

# Volunteering

## Wednesdays

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

Projects in the Ashford area  
Meet 9.15 at the KSCP Office (see below)

## Thursdays

Projects in the Canterbury and north Dover areas  
Meet 9.15 at the KSCP Office (see below) or  
9.45 at North Lane car park, Canterbury




## Sundays

Projects in the Canterbury and north Dover areas  
Ring for programme or visit website for details.







Kentish Stour Poo Project!

### You supply:

-  your lunch
-  work clothes and strong boots
-  enthusiasm and energy

### We supply:

-  tools and materials
-  training
-  transport
-  insurance

Kentish Stour Countryside Project,  
Sidelands Farm, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5DQ

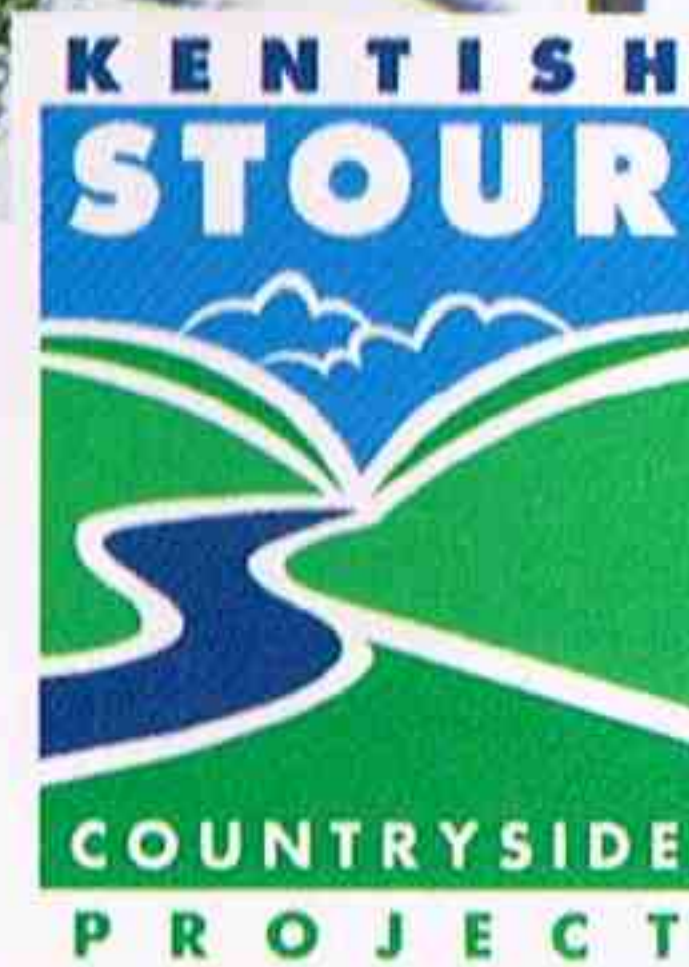
For our detailed programme, 'phone us on  
01233 813307 or go to [www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)  
and click on 'Get Involved'

Stour View is designed by Clarity Interpretation 01303 249501 clarity.interpretation@virgin.net Printed on environmentally friendly paper.

# Stour View

Issue 36 Spring 2006

The countryside and urban greenspace newsletter  
for people living in and around Ashford, Canterbury & Sandwich  
FREE - please take one

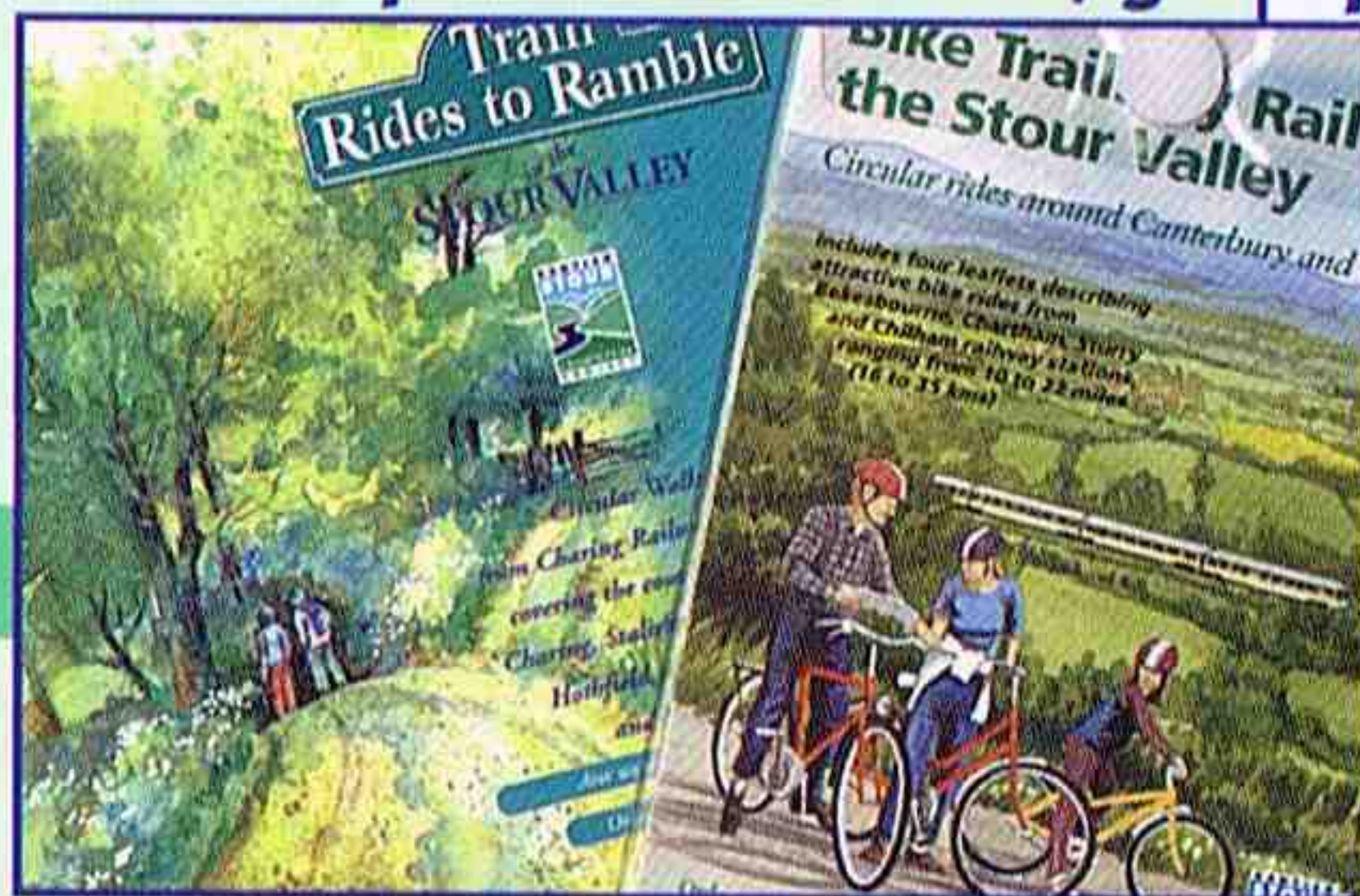


[www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)

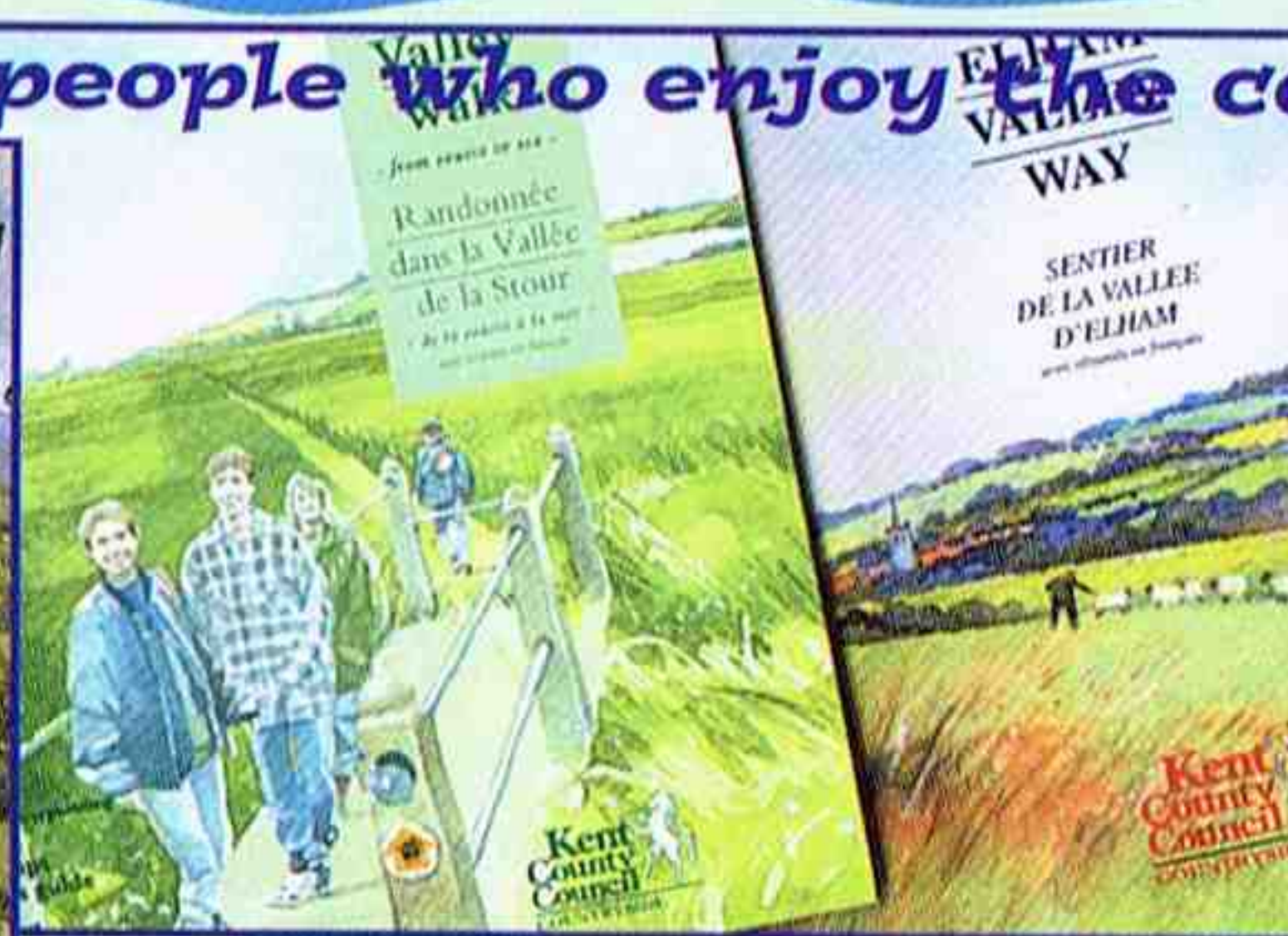
## Historic Stour

Canterbury's riverside  
Heritage

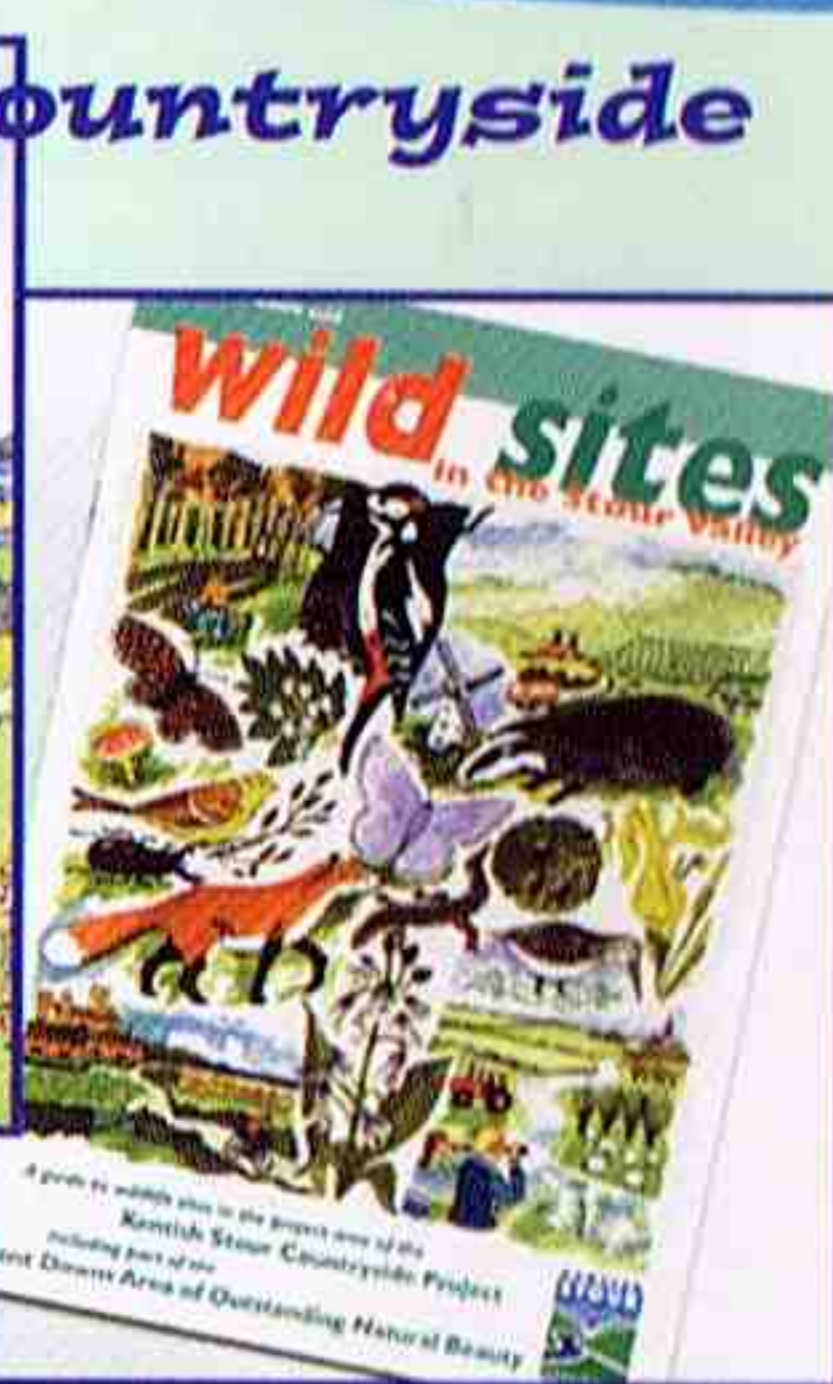
### KSCP publications, for people who enjoy the countryside



Train Rides to Ramble (£4.99) & Bike Trails by Rail (£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 book shops, KSCP, and Kent County Council  
(08458 247600 or [env.publications@kent.gov.uk](mailto:env.publications@kent.gov.uk))

# In this Issue

# Stour View

Stour View is produced three times a year in January, May and September

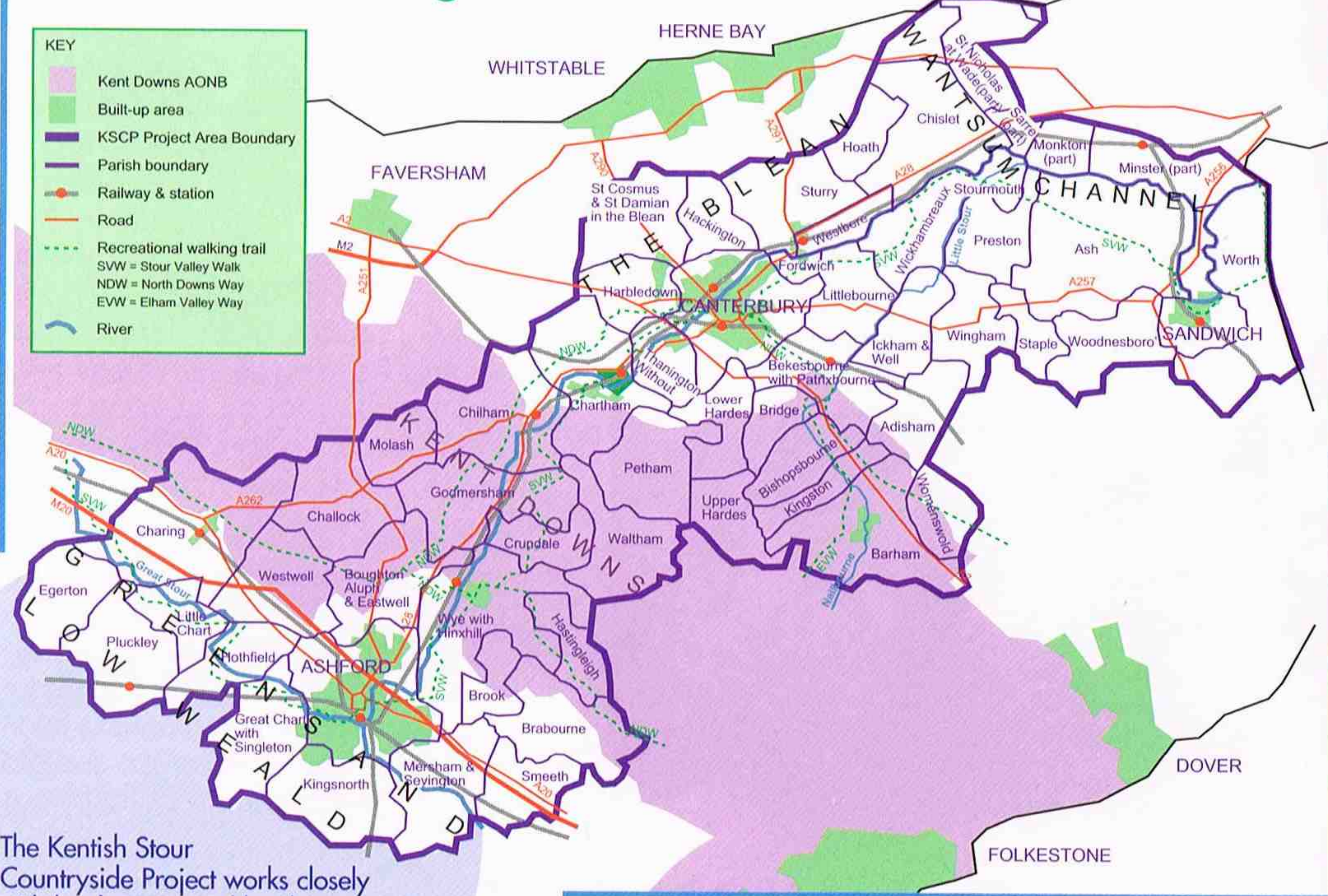
Community Updates



Kent Messenger Group



## About the Project

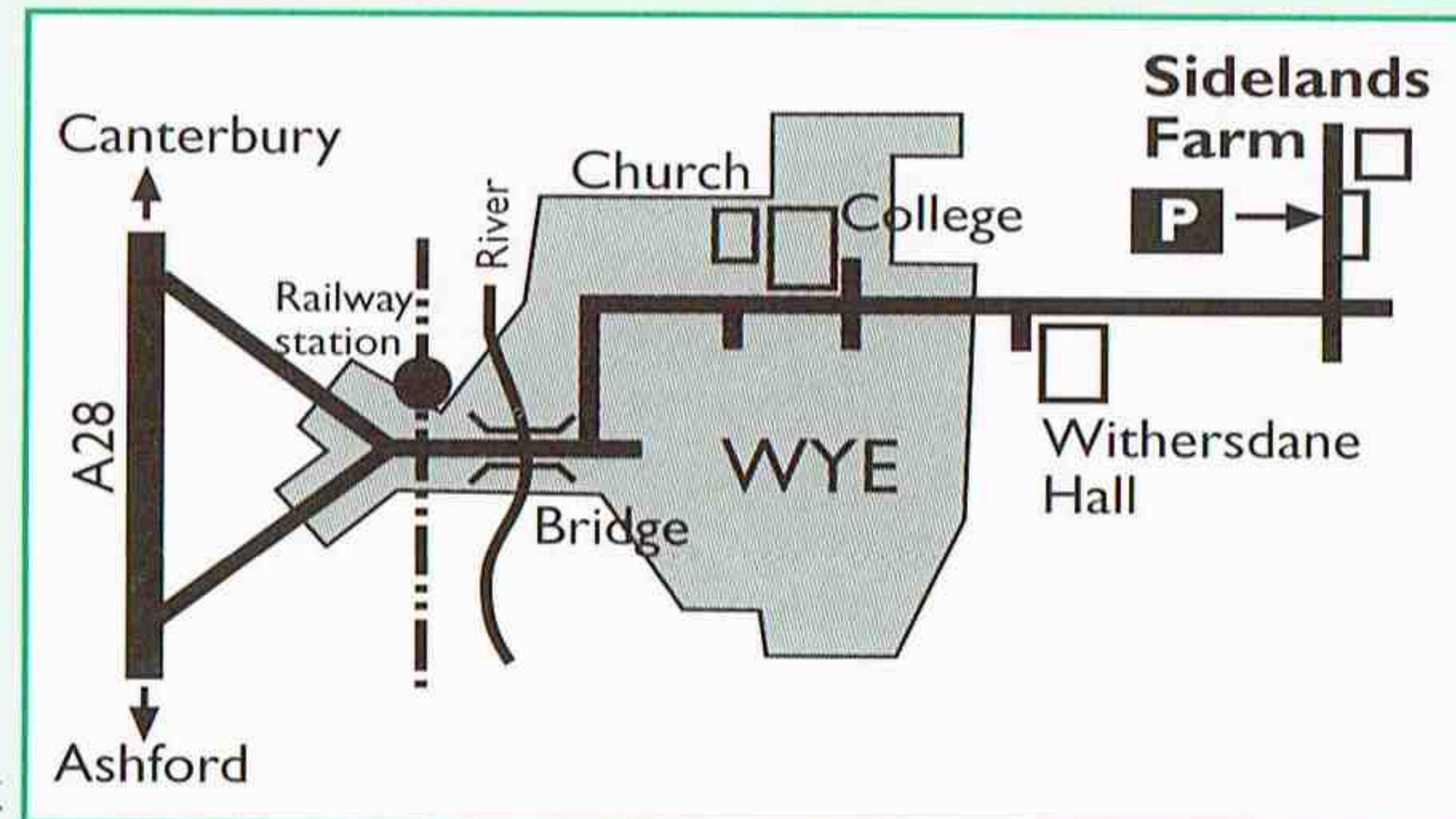


The Kentish Stour Countryside Project works closely with landowners and local communities to manage landscapes, wildlife habitats and urban greenspace. We develop opportunities for appropriate recreational access and promote the outstanding qualities of the Stour Valley. The Project operates as a partnership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

[www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)

## Contacting the Project

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Web: [www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk](http://www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk)



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Ashford Green  
Corridor Officer



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Canterbury  
Greenspace Officer



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Office Manager (p/t)

### Acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the newsletter

<b>AONB</b> – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	<b>Ha</b> – Hectare (1 ha is equal to 2.5 acres)	<b>SNCI</b> – Site of Nature Conservation Interest
<b>DEFRA</b> – Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	<b>KSCP</b> – Kentish Stour Countryside Project	<b>SSSI</b> – Site of Special Scientific Interest
	<b>LNR</b> – Local Nature Reserve	

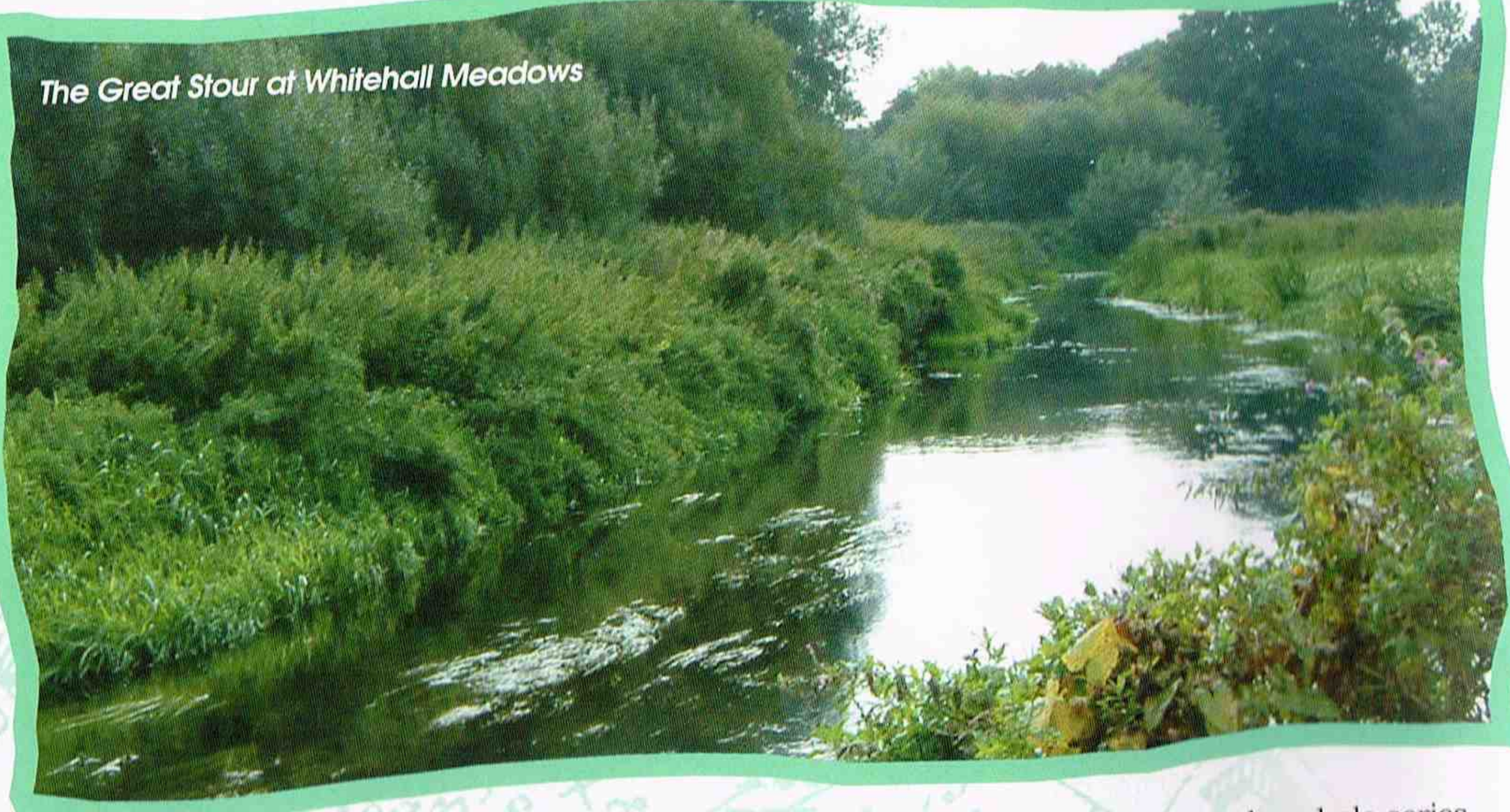
Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate. The publishers can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Kentish Stour Countryside Project.

## Project sponsors



[www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)

# The story of the city's waterways



The Great Stour at Whitehall Meadows

The Great Stour is the second longest river in Kent and is the major watercourse in the east of the county. Rising 75 metres above sea level near the village of Lenham, to the east of Maidstone, the Great Stour joins the East Stour at Ashford and continues along to Canterbury. Here, the river splits into two main channels, creating several islands before continuing on its course and flowing out to sea at Pegwell Bay. Its overall catchment area is 1,080.77 km<sup>2</sup> with great landscape, wildlife and historic interest.

The Canterbury section has arguably the greatest mix of these characteristics. In fact, the earliest records of the city's name date back to AD 150 when it was called 'Davovernon' from the British words *duro* (fort) and *verno* (swamp). This clearly demonstrates that characteristics of the land at the time from the influence of the Stour were so great they were included in the city's name. Later, the Romans adopted this

Canterbury based artist painted a whole series of cattle scenes in the water meadows adjoining the Stour. In November 2004, students from Canterbury High School and artist Martin Brockman, with the help of the KSCP, constructed life size willow sculptures of one of these famous scenes.

It is at this point the river divides into two, creating Bingley's Island (where the cattle sculptures are located), part of the LNR and the first in a series of islands. The next of these river islands is actually the whole of the Westgate area, including the gardens, St. Peter's Street, part of Rheims Way, the bottom of the High Street and the Marlowe Theatre.

Following along the left-hand branch of the river, you pass Toddlers Cove Play area before reaching the picturesque Westgate Gardens on the right. To the left is what remains of an ancient mill. During the reign of King Stephen,

Going back to where the river first split into two, at Bingley's Island, we will now follow the right hand fork through the city; past where the old BT building was recently demolished for housing development, under Rheims Way and on the right is St. Mildred's Church. Before the dissolution of the monasteries, Canterbury had twenty-two parish churches! It is believed that St. Mildred's is the oldest in the city, having been there before the Normans arrived and built the adjacent castle. Churchyards often provide vital areas of habitat in towns and cities, and can support an interesting array of wild flowers as they often have had little or no improvement (i.e. fertilisers, re-sown grass).

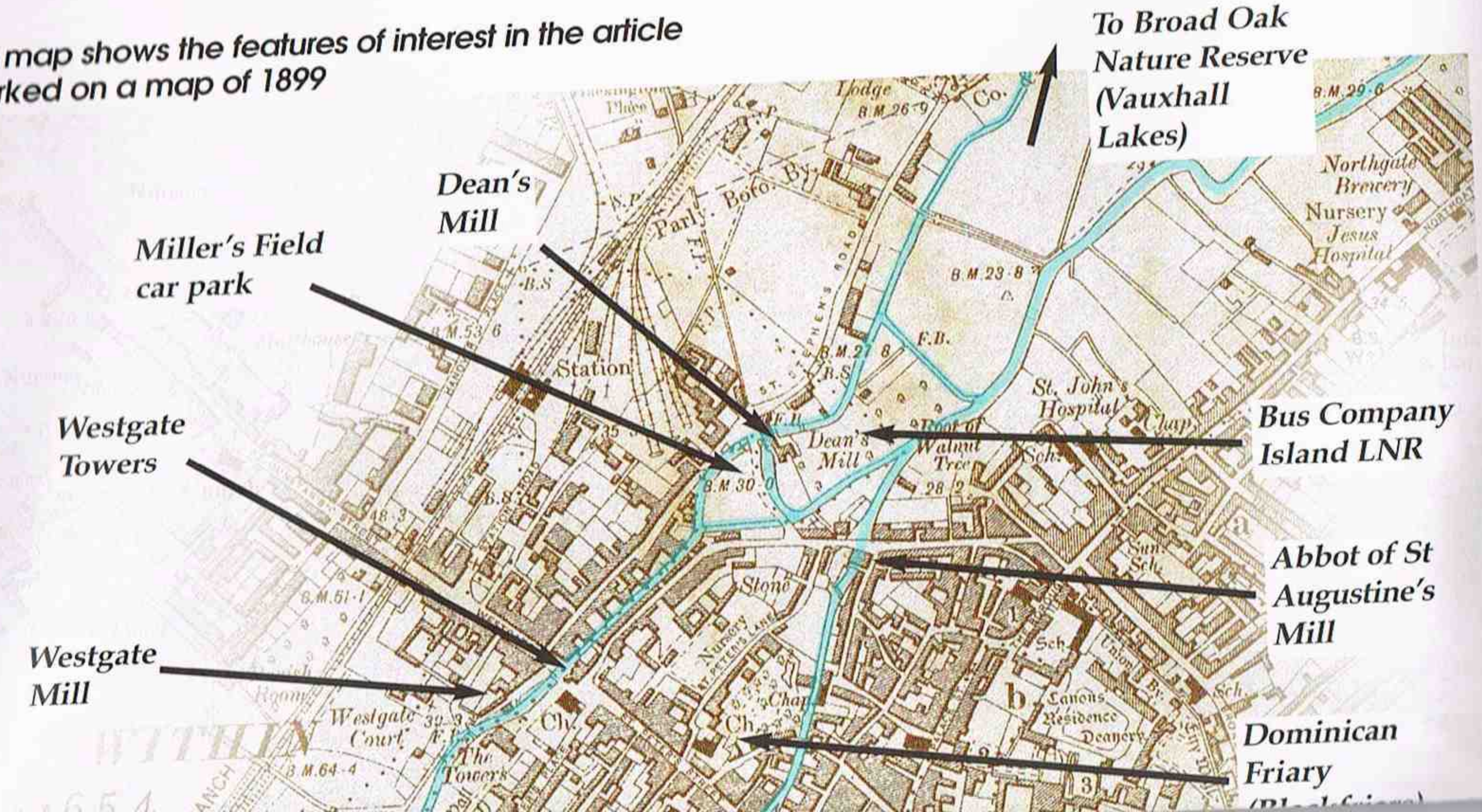
To the left is St. Mildred's Tannery, which started in 1860 preparing and tanning imported hides. From 1988 it concentrated on the dressing, softening and dyeing of hides and has recently closed. During its early years, the site polluted the Great Stour with chloride, sulphate, ammonium, phenols, hydrocarbons and land metal spills, such as lead, mercury, cadmium and copper, which is extremely toxic to aquatic life. Water was sometimes used in the cooling process, which lead to warm water being released into the river which has a low dissolved oxygen content – again very bad for aquatic invertebrates. However, it wasn't just industries that polluted the Great Stour. Raw sewage and drainage systems used to flow directly into the river too, meaning little could survive in such conditions. Now, however, water quality and

black coat they wore over their white habits) who came to Canterbury in 1221. The Rectory on the right is now part of the Kings School, and the guesthouse on the left was granted to the friars by King Henry III in 1237.

The Great Stour flows until it reaches the sluices and mill races that once served Abbot's Mill, until 1933 when it burnt down. Six stories high, it dominated the city's skyline for 140 years. Further along the river is Barton Mill, which was again ravaged by fire only a year ago. Although brown field sites like these and the now disused tannery are often re-developed as housing, they can potentially provide a good habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species. After just a few years, such a site can easily become covered in hawthorn and birch scrub, with shrubs such as buddleia and plants like bramble, stinging nettle and rose-bay willowherb. This is brilliant not only for birds and butterflies but small mammals, including wood mice and rabbits and reptiles such as slow worms. Next to the river, you also often find grass snakes that swim and hunt amphibians in the water.

After this, the two main branches of the Great Stour then rejoin as they reach Vauxhall Lakes, now Broad Oak Nature Reserve. These were previously gravel extraction works, and now support a wide range of bird species and the endangered great crested newt, amongst other things. The reserve is an excellent demonstration of how old industrial works can be taken over very effectively by nature in a short space of time.

This map shows the features of interest in the article marked on a map of 1899



LOVER and LONDON they joined the river here (which was perhaps at the time the upper limit of navigation) and so the settlement grew and prospered. By 754 it had become 'Cantwaraburg' the Stronghold of the 'Cantware' (the people of Kent) and with the spread of Christianity it grew to be the ecclesiastical capital of England.

By following the course of the Great Stour through Canterbury it is possible to see a huge variety of different areas of both historical and wildlife interest. As you come into Canterbury from Ashford on the A28 you will notice a large complex of lakes from previous gravel extraction by Brett. These run from Chillingham through to Thanington Without and provide a rich wetland habitat next to the river for a variety of different plants, birds and animals.

Next you come to meadows, running from Tonford almost to the city walls. This area includes Hambrook Marshes, recently acquired by The Canterbury and District Enterprise Trust to turn into a wildlife area and Whitehall Meadows LNR, owned by Canterbury City Council and managed with the assistance of the KSCP. The area once offered an important ford for the ancient trackways used to transport salt from the coast inland. It is believed that names with 'white' in indicate the presence of a salt pan or track, hence the name 'Whitehall Meadows'. This area also has a significant cultural interest as the setting for many of the Victorian artist Thomas Sydney Cooper's paintings. The

The river then continues flowing between buildings and the remaining city wall, until it branches again at Miller's Field. The right hand branch then rejoins with the split off back at Bingley's Island. The left leads on past what was one of the city's last working flour mills, Deans Mill. Here, another island has been created by the KSCP. Bus Company Island, bought by the Council in 1994 and designated a LNR. The dig a pond, sow wild flowers and plant trees. It is now a vital area of habitat for a huge variety of species, right within the heart of the city.

Just after the river rejoins after its split around this island, it flows under St. Thomas's, or Eastbridge Hospital. Originally founded as a hospital for wayfarers and injured folk in the reign of Henry II, it later became a hostel for pilgrims.

We now come to the part of the river that anyone who has walked up Canterbury High Street and over King's Bridge will have seen. Below the bridge on the right is where King's Mill once stood, one of the city's earliest and most important mills. Owned by the King, city residents could have their corn ground there. The city's first public lavatory was here, and the city's swans were kept near and fattened up for banquets. To the left is the Weavers. In 1575 a hundred Flemish refugee families came to Canterbury and were granted a license to establish themselves in the city. At one time, 2,900 people were employed here hand weaving cloth.

Next are the remains of another Friary, that of the Dominicans (or Blackfriars, because of the inflows are strictly monitored by the Environment Agency to ensure the Great Stour remains clean.

Next on the left is another island, as the river splits again, which is the grounds of what remains of the Grey Friars or Franciscans land. They came here from France in 1224, and one of the remaining buildings is built across the river itself. Not only do the remaining grounds provide a public amenity but they are excellent for garden bird species, such as blackbirds, robins and sparrows, which thrive here.

Just after the river rejoins after its split around this island, it flows under St. Thomas's, or Eastbridge Hospital. Originally founded as a hospital for wayfarers and injured folk in the reign of Henry II, it later became a hostel for pilgrims.

Canterbury has grown up because of the Great Stour – many of its industries and therefore its wealth have depended upon it, and now by taking a trip along the river you can see a rich mix of heritage and wildlife, right through the city's heart. There are boat trips leaving from both the Weavers on the High Street and outside of Westgate, so why not see for yourself?

**Historic Boat Tours:** Each boat is rowed by a Historic Tour representative who provides a light-hearted historical commentary along the route. Depart (weather and river conditions permitting) from The Ducking Stool, The Old Weavers Restaurant Garden, Kings Bridge, Canterbury daily from April to October. Telephone **07790 534 744** or visit their website at [www.canterburyrivertours.co.uk](http://www.canterburyrivertours.co.uk)

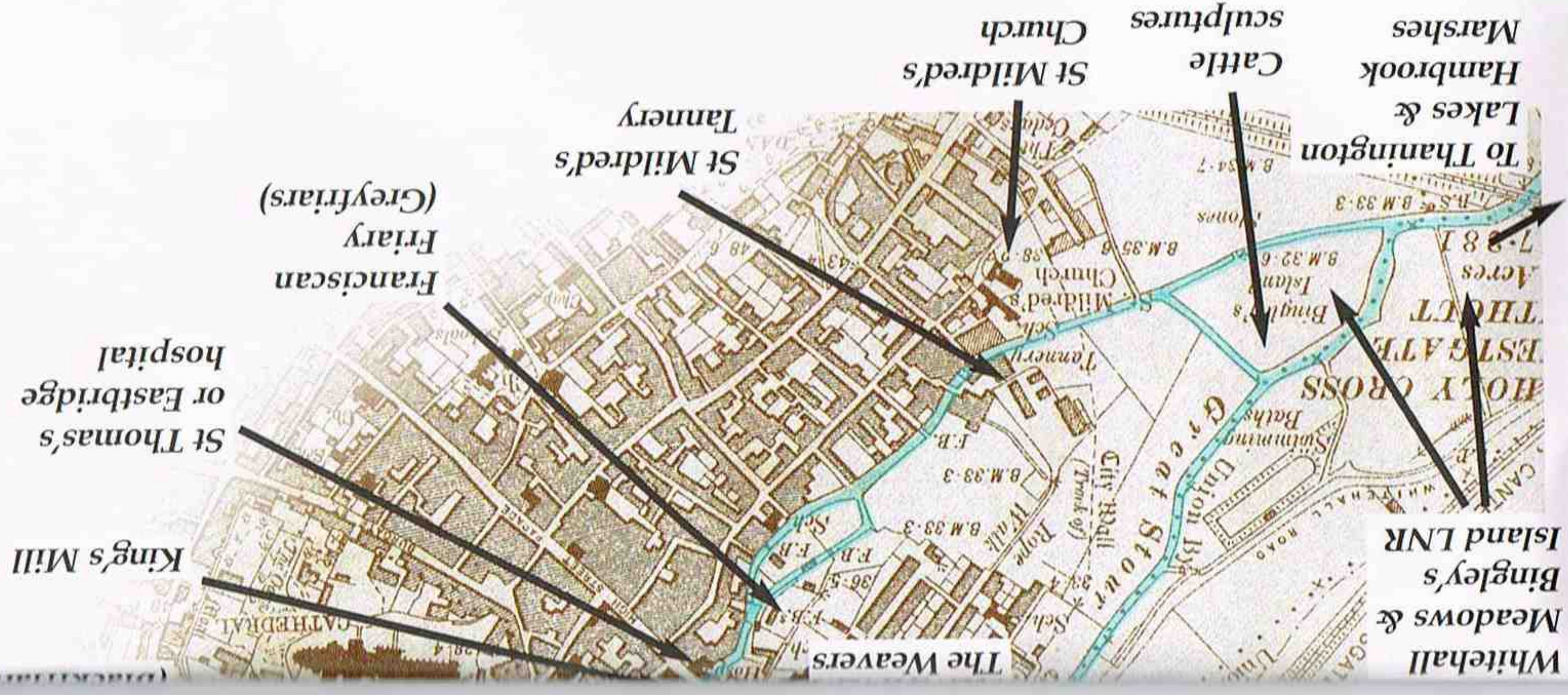
**Canterbury River Navigation Company:** A relaxing punt trip along the River Great Stour being chauffeured by an experienced boatman. Departs Slipway Westgate Grove close to West Gate Towers during the summer months. Telephone **07816 760 869** or visit their website at [www.crncc.co.uk](http://www.crncc.co.uk)

**Guild of Guide Walking Tours:** A walking tour with a local resident (officially trained guide) lasting about an hour and a half. Runs Easter to October with tours leaving from the Canterbury Information Centre, Sun Street, opposite the cathedral's Christ Church Gate. Imelda Purdy **01227 459 779** or visit the website [www.canterbury-walks.co.uk](http://www.canterbury-walks.co.uk)

**Jo Haskett,**

**Canterbury Greenspace Officer**

*Willow cattle sculpture*



# New Wildlife Site for Charing Residents

The Charing Alderbed Meadow project has been up and running a year. In this time a huge amount of work has taken place. The site is 2.6ha of wet meadow and damp alder wood located beyond the playing fields and forming part of 5.6ha of public open space.

The wet fen meadow had not been grazed for 25 years. Bramble and scrub had started to dominate the field, so volunteers have cleared scrub and light grazing has been introduced. Hedge planting and laying around the perimeter of the site is under way; this will amount to 720m when finished. A small amount of coppicing has been introduced into the woodland, which will help regenerate the derelict coppice and add diversity to the ground flora. An access road from Pett Lane and a hard standing for parking have been created. Access around the site will be improved with a circular



**Celebrating the start of the project**

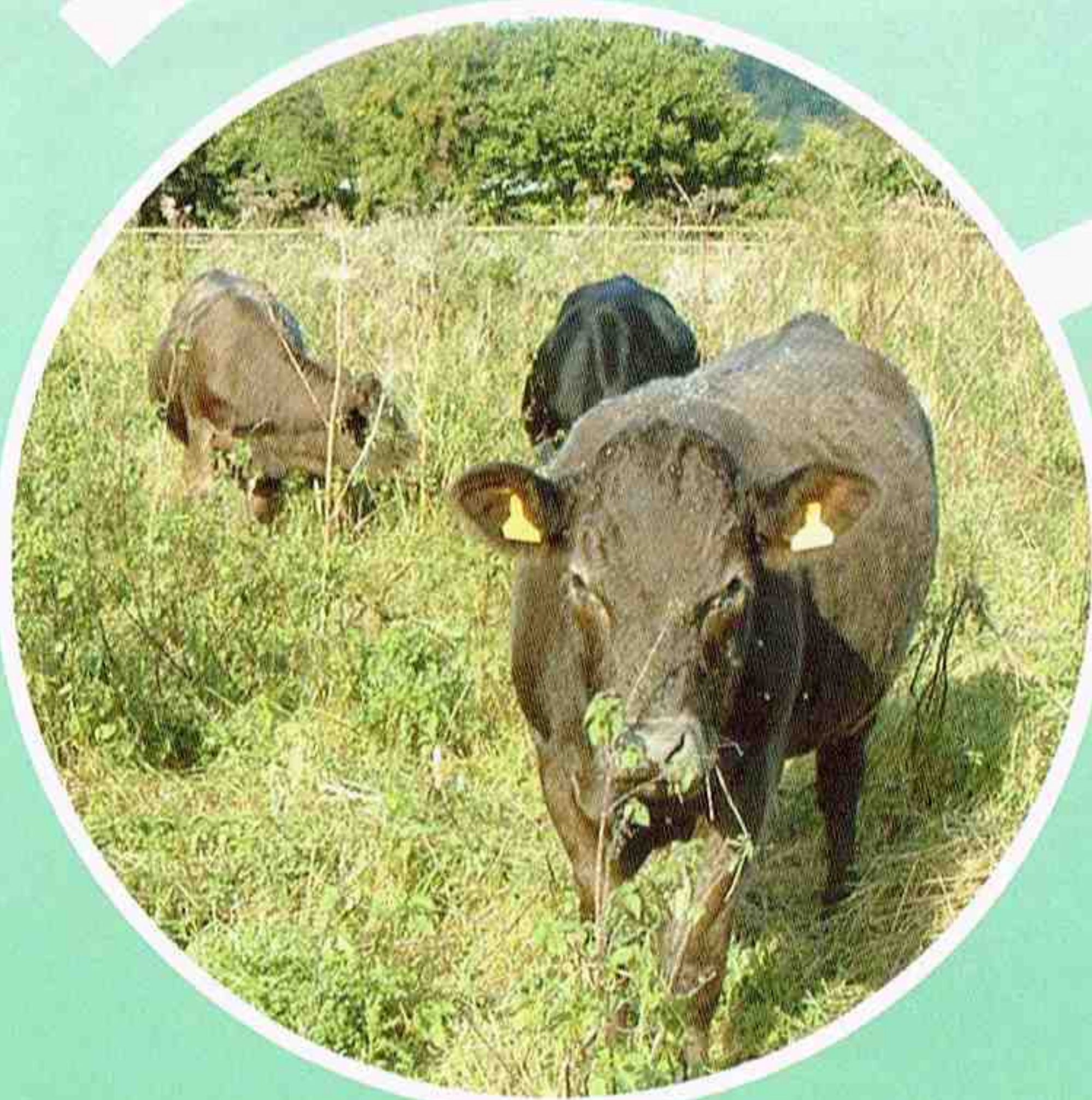
Kent Messenger Group

route of paths and board walks. The site is Open Access under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Work will be carried out to use the site as an outdoor environmental classroom, with an education pack, leaflets, and interpretative panels. In addition a programme of events and training courses will be going on throughout 2006. Please contact the KSCP for your copy of the events programme.

The project is being managed by the KSCP, with help from a specially formed steering group, which reports to the Charing Playing Field Committee. The chairman, Martin Pym said, 'Alderbed meadow will be a lasting asset for the village, but it must be handled with care and sensitivity. While revealing the secrets of such a rare wetland site to the community, its ecosystem needs to be conserved'.

This project was made possible with funding from: Living spaces, Mid Kent Leader +, Brett Environment Trust, Rail Link Countryside Initiative, Ashford Borough Council, KSCP, Charing Playing Field Committee and Charing Parish Council.

**Jason Adams, Ashford Countryside Officer**



**Cattle grazing**

## Conservation News : Ashford

### The Quest Continues

Quest International continues to lead the way with biodiversity projects at their site in Ashford. Further enhancements on the site have seen a second larger pond created and planted up. The work was carried out by KSCP volunteers with help from Kent Probation Services. The meadow has been cut and cleared; this will help the wild flowers which were getting swamped by the dominant grasses.

The KSCP lead several guided tours of the site over the summer and autumn, on one such event the group was treated to a fly over from an osprey! The other highlight of 2005 was the first use of the nesting boxes by a family of kestrels, all young were successfully fledged and we hope to see them again next year. Finally Quest have been entered into the ICI National Environmental Awards 2005. With all the work that has been carried out they should do well.



**Osprey overhead!**



**FoKW working on the long barrow**

### Getting horny in t

King's Wood near Challock will be the venue for artist and musician Jem Finer won the New Music 'Ground' and visited several woodland areas in the area. The Forestry Commission will work closely with the artist. The work made by water slowly dripping into a chamber. The sound of a steel horn, reaching 6m into the trees. Finer described the landscape and the forces that operate on it as

### Willesborough Junior School Goes for Green Status

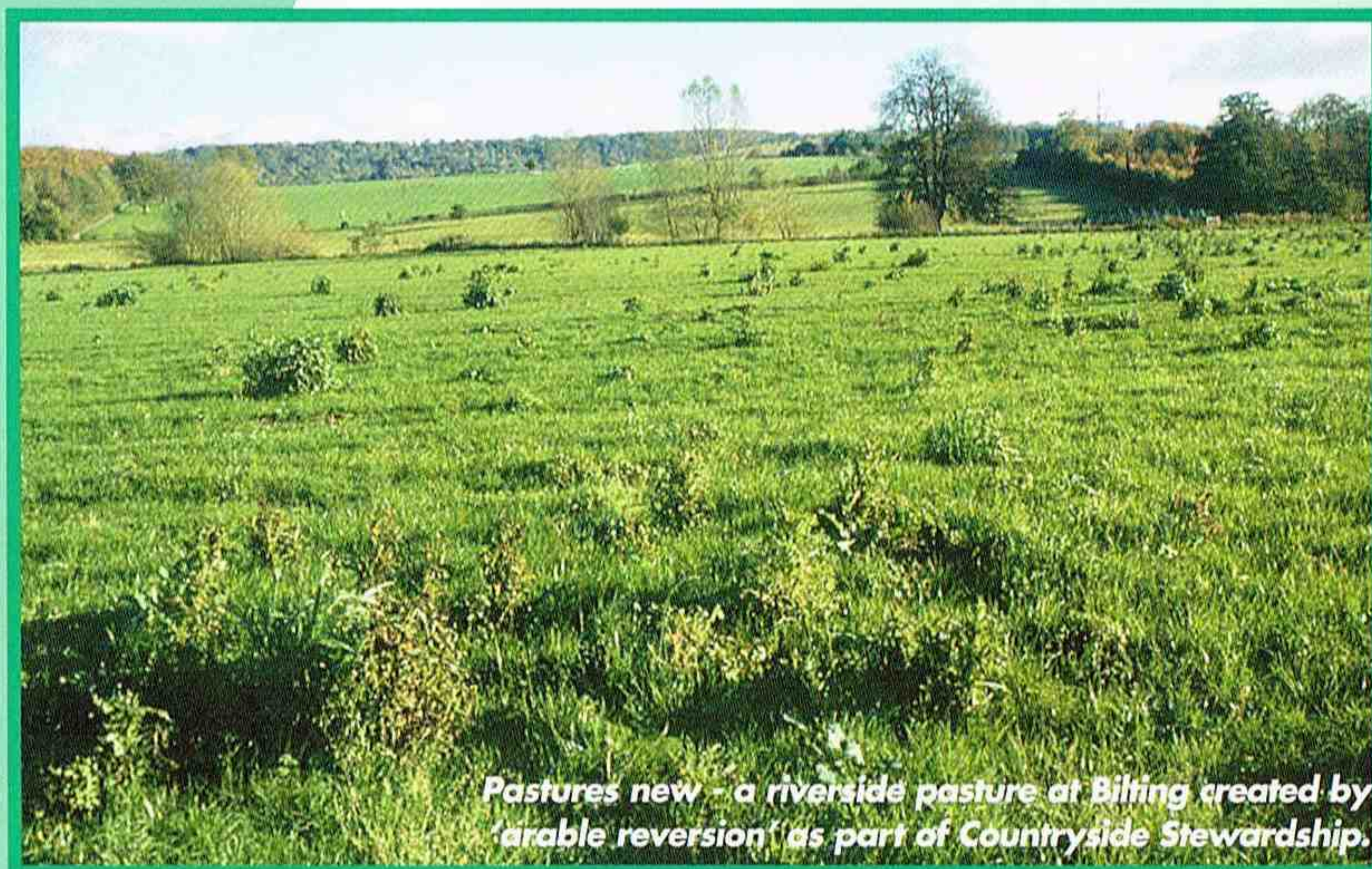
If there was not enough wildlife features already at Willesborough Junior School with the wildlife garden, pond and green activity packs, there will soon be more. The school has been awarded further grant aid to create a nature trail and enhance the grounds for wildlife. The hope is that it will gain Eco-school status. The project was made possible with funding from Rail Link Countryside Initiative. The work is being carried out by parents, children and KSCP volunteers. Hedges and trees have been planted, spring bulbs dug in, a bird feeding station created and loads of interesting educational tools will complete the nature trail. Further work is planned for the spring with wild flower areas, a bird hide and outdoor classroom facilities.

## News Updates

### Recording wildlife by calendar

Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre aims to collect, store and give out wildlife information about Kent and would like to know about the wildlife in your garden. Gardens are a valuable source of records, attracting a great variety of wildlife. To help you to record in your garden, KMBRC has designed and produced a Wildlife Recording Calendar. This unique calendar can be purchased from KMBRC for just £8.00. Make a difference to Kent's wildlife by supporting your Biological Records Centre.

For more details contact KMBRC on 01622 685646/685780 or email [info@kmbrc.org.uk](mailto:info@kmbrc.org.uk).



Pastures new - a riverside pasture at Bilting created by 'arable reversion' as part of Countryside Stewardship.

[www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)

## DEFRA's new 'Higher Level Stewardship' (HLS) scheme

The Rural Development Service (RDS) in Kent are currently seeking applications for DEFRA's new Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme. RDS is keen to generate interest in HLS and has significant funds available to help farmers and landowners meet government's environmental targets. They are looking for high quality applications, supported with a Farm Environment Plan (FEP). Agreements operate on a quarterly start date basis.

Free advice and support for potential applicants is available from RDS advisers at Wye. Monthly one-to-one appointments are also available to discuss potential applications, and take place at Wye. If you would like more information or to book a place, please contact Margaret Rulton on 0118 939 2347.

For more information: [www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/hls](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/hls)

The KSCP are able to write HLS applications and carry out FEPs on behalf of farmers and landowners. Under the old Countryside Stewardship Scheme the KSCP assisted on over 50% of agreements in the Stour Valley.

## Conservation News : Canterbury Wantsum

### ...Then two come along at once

Bus Company Island is a little known 'green oasis' hidden away behind The Causeway in Canterbury. The site was bought by Canterbury City Council in 1994 from the bus company and designated a LNR. The site is small, just 1.7ha, but is a vital wildlife refuge in such a built up area. So secluded is the site that it was chosen when several slow worms were relocated from a nearby area which was developed. The reserve is not open to the public and has become a little overgrown recently, particularly around its small pond. For this reason the KSCP volunteers descended on a sleety November day to give the site a face-lift. With help from staff and volunteers of the Canterbury Environmental Education Centre, a group of 17 set about coppicing scrub, clearing pathways and improving safety on a very slippery dipping platform. A few sore thumbs later, the chicken wire was firmly in place!

### What no water! Volunteers remove willow from dried out wetland area



[www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)

## Events at Blean Wood National Nature Reserve

Meet at the car park, Rough Common, Canterbury (grid ref. long. Advance booking for dawn walks advisable when hot. All events £2 adults/£1 children other than dawn walks which are free. Walk - children must be accompanied by an adult. Further...



Sun 30th April  
Fri 5th May  
Sun 7th May  
Fri 12th May  
Sat 20th May  
Fri 2nd June  
Sat 10th June  
Sun 25th June

**Nightingale - one of Dawn Walk at Blean**

## Sculptured bike rack installed at the Goods Shed

Local artists Will Glanfield and Julian Coode are responsible for creating an impressive sculptural bike rack near the start of the Crab & Winkle Way at the Goods Shed in Canterbury. The piece is made from oak, and railway line that once sat next to the Goods Shed. Both artists come from Whitstable. Commissioned by the KSCP it is the 9th piece of art that the Project has installed along the Crab and Winkle Way since launching the route in 1999. Funding came mainly from the Brett Environment Trust but Sustrans, through a private donor, and Canterbury City Council also made significant contributions. Jon Shelton, Manager of the KSCP says 'I think we have got a bit more sculpture than bike rack, but it certainly looks very impressive. The artists have done a great job'.

**Julian Coode & Will Glanfield next to the new sculptured bike rack at the Goods Shed in Canterbury**



## Take a walk on the wild side

Another year of events has come to an end with the Friends of King's Wood, finishing in style with the annual Christmas work party. After a morning of bramble bashing and pond clearing everyone enjoyed spuds on the fire and mulled wine, suffice to say not much work was achieved after lunch...

A new series of events is planned for 2006. Please contact the Friends for your copy of the events leaflet 01795 530490 or e-mail: [kings\\_wood@btinternet.com](mailto:kings_wood@btinternet.com) Thanks go out to the committee's huge efforts to make the Friends such a vibrant organisation.

## Woods

and new piece of work in 2006. International sound  
ward with his proposal 'A Score for a Hole in the  
before choosing King's Wood. Stour Valley Arts and  
to realise his proposal. Ever-changing sounds will be  
ambient music will be conveyed through an elegant  
his project as, 'both music and an integrated part of  
it'.

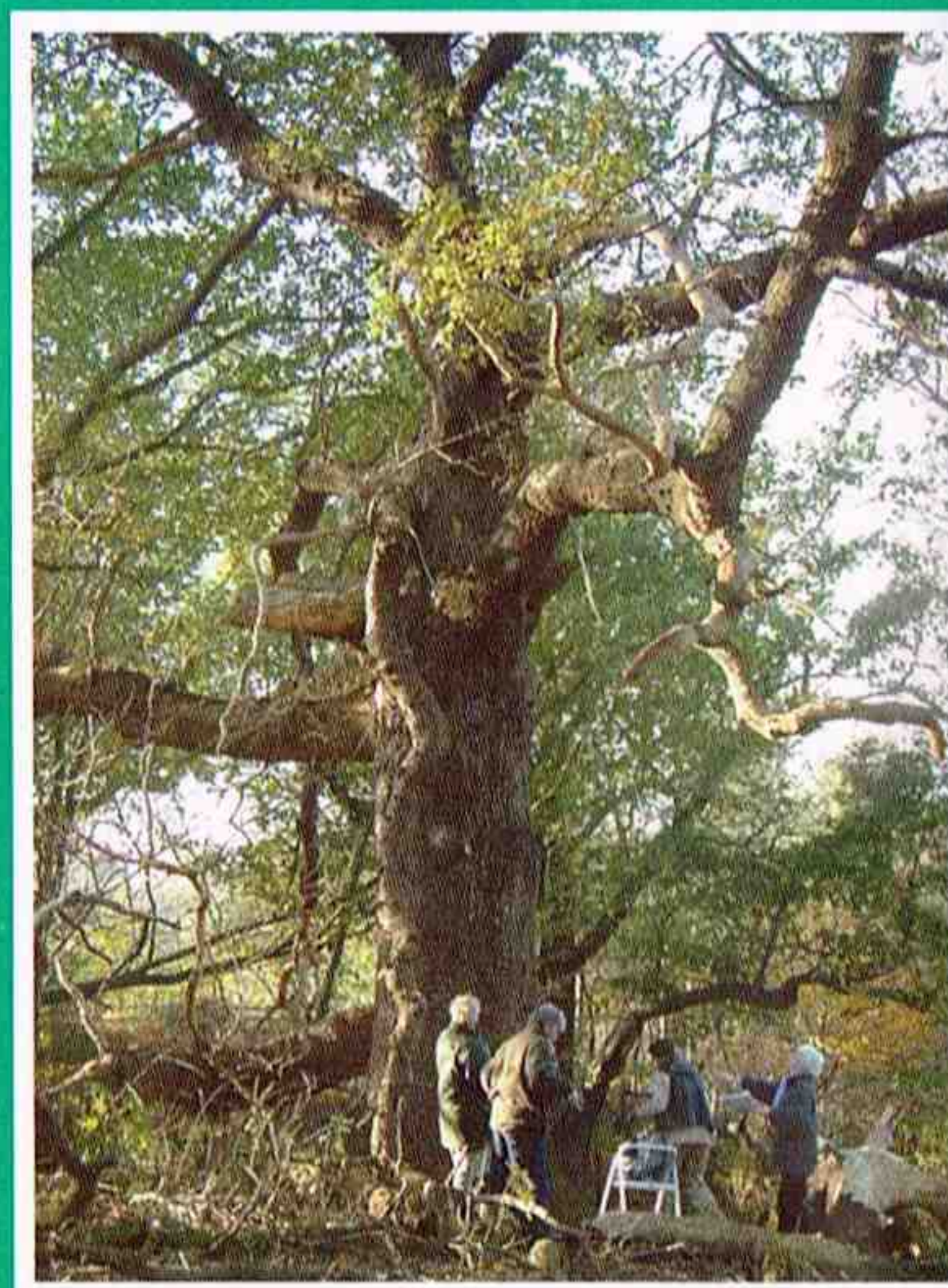
## Major Landscape Study for Ashford

English Partnerships and Ashford Borough Council commissioned Studio Engleback to carry out a Landscape Character Assessment covering over 100 square kilometres of countryside around Ashford. Over 250 parcels of land derived from a Historic Characterisation Study of Kent were grouped into 58 District Landscape Types, covering 12 County Landscape Areas.

This indicates the great variety and subtlety of the landscape. An extensive data base of the resource was created and a weighting of nine landscape sensitivity categories given to District Landscape Types ranging from Conserve and Reinforce to Restore and Create. This study will help to inform the Local Development Framework and future planning policy for Ashford.

## Improvements to key urban wildlife location

Ashford Warren situated on the eastern edge of the town has always been a very popular site for local people. The KSCP working with Ashford Borough Council have been making improvements to the site as well as carrying out survey work. Interpretative panels are planned for the entrance points, which will orientate as well as inform visitors to the site. A pond-dipping platform is planned and work on reducing the silt entering the pond will also be undertaken this winter. Coppicing a small section of the woodland, cutting the meadow and glade creation work will all enhance the site for wildlife. A programme of survey work has started which includes recording all the ancient trees within the wood, tagging them, taking vital statistics and marking the location on GPS. Flora and fauna surveys are also under way. If you would like to get involved in any of the work please contact the KSCP.



**One of the ancient oaks being surveyed at the Warren**

## Ashford Green Corridor

### Wonderful wood carving and somewhere to sit...

Wood carving expert and local artist Martin Brockman worked with the Ashford North Youth Centre on a wood carving project to create rustic seating and a large sculpture at Singleton Lake. Local birds, reptiles and insects inspired the designs.



**Ashford North Youth Centre working on wood carvings**

The group also put their own stamp on the work by carving images of their hands and creating patterns on the pieces. The seating is found in the main car park at the end of Bucksford Lane, off Tithe Barn Lane, Singleton. New sculptural seating has been installed at Civic Centre Park North and Queen Mother's Park. Local artist Will Glanfield was commissioned to create the seats. Will worked with a student from the Ashford School of Art and Design to create the piece at Civic Centre North. Two other benches can be found at Queen Mother's Park which provide useful resting points along the lengthy pathway.

## At the rivers edge

A water vole survey was commissioned by the Green Corridor Project to survey the South Willesborough Dykes. The Dykes are an important area forming part of the floodplain to the south of Ashford and are designated a SSSI. The area is made up of a network of ditches, as well as the main channels of the East Stour and Aylesford Stream. The area potentially offers good habitat for water vole. At the other end of the Green Corridor, willow trees were pollarded on the banks of the Great Stour at Great Chart. The work was carried out on land owned by the Wyvern School. The work restored two old willow pollards and created three new pollards.

## Cleaning up the Green Corridor

Kent Probation Service have helped to clean up areas of Victoria Park. Several trailer loads of rubbish were removed from the river and ditches in the park. In addition the wildlife pond was cleared of rubbish and debris. It supports a population of smooth newts as well as a range of aquatic invertebrates such as dragonflies; it is used as an educational resource in the spring and summer. KPS also joined up with the Ashford Angling Society to coppice willows and clear pathways around the edge of Singleton Lake. The South Willesborough and Newtown Environment Group are working with the Mobile CCTV unit, the Green Corridor Project and Ashford Borough Council to safeguard the Spinney – a small copse that despite its urban location attracts a range of butterflies and birds. The aim will be to combat abuse such as fly tipping.

## Green Corridor Events

The Ashford Green Corridor will be hosting a programme of wildlife events this year. The events programme includes guided walks and children's wildlife clubs for the Easter and summer holidays. Details of all the events can be found on the Ashford Green Corridor website and from the KSCP.



**Arts in the Green Corridor**

e in 2006

£3 adults/£2.50 children. Kids' Evening  
 ges and coffee will be available afterwards.  
 e TR 122594). All events are two hours  
 from Michael Walter Tel: 01227 455972.

## What's under the bridges?

Bats! A public bat evening at Whitehall Meadows this summer revealed that at night, the road bridge where Rheims Way passes over the Stour was a key spot for Daubenton's bats hunting insects! Despite not coming out until a little later than expected, with the help of Jill Tardivel from the Kent Bat Group and some trusty bat detectors, the group soon had an amazing display of aerobic expertise!

4-30am	own Walk
7pm	's' Evening Walk
4-30am	own Walk
8pm	ening Walk
8pm	ening Walk
8pm	ening Walk
8pm	ening Walk
8pm	ening Walk
2-30pm	ath fritillary Walk

**birds you might hear on the**  
**oods NNR**

## Holy cow!

After more than a year and a half, the final staple has been 'driven home' on the fencing work undertaken by volunteers at the Weatherles Hill SSSI near Pegwell Bay. Although less than a kilometre in length, the work involved not only the removal of the old fence line but also the back-breaking task of cutting our way through both reed-bed and Hawthorn thicket. So, you can imagine the collective sigh as the fencing was completed and I think that included the cows too!

**'Mad? What do you mean? We love it here'**



## Wet woodland, not wet socks!

English Nature has called in KSCP volunteers to undertake this year's management of their alder and willow woodland adjacent to the nature trail at Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve. The site is one of English Nature's 'Spotlight' reserves and best known for its sweeping reed-beds rather than its woodlands. Once complete, 0.25ha of woodland will have been coppiced. Over time, the trees will regenerate from the cut stumps, but before the canopy closes over once more, the woodland floor will come alive with an array of wild flowers. However, time is against us as winter water levels are rising and the woodland will flood soon!

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## Keeping up the good work

The second stage of an ongoing project to fence Jumping Downs LNR was carried out by KSCP volunteers this summer. 200m of stock fencing was erected between the site and the adjacent road to allow cattle to graze the area over the winter months. This helps to keep the site as open chalk grassland.



**Fencing at Jumping Downs**

## Volunteering at Canterbury Environmental Education Centre

The centre offers a wide range of opportunities to volunteers interested in wildlife surveying, conservation and environmental education. The 12ha site near Canterbury has wetland, woodland and grassland habitats that need continual management and access improvements. The CUBS project, a community wildlife survey, is also run from the centre. It provides free training and wildlife surveying opportunities at a variety of wildlife sites around Canterbury. Likewise if you're interested in gaining experience working with visiting schools doing environmental activities we can help too. Please contact Alex Ewing, Conservation & Community Officer, CEEC, tel. 01227 452447 or email alexewing100@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

## 5 tonnes of rubbish in one day!

The KSCP have been working together with the MOD and Canterbury City Council (CCC) to combat the misuse of a valuable wildlife site just off the Sturry Road in Canterbury. Reed Pond, part of Old Park SSSI, provides not only a vital wildlife haven but also an excellent community resource. Sadly, it's suffering from misuse by motorcyclists, vandals and people dropping litter. So local residents, KSCP volunteers, Kent Probation Service and soldiers from Howe Barracks joined forces with help from CCC, Serco and KCC Clean Kent Campaign to carry out a massive success with 8 trolleys, 4 burnt motorbike frames, a mattress, a sofa and over 150 black bags of rubbish collected. This is part of an ongoing project to try and improve the area for both wildlife and local residents. So well done to everyone who came and joined in, and many thanks to Northgate Community Ward who kindly provided lunch for everyone on the day!

## All things traditional

400 visitors to No Mans Orchard LNR this September were treated to a 'Making Hay the Traditional Way' demonstration by members of the Working Horse Trust, KSCP volunteers and, of course, three lovely heavy horses. Monty and Dillian, two Ardennes, pulled a hay cutter whilst KSCP volunteers raked hay and forked it onto the cart pulled by the grey shire Drew. Many local companies selling traditional Kentish goods, such as honey, organic vegetables and paintings had stalls and refreshments were available throughout the day. Apple picking and folk music and of course some beautiful September weather made the day complete.



**Monty, Dillian & Drew doing what they do best at No Mans Orchard**

## Little Bitterns seen at Stodmarsh!

Twelve members of the French group Les Blongios (the Little Bitterns) turned up to help out at Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve over a weekend in December. Combined with about 20 English volunteers the cross channel working party got stuck into removing invasive willow on the reedbeds. The BBC even came out to film the cutting and burning and everyone getting on together! The French volunteers demonstrated they were no slouches when it came to hard work and seemed to enjoy 'destructive conservation' as much as the English! The project was part of an ongoing partnership between the KSCP and the French partly funded through the Inter-Regional Development Fund (Interreg). It's our turn to cross the channel next so anyone interested in volunteering on a French Reserve should contact the KSCP.



**Taking a seat on the reed.....bed!**

## Come and visit the AONB!

The KSCP are embarking on two new projects this year to help encourage people to visit the Kent Downs AONB. The first, funded by the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, will work with local communities and pub owners to develop and print a set of circular walks from pubs, initially within the Canterbury part of the AONB. The second is to run a variety of different events, from walks and talks to survival techniques in the AONB for minority groups including young people and asylum seekers.

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