

Discover Perry Wood

This is a project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund which is being run by Swale Borough Council and the Mid Kent Downs Project (a Countryside Partnership). It is a project which has been developed to provide a better understanding of Perry Wood, and its value in the Kent Downs landscape. The work will engage the local community and run various events and activities until the end of 2010.

Main objectives

- 1) To carry out historical research with professional archaeologists from the Trust for Thanet Archaeology, with community involvement.
- 2) To use the outcomes of the historical research with wildlife data to feed into a new KWT management plan for the woods, upon which the local community will be consulted.
- 3) To hold at least 2 events for locals & visitors per year, exploring the wildlife, landscape and historical value of the site. Hopefully these events can help to add to our wildlife knowledge of the area.
- 4) To use the research findings to provide new interpretation for the woods - for example a new leaflet, website information and on-site interpretive features. The latter will probably be woodcarved sculptures, in-keeping with the woodland environment. Again, the plans will be available for consultation.
- 5) To provide a nature trail and education pack for local school use.
- 6) To replace 'The Pulpit' with a bigger and better version, using local materials. There used to be a bigger version and we hope to re-create this and to include some interpretation of the stunning views.
- 7) To carry out some footpath and bridleway restoration, improving conditions for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

Opportunities - Plenty!

- We will be helping to carry out an archaeological survey of 'Windmill Hill' in March. This has been identified as a significant archaeological site, so the group work is focussing here at the moment. The suggested dates are 14th, 16th, 25th, 27th and 18th. Please get in touch to register interest!
- If you're interested in documentary research, for example past land-uses in and around the woods, the history of quarrying, the history of the old Mill and mill-path, old estate and woodland boundaries etc... and would like help to pay for trips to the archives, printing old maps etc... there is money for these 'volunteer expenses'. Please use the contact details below. The Trust for Thanet Archaeology can give you all the pointers you need!

From the 'Ghosts & Memories' event held in November, several people expressed an interest in this kind of research. Please do get in touch if you're still interested!

- We're planning a 'learning bird song' and wildlife-art event for the warmer months, and hopefully an event based on forest management and traditional wood-working skills in the Autumn.

- For those who would be interested in volunteer 'conservation work' in the woods, the Mid Kent Downs Project can help to organise this kind of work in addition to the main work areas of the 'Discover Perry Wood' project. This year, it would be really beneficial to do some bracken and rhododendron bashing - which is always therapeutic! Also, we'd like to regenerate the native heather growing on site, to stabilise some of the eroding banks of gravel and sand. Please get in touch if you'd like to help take cuttings and grow-on plants.

As we learn more about the nature of the woodland, both wildlife and historical, we'll be able to hold more events to 'interpret' and celebrate this. Hopefully we'll unravel the mysteries of Windmill Hill and be able to take you back to a time when the landscape looked and felt quite different . .

Watch this space!

Better still, help us fill it!

The role of the Mid Kent Downs Project

The Mid Kent Downs Project is a 'Partnership Countryside Management Project' covering areas of Swale and Maidstone Boroughs, within the Kent Downs AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). It is able to offer help, advice and often grant money for conservation and enhancement of landscape and wildlife in this special area, with a strap line of 'Linking People, Land and Nature'.

The Mid Kent Downs Project is helping to oversee implementation of the main objectives of the Discover Perry Wood project, and is taking a 'facilitating' role as regards the community aspects. For the duration of the historical research stage, the Trust for Thanet Archaeology can also offer plenty of guidance. If you'd like to offer any ideas or get involved, please contact:

Sally Evans, Mid Kent Downs Officer. 01303815170 sally.evans@kentdowns.org.uk. West Barn Penstock Hall Farm, Brabourne, Ashford, Kent TN25 5LL

Updates, general information and a proposed events programme is held on the Kent Downs website:

www.kentdowns.org.uk

