

## Grants for grilles and glades

The KSCP has been involved with Charing Beech Hangers near Westwell for some years now. Past achievements have included the production of a management plan and the installation of fencing to protect this protected woodland from illegal vehicle use. The latest project focused on a pair of 19<sup>th</sup> century lime kilns in a part of the site known as Larry's Wood. Used for burning chalk to turn it into quick lime for various agricultural and industrial uses, the kilns are a well preserved and fascinating heritage feature. A grant from the Rail Link Countryside Initiative funded the installation of steel grilles across the tops of the kilns to make for safer access, and an interpretation panel explaining the history of this ex-industrial site. It is hoped that in time the kilns will become a suitable hibernation site for bats.



Installing the grilles

Elsewhere on the site, a Forestry Commission grant is helping to finance the maintenance of woodland glades and rides. A number of volunteer tasks are coming up to carry out some of this work; all are welcome, so contact us to take part.

## Events

**Denge Wood Project Drop-in session** – Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> March 7-9pm. Petham Village Hall, TR 129 514. Displays on the project's progress so far and information on the butterflies, moths and woodlands of the local area.

**Denge Wood Project Bird walk** – Sun 29<sup>th</sup> March 9am-11am. Local RSPB group. Mt Garlinge Green TR 112 525.

**Bluebell Walk**, King's Wood, main car park. Sat 18<sup>th</sup> April 10-12. Friends of King's Wood £2 to non members. Further details 07523 203458

**Bluebell Walk**, King's Wood, main car park. Sun 26<sup>th</sup> April 10-12. Friends of King's Wood £2 to non members. Further details 07523 203458

**Denge Wood Project Butterfly walk** – Sat 9<sup>th</sup> May 10am-12pm. Denge Woods southernmost entrance, Penypot Lane TR099501

**Denge Wood Project Moth trapping session** – Fri 15<sup>th</sup> May 8.30pm. Shrubs Wood, nr Hastingleigh/Bodsham. Woodland entrance TR102460

**Denge Wood Project Butterfly Survey Bonanza** – 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> May. Ring to help out surveying.

**Mini-beasties in the wood, King's Wood** Sun 24<sup>th</sup> May 11-1pm Debbie Adams (KSCP) for Friends of

King's Wood £2 to non members. Further details 07523 203458 or 01233 813307

**Boughton Aluph Village Fete** – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2.00pm. Boughton Lees, next to the A251.

For more events go to:  
**Denge Wood Butterfly Project**  
[www.dengewoods.org](http://www.dengewoods.org)  
**King's Wood**  
[www.friendsofkingwood.org](http://www.friendsofkingwood.org)  
**Spokes (cycling)**  
[www.spokeseastkent.org.uk](http://www.spokeseastkent.org.uk)  
**KSCP events**  
[www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)

## 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 St, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat. of the month 9.30-2 pm

## Volunteer days

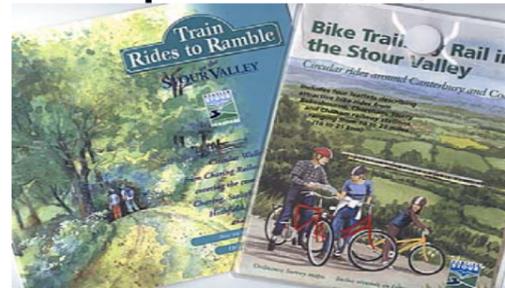
**Wednesdays (Ashford area):** Meet 9.15 at the KSCP offices.

**Thursdays (Canterbury & Wantsum):** Meet 9.15 at KSCP offices or 9.45 at North Lane Car Park, Canterbury.

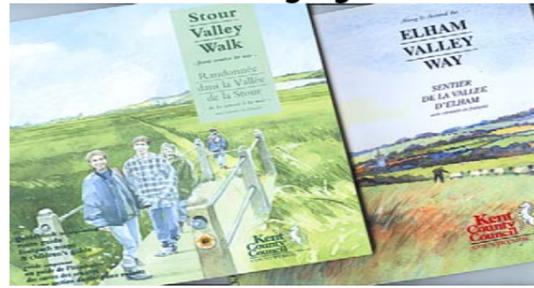
## Volunteering

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'.

## 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](mailto: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 42  
Spring 2009

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.

## The Trees that were, are Once Again

The landscape of the Kent Downs tells a woven tale of management and land use. Steep chalk escarpments clothed in herb rich plant species are topped by vast stretches of farmland and pockets of woodland on the heavy clay and flint plateaus. Many areas of woodland have been cleared over the decades to increase the area of land available for farming. This is evident at **Cold Blow Farm, Hastingleigh**, where maps dating up to 1975 clearly define a swathe of woodland crossing the valley. Since clearance of the woodland, livestock has grazed the site whilst the ancient woodland soils lie dormant under the turf. The landowner, with support from Natural England and volunteers from the KSCP has started to re-plant this area of woodland. In years to come this stretch of farmland will once again create a valuable route for wildlife across the Kent Downs.



KSCP volunteers receiving help from French volunteers re-planting the woodland

## It's Nothing to Snipe About!

Over the last three decades Snipe, a medium sized wading bird, has suffered from declining populations in lowland south-east England as their habitat, well vegetated wetlands, have disappeared as a result of field drainage for farming and development. Hatch Park in Brabourne has made a remarkable effort to encourage this fascinating long beaked bird back onto the farm. A number of scrapes (shallow water pools) have been excavated across a large marshland field. In addition to the scrapes, a big pond has been created, thus forming an extensive wetland area for Snipe. Once the scrapes have vegetated, the site will be invaluable for a range of wetland birds and animals. The wetland area is part of a larger project including wild flower meadow creation and avenue planting. KSCP has run the project with enthusiasm and funding from the landowner and the Rail Link Countryside Initiative.



New scrapes to benefit wildlife

## 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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](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](http://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](http://www.stourvalleyarts.org.uk).

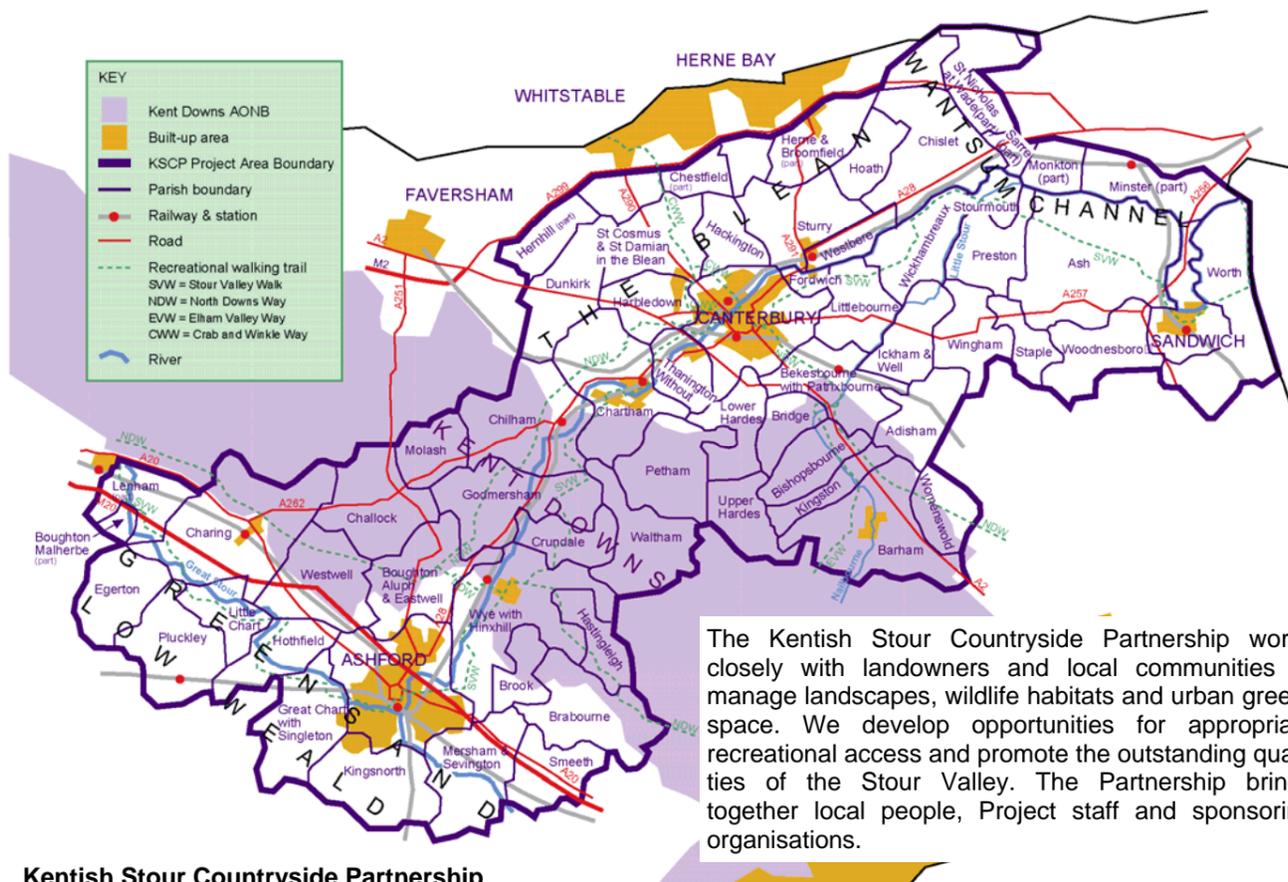
## The Goatsucker



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



The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership works closely with landowners and local communities to manage landscapes, wildlife habitats and urban green-space. We develop opportunities for appropriate recreational access and promote the outstanding qualities of the Stour Valley. The Partnership brings together local people, Project staff and sponsoring organisations.

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**Partnership Manager:** Jon Shelton  
**Ashford Countryside Officer:** Debbie Adams  
**Canterbury & Wantsum Countryside Officer:** Carol Donaldson (P/T)  
**Project Officer (P/T):** Diane Comley

## Re-discovering Millponds in the Stour Valley

Millponds, once a crucial means of income for farmers in the Stour Valley, have all but left our memories. They no longer provide an income from industries such as milling and paper, but instead provide valuable wildlife sites. Bowley Millpond, referred to in our summer 2008 issue, has undergone a magnificent restoration. Tremendous silt levels, built up over decades, had left the vast majority of the site dry and inhospitable for our native amphibians, reptiles and fish species. Much of the silt has now been cleared, leaving a wide barrier of rushes and wetland plants that will create ideal conditions for a wealth of wildlife. The site adjoins wet woodland with exceptional features including blooms of marsh marigolds and exposed Kentish ragstone. The project, supported by the KSCP was funded through the Rail Link Countryside Initiative and the landowner.



Mill pond restoration

## Natural Landscapes Support Target Species

KSCP grants are available to support landscape and wildlife projects in the Stour Valley. A good example are the owners of Bilting House, who received a grant to create a number of water features on their land, including a range of ponds and scrapes (shallow excavations). The success of these is measurable given the numbers of Lapwing that have visited the site since their completion. The KSCP is lucky to work with landowners who are willing and able to manage their land for wildlife. Fields in the Stour Valley that were once inundated by flood waters are now controlled by field drainage systems. Once dry, fields have very little value for wading bird species, such as Lapwing. The KSCP would like to thank Bilting House for their willingness to return areas of their land to a natural landscape for wildlife.



Banded demoiselle thrives at Bilting