



WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT



GREEN GANG

Family Activities for the School Holidays

Last Easter – 1993– the White Cliffs Countryside Project launched its “GREEN GANG”, a magazine packed full with activities suitable for all the family. At that time we tentatively printed 500 copies to see what sort of response we would have. It was a reasonable response; families turned up for guided walks and pond dipping events. So we decided to go for it in a big way for the summer school holidays. We organised an event somewhere in the White Cliffs Countryside Project area for every day of the holidays. This time we printed 10,000 copies and distributed them to the local primary schools, tourist information centres and libraries.

The Summer 1993 issue of *Green Gang* came out in June and guaranteed an action-packed summer, with nature conservation and countryside events to suit all ages and interests. The summer events included Environmental Matters, ‘green’ play schemes and weekly schemes which children would book for a week’s activities. Every day the children were taken to visit the local countryside looking at different habitats in unusual and interesting ways. A day was spent looking at the problem of waste disposal and the need for re-use and recycling. This day also included a visit to the landfill site at Richborough and a visit to the Whynot Centre at Hawkinge where aluminium and steel cans are recycled.

As in previous years on the play scheme, we dedicated one day to visiting local farms and discussing the need for kind animal welfare. The visits to see rare breed cattle, pigs and sheep at Sladden Farm, Alkham, proved to be a great success with the children.

On the last day of the summer 1993 play scheme, the children helped care for the local countryside by taking part in practical conservation work themselves.

18 There were also many one-day guided walks; Conservation for Kids with practical events to help improve the appearance of the landscape, or footpaths or habitat management; Beach Cleans and Nature Detective Days where the children looked for clues of animals and made plaster casts of animal footprints. We also organised Earth Walks, Family Walks and Art and Crafts sessions.

Earth Walks are a special way at looking at the natural environment in an unusual, sensory way. The aim is to get people closer to nature by using their senses to explore the natural world. Using touch, smell, taste and other creative techniques, people of all ages look at the wild places in a different and stimulating way. I do not want to give too much away as I hope that you will join us for an Earth Walk sometime soon.

Family Walks are aimed at attracting grand-parents, parents and children, all out together to have fun by doing something in the local countryside.

Natural arts and crafts sessions are spent in making collages, cards and calendars – simple items from natural materials

Green Gang was originally developed to involve local families in their local countryside and the work of the White Cliffs Countryside Project. This has proved highly successful over the last year. And as well as attracting a regular local following, it has drawn families from as far afield as North Kent, Greater London, Essex and even France and Germany for some special events.

In the Spring 1994 issue of *Environmental Education*, the national journal of the National Association for Environmental Education, there was an article about the *Green Gang* as an example of good practise.

I am currently organising our next programme for Easter 1994. Look out for fun and exciting activities advertised in the local press. If you would like to be put on the mailing list for *Green Gang* magazine, *Countryside News* or the Guided Walks programme, please contact the White Cliffs Countryside Project, 6 Cambridge Terrace, Dover. Kent CT16 1JT or telephone 0304 241 806.

The Dover Society & LE WALK

The Society contributed to the sponsorship organised by the *Dover Express* for the benefit of the East Kent Hospic Project.

The Retiring collections at the November '93 and January '94 Meetings raised £31.34p.

The Raffle at the Christmas Feast made £73.27p.

Thank you to all those who contributed.

Jennifer Gerrard

Hon Treasurer