



Romney Marsh 

Project Case Study



Supported By



From November 2006 the England Rural Development Programme has been implemented by SEEDA. Hidden Britain is a programme managed under the existing scheme and supported by Defra, Tourism South East, and SERCC. The project works to ensure social and economic growth in rural communities across the South East through small tourism initiatives. www.seeda.co.uk



SERCC is the regional umbrella organisation of the eight Rural Community Councils across the South East. RCCs are independent, county-based, rural community development charities, providing support and advice to rural community organisations and individuals. They are the major rural VCS stakeholder in a range of local, regional and national funding and support initiatives in the delivery of public services. They also provide infrastructure support to rural voluntary and community groups in both generic and specialist arenas. www.sercc.org.uk

TOURISM SOUTH EAST

Tourism South East is the regional body dedicated to fostering tourism growth and innovation in the region; a partnership of industry with regional and local government.

www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com



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Project Report	4	This report is intended to describe the process used and results delivered by an individual Hidden Britain project. It covers all the major elements of the project so it can be used as a case-study for other communities. In order to make this as useful as possible it is presented in an objective light with attention paid to the failings as well as the successes.
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Overview of project

The objective was to create an identity and a brand for Romney Marsh that will attract further visitors to the area. This will hopefully encourage a wider appreciation of why the Marsh is important and engage locals and visitors alike in appreciating the rich farming heritage of the area.



area are moving away or have no appreciation or knowledge of the past. As we lose the older generations that worked in the sheep farming industry we lose this knowledge about the past.

This problem also manifests itself in the visitor industry, with the Marsh having little cohesion or identity for the visitor, there are groups doing sterling work but separately.

The project planned to try and correct this state of affairs on several fronts, by getting local people (and importantly young people) actively looking at their history and heritage. By creating an identity around this heritage it will hopefully unite the work being done, and also raise awareness amongst the visitor population of the historical importance of the marsh and increase their appreciation of it.

Need for the project

Romney Marsh is a unique part of the country. Its landscape has been created by both sea and farming. However the character of the area is currently being threatened by a different set of forces. Neighbouring growth areas and better transport links are posing threats to the traditional land use and turning the Marsh into a forgotten corner.

Many people retire to Romney Marsh from outside the area and have no knowledge of the area's heritage. In addition many young people born in the





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Planning of the project

The Countryside Agency's market Town Healthcheck for new Romney and its environs highlighted the need and desire for a local heritage project to be developed. The wishes were for a record of the heritage before it was lost, to raise awareness of the Marsh's heritage, and to bring the community together by engendering further civic pride.



Marsh Forward was a community led organization dedicated to delivering the needs identified in the Healthcheck. A project group was formed from volunteers and trustees to take this project forward. This group identified the action plan, the partners to involve and in short bought the project to this stage.

In the spring of 2005, The HB development officer attended a meeting of the group to explain how Hidden Britain could assist in achieving the heritage ob-

jectives of the group and also provide for some of the tourism objectives of the Healthcheck.

Who was involved?

A small working group was established and comprised members with a wide variety of skills and knowledge:

Liz Grant - project leader
Ray Axford – Local resident
Patricia Butchers – Local resident
Simon Handley – Local business owner
Phil Morgan-John–Greatstone School

Supported by:

Marsh Ink writers group
Kent Wildlife Trust
Local chefs
Women's Institute
Lydd Museum

Status of funding

£20,000 grant from Local Heritage Initiative obtained in September 2005.





What was included?

- ◆ Production of an over-view information leaflet.
- ◆ Production of a Local Recipe booklet for sale with new and old local recipes linked to the history of the area.
- ◆ Greatstone School are producing a dvd presentation to be shown at the
- ◆ visitor centre run by Kent Wildlife Trust. This will be about their journey of research into the local area and will include their art work.
- ◆ Design of a branding for use on all marketing material.
- ◆ Provision of branded 'bags for life' carrier bags to be given away free by retailers
- ◆ A local website.

Project Implementation

In order to proceed with the project meetings were held to discuss and determine the format of the recipe books, bags and leaflets. All of the content was sourced locally through volunteers and the project group who freely gave of their time to the project. They provided information, contributed photographic images, tested and photographed recipes, wrote copy, and took editorial decisions.

The leaflets, bags and recipe books themselves were professionally designed and printed by David Roder of Red Carrot Design, a New Romney based company.

The leaflets, bags and recipe books are now being distributed across the Marsh and its surrounding area; they are also available at the Farmers Markets and at the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre.





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The DVD was produced in May 2006 by the pupils of Class 9 Greatstone School, under the guidance of their teacher Phil Morgan-John.

The Children embarked on a local history project to investigate their heritage and to put together a presentation that would appeal to both locals and visitors. They produced an excellent quality DVD presentation featuring the entire class. The DVD is now on show at the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre.

A local website detailing the project was created by Red Carrot Design and is located at www.lookersheritage.co.uk

The Full launch planned for Oct 2006 was never held, a small launch for the recipe book was held at the New Romney farmers market in early November 2006



Who benefits?

The project has provided benefits to the local heritage and environment by an

increased awareness of their importance and a record of history and heritage that



has now been preserved for future generations. It has also made more people aware of what their real heritage is and why it is so important.

It has also promoted knowledge, understanding and pride in the area for local people and especially the younger people involved in the project who have also gained valuable skills and knowledge.

The project also aimed to benefit to the local economy by attracting more visitors, with the main benefit being to businesses with increased revenue.

The project has also added value to the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre as well as interpreting the Marsh for visitors and showcasing the distinctiveness of this special landscape.



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Hidden Britain Input

The Hidden Britain Development Officer (James Turner (JT)) was invited to facilitate the process and wrote the business plan and developed the action plan with the group for the funding bid. Attending follow up meetings and acting as general support to the local coordinator. JT arranged the agreement with Greatstone school and worked with them to help plan their part of the project. JT contributed copy for the Lookers Leaflet, took many of the images for the recipe book, cooked a lookers pie, and was involved in trouble-shooting liaison between the school and Romney resource centre when communication broke down.



Particular achievements

- ◆ The excitement and full involvement of school in production of the DVD.
- ◆ The many different people who

assisted and pulled together at moments of need.

- ◆ The excellent working relationship with the designer.



Lessons learnt

- ◆ The process takes longer when dealing with voluntary groups.
- ◆ Change of management can lead to conflicting priorities.
- ◆ Financial arrangements must be very clear.
- ◆ If there is no local desire then it cannot be manufactured.
- ◆ Realism is very necessary in setting timescales and objectives as well as in estimation of volunteers capabilities.
- ◆ More HB input was needed.

What are the future plans?

None at present.