



WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT



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Project Officer

SAMPHIRE HOE

After a long, cold winter it did rain for a couple of weeks. This rain had an immediate effect on the vegetation at Samphire Hoe. The grasses grew more strongly and many flowering plants burst forth. In areas Bird's-foot Trefoil carpets the ground with yellow blooms. Mixed in with this are the yellow, downy heads of Kidney-vetch, and standing above them are the pink Sainfoin flower spikes.

A large number of species has colonised the grassland area. These are all welcome at the moment, but we are watching for any problem plants. The recent hotter weather has brought the butterflies out - Small Copper, Small Heath and Common Blue have been recorded so far.

The monthly organised guided walks have continued to be very popular. On 1 June about 190 people enjoyed the sun and the flowers.

SHAKESPEARE CLIFF

This site is important as it is one of the gateway areas to Dover, crossed by the A20, North Downs Way and Saxon Shore Way. The grassland should be grazed again by cattle by early July. This is great news and will be a major step in maintaining the downland plants and insects.

GREAT FARTHINGLOE FARM

Extending westwards from the Western Heights, this area of mixed farmland had its grasslands brought back into grazing management this year, with encouraging results. This spring there was a beautiful showing of Cowslips in several areas, there should be some colonies of Common Spotted Orchid in flower at any time, and most excitingly, a significant number of Adder's-Tongue plants have been found.

WHINLESS DOWN, ELMS VALE

Finally, dedicated volunteers have completed the long set of steps that link the bottom of Whinless Down to the top of the 'downs' steepest end. The steps start on the hillside at the Harbour School end of the recreation ground, within the grazing area, and lead up the steep hillside to the Long Wood end of Whinless Down.

About 114 steps have been cut and built into the hillside to complete a circular route around Whinless Down. The steps provide easier access for local residents, school and college groups, and for people participating in Green Gang events.

Kings Road footpath that leads up onto Whinless Down past Astor School was the

focus of attention for Tidy Britain Week. A day was spent clearing age-old litter from this neglected footpath. About 130 pupils and teachers from Vale View Primary School helped by White Cliffs Countryside Volunteers and some Astor sixth formers cleared the footpath of litter and larger rubbish, collecting about sixty bags of litter and larger rubbish. All the participants were very thorough and not a scrap of rubbish was left. **Please help to keep areas litter free.**

In 1995 we had three cattle die in the Dover area as a result of eating rubbish. Please help us to stop more painful deaths and pick up rubbish especially in any of the grazing areas that you may be visiting. As you know litter is a constant problem, and although we try to collect litter on a regular basis it appears more quickly than we can get rid of it.

The fencing has been regularly vandalised at Whinless Down. This has been done by young lads, some of whom are under age and uninsured to drive motorbikes around the town. Motorbikes are not allowed on Whinless Down. If you see problems up there please contact Dover Police and the White Cliffs Countryside Project. Better still, if you know who these boys are, please let us know.

WESTERN HEIGHTS

The Volunteers and Wardens continue to work hard on maintaining the footpaths, steps, fences and waymarking.

After the winter improvements around St. Martin's Battery and the Grand Shaft to improve views out to sea, it appears that more visitors, both locals and tourists, are enjoying these areas as view points. The gun battery car park is often full of cars with families using the picnic tables provided by the WCCP.

The grazed areas had a wonderful display of cowslips this spring. On the spring bank holiday I led a walk 'In Search of Cowslips'. These flowers are returning to the slopes of the Western Heights once again as the grazing provides better condi-

tions for their growth. We toasted the return of the cowslips with a sip of cowslip wine. (in these days made from commercially grown cowslips) as we sat on the cliff top admiring the chalk downland and the views across the Channel.

Unfortunately, we have had vandalism to fences on the Western Heights too. Some foolish person(s) cut a section of stock fencing above Clarendon. This led to four or five Dexters escaping into the Clarendon area in the middle of the night, causing the local residents much concern and disturbance and the police, graziers and WCCP staff had to be called. If anyone knows who cut the section of fencing and removed it to the moat of the Drop Redoubt we would very much like to hear from you. This is a very serious issue and the culprits need to have a serious warning as to the potential danger caused by their stupid actions. Thankfully, this is a very rare event. Please help us to keep it that way by letting us know if you see any suspicious behaviour.

Its not all bad news though! The Volunteers, Volunteer Wardens and staff continue to care for the countryside around Dover and Folkestone. If you are able to spend any time helping us please contact us at the office.

NEW LEAFLET COMING SOON

Look out for the new, full colour Western Heights leaflet that will be printed very soon (available from mid-July). It gives information about the history and wildlife of the area.

GUIDED WALKS, BIKE RIDES AND GREEN ADVENTURES

Please look out for our summer programmes that are available from Tourist Information Centres, libraries and directly from us. Do encourage your friends and relatives to take part if they come to visit you over the summer.

We look forward to seeing you sometime soon.

