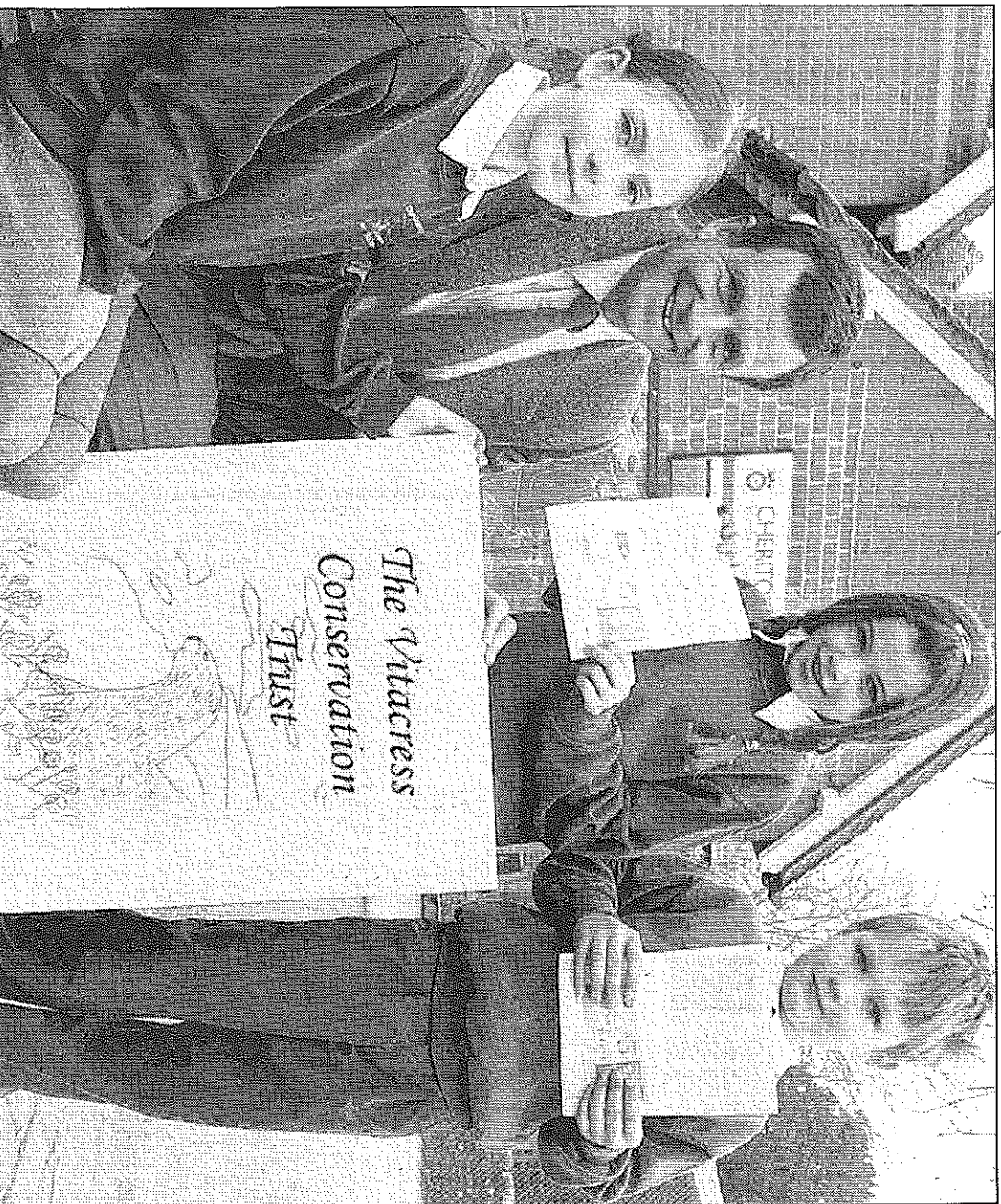


Otter symbolises the aims of salad firm's new nature trust



Dr Steve Rothwell, production and technical director of Vitacress Salads, pictured with Eliza Smith and her winning design for the otter logo, and runners-up, Rosie Appleton and Josh Prest, as he presents the children with their book tokens and a cheque for £280 for the Ngenia Fund. T5713. Picture: Terry Bond.

AN otter is to be the logo of a conservation trust set up by Vitacress Salads.

The firm, which is based in St Mary Bourne, near Andover, wants to promote the conservation of wildlife and habitats which are associated with watercress and other salad crops.

It hopes that the trust will help to increase awareness, knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of wildlife to be found near chalk streams and other habitats associated with their industry. The Vitacress Trust will have charitable status, operate independently of the company, with its own identity which will be symbolised by the otter logo.

A competition for children at Cheriton Primary School attracted 56 entries. The winner was a cheerful otter, designed by Eliza Smith, who received a £10 book voucher. The runners-up were Rosie Appleton and Josh Prest, who each received £5 vouchers.

The company also donated £5 for every entry to the school's "Ngenia Fund", a project to finance a water supply to a village school in Kenya.

Through Vitacress contacts, the Cheriton pupils have made links with the children at Ngenia school and they correspond regularly, telling each other about their home and school lives, families and hobbies.

Vitacress decided to use an otter after some of their employees constructed two other hots on one of the firm's watercress farms at Alresford in a team-building exercise. The hots were quickly occupied and there is a plan to set up a webcam for viewers to follow the otters' activities.