

# Environmental Education

*Alan Bruford continues to stimulate the hearts and minds of the young and the old in his innovative environmental adventures, nature rambles and workshops.*

Since our last newsletter the Trust has maintained its focus on environmental education and through 2004 Alan Bruford has continued to receive a grant towards his educational activities. His work with local schools, youth and community groups has been a great success and the variety of educational activities in the Tale Valley has expanded. There have been over 2,700 visitors to the valley to take part in these activities since September 2003, and a total of 5,211 visitors have benefitted since the environmental education project started.

***The Summer programme went very well with only one school getting seriously wet but Alan reported that “they all went home dry and happy at the end of the day”.***

In August the Alan teamed up with Abbi Ralls from Payembury Youth Group to introduce an week of bush skills, greenwood crafts, story-telling and circus skills. The activities were very well subscribed and developed into a full-scale promenade production in the wetland demonstration area. The story-telling on the second day led to a raid on family dressing up boxes, the props were all made by the participants using willow and other natural (with some completely unnatural but colourful) materials.



***Environmental education, ecological concepts, plant and animal identification and other topics are introduced to young people through a range of innovative games and interactive programmes.***

The characters included a Woodland Sage, some Wetland Fairies and some rather nasty Blood Gnomes. They were all named after wetland plants found in the area. Alan added, “The plot was a little hard for the audience to follow, but I’m told the kids knew what it was all about! It was very colourful and great fun and we will definitely be doing it again next year.”

As well as creative activities and wildlife studies such as pond dipping and the Dormouse Project, the programme now includes the study of water voles and their habitats. Water voles once a common riverbank dweller are now an endangered species and in need of protection. By teaching people about water voles and demonstrating their plight we hope that, like otters, these little creatures can make a recovery before they become extinct.

The popularity of these activities is spreading as teachers discover their value and relevance to the National Curriculum. Children, young people and adults from over twenty-five different schools and groups visit the valley to take part and the Trust is seeking funds so that we can continue to offer grants towards environmental education in the Tale Valley.

**To arrange a visit to the Tale Valley for a group of adults or children you can contact Alan Bruford on telephone 01404 822188.**

**The Tale Valley Trust’s environmental education work is supported by SARGENT COMPANY XXXXXXXXX the Norman Family Trust, Lloyds TSB Plc and the Pike Woodlands Trust**



***“Wetland Fairies” guard the entrance to the Court in an environmental play.***