



WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT



PAUL HOLT
Assistant Project Officer,
W.C.C.P.

MEMBERS MAY HAVE NOTICED in the local press and a brief mention in last December's *Newsletter* that the White Cliffs Countryside Project has a new person on the team. Paul Holt joined the team in September 1996. He went to the University of Hertfordshire and completed a B.Sc Hons in Environmental Studies. This included a work placement year where Paul worked for the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Parc National Des Cevennes in France. After finishing University in Hertfordshire he went to work as a Warden of a National Nature Reserve in Ireland. At the same time doing a research Masters Degree with University College Cork on hedgerow birds. Before coming to Dover he worked for the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust as an educational officer at Gibraltar point. The main area that Paul is working on is the Western Heights and Whinless Down in Dover.

With a new addition to the team it has been possible to start a monitoring programme for the butterflies on the Western Heights. This involves walking a route once a week counting the number of butterflies within a set distance. This will help show how successful the management is. Certain species of butterfly need specific plants, for example the rare Adonis Blue and Chalk Hill Blue need Horseshoe vetch for the caterpillars to feed on. This plant only occurs in short grass so the grazing has to match the plants needs.

The Spring and early Summer on the Western Heights has been impressive for the flowers. The cowslips on a number of the fields have increased in recent years thanks to the grazing. This year with no summer grazing on Rope Walk field near Ayecliff it is a riot of colour, with Kidney vetch Pyramidal orchids Milkwort and many others.

Whinless Down is the only site in Kent where the Scarce Forester Moth occurs it is a shiny metallic green and can be seen flying on warm sunny days in the middle of June. It is closely related to the spectacular red and black six spot Burnet moth which is familiar day flying moth.

The new Western Heights leaflet is going like hot cakes and has been a great success. The Summer Guided Walks programme is out now. It has more than three hundred walks to suit all ages and interests, and can be found in Tourist Information Centres, libraries and directly from us.

We look forward to seeing you soon.