

Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme

Words in the Landscape Poems 2021



CHASE & CHALKE
LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP



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1. Words in the Landscape

This booklet contains the poems, photos, paintings and sketches collected from Poetry Boxes installed across the Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape areas part of the Works in the Landscape project.

The aim of the project was to bring together readers, writers, poets and tellers of tales to celebrate the written and spoken word.

Using the poetry boxes our aim was to capture people's responses to the landscape and the heritage of the area as they explored this incredibly inspiring landscape.

So many poets and writers are inspired by their surroundings to weave words into bejewelled tapestries that transport us and help us further a connection to our local landscape and heritage.

We are so very grateful to everyone who has been inspired by the Chase & Chalke area and extend our thanks to everyone who has offered us their words and shared creative pieces revealing their relationship with the landscape.

Collected over the spring and summer of 2021 this compendium represents our individual and collective relationship with the countryside, our connections with each other and our place in the landscape.

Many pieces were posted in our poetry boxes installed at Win Green, Fontmell and Melbury Downs, the villages of Chettle and Tollard Royal, Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve and at Martin Down National Nature Reserve, while others were sent as emails and social media posts. Some were even hand delivered to our office while others reached us by mail.



2. Your poems

Win Green



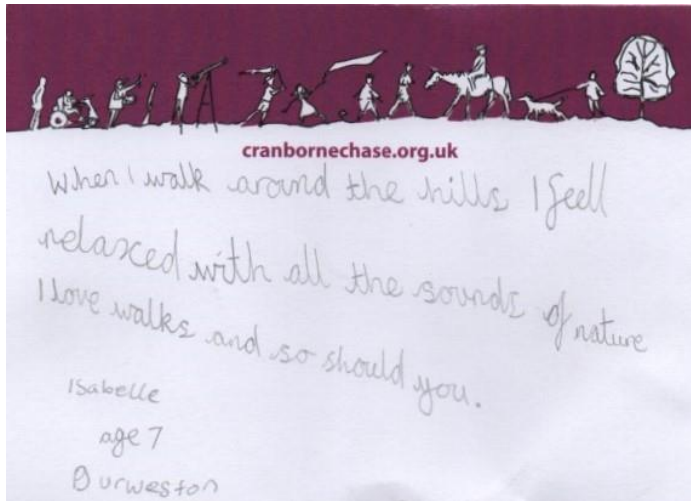
Win Green is the highest point in Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). From this vantage point we are blessed with beautiful and dramatic panoramic views in all directions, with glimpses of the Isle of Wight, the Purbeck Hills, Blackmore Vale and Salisbury Plain in the distance.

This rich downland habitat of Win Green is a distinctive point in the landscape south of Shaftesbury and is recognisable for miles around by a clump of beech trees which crown the site. These wonderful trees mark the location of a Bronze Age bowl barrow created by our ancestors thousands of years ago to honour their dead, standing proudly on the highest point and surrounded by gentle slopes of grass downland habitat supporting a wide range of plants and animals.

The ancient Ox-drove links the countryside of Thomas Hardy's novels with Salisbury, along which cattle would have been herded over long distances from Devon and Somerset to Hampshire ports.

This important habitat is managed by the National Trust for its importance to biodiversity through cattle grazing which has resulted in an increase in the number of flowers and grasses found here.

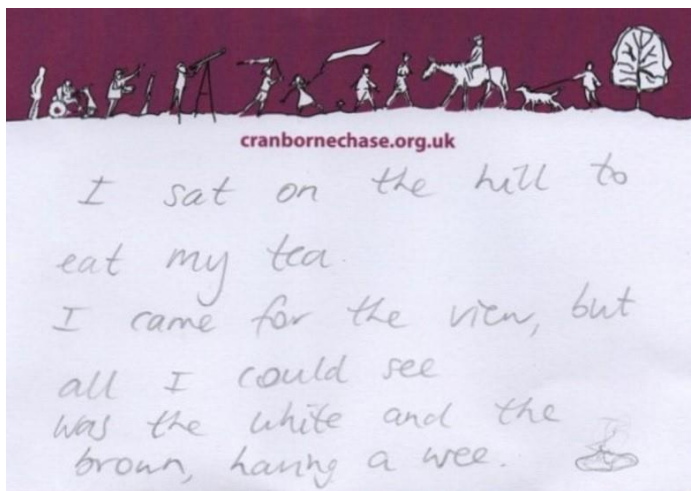




When I walk around the hills I feel relaxed with all the sounds of nature

I love walks and so should you.

**Isabelle, aged 7
Durweston**

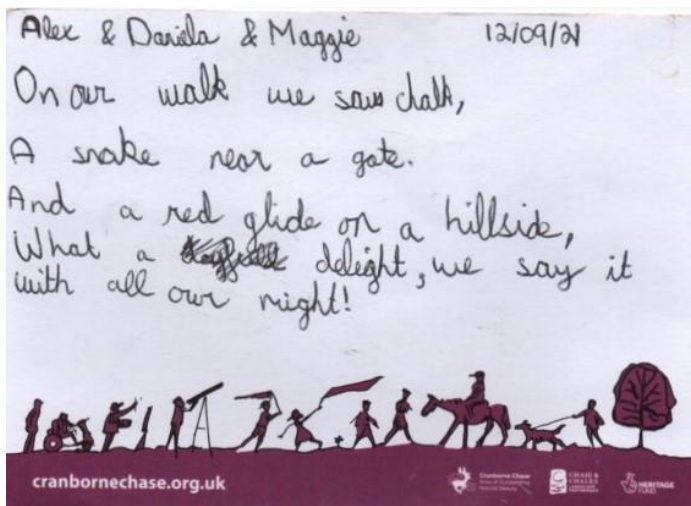


*I sat on the hill to eat my tea,
I came for the view, but all I could see,*

*was the white and the brown,
having a wee.*

*Cobwebs blown away,
The view is good for the soul,
Peace abounds up here.*

Isabelle Family



*On our walk we saw chalk,
A snake near a gate,
And a red glide on a hillside,
What a delight, we say it
with all our might!*

Alex & Daniela & Maggie

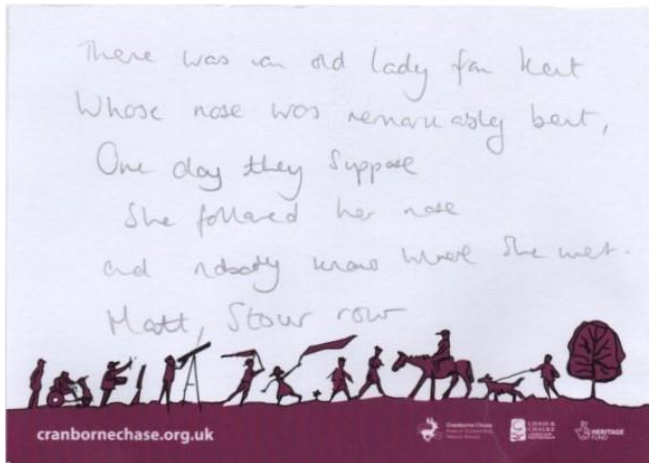


Win Green Hill and Ox Drove Heights

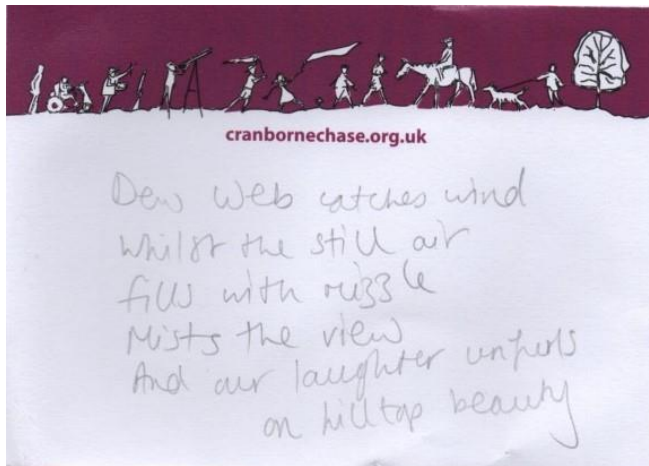
*The guardian call of ravens greets our ears,
From Cranborne's crown on New Year's Eve.
A shrug of fog lingers over Shaftesbury way,
Hugging frosted hollows and sheer slopes.
It is cold in Win Green's bower -
Even though bright sun rakes through
The beech henge army,
Casting shadows the length of solid trunks.
A kiss of remembrance hangs withering,
Recalling an ancient barrow warrior,
A simple holly wreath, ribbon trimmed,
Chalk rubble stones scattered beneath.
Zebra-striped shade strides North East
To exit on a plank bench with bird's-eye view,
Stretching far across Nadder vale to distant heights:
White Sheet Hill, Salisbury Plain, North West to
Stourhead.
How many have stood at this lookout
Marking the magic arc of space?
Death, conquests, unknown feet, bind us to this hill -
Until the whisper of beyond beckons us forward
To walk the green way for a while.
Slumbering ant hills blotch the down.
The air's ice breath has crystallised on chalk stones,
Mooring small icebergs in a sea of frosted grass.
All these small beacons of hope Inspire our fragile
thoughts.
Was there something that drew us upward?
To pull the skies closer, to breathe more freely.
Time transcends sightlines here,
Where all past and futures interweave,
And winter cracks her knowing smile.*

Yvonne Crossley

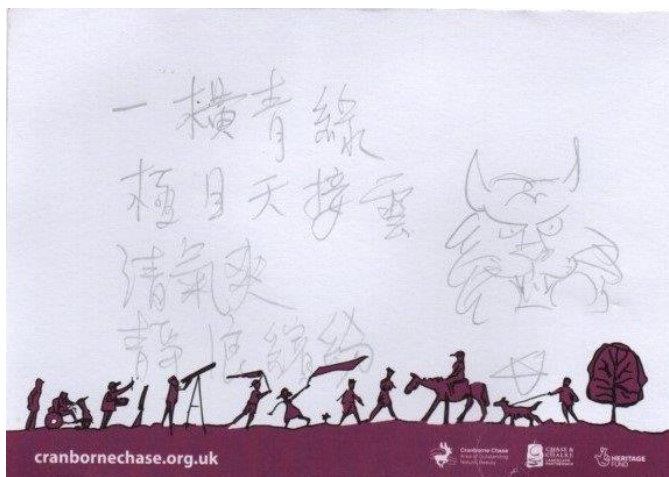




*There was an old lady from Kent,
Whose nose was remarkably bent,
One day they suppose
She followed her nose
And nobody knew where she went.*
Matt, Stour Row

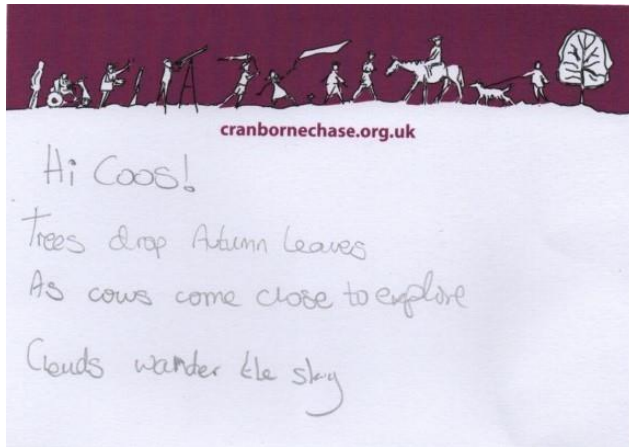


*Dew web catches wind
whilst the still air
fills with mizzle
Mists the view
And our laughter unfurls
on hilltop beauty*
Anon



*A slice of pure green
The whole landscape cradles the sky
All the pure cool air
Calm in gentle waves, all rolling
nonstop*
Anon

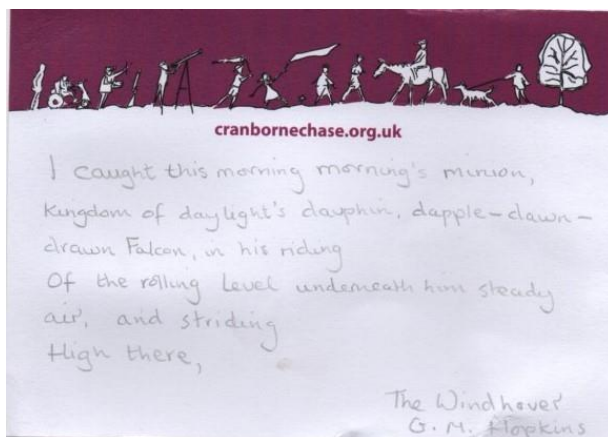




Hi Coos!

*Trees drop Autumn leaves
As cows come close to explore
Clouds wander the sky*

J Monteith



The Windhover

*I caught this morning morning's minion,
Kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-
dawn –
drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady
air, and striding
High there.*

G. M. Hopkins



*All things bright and beautiful.
Sensational!*



*Thank you 😊
Isabelle, aged 7, Durweston*



Escarpment

*Among the things
That have not changed
All that much in millennia,
Is the shape of a shoe.
Nor, here, have the hills that
Curl up like the handiwork of ages
Meant for hardy travellers
Along the ridge
Where the sound of chalk
Is the footfall of words
Shared by Romans,
The more sensitive of whom,
In between putting locals to the sword,
Might have thought
The long shadow of trees below
In the evening sun
Reminded them of home.*

Marius Quint



*Blue air breathing;
Sun over sheep's bit
Heat shimmer lies
levelled on sere grasses
Land rolls, circling like an ocean
Ancient seas lie under.*

Jenny Whymark



*From Salisbury to Win Green
Not by the drover's road
But by the 29
Shuddering and shaking
through Sixpenny Handley
and Stoke Farthing,
the Wessex Ridge by our side,
promising a hot climb,
a breezy view
Our time me and you.*

Steve Potter



The Land

The land is rough
The land is smooth
The land is cold
The land is warm
The land is high
The land is low
The land is happy
The land is sad
But the land is strong
and wise and glad
and it is safe, it is
happy, so help keep
in strong, happy and
safe!

by Ayla
Horsfall 11

The Sea

The sea pounds the rocks and
pounds the sand.
I cosy in my cottage look out to
sea and stroke ~~a~~ a cat and
wrapped up in a shawl I shiver.
The lovely calm sea, the day
before was as gentle as a mouse.
But now the sea is as wavy
as the Navy, but I look and
see ^{the} waves just want to get
warm by the fire. So the lady
with a cat, walked to the windy
shore and lit a bonfire and
the sea sighed playfully and
was gentle once more.

by Ayla 11
Horsfall

Moss

The moss slithers over the log.
It slithers along the ground and
glistens in the rain and soaks
up water like a sponge. It
creeps along silent and green.
It winds along. It glides along.
It covers its lands all over
with a lovely warm grasp.

by Ayla 11
Horsfall



Tollard Royal

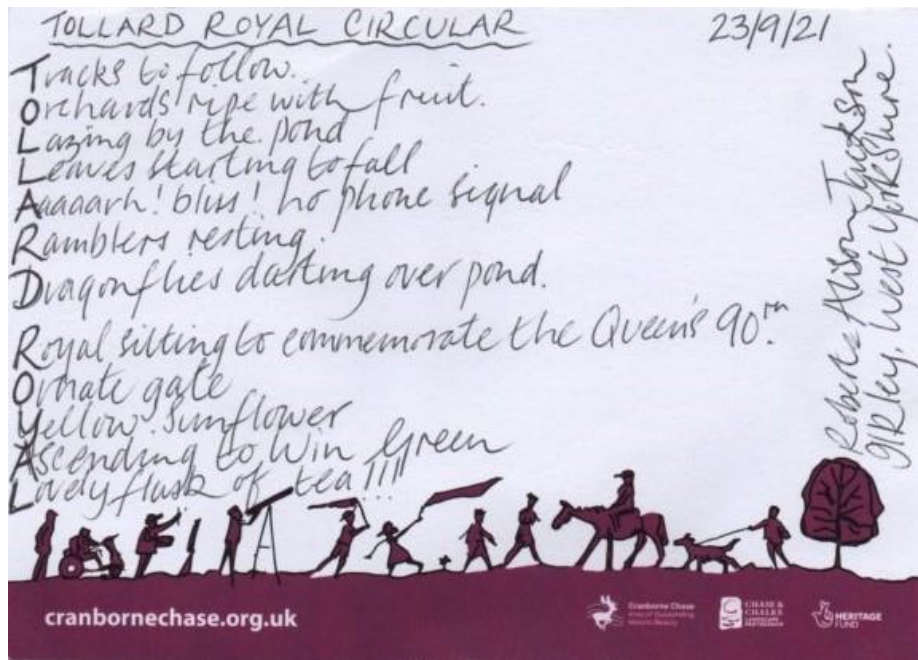


The beautiful small village of Tollard Royal lies between Ringwood and Shaftesbury, enclosed by high valley sides. This peaceful location is the perfect place to start a walk with quiet tracks and lanes linking walkers to wooded valley bottoms and high chalk hills with extensive views all around. The thatched houses of the village add a serene character, set around a beautiful village pond.

King John's House, a medieval hunting lodge dating back to around 1240, sits adjacent the Church of St Peter ad Vincula. This was the hunting lodge used by King John whilst hunting on the Chase through which the village received the 'Royal' addition.

During the 18th century the house was owned by the Pitt-Rivers family, and General Pitt-Rivers known as the father of modern archaeology, resided at the late Georgian or early Victorian 'Rushmore' opening up the Larmer Tree Grounds 'for the recreation of the people in the neighbouring towns and villages'.





TOLLARD ROYAL CIRCULAR

Track to follow

Orchards ripe with fruit

Lazing by the pond

Leaves starting to fall

Aaaaarh! Bliss! No phone signal

Ramblers resting

Dragonflies darting over pond

Royal sitting to commemorate the Queen's 90th

Ornate gate

Yellow Sunflower

Ascending to Win Green

Lovely flask of tea!!!

Robert & Alison Jackson

Ilkley, West Yorkshire



Chettle Village

The village of Chettle is a perfect example of an estate village with its family still in residence and with feudal links going back a millennium. This thriving village sits towards the southern part of the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership area and comprises just eighty parishioners, and is fortunate to a village shop and hub through which village life flows.

The name Chettle is thought to derive from the Old English 'Cietel' for 'a deep valley between hills' and may be of Anglo-Saxon origin, and records show the name had evolved into 'Chetel' by 1234.

The architect Thomas Archer created Chettle House as an elegant Baroque mansion, in Queen Anne style, for George Chafin in 1710, and went on to be employed by both George I and George II. Chettle House remains the almost perfect example of Archer's early work, which is intact except for the cupola, which was taken off the roof in the 1840s.

*There are photos
but what do you remember
without them?*

Anon

*Still morning,
I climb the road hill,
turning onto grass lanes
that lead me gently
back to you.*

Anon

Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve

Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve is located just south of Salisbury, on the northeastern tip of the Chase & Chalke area. This 70 hectare nature reserve encompasses rolling chalk downland, steep slopes and a dry valley and part of the reserve has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of the rare flora and fauna found here.

The history of this site goes back thousands of years: Neolithic Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Roman artefacts have all been uncovered in and around Coombe Bissett Down, and the steep slopes within the nature reserve are patterned by medieval terraces called strip lynchets, which were used for livestock grazing.

The site has a rich abundance and diversity of plants, insects, and birds including delicate harebells, bee orchid, pyramidal orchid, devil's-bit scabious and burnt orchid. Yellowhammer, goldfinch, and skylarks are just a few of the common birds that thrive here and in summer months the chalk downland comes alive with butterflies such as Adonis blue, chalkhill blue, dingy skipper and marbled white.





*We trekked all the way from Salisbury town
Looking forward to the splendour of Coombe Bissett Down
Relaxing whilst enjoying the view
Hoping to see some deer, one, two or a few.*

Philip Pleass

*Wind in my hair, sun in my face, Coombe Bissett Down what a wonderful place.
Rolling hills of green and brown, where I see buzzards swooping down to the ground.
Exhilarating feeling, so alive.
A myriad of colourful plants are spread all around,
Like a magic carpet of delight.
If I'm lucky I might spot a deer, just for a moment, then he'll disappear.
Wind in my hair, sun in my face, Coombe Bissett Down what a wonderful place.*

Evelyn Pleass





Late Summer Custard

*Shadows flow down the Coombe like custard
Actually, it's morning so they shrink upwards
Pulled by the soaring sun into the raised arms of the hedgerow
And the curled paws of the wild carrot.*

Charlotte Moreton



Fontmell & Melbury Downs



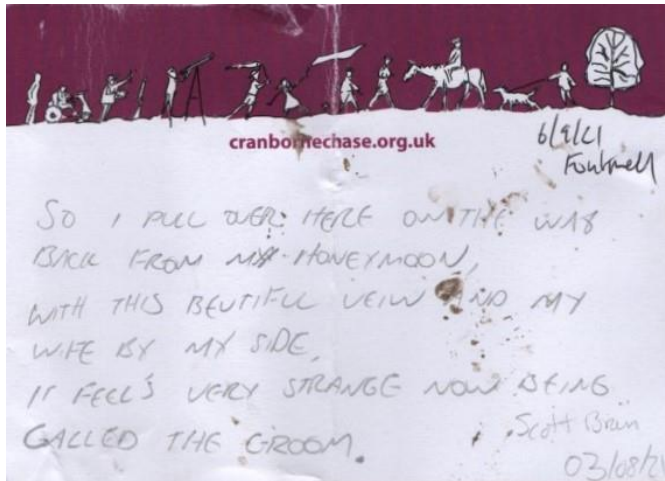
Fontmell & Melbury Downs offers quite stunning, far-reaching views towards the Saxon town of Shaftesbury across Blackmore Vale and beyond. This open expanse of flowery downland inspired Victorian novelist and poet Thomas Hardy in which his novels are set.

From the car park at the top of Spread Eagle Hill, you can embark on many circular walks across the chalk downland, a fantastic setting in which to encounter the many butterflies and orchids which thrive here. Northwards towards Compton Down and Melbury Hill this unique vantage point offers one of the best displays of glow-worms during warm summer evenings.

Melbury Hill marks the high point of a spur Melbury Beacon located 863 feet above sea level. From these sweeping views the eye drifts towards Melbury Down, a dry valley that cuts the ridge of Cranborne Chase and straddles the counties of Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire.

*Green woman wandering
Twigs and feathers in her hair
The forest spilling out
Mycelium running underground
Her dark tendrils reaching into dream
Her call insistent, infectious
Wake up, wake up! Time is running out.*
Mandy Griffiths

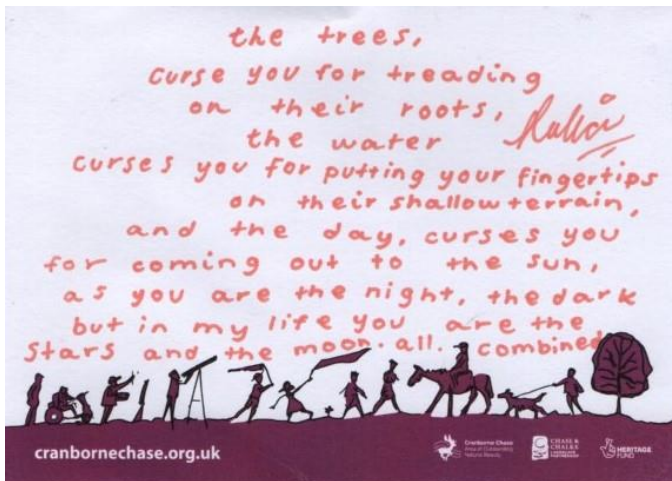




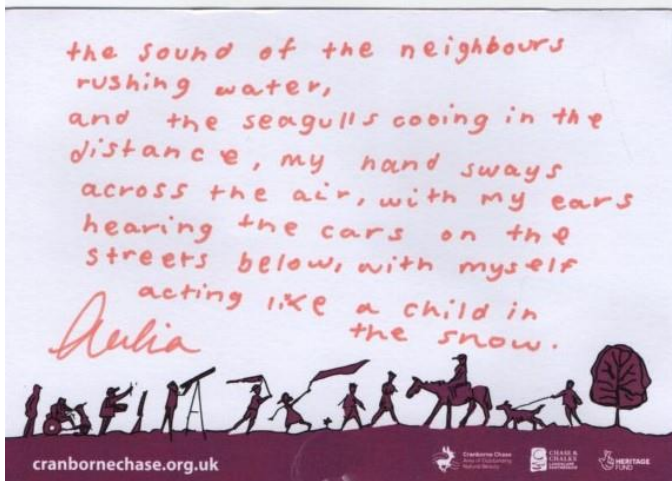
*So I pull over here on the way
Back from my honeymoon,
With this beautiful view and my
Wife by my side.
It feels very strange now being
Called the groom.*

Scott Bran

03/08/21

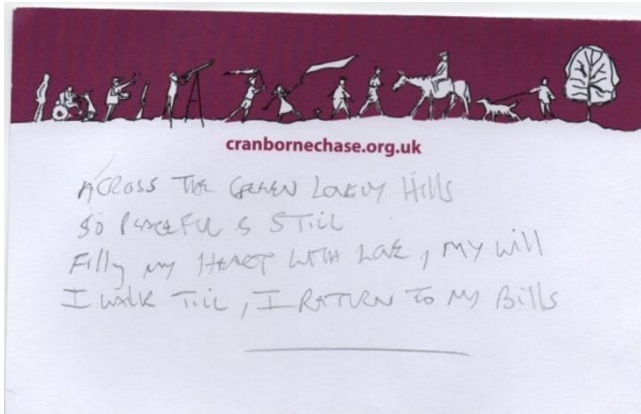


*The trees,
curse you for treading on their roots,
The water,
curses you for putting your
fingertips
on their shallow terrain,
and the day, curses you for coming
out to the sun,
as you are the night, the dark
but in my life you are the
Stars and the moon, all combined.*



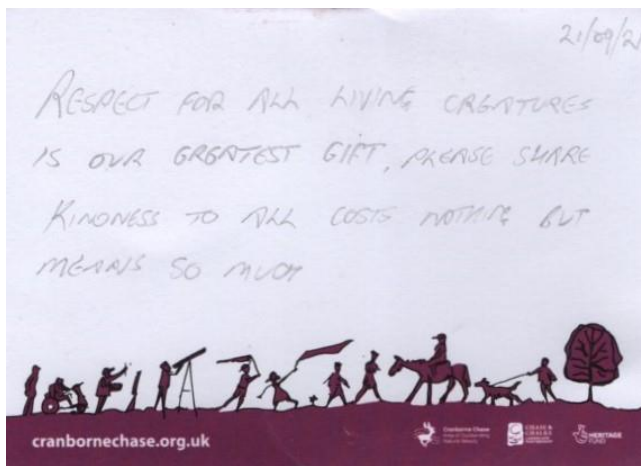
*The sound of the neighbours
rushing water,
and the seagulls cooing in the
distance,
my hand sways across the air, with
my ears
hearing the cars on the streets
below, with myself
acting like a child in the snow.*





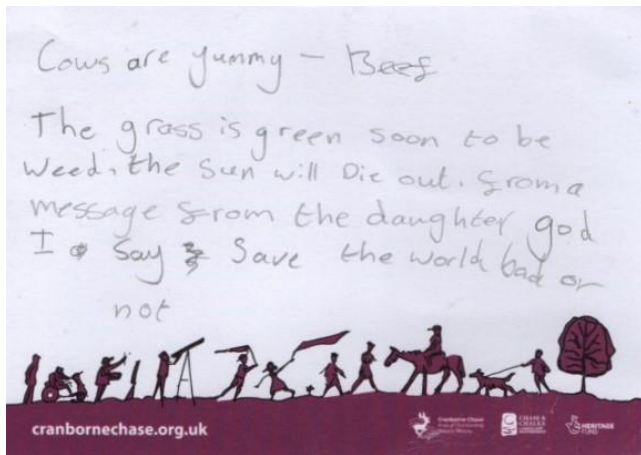
*Across the green lovely hills,
So peaceful and still,
Filling my heart with love, my will
I walk till, I return to my bills*

Anon



*Respect for all living creatures
Is our greatest gift, please share
Kindness to all costs nothing but
Means so much*

Anon



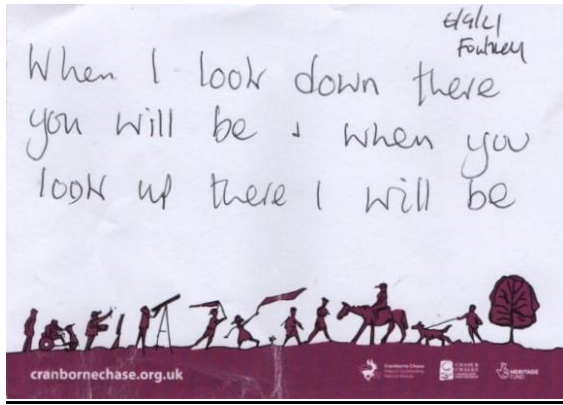
*Cows are yummy – Beef
The grass is green soon to be weed,
the sun will die out.*

From a message from the daughter god

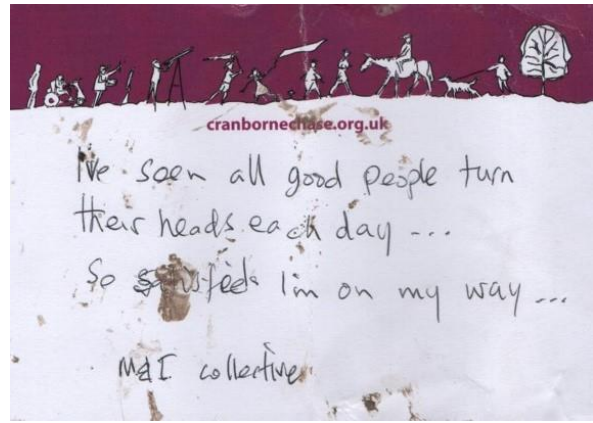
I say, Save the world bad or not

Anon





*When I look down there
you will be & when you
look up there I will be.*



*I've seen all good people turn
their heads each day ...
So it feels I'm on my way ...
M & I collective*

My dear sweet lovely dog Pompayo rescued from Greece has gone peacefully this morning to a happier place. May you now run and bark with the angels, my darling.

Anon

*Jump and spin and turn around
Drink in the views and wildlife sound
Be happy and cheerful
Say Hi as you go
Cause there's definitely no reason
You should ever feel low*

Mother Nature



Martin Down National Nature Reserve



This extensive area of chalk grassland and scrub is of national importance for its rich archaeology and wealth of downland wildlife. Covering a total of 350 hectares Martin Down is the UK's third largest area of unspoiled chalk downland where flowers and insects flourish and rare birds sing. To the sights and smells of dozens of different species of wildflower and birdsong from cuckoos, yellowhammers, skylarks and turtle doves this beautiful location inspired many visitors and locals alike to write some poetry.

This ancient landscape provides vistas of open meadows, scrub and ancient hedges, and is characterised by the prehistoric Bokerly Ditch which runs along one side of the area. This vast ditch and bank snakes along the western edge of Martin Down, defining the Dorset/Hampshire border. Built as a boundary in the Iron Age and fortified in the 5th or 6th centuries AD against invading Saxons this monument this feature is dwarfed only by the huge, sculptured mound which was created as a Second World War rifle range.

A haven for butterflies which feast on the wildflowers on sunny, still days you may spot marsh fritillary, adonis blue, small blue, dark green fritillary, small copper and grizzled skipper. Orchids dot the area while scabious and knapweed give Martin Down a purple haze in high summer.



*Surprise as sunshine breaks through
After weeks of cloudy days
Hatless head exposed, brain gently stroked
Like battered Blues in the haze*

*Mauve Gentian, Filipendula feathers
Diminutive Scabious, Hawkbit
Horseshoe Vetch, Hairy Mouse-ears
Bastard Toadflax, Devils Bit*

*A tiny, nearly grassless world
A conspiracy of herbs and Dwarf Sedge
Late bumbles probe flowers for nectar
Black and Haw thorns the edge*

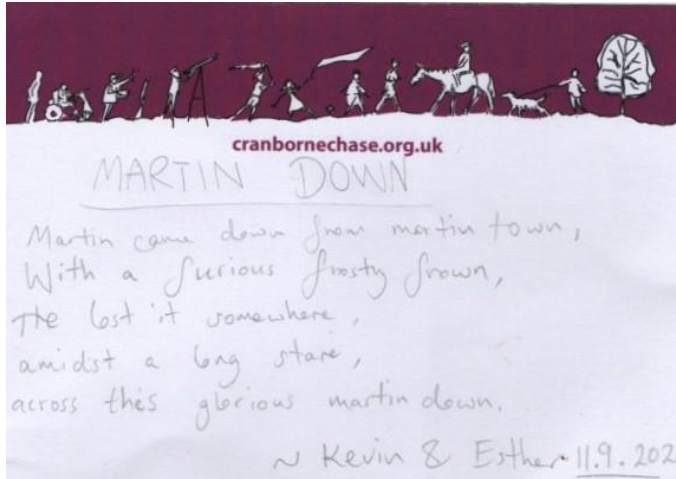
*Surprise sits atop Dogwood
Exotic eye-stripe draws my eye
Peachy breast framed in black
Larger than life, proud, perching high*

*Childish excitement! A shrike?
He looks down at me with disdain
No! I've got it now – he's a Wheatear
The first returning South again*

*Recognised now, off he goes
Swooping ahead from bush to bush
Last seen here in May or June
More will follow soon*

Mike Fussell



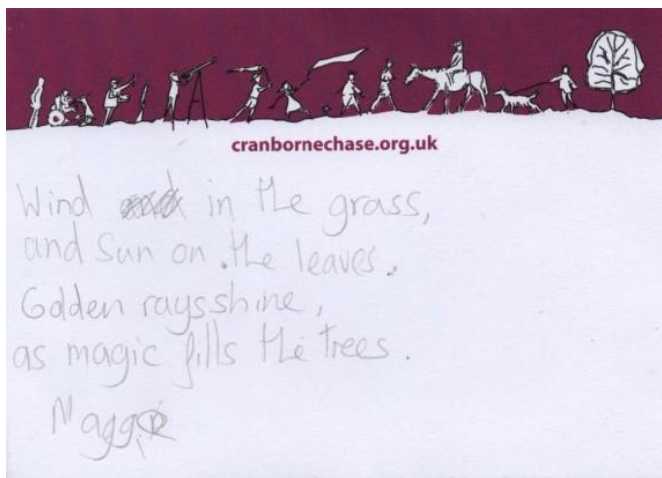


Martin Down

Martin came down from Martin town,
With a furious frosty frown,
He lost it somewhere,
Amidst a long stare,
Across this glorious Martin Down.

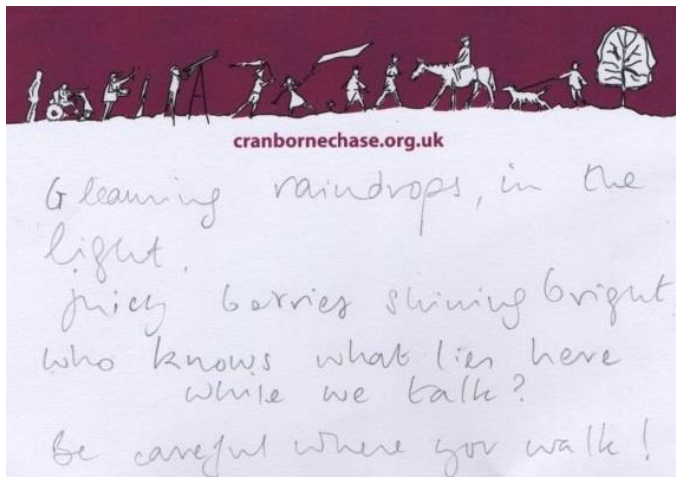
Kevin & Esther

11.9.2021



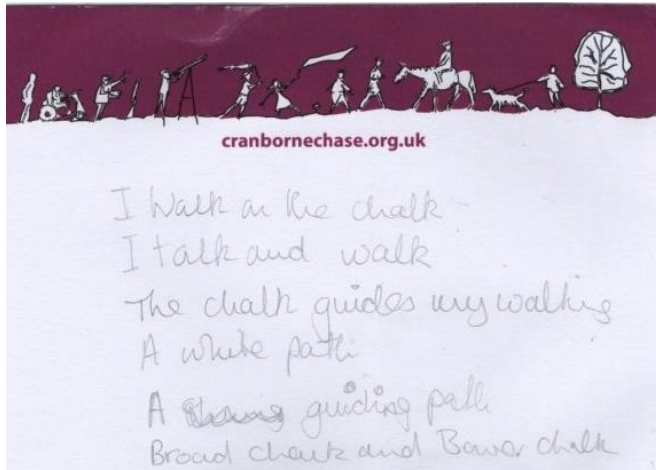
Wind in the grass,
And Sun on the leaves,
Golden rays shine,
As magic fills the trees

Maggie



Gleaming raindrops, in the light,
juicy berries shining bright,
Who knows what lies here while we talk?
Be careful where you walk!





I walk on the chalk
I talk and walk
The chalk guides my walking
A white path
A guiding path
Broad Chalk and Bower Chalk



I Loved Seeing
The Beetles
Ben Age 6

*True happiness can be found
in nature, companionship and love*

Anon

*Ripening sloes,
Dense wild gorse,
bracken invades,
well-trodden path*

Anon



Nature's lessons

*Watch the green brown life
thriving at every chance
stems push from cracks and strife
To bask in light and dance*

*Look closer and look down
Amongst rich and leafy ground
White webs meet fungus crown
Sharing natures food found*

*See trees leaves shimmer
Charging through the year
From Fresh to rusty whisper
To give it their all, no fear*

*Feel the meadow patch
low jungle, soft and looming
A mixed up pretty thatch
That lives together blooming*

Debbie Browning



3. Other Contributions

Many pieces of creative writing, sketches and paintings reached us at our office and through social media. This is a selection of these wonderful works.



Walking, Jenny Monds



Sheep, Jenny Monds

*There was a cool dude named Roland,
Who was keen to lend a hand,
With his poetry box,
This gay silver fox,
Was the talk across all of the land!
Boom, boom!*

Paul Broughton via Facebook



The Shire Rack

*We drove up north on Woden's day
Through Handley, Deanland, Newtown way.
The first ones there did have to wait
For me to get to Shermel Gate.*

*From Shermel Gate off west we troupe
The Dorset County Bound'ry Group.
We walked along the Shire Rack,
A woody undulating track.*

*Our Leader wasn't very sure,
Although I think she'd been before,
Which side the track the bound'ry ran.
She'll have to ask the old Meresman!*

*We heard aloft a loud 'mew, mew'
And over us some buzzards flew.
We saw there two, maybe a third
But didn't see another bird!*

*Lots of orchids were around
And many plants and trees we found.
We didn't try to make a list
Because we had no botanist!*

*We took three hours to walk the loop
And eat our picnic pies, no soup.
'Twas then we drove down to the pub,
Our lovely little Bound'ry Club.*

Chris Slade



Chalk Valley

River Ebble

Ancient Woodland

Night Skies

Bats and butterflies,

Ox Drove

Roman Road

Norman Settlements

Escarpments steep

Cereal crops and sheep,

Hazel coppice, beeches and kites

Archaeological Sites

Stony tracks

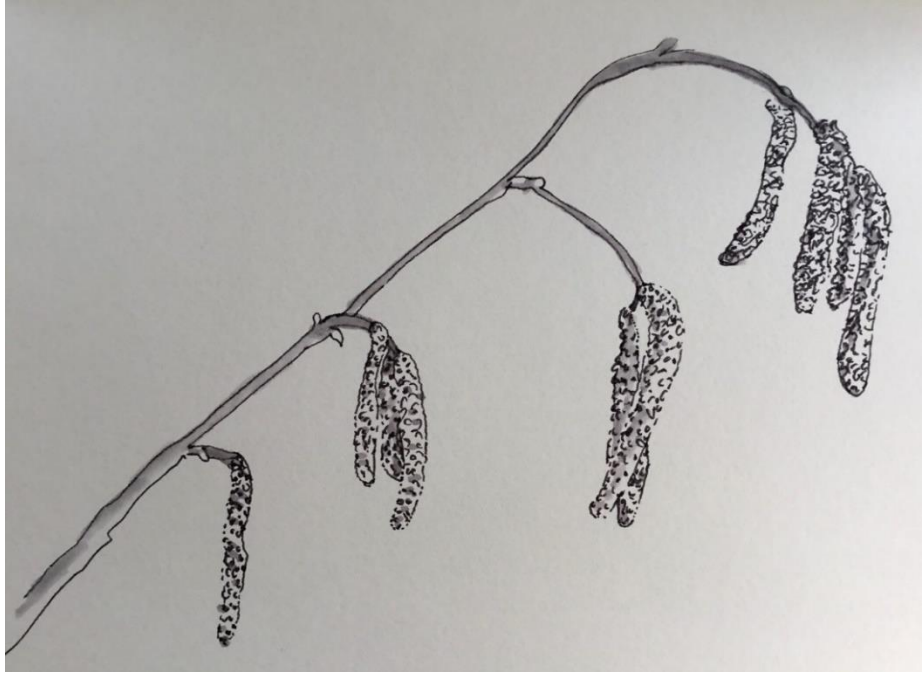
*Echoes of the past in a landscape we
hope to last*

Catherine Hughes



Plantain, Jenny Monds





Hazel catkins, Jenny Monds

The Chase *I pull on my boots and push down my hat,
Grab my picnic lunch and my tattered old map
With a big grin and a long sigh of pleasure
Walking the Chase is my first choice of leisure.*

*Breathtaking views, vast rolling valleys and hills
The effort of climbing helps ward off the chills
Every view is different and miles you can see
Fields, trees, space and sky with just little old me.*

*If you stop for a breath, you aren't quite alone
The wildlife is hiding, your presence is known
Faces of deer peep out from deep in the wood
The trail of a badger is beneath where you're stood.*

*The birds observe quietly from up in the trees
The insects are busy and so are the bees
The squirrels are hiding, too shy to be seen
The pheasants crouch instinctively down in the green.*

*The distant fields have tractors working the land
The crops from the Chase are in such high demand
The sheep graze quietly, giving just the odd bleat
The routine the same, eat, walk and repeat.*



*Buzzards and Red Kites on the wind soaring high
Gliding with ease and omitting an odd cry
Surveying the Chase and all she holds dear
It is such a special place - that much is clear.*

*The years of history, all the lives gone before
Are embedded below you, right down to the core
Intertwined quiet whispers of those that have past
Growing in every tree leaf and blade of grass.*

*The Chase weaves it's magic, you're under the spell
Your body relaxes and all becomes well
Its power draws you, deep down to the earth
Grounding you to nature, almost rebirth.*

*And when I am gone The Chase will still be here
Growing , changing, adapting, year after year
I'll be just a whisper through leaves in the tree
She will stand firm, reassuring and free.*

Karen Kebby



Coombe Bissett evening drawing group, Charlotte Moreton





Wild carrot and agrimony seed heads, Charlotte Moreton

