

# Newsletter




Canterbury Environmental Education Centre

Spring 2008

Welcome to the latest edition of the Newsletter. Spring has arrived early this year, with frog spawn in the ponds on 26/02/08 and the first chiffchaff arriving on 10/02/08, during a weekend of bright sunshine. As you can see there has been a lot going on at CEEC over the last few months with many exciting projects coming to fruition and support both financial and physical from our 'Friends'.

Special mention must go to Emily Darge, our first V-Fund Volunteer, who has just been appointed Education Ranger with Thurrock District Council. Congratulations and good luck Emily.

Those of us striving to make a more sustainable world (all of us I hope), will find some interesting information on the [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) website, including a report on KCC's, energy efficient traffic lights initiative, renewable energy projects in schools and the 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign.'

Graham Dear   
Head of Centre

## Friends Bird Hide by Dave Pritchard

One of our main projects on the reserve has been the construction of a new bird hide and adjoining boardwalk which is on Teddy Bear Island, quite close to the main centre and the views across the lake are quite stunning!

It is a perfect location to observe our local wildlife on the reserve, which includes many species of waterfowl, kingfishers, swans and also migrant species of birds who visit our shores in the spring and summer months.

Work on the boardwalk started in November of

last year. We have created a new scenic route which overlooks the lake, on the approach to the hide.

The work on the actual hide started in January this year and has been a very rewarding project. We feel it will prove to be a great asset to the centre.



The new Friends Bird Hide taken from Ant Island

Staff members from CEEC have worked alongside

regular volunteers. We also had Canterbury College students on work experience, so we thank them all for their hard graft and dedication.

However, the weather has not helped us as we lost a few weeks due to heavy rain and flooding, but we are bang on target for completion and our grand opening date, which will be on Sunday 6th April.

We hope to see you then.

Spread the word around, that there is a little gem in the heart of Canterbury and that's us.



Sponsored by the Big Lottery Fund

## Up date on the Reserve by Dave Edgar

There has been quite a lot of activity during the new year at CEEC, which will hopefully have quite an impact when all the projects are completed.

The new bird hide will be finished by Easter. An opening event will be held on the 6th April 2008. It has been a joint effort with Dave

Pritchard, being helped by Peter Adams and three Canterbury College students John, Jack and Chris doing most of the work.

Our decking adjacent to the visitor centre has been extended, which makes a huge difference in terms of space, but also contributes to a better view, when sit-

ting having lunch or tea.

We also have a new roundhouse being constructed from local sustainable materials by Peter Forrest from Forest Woodcraft, to replace our present one situated in Canterbury Woods. The new structure will be bigger and a better experience for visitors.

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### Events 2008:

- Easter fun days' ~ 21st, 23rd, 24th March
- Spring discovery Day ~ 6th April
- Buzz Club ~ 9th, 10th, 16th, 17th April
- Mini Buzz Club ~ 8th, 15th April
- Organic vegetable gardening for beginners: Part 1 ~ 13th April
- Beginners bird watching part 1: Residents and early migrants ~ 13th April
- Dawn Chorus Walk ~ 4th May
  - Wild Activities ~ 4th May
  - May Day mystery trail ~ 5th May
- Organic vegetable gardening for beginners: Part 2 ~ 11th May
- Beginners bird watching part 2: Summer migrants ~ 25th May
- Buzz Club ~ 27th, 28th May
- Mini Buzz Club ~ 29th May

## Mini Buzz Club by Diane Crush

14 boys and girls aged between 3 ~ 7 arrived with mums and grandparents to hunt for minibeasts'.

On the way to Canterbury Woods we looked for birds and then searched for creatures under logs and leaves.

Much excitement ensued as worms, slugs, centipedes etc were discovered.

Walking back to the centre we collected leaves, twigs and other materials to make a clay model of their favourite creature. Some imaginative creatures emerged

and the morning finished with a minibeast version of "Old McDonald". Overall the day was a success and the Children and adults alike were looking forward to returning to the next Mini Buzz club!

The photographs to the right show two members of Mini Buzz Club and their finished creature.



Oscar and Libby with their Mini Beasts



Snail made during Mini Buzz Club

## New Staff Members by Diane Crush and Karen Matthews

As the new admin assistant I feel I have settled into my new role after four months and I really enjoy working here at the centre.

I work alongside a great team, who are friendly and always there to help me when I have any work related problems.

My job is varied and I enjoy all aspects of it, especially with the events and marketing. Thank you to all my fellow colleagues who have made me feel so welcome.

By Karen Matthews

Having brought school parties from Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School to CEEC for many years I never dreamt that one day I would actually work here.

But four months on I feel part of the team here and have run activities for a wide age range. Nursery children to post graduate students from Christchurch University and National Grid employees on a team day out.

Certainly no two days are the same here and I am enjoying the different challenges that life at the Nature Reserve brings.

By Diane Crush

*"No two days are the same here"*

## V-Volunteering by Emily Darge

As I approach 4 months as the V Volunteer this article is a good excuse to reminisce on my time at CEEC.

My placement with the Education Officers has had the opportunity to shadow them and work on projects of my own.

Over the winter I have developed a new way-finding programme for schools and helped review other educational material.

Key projects are the 3 new children's activity trails to accompany the new site guide, the bird boxes are now mapped ready for monitoring and our library of books is currently being catalogued!

It has been a pleasure volunteering here with fun, interesting people and such varied work.

vinspired

The volunteering site for 16-25 year olds in England



Clyde Frog, as part of the new activity trail

## Upcoming Events



We have many exciting events this year for all the family and individuals to enjoy.

On Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Monday we have days of Easter fun with drop in activities of crafts and Easter egg hunts following clues around the Nature Reserve.

Our Spring Discovery Day is on the 6th April. Please come along to witness the opening of the Friends Bird Hide. This is also the first day of our new trail leaflets.

We have a three part course on organic vegetable gardening for beginners, on the 13th April with the second on 11th May and the third

on the 15th June. Where you have the opportunity using our allotment to grow your own organic vegetables!

Mini Buzz Club is on the 8th and 15th April and the 29th May. Our first one in February was a success with everybody enjoying the day.

Buzz Club is on the 9th, 10th, 16th and the 17th April and the 27th and 28th May

On the 13th April we have a part 1 of a 2 session short course on beginners bird watching concentrating on residents and early migrants and the second course on summer migrants on the 25th May.

On the 4th May we have a Dawn Chorus walk and a Wild Activities

event of practical tasks, guided walks and pond dipping.

On the 5th May we are hosting a May Day mystery trail where you will win a prize!

On the 8th June we have our Friends Open Day, full of family fun with guided walks, art, pond dipping, face painting and practical tasks!

Please see our events leaflet or call the centre for further information.



A guided tour of the Nature Reserve on the 2007 Open Day

## New Promotional Material by Graham Dear



CEEC may not be Canterbury's best kept secret for long with the new promotional material funded by the 'Friends 'BIG Lottery Fund grant and match funding from KCC.

The off-site flier and membership form should encourage more visitors to enjoy our special place for nature and hopefully recruit more members for the 'Friends'.

The new 'Kingfisher Trail' guide is full of interesting facts about the reserve, its history, wildlife and management.

Now, in addition to pond-dipping, there are also three new activity trails for the younger visitors. A sticker trail for the very small and hedgehog and tile trails for older children.

The latter are based on our very popular activity trails for primary schools and involve finding clues, collecting natural materials and making a clay animal or decorative tile.

*"CEEC may not be  
Canterbury's best kept  
secret for long"*

## Floods and Storm damage by Karen Matthews



In January 2008 we had some vicious storms, that consisted of persistent heavy rain and gale force winds.

Canterbury Environmental Education Centre did not escape from damage. The wind ripped off part of our roof that covers the verandah outside of the visitor centre. Part of it blew into the lake and the other part went over the roof and into the road.

We also suffered extensive flooding,

it nearly reached the top of the verandah!

One morning we were watching the water rise and a squirrel appeared. We watched in amazement as it jumped into the flood water and swam to the nearest tree, ran up it, shook itself dry and went on its way.

The Coots were just as surprised as us when the squirrel went swimming by them!

The floods soon subsided and we were pleased that the water didn't reach into the centre.



## Canterbury Environmental Education Centre

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**Find out about  
Canterbury's best kept  
secret, less than a mile  
from Canterbury Cathedral**



**nationalgrid**

We are open from the 1st April to 31st October; Sundays, Bank Holiday and Monday to Friday during school holidays.

Open: 10 ~ 4pm.

£2 per person

Under 5s free

Children under 16 free with a full paying adult with a Canterbury residents card.

## Winter Birds by Paul Jackson

It has been a good winter for Tufted Duck and Shovelers with record numbers. This has also been the case with numbers of Blackbirds on the reserve ~ clearly there seems to have been an influx of continental birds.

However these birds are now gradually leaving us and we now eagerly anticipate the arrival of our summer migrants. Indeed some, like Blackcaps, have already been

heard on the reserve.

Over the winter we have been busily putting up additional nest boxes to attract both hole nesting species and other birds such as Robins and Wrens. We are also trying to attract Tawny owls to nest by providing them with a suitable box.

This Summer we are also submitting nest records to the British Trust for Ornithology. To do this thoroughly we do need help so if you feel that

you would like to participate in this very rewarding task please contact the centre ~ you don't need to be an expert ~ just enthusiastic!

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Alex Ewing has organised the next Dormouse and Great Crested Newt monitoring. 'Friends' are welcome to attend. Please bring a torch to the Newt monitoring and children must be accompanied by adults. Please book through the centre. The dates are as followed:

### **Dormouse:**

Sunday 20th April 2008 at 20:00 ~ 21:30

Sunday 18th May 2008 at 20:30 ~ 22:00

Sunday 15th June 2008 at 21:00 ~ 22:30

### **Great Crested Newt:**

Sunday 27th April at 9:00

Sunday 25th May at 9:00

Sunday 22nd June at 9:00

Sunday 20th July at 9:00

Sunday 24th August at 9:00

Sunday 21st September at 9:00

Sunday 26th October at 9:00

Sunday 23rd November at 9:00

Please recycle me 

KM