



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
CHESHIRE

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Registered Charity no. 248304

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PRESS RELEASE

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Cheshire children meet Bill Bryson

Children from all over the county met Bill Bryson[1], the American-born writer and President of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)[2], when he visited a Cheshire farm today[3].

The children included winners of the Cheshire CPRE 'Design a locals foods poster' competition, which ran last year when the three were pupils at Beech Hall School.

Six paintings were chosen to promote local foods throughout Cheshire in a new series of campaign posters[4] for CPRE. Bill Bryson presented winners with signed certificates, and runners up received book prizes.

The winning posters were launched when Bill Bryson visited Broad Oak Farm in Warburton[5], during a fact-finding tour of the North West in his new role as President of the countryside campaigners, meeting CPRE volunteers and learning more about the charity's work in each area.

'Ever since I heard about these posters, I've been really looking forward to seeing them. They look great,' said Mr Bryson. He was delighted that the children showed so much awareness of the value of local food and the work of our local farmers.

He described his visit to Cheshire as 'a really upbeat experience. It was good to meet the children with their parents and teachers, and we all had such a good time looking round the farm.'

CPRE works to protect the countryside from inappropriate and intrusive development. Mr Bryson said, 'The way I think of it is: we have around 60 million people in this country, and about 60 million acres of land - that's an acre for each of us. But if you build on green fields, some of us are losing our acres.'

'People in Cheshire are lucky to have such beautiful countryside. But we've really got to protect it or it IS going to get nibbled away. This is why CPRE is so important, and we need more people to stand up for it with us.'

He said he that as our children will be managing the planet in the future, it is important that they learn as much about their environment as possible.

'How do you teach people to love their countryside? We need to get children out to enjoy it more. Look at the fun they are having here today. Once you've been introduced to it, you can't help falling in love with it.'

He praised the work schools and farms such as Broad Oak are doing to teach children about the countryside, and expressed support for Cheshire CPRE's latest project listing farms throughout Cheshire offering educational services, as a resource to teachers planning visits. The project is part of this year's Year of Food and Farming in Education initiative.

Bill Bryson is passionate about litter, and will lead a new nationwide CPRE litter campaign. Cheshire CPRE is planning to be very much involved in solving this problem, which affects both town and countryside.

Bill said: 'Some urban litter gets swept up, but a lot of it ends up in our hedgerows. People go to places to enjoy them - they drive a long way, and then they throw crisp packets about. This is too lovely a county to treat with such indifference.'

He said the litter problem needs to be tackled by educating people to take care of their environment, and enforcing the laws that already exist, 'It's not only illegal to drop litter, it's illegal to leave litter lying about. It should be cleaned up fast. If litter is already there, then people will drop more. We all need to start nagging about this.'

If you would like more information about Bill Bryson's CPRE litter campaign, or about CPRE's work, call the charity's Cheshire Branch Office on 01606 835046 (9-12, Mon – Fri) or visit their website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk.

Notes for editors

[1] Bill Bryson was born in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1951, the son of two journalists. A backpacking expedition in 1973 brought him to England. He got a job in a psychiatric hospital in Virginia Water, Surrey where he met his future wife, Cynthia. After working for The Times and The Independent in the 1980s, he became a full time author living in North Yorkshire. He and his family returned to the USA for several years, then moved back to England in 2003 to live near Norwich. The Lost Continent (1985), his first travel book, chronicled a trip in his mother's car around small town America. Since then he has written several more including Notes from a Small Island (1995), A Walk in the Woods (1998), Notes from a Big Country (1998) and Down Under (2000). He has also written books about language and an autobiography (The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid, 2006). His magnum opus on science, A Short History of Nearly Everything (2003), won the Aventis Prize for best general science book. Bill is Chancellor of Durham University, a Commissioner for English Heritage and in 2006 was awarded an honorary OBE for services to literature.

[2] Cheshire CPRE is a registered charity and campaigns to ensure the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. Cheshire Branch works in all of the districts of Cheshire County, and in Trafford, Warrington, Halton, Stockport and the Wirral. The Branch was founded in 1928.

[3] The visit took place on Wednesday 10th October 2007.

[4]The posters promote Cheshire CPRE's campaign to encourage more people to buy local foods, and its annual 'Buy Local' Awards to recognise businesses nominated by the public for providing opportunities to buy quality local food, produced and processed within 30 miles of the point of sale. The production of the posters was generously donated by Tom Thistleton, of Albany Graphics. Mr Thistleton lives in Wilmslow and has his premises in Manchester.

[5] Broad Oak Farm is CEVAS accredited for educational visits, and a Profile Farm for FACE (Farming and Countryside Education, one of only a small number of farms nationwide to have achieved this.

Further information:

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