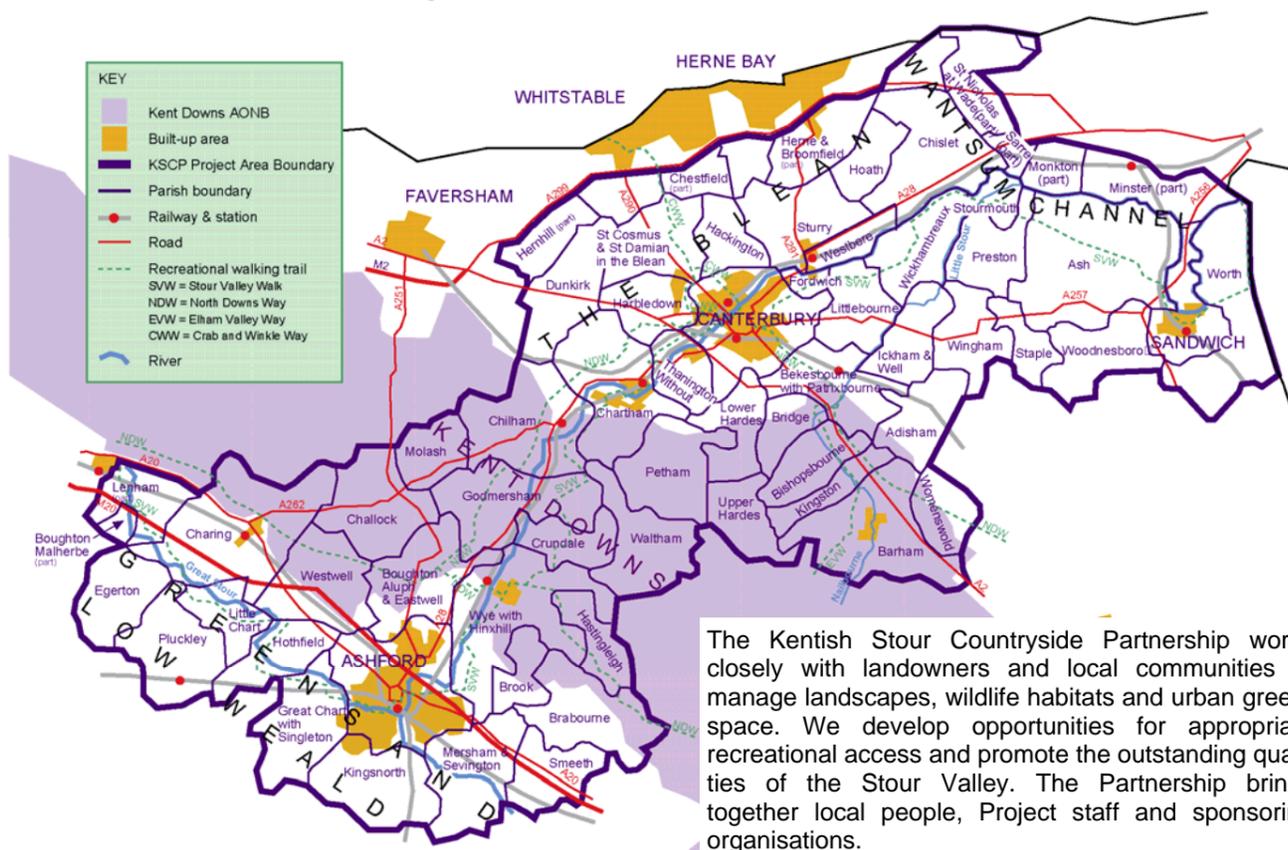
The Goatsucker



Nightjar

This is an old name for the Nightjar, taken from a false belief that it milks goats with its huge mouth. From late April to mid-May, this elusive summer visitor returns to its strongholds in south-east England after over-wintering in Africa. With pointed wings and a long tail, their shape is similar to a Kestrel or Cuckoo. Nightjars fly at night, and are very hard to see during the day as their grey-brown mottled feathers and habit of sitting still on the ground make them almost invisible among fallen leaves. They are far easier to spot at dawn or dusk, 'hawking' moths and insects or singing in trees. Their call is often described as 'churring'. Nightjar populations decreased sharply after World War two, probably because of loss of habitat, disturbance and a decrease in large insects, but recently better management practices, especially in woodlands, have seen this secretive bird's numbers start to increase. They require open ground to nest so the KSCP, along with many other conservation bodies, have been creating heathy glades and open areas in woodlands to improve the plight of this very special bird. In the Stour Valley they can be seen in open woodland in King's Wood and the Blean; see events listing for guided walks.

About the Partnership



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Reversing Ratty's Decline

Regular readers of *Stour View* may remember that back in 2005 we reported the outcomes of a Water vole survey that highlighted the Lower Stour and Wantsum Channel as an important stronghold for this declining mammal. A new project has now been launched to ensure that it stays that way.



Water vole

The Lower Stour Water Vole Project will promote good management for Water voles among landowners, through a half-day workshop in March, new literature and follow up advisory visits. It will also research what makes the water courses where the voles thrive good habitat, and target other sites, where numbers are poor, for improvement. Perhaps most crucially, it will show farmers how management that benefits Water voles can also benefit them financially.

KSCP are organising the project in partnership with Kent Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, with funding from Natural England.

Bye to Matt and welcome Carol Donaldson

Matt Hayes has left the KSCP after two years to work for the Kent Wildlife Trust as a West Kent Warden. He is replaced by Carol Donaldson, who joins us on 2nd March from the RSPB where she spent four years based at their Northward Hill Reserve, and before this working for a Wildlife Trust and BTCV. Carol will be working for us for three days a week and running countryside tours on her spare days. We are to recruit for the other two day job share.

