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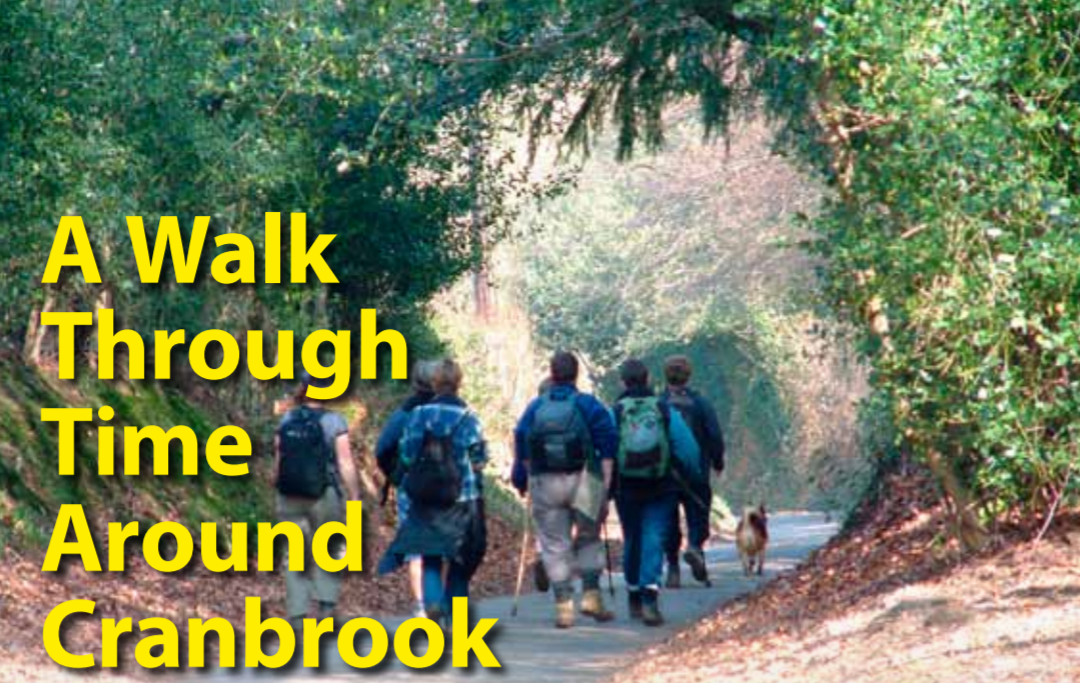
Bumper Free 20th Anniversary pull out Countryside Events Guide

FREE Please take one!

SPECIAL 20th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Weald Wise

A newsletter from the Kent High Weald Partnership Spring / Summer 2011



A Walk Through Time Around Cranbrook

Cranbrook In Bloom has joined forces with the Kent High Weald Partnership to launch an exciting new project called 'A Walk Through Time'. The focus of the project is to work with the local community on producing a series of circular guided walks in and around Cranbrook.

The walks will follow existing public footpaths, taking in points of interest within the beautiful High Weald landscape. Local volunteers will be instrumental with helping deliver this community based project. Historians, ramblers, actors, photographers and wildlife enthusiasts are all needed to help with the research, promotion and launch events.

The walk guides will be completed by the Autumn and widely available free of charge. A series of public events are planned to mark the launch of the project. The walk guides and lots of other interesting local information and pictures collated during the project will be available to browse and download from a new website.

Cranbrook In Bloom (CiB) were successful with a Big Lottery, Awards for All application and a Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Heritage Grant. Other contributions from Cranbrook Parish Council, Kent County Council and CiB have made the project possible.

If you would like to help and can volunteer some time or would like more information on the project, please contact Ian Johnstone at the Kent High Weald Partnership 01580 212972 or email ian.johnstone@khwp.org.uk

Ian Johnstone
Partnership Officer (Countryside)

Dip in and discover something new!

The Friends of Barnett's Wood will be inviting people to dip into their Local Nature Reserve in 2011, and discover something new!

Thanks to an Awards for All grant from the Big Lottery, a packed programme of wild activities and exciting events will take place throughout the year. This will include a Spring and Summer that is positively packed with minibeasting, bat detecting, pond dipping, and more!

Located on the edge of High Brooms, Barnett's Wood acts as a gateway to the wider countryside beyond. We will be making good use of the reserve's rural-fringe location with a series of low-impact, healthy guided walks. See our current work programme for dates and details.

As well as walks and activities for young people, the grant will fund a series of wildlife surveys for the important habitats of Barnett's Wood. Survey work is essential in making sure the practical activities carried out by volunteers each year help to keep this wildlife-rich reserve in good condition. There are lots of ways to get involved as a volunteer, from practical work, to wildlife monitoring, to coming along to one of the Friends' regular meetings. More information on volunteering can be found at www.khwp.org.uk

Jane Frostick
Partnership Officer (Greenspaces)



BIG SOCIETY COMES TO LAMBERHURST

A new conservation project has seen the local community gathering together to help improve Lamberhurst's common for both people and wildlife.

The first day of practical community action took place in October 2010 and saw local residents taking up bowsaws, slashers and loppers to help clear a path around a pond. Work then continued to create a glade, with the cut material then piled between stakes and woven together, to create wildlife friendly habitat piles.

As well as being of benefit to birds, insects and reptiles, the newly open, sunny areas around the site provide a wonderful setting for outdoor learning and community events. This has already been put to good use with a day of survival skills, and a spring-time session of birdbox and beastly sculpture building in the woods.

Early March saw a special amphibian survey training day being held for volunteers. Over 20 keen local residents spent an afternoon learning how to identify amphibians and look after them in the wild, before a practice torch-lit survey session at the Gravel Pit.

Work at Lamberhurst will continue throughout 2011 with a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid. Visit the 'Community' section of www.khwp.org.uk to find out more.

Jane Frostick
Partnership Officer (Greenspaces)

Picture above: Lamberhurst Community Group

Loanable Toolkit for Community Conservation

A new conservation toolkit has been created and is ready for any community group to borrow free of charge!

A range of tools are available to help local community groups with their practical conservation tasks: If you want to plant a hedge on a local green or help cut back vegetation from the churchyard for example, create a school wildlife garden, clear a public footpath or install a gate, all the tools you need are available from the toolkit.

Each kit comes complete with health and safety information including example risk assessments, first aid kits and an instructional DVD on how to prepare for task days and how to use the tools safely. Personal protective equipment and warning signs are included, so that groups of volunteers of all abilities get the most out of the day in a safe and proper fashion.

The Kent High Weald Partnership are holding the kit and we are happy to lend it to any conservation related group. If you are interested in borrowing the kit, simply call or email us. You can find out more about what is in the toolkit and conditions for loan on our website www.khwp.org.uk

Toolkits are available from our sister Countryside Management Partnerships across the whole of Kent Find out more from www.kentcountryside.org.uk

The Loanable Toolkits were made possible with funding from Kent County Council.

Ian Johnstone
Partnership Officer (Countryside)



Discover the wonders of the Weald with your toddler

Free Walks for Toddlers

Parent Toddler Walks are part of the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme. A £3.3 million programme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund to enrich the natural and cultural history and enable people to enjoy and care for the area.

The Kent High Weald Partnership has selected eight sites in the Tunbridge Wells area that are particularly suitable for little legs and buggy wheels. Some of the sites have a range of facilities including parking, toilets and cafes. The walks are available as simple easy to follow guides downloadable for free from the Kent High Weald Partnership website. The guides are also available as a printed booklet.

Come and join us to celebrate the launch of the project, at three free fun events called 'A Toddle Through Time'. The event will include fun and fascinating living history activities. Learn all about how stone aged man lived, with lots of child friendly hands-on activities.

The events are taking place from **11am – 3pm** at:

- Dunorlan Park, Royal Tunbridge Wells – 12 April**
- Pepenbury Centre, Pembury – 20 April**
- Birchden Wood, Eridge – 12 June**

For further information on the launch events and walks visit our website www.khwp.org.uk or call Saul Fajerman 01580 212 972.

Saul Fajerman
Partnership Officer (Education)

ALL KITTED OUT

has marked its commitment to 'Investing in Volunteers' by making resources available to ensure that Countryside Volunteers across all the Countryside Management Partnerships in Kent will be properly equipped. Our volunteers will now be the picture of sartorial elegance, with new safety boots, socks and gloves accompanied by branded T-shirts, fleeces, hi-vis jackets, mugs and bags.

There is a limit to what we could get done on our own, so the success of the Partnership is in a large part down to the fantastic efforts of our volunteers. It's great to be able to make sure they are well looked after and know their efforts are appreciated.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, The Kent High Weald Partnership provides all the tools needed and instruction on how to use them safely and effectively. Our staff are all trained first aiders, and keen to help you learn new skills. All you need to bring is suitable clothing and footwear for the weather, a packed lunch and the enthusiasm to get stuck in.

Our Wednesdays normally run from 10am to 3pm, with breaks for morning tea and lunch.

For more information visit the volunteer section of our website www.khwp.org.uk

Nick Robinson
Partnership Officer (Mid-week)

Investing in our volunteers

Kent High Weald Partnership Team

About Us

The Kent High Weald Partnership was started in 1991, as a partnership funded by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Kent County Council and Natural England. We are part of seven Kent Countryside Management Partnerships. We work with individuals, community groups, schools, youth groups, landowners, local businesses and Parish Councils.

Our aim is to 'link the local community and the countryside, by raising awareness and encouraging action'. You can contact us via e-mail at info@khwp.org.uk, telephone on 01580 212972, or by post at Kent High Weald Partnership, Conservation Centre, Bedgebury Pinetum, Bedgebury Road, Goudhurst, Kent TN17 2SJ. Further information can be found on our web site at www.khwp.org.uk.

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Kent County Council **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council** **KENT HIGH WEALD PARTNERSHIP** **HIGH WEALD AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY** **NATURAL ENGLAND**

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'What a difference 20 years makes'

The Kent High Weald Partnership 1991 to 2011 and still going strong!

This milestone is an opportunity to celebrate the successes of the last 20 years



Volunteers

We have always been hugely grateful to the volunteers for their help and boundless enthusiasm over the years. Rain, snow, heatwaves, mud, water, hills or hurricanes don't seem to be able to stop them!

'We really enjoyed the task day. It was good to see the instant change when we worked on the beans bed. You don't get that when answering emails all day! Thank you for organising that, couple of people were complete novices in using a fork and a spade and I would like to believe that next time they won't be that scared.' Veronika Reeves.



Kent College pupils helping with Pond Week 1997

In 2010 KHWP was awarded the Investing in Volunteers accreditation. The Standard assesses how an organisation's volunteers are recruited. Achieving the Standard shows prospective volunteers that this is an organisation that knows how to look after its volunteers (plenty of biscuits and tea!)



Bokes farm, Hawkhurst, volunteers hedgelaying 1995

Volunteer Task Days

Practical volunteering has been at the heart of what we do. Countless tasks have taken place over 20 years, covering a dazzling array of projects, places and people. We wouldn't get much done on our own, so the success of these days is entirely down to the fantastic efforts of our volunteers.



One of the first volunteer tasks at Barnett's Wood, 1992



Appledore Project building a Mesolithic shelter, 2004

Volunteer task days have seen a huge variety of people, from incredibly diverse backgrounds, ages and abilities. There reason for volunteering is as diverse as the group itself! But they must love it because they keep coming back!

The Volunteer Officer

KHWP has been blessed over the years with a continuous flow of enthusiastic and passionate volunteer officers who have joined to gain much needed experience in conservation, and often bring so much more as well...

'I have just got a place at the University of Kent to do a course in Conservation. I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciated the help you gave us. I honestly believe I would not have passed my course if you hadn't helped. I have enjoyed working with the KHWP and will miss it a lot. Thank you so much for everything you have done for me.' Alex Bartlett 2009



Volunteer Officer, Vikki Osborne, 2011

The Staff

It is said, that you're only as good as the sum of your parts, and one person can't be a team. The bedrock for 20 years of success at KHWP has most certainly been the team.



KHWP team 2009 Jane, Beks, Richard, Nick, Ian, Jason

KHWP staff in 2000 Lawrence, Sue, Juliet and Matt

Partners

KHWP cannot function in isolation. It is only possible through the commitment, goodwill, trust and integrity of everyone involved in its work. By developing a special role, working in partnership with many differing organisations, bodies, groups or individuals, which are all crucial to this process.



Launch of Food4Thought at Oakley School, 2010

'We have known KHWP for over ten years. Their enthusiasm and support always makes it a pleasure to work with them and know that we have an organisation devoted to the care of what is a particularly beautiful area.' Joyce Gutkowska from Cranbrook in Bloom

New boardwalk at the Crane Valley 2001

Enhancing Natural Beauty

For the last 10 years KHWP has overseen the management of three Local Nature Reserve's, Barnett's Wood, Hilbert Wood and the Crane Valley as well as Cinderhill Community Woodland. The reserves have acted as 'hubs' for much of the conservation and community work KHWP delivers.



Cinderhill sculpture, 2005



Green Action in progress at Barnett's Wood, 2007



Cinderhill heathland re-creation volunteer! 2003

Our influence and partnership working with other greenspace landowners has remained strong. This has been vital in making greenspaces a better place for wildlife, a more attractive place in which to live and visit and creating a greener future.



Dunorlan Park, hedge laying 2004

Encouraging Action

Running schemes such as 'Wild About Gardens' and 'Kent Free Tree Scheme' encourage people to get directly involved. KHWP has fundraised, organised, project managed and run hundreds of community based initiatives and schemes over 20 years of encouraging action.

Gardening for Wildlife Awards 2008

'Thank you so much for the Gold Award. We were delighted! I must say that the more one gets and the more excited to feel that perhaps we really are doing something to help the wildlife future.' Susan and Ranendra Basu.



Grant aided laid hedge in Horsmonden 1996

Raising Awareness

20 years of raising public awareness of the local environment.

'I think you deserve a medal for the way you organised the meeting about Combwell Woods on Saturday. The room was bursting at the seams, but all were comfortable, and the programme ran smoothly. There is no doubt that what you have started will have a long term benefit to the woods. Congratulations on an unqualified success.' Margaret Hanton; Woodlands.co.uk



Kent Goes Wild at Dunorlan Park 2010



Strawberry Wood Culvert Celebration Day, 2009

'Thanks for the event at Strawberry Culvert. We live in Horsmonden, and we brought the family along and had a great time. Not only was it interesting for me to see the work you've done on restoring the culvert, but the kids had a great time enjoying the natural benefits of the woods.' Darren White Sept 2009

Environmental Education

KHWP has always had a strong link to environmental education, an innovative approach and high standard of work has been well recognised and long admired.

'BIG BIG thanks to you and your team for allowing our Year 10s the opportunity to work with you this academic year. They have learnt so many new skills and have really grown in confidence.' Ruth Abrahams; Learning Manager for Science and Humanities; Angley School 2009



In 2006 the High Weald Heroes Scheme was launched, which aims to make children more aware of the environment, and specifically the unique local landscape of the High Weald. We have in partnership with the High Weald AONB unit carried out many inspirational projects.



David Bellamy at Broomhill Park School 1996



New pond at Sherwood Park School 1998



Lamberhurst School on Welly Walk launch 2007



Kent College receiving Green Action Award 1997

Recreation & Access

KHWP has been instrumental in improving and promoting access to the High Weald AONB. We have helped develop walk routes such as the Tunbridge Wells Circular and Walk the Bounds. As well as carry out endless practical access improvement projects.

In 2003 Neil Barnes the then KCC Public Rights of Way Officer recalls an access project that KHWP helped with, *'It involved a really good hedge-laying project that we carried out at Cranbrook Primary School. It really*



Launch of Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk 2000

was a big success and it solved a problem that had built up to be a source of complaints from April to September every year: the file was literally bulging with phone messages and complaint letters. Previously, the problem had never really been tackled properly and so it was a great advert for both KHWP and ourselves, especially as it involved the school children and the community.'

Volunteers carrying out access improvements, 2010



Events & Promotion

Over 20 years of activities and events has helped to educate, inform and enjoy the natural environment.

'I am writing just to say thanks for the activities my sons went to. They loved both of them. The pond dipping one was really exciting for them. My 5 year old arrived home and went straight to his drawing desk and made me a card to say thanks for taking them there. It was very educational and informative. It was amazing!' Emilia Sanders 2010



KHWP stand at Weald Ploughing Match 2004



Bow building at Hilbert Woods 2009

'My son Ethan's love of all things nature has been greatly encouraged by your project days and I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart, for taking the time and energy to host these days. They truly have been priceless. Thank you to everyone in the Team and I hope that you all want to continue to share your time, expertise and patience for a few more years to come!' Debbie Basso 2009

Technology has come along way in 20 years, communication was done mainly via Morse code and semaphores when KHWP began! Events were held in a second-hand scout tent with a certain rustic feel!



New pond dipping platform at Barnett's Wood 2006



Woodland Craft Day, Angley Wood 1996

More recently we have entered cyber conservation! Websites with downloadable resources, video clips, electronic booking systems, audio tours and you can even tweet us!



KHWP new website is launched 2009



Landowner Workshop 2004

'This is a rightly proud and impressively resourceful and innovative partnership which has gone from strength to strength over two decades. It continues to deliver a huge range of high quality projects, growing local involvement, access and awareness and improving the fantastic High Weald wildlife and landscape. It is no surprise that this breeds high levels of satisfaction and support from its partners. Its model 'big society' approach equips it very well for the challenges ahead.' KHWP Chair, Linda Davies, formerly Kent County Council Director of Environment, Highways & Waste.

What does the next 20 years hold?

KHWP has built itself upon a reputation for delivering sustainable solutions to local conservation issues whilst providing excellent value for money. We would like to maintain this status and strive to continually improve.

The successful CMP of the future will need to be adaptable, flexible and more business minded if we are to evolve and meet the challenges ahead.

A huge THANK YOU to all who have contributed towards 20 years of KHWP success, it wouldn't have been possible without you!



Kildown Mill Green hedge planting, 2000

Thanks to Kate Chitham and Chris Hughes for pictures and illustrations. Thanks to all our supporters who provided text.