

Natural England Creative Waves Community Arts Connecting with Nature

Evaluation report March 2023

Guided wellbeing walks at 4 different locations on the South Downs.
Led by 2 practitioners/mentors. Free for all participants.
Focussing on our wellbeing whilst connecting to nature.

Five creative workshops, inspired by nature
at our pop-up studio in Beach House Park.
Learning new skills & taking time to 'play'



Highdown Hill & Highdown Gardens - Monday 16th Jan.



*"I had no idea that bark
could be so beautiful"*



*"I feel so hopeful seeing signs
of new life and Spring"*



"There really is something wonderful about tree hugging"

Taking time to look, touch & appreciate the variety of trees & abundance of colours, textures and patterns on the barks.

Cissbury Ring - Tuesday 24th Jan.



"It reminds me of being a child, running around, playing in tents and not worrying about anything"



Taking time to laugh and 'play'

We split into 2 groups - the faster walkers marched to the top.

We all cheered with delight when we spotted the slower group reaching the top and agreed that we would make the descent together.

Stopping to listen to the birds, feel the wind & smell the cows.

The laughter, encouragement & emotional support between people was heart warming & very effective.

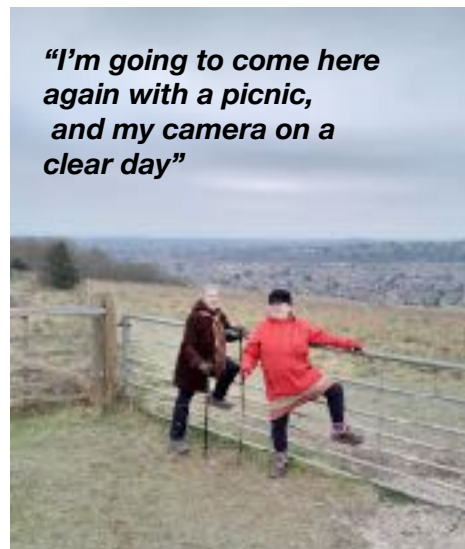
Complete strangers coming together to share the countryside



"I can't believe that I made it to the top, I wouldn't dream of doing that alone, thank you for motivating me"

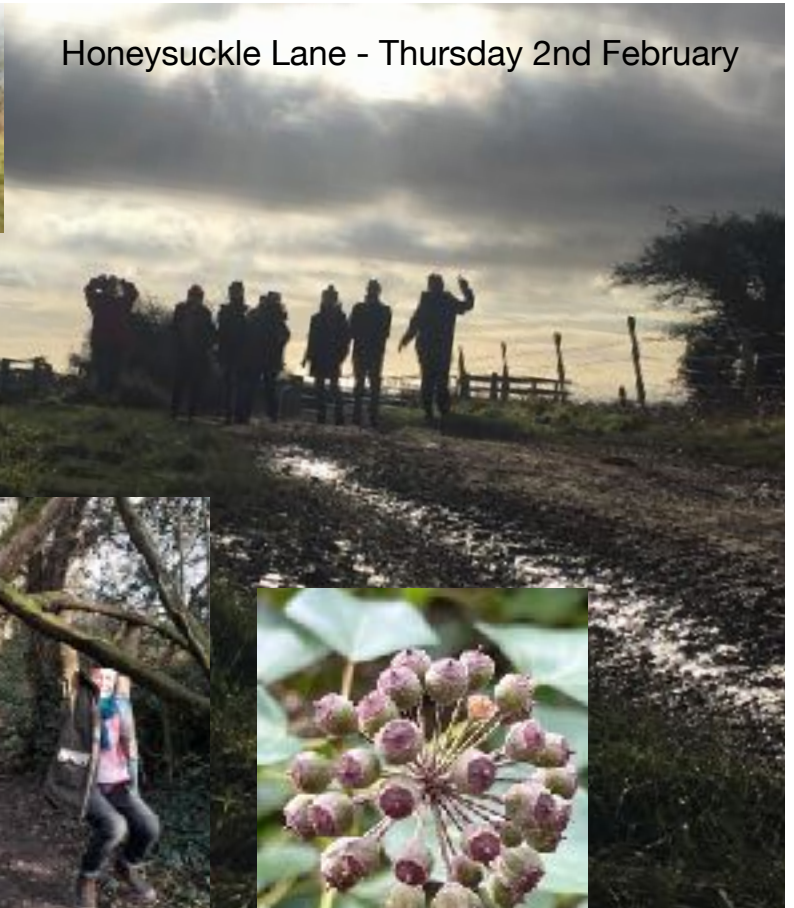


"I didn't expect to see cattle today, what a treat, I prefer animals to people"



"I'm going to come here again with a picnic, and my camera on a clear day"

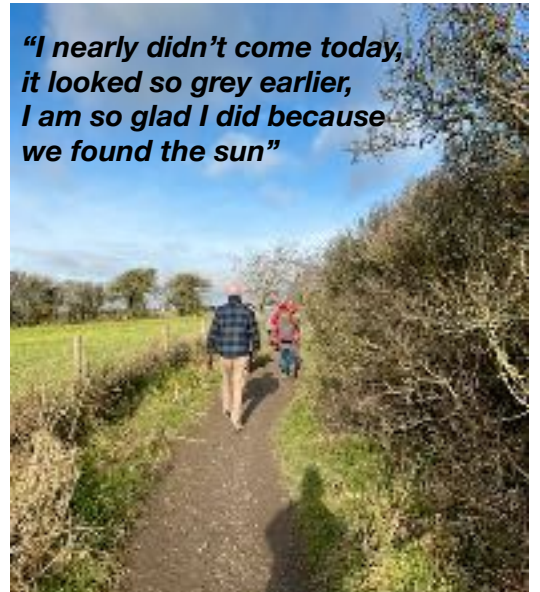
Honeysuckle Lane - Thursday 2nd February



"I didn't know what to expect today. My friend sent me details of it from facebook. It has been lovely, thank you."



"I nearly didn't come today, it looked so grey earlier, I am so glad I did because we found the sun"

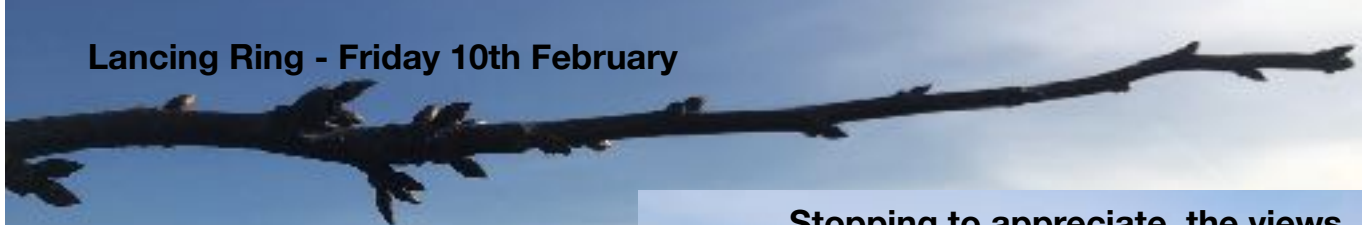


The sky changed so many times. Providing us with an extensive colour palette of blues, greys and greens. Dramatic shadows accentuated the magnificent views.

We all felt grateful, especially when the rain waited until we had finished the walk!



Lancing Ring - Friday 10th February



“My grandchildren would love it here. I’ll tell them about all the dens they can play in”



Stopping to appreciate the views



Engaging with other walkers and each other through nature



Responding to the inspiring environment; breathing, smiling, striding and swinging our arms to feel the freedom of space & light.



“look at us, we’re all grinning from ear to ear”



Monday 20th Feb.

1st creative workshop
inspired by nature, in the
pop-up studio,
in Beach house Park.

Using fine liners to do short,
timed illustrations of foliage
collected from the park.

The task, to do 2, 5 and 10
minute illustrations, was
initially terrifying for the
participants but they soon
realised that they enjoyed
the focus, the instruction
and the outcome of their
pictures.

The aim was to avoid over
thinking it. Helping them
develop skills to look and
draw, without interrupting it
with self doubt and fear.
It worked.



Please do not share the photos of people.

Tuesday 28th February

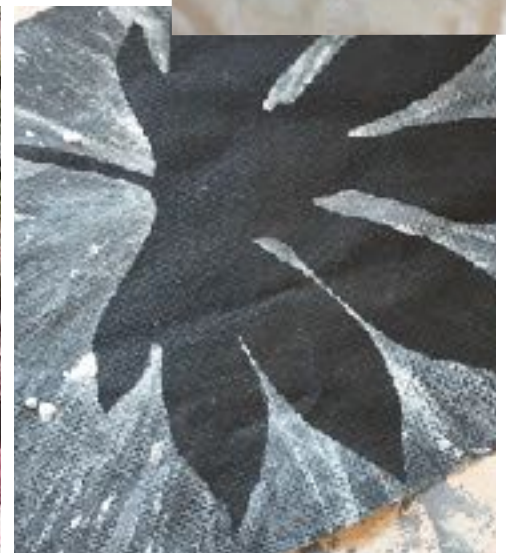
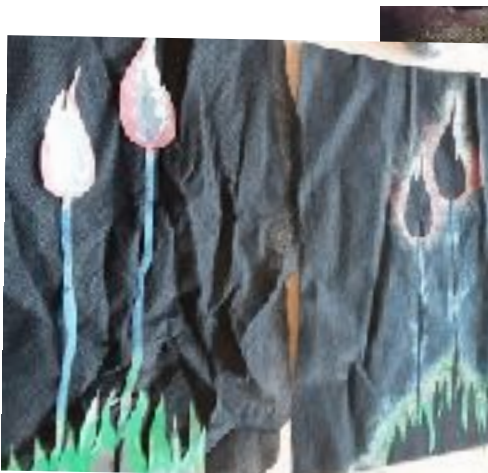
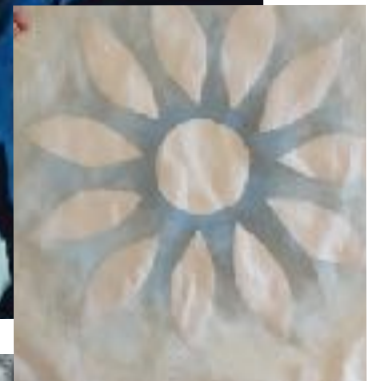
Design simple shapes, inspired by the variety of foliage, to create stencils using adhesive vinyl.

Stick the vinyl to fabric, paint over the whole area, dry with hairdryer, peel the vinyl to reveal the stencil shapes.

Very simple, effective & extremely satisfying. Especially as strong designs can be achieved by all abilities.

We asked people to look at their designs and imagine them on a duvet cover, curtains or clothing, this was quite enlightening, recognising the value of their work.

The vinyl and fabric are waste materials that we have salvaged, showing participants that expensive art/craft materials are not necessary.



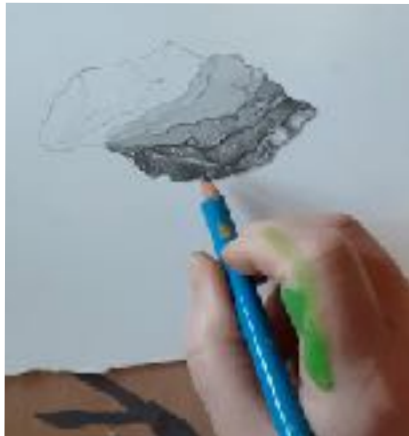
Thursday 9th March

We referenced layers in nature; the woods, hills, branches, leaves, clouds, sounds.

Freedom to play with different materials using the foliage and shells for inspiration.

Building up layers of colours and patterns on wood. Enjoying the textures & changes of the paint. The decorative wood will be part of a collaborative artwork which will be installed in our community garden, BugCycle in Beach House Park.

Layers of pencils on paper.
Creating 3D forms with attention to details.



Friday 17th March

More layering.
Using coloured card as the base to add layers of paint.

Use a hairdryer to dry the paint before adding layers of oil pastels, pencils and/or more paint.

Exploring the effects achievable combining different materials. Watching the artwork come to life by using white paint or pastel to add highlights to the natural designs.



Tuesday 21st March - Celebration Event, final session

We covered tables with brown paper, which was liberating as nobody felt precious about their final piece of work.

Linking back to the 1st session we did 2, 5 and 10 minute drawing tasks. First with fine liners then with coloured pencils.

Layering each drawing on top of the other, reminding us of leaves, twigs and plants on the walks.

The final touch, adding white pencil, to highlight the illustrations, which lifts them off the brown paper which was cut to size for each person.

Bookings were slow for the Celebration event. When we reminded participants - we learned that people were nervous of the title, but were delighted to hear that it was a creative session, with cake.



Please do not share the photos of people online. Internal use only.

