

Report of the March Meeting

The White Cliffs Countryside Project

On March 14th Melanie Wrigley, of the White Cliffs Countryside Project, addressed the meeting at St. Mary's Parish Centre, giving an update on the work of the project and outlining some of its future plans.

The project, launched in 1989, manages the "Heritage" coasts from Folkestone, through Dover to Kingsdown, regarded as areas of outstanding natural beauty.

The project is funded by public and private funds from a variety of sources; KKC, DDC, Shepway DC, English Heritage, Kent Trust for Nature Conservation, the Countryside Commission, English Nature, Eurotunnel and Network South-East. Some money also comes from the EEC.

With the aid of some excellent slides, Mrs. Wrigley described some of the successful work completed by the WCCP and went on to give a detailed picture of the life of the flora and fauna of the chalk grasslands along our coast, with some examples of the rare species to be found only in areas of chalk grassland. For instance, the rare late spider orchid is found only in this area of Dover and Folkestone and the Adonis Blue butterfly is found only on the hills behind Folkestone.

There is so much to see in the chalk grassland area that the WCCP guided walks have, each year, attracted more and more people. Last year 6000 people came from outside the Dover area. Details of all walks and are given in the WCCP programme available from the Tourist Centres or from the Museum.

The WCCP is concerned all the time with new ideas and developments. In 1994 the Drop Redoubt is to be floodlit and the 140 acres of the Western Heights under grazing is to be declared a Local Nature Reserve. There will also be improvements to St. Martin's Gun Battery and information boards will be put up. There are also plans for story-telling guided walks around the moats of the Drop Redoubt. Another idea is to give the area the name of Cretaceous Park in a series of dinosaur-building days for local children. In the future, also, the WCCP would like to offer walking holidays and interest holidays to people coming from outside the area.

All the Dover Society members present thoroughly enjoyed the talk, agreeing that the the WCCP has much to offer to residents and visitors. A vote of thanks to Melanie was proposed by our chairman, Jack Woolford.

Planning Ahead

After the interval and raffle, members divided into three groups to discuss the social calendar. The items discussed were Trips to France, the venue for the Christmas meeting, liaison with the Deal Society, outings for 1995 and topics and speakers for 1995. As on previous occasions these group discussions proved very valuable and, in this case, extremely useful to Joan Liggett and the Social Planning Committee. Many thanks to all who took part.

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