



# DOWNLAND THYMES

NEWS FOR THE SOUTH DOWNS VOLUNTEER  
RANGER SERVICE ISSUE 72 | SUMMER 2016



## HEDGE FUN

WESTERN DOWNS VOLUNTEERS WERE FREQUENT VISITORS EARLIER IN THE YEAR TO NORTON FARM ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SELBORNE IN HAMPSHIRE, THE LATTER BEST KNOWN AS THE HOME OF PIONEERING 18TH CENTURY NATURALIST GILBERT WHITE.

A hedgeline, planted some ten years ago, was identified as suitable for laying and because of a strong and growing relationship between the local ranger team and the farm owner, found its way onto the VRS task schedule. The site had the advantage of being adjacent to the local community of Farrington, with a permissive footpath for public access so that they could see for themselves the benefits of improved habitat and landscape.

Farm owner Kate Faulkner has a Higher Level Stewardship agri-environment agreement and is a keen member of the Selborne Landscape Partnership (SLP), a consortium of 12 local farmers established with help from the SDNPA in mid 2014 to jointly increase biodiversity in the landscape. Volunteers were first involved in the area carrying out chalk grassland restoration (through scrub cutting and re-seeding), hedge planting and barn owl box installation. With recognition of how this contributed to the conservation goals of the SLP they were subsequently invited to undertake

harvest mouse monitoring in the area – their notable success featuring widely in national press reports early this year.

This winter at Norton Farm the volunteers have conducted more harvest mouse surveying and supported the farm's woodland management by carrying out coppicing to produce the stakes and binders which would ultimately be used on the hedging project. Coppicing is great for wildlife, reintroducing light and heat back into the woodland to create a microclimate for invertebrates and mammals, however hedges can present a particular problem. An unmanaged hedgerow will have a poor base area offering limited habitat value and little by way of wind break, making it an unattractive proposition for wildlife. It would have been all too easy for the farm – as so many have – to cut two parallel sides to the hedge with a tractor mounted flail mower, leaving a tall but insubstantial hedge. But laying the hedge creates an "A" shape, promoting growth at the base as well as along the laid ('pleached')

limbs, creating an ideal habitat for mammals, amphibians and birds.

The laying of the hedge was started with a two-day training event for farmers and others staged by rangers Rob Nicholls and Laura Deane, with support from professional hedge-layer Andrew Birnie. Trainees returned to their farms ready to apply their new skills and pass them on to others. The VRS subsequently spent more than 10 task days laying a total of 300m of hedge, almost entirely using billhooks and bow saws. Their pride in their work grew as work proceeded down the field boundary, each day concluding with admiring glances for the latest completed stretch as well as encouraging comments from passers by.

As ranger Rob observed, "The volunteers' considerable efforts were invaluable in promoting the work of the Partnership and were greatly appreciated by the SDNPA, but most importantly by the local farmers and their community."

ALASTAIR STEWART, WESTERN DOWNS  
VOLUNTEER RANGER

### IN THIS ISSUE:

2

VRS TEAM  
UPDATE

3

LITTER PICK DAY

5

DOWNLAND  
POEM

8

SPOTLIGHT

10

RIGHTING THE  
WRONGS OF WAY

11

FINDING  
FLINT TOOLS

14

CALLING ALL  
VOLUNTEERS

16

PUDDING RECIPE

.....  
Above: Team work.  
© Alastair Stewart





CHAIRMAN’S CORNER

Since our last VRS Committee meeting in March a number of important steps have been initiated, hopefully to enable us to be more proactive and better able to represent the views and needs of the VRS. Two key areas are as follows:

- 1. Two Committee members, Alastair Stewart and Tony Mobbs, recently underwent training on updating content on the SDNPA’s Intranet. By now you should have received your log-in details for the Intranet so, hopefully, you will have noticed changes in the structure and information on the volunteering pages. The plan is to develop the pages to make it a more meaningful communication tool for volunteers – thanks to Alastair for all his work to date.
- 2. The Committee agreed that a thorough review of its role and responsibilities should be undertaken to ensure it has a structure fit for the future and takes on board implications arising from the SDNPA’s recent restructuring. It was agreed that a Review Group would form to recommend proposed changes for approval at the next VRS AGM. This group consists of five individuals chosen for their skills, background knowledge and range of volunteering experience. I much appreciate the support of the following who have kindly agreed to serve on this group:

- Tony Mobbs – Information Technology
  - Ron Wilder – Strategy
  - Alan Jones – Communications
  - Martin Cowell – Overall co-ordination
  - Tom Templeton – RNLI volunteering
- I know that during this process the group will rely considerably on the views and ideas of all members of the VRS.
- Wishing you all a sunny English summer (I’m always an optimist!).
- NEVILL BROOKE, VRS CHAIRMAN

UPDATE FROM THE VRS TEAM



VOLUNTEER SUPPORT OFFICER SARAH BRETT WENT ON MATERNITY LEAVE IN EARLY FEBRUARY AND NOW HAS A LOVELY BABY GIRL, ISOBEL, WHO WE MET FOR THE FIRST TIME RECENTLY.

We were fortunate that we were able to recruit Corinne Munday as maternity cover for Sarah while she was still here so she had time to hand over work before she left. Corinne got up to speed really quickly and has done some fantastic work over the short time that she has been part of the team – managing to organise several extra training courses for Volunteer Rangers before the end of the financial year, for example, when some additional money became available at short notice.

Sadly the VRS lost two important names during February; Peter Rolfe of the Stanmer groups and Jake Wright, formerly of the Singleton Wednesday group. Between them they gave more than 42 years of their lives to the VRS and there is more about their contribution later in this *Downland Thymes*.

At the time of writing the new staffing arising from the SDNPA restructure is in the process of

being implemented, with the most senior posts being decided first. The new structure has two Directors reporting directly to CEO Trevor Beattie, rather than the current four.

Unfortunately Phil Belden, current Director of Operations, who has been working with and supporting the VRS since the mid-1980s, will be leaving SDNPA. Phil worked with VRS founder Paul Millmore in the early years of the VRS and has been the most important individual in enabling the development of the VRS to where it is today. The South Downs and the VRS owe Phil a huge debt of gratitude and he will be very much missed. Andrew Lee will take the helm of the newly combined Operations and Strategy functions which will oversee our volunteering work.

IAN HARTLE, VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

VOLUNTEER DISCOUNTS

Following successful approaches to two major retailers the VRS Committee are delighted to announce that you can now get discount on all full price personal in-store and online purchases from Cotswold Outdoor and JD Sports Fashion Group (Milletts, Blacks and Ultimate Outdoors).

Full details of the scheme, including how to obtain your discount, are available on the SDNPA Intranet for which you should have received a personal id and password earlier this year <https://intranet.southdowns.gov.uk>. Please note that the scheme is administered by the VRS Committee, not by the National Park, so the Volunteer Support team will be unable to answer any queries.

ALASTAIR STEWART, WESTERN DOWNS VOLUNTEER RANGER

How do I access the intranet?

Access requires a personal log-on id and password, both of which were emailed individually to all volunteers with a registered email address at the beginning of this year. If you haven’t heard anything or have lost your log-on details then please contact the Volunteer Support team by email at [vrs@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:vrs@southdowns.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01730 819241 or 01730 819247.

“WELL DONE EVERYONE, IT’S A BEAUTIFUL SPOT IN NEWHAVEN THAT IS VERY EASY TO VISIT BY FOOT OR CAR.”

LITTER PICK DAY



APPROXIMATELY 35+ MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, PLUS FOUR SDNPA VOLUNTEERS JOINED THYONE OUTRAM, LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSERVATION RANGER, ON A SUNNY SPRING MORNING ON 3 APRIL FOR HER ORGANISED LITTER PICK DAY.



It was rewarding to see so many local families arrive at Castle Hill Nature Reserve to be involved in maintaining their local beach, as well as others travelling quite a distance to join the efforts. The task was mostly clearing various objects from the beach, predominantly small pieces of brightly coloured plastic which both birds and fish are attracted to and as we know from global publicity, is being readily consumed and causes fatal injuries to their internal organs and gut.

It was back breaking work – other larger items were also found which were either products of fly tipping locally or further along

the coast. One of the biggest disappointments of the day was the amount of plastic bags and wrappers found in the beach grass and sea plants under the cliffs. These had either been left on the beach or dropped from cars in the car park. This proved the point that we need to raise awareness about our individual responsibility to take our rubbish home, recycle what we can and/or put it in our own bins, so that everyone can enjoy the natural beauty that we are all so lucky to have on our doorstep!

FRANCOISE COSGROVE, EASTERN DOWNS VOLUNTEER RANGERS

All photos: Enthusiastic volunteers helped clear litter from the beach.  
© Alexis Maryon





# HOUGHTON BRIDGE

WHERE THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. IF YOU HAVE A DAY TO SPARE OVER THE SUMMER YOU REALLY SHOULD CONSIDER VISITING HOUGHTON BRIDGE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF AMBERLEY WHERE YOU WILL FIND ATTRACTIONS FOR EVERY TASTE AND ALL AGES.

It's very easy to get to by train as Amberley Railway Station is just a few minutes walk away and is on the Arun Valley Line with an hourly service from Arundel and stations south, as well as Pulborough and stations north.

If getting out into the countryside appeals to you there is a myriad of footpaths and bridleways going off in all directions and the South Downs Way is just a stone's throw away. You can choose a walk beside the River Arun or stride out over the Downs.

Refreshment is readily available at The Bridge Inn, West Sussex Pub of the Year in 2014/15, [bridgeinnamberley.com](http://bridgeinnamberley.com), which serves a good selection of beer and an interesting food menu often with a Greek flavour. Alternatively you can sit beside the river and enjoy a cup of tea or a more substantial meal at the Riverside Restaurant – [dinebytheriver.co.uk](http://dinebytheriver.co.uk).

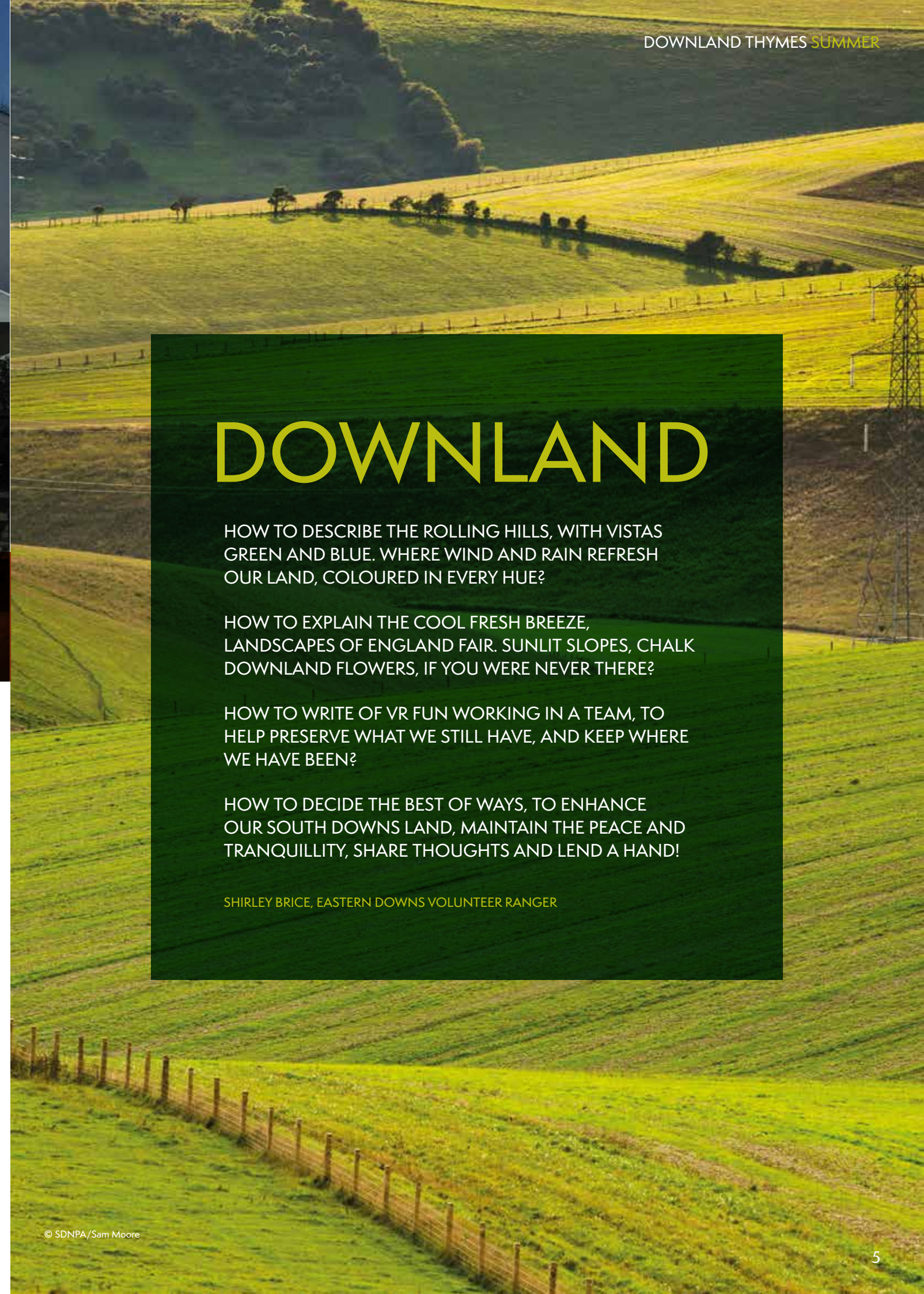
There's also the ever popular Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre ([amberleymuseum.co.uk](http://amberleymuseum.co.uk)) dedicated to local industrial heritage where you can ride on working examples of historic transport and watch traditional crafts people at work.

Only a mile away is the centre of Amberley with its amazing Village Stores stocking a wide range of local produce, the Village Tea Room and the Village Pottery where you can buy a country pot at an affordable price. St Michael's 12th Century church is well worth a visit too and offers a chance to relax and reflect.

**JAMES TOLSON,**  
CENTRAL DOWNS  
VOLUNTEER RANGER

.....  
Main: The Bridge Inn.  
© James Tolson

Left: Steam powered circular saw at Amberley Museum.  
© Colin Barker



## DOWNLAND

HOW TO DESCRIBE THE ROLLING HILLS, WITH VISTAS GREEN AND BLUE. WHERE WIND AND RAIN REFRESH OUR LAND, COLOURED IN EVERY HUE?

HOW TO EXPLAIN THE COOL FRESH BREEZE, LANDSCAPES OF ENGLAND FAIR. SUNLIT SLOPES, CHALK DOWNLAND FLOWERS, IF YOU WERE NEVER THERE?

HOW TO WRITE OF VR FUN WORKING IN A TEAM, TO HELP PRESERVE WHAT WE STILL HAVE, AND KEEP WHERE WE HAVE BEEN?

HOW TO DECIDE THE BEST OF WAYS, TO ENHANCE OUR SOUTH DOWNS LAND, MAINTAIN THE PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY, SHARE THOUGHTS AND LEND A HAND!

SHIRLEY BRICE, EASTERN DOWNS VOLUNTEER RANGER





# JAKE WRIGHT

**I FIRST MET JAKE BACK IN SEPTEMBER 1998 WHEN HE WAS A MERE YOUNGSTER OF 76 YEARS OLD AND JUST RETIRED. THE TASK THAT DAY WAS TO CLEAR AN OVERGROWN BYWAY THAT WENT ON A DOG LEG BETWEEN FAIRMILE BOTTOM NATURE RESERVE AND WHITEWAYS FOREST.**

The Wednesday volunteers split into two groups that would cut back the overgrowth and meet in the middle. After giving a health and safety talk to Jake and buddying him up with another volunteer I sent him on his way. The group made excellent progress and had almost met in the middle after an hour and a half, so I called out for a tea break. It was at this moment I noticed that the new volunteer Jake was nowhere to be seen. I talked to both ends of the work party and he seemed to have vanished. I then shouted out; "Jake! Where are you!"

A calm voice answered, "Hello Cris, I am up here." Jake was very high up in an Ash tree. "Please stop Jake and come down." I said. He climbed down and said "Are you ok Cris, you look a bit shaken." I was amazed that he had climbed this tree so high up, as I would not expect someone half his age to do so. Jake smiled and explained that most people stop climbing trees when they are teenagers, but he didn't, he liked climbing trees! That sense

of spirit and fun was always there. In the next 15 years Jake was out pretty much every week on a Wednesday, in fact such was his willingness to help he also joined rangers on other days too. He was a very keen stalwart in the South Downs Campaign and could always be relied upon to hold up a placard to Save Our Downs Now outside one of the County Council Halls across the Downs and engage Councillors in a conversation.

In 2012 at Halnaker Windmill we gathered to celebrate Jake's 90th Birthday which was one of his favourite places and had a great picnic. Sadly Jake had a stroke in March 2013 but he fought back and went to Bognor Memorial Hospital, then onto a nursing home.

Everyone liked Jake because he was easy going, good company and interesting to talk to. He was also endearingly modest about his achievements and career.

When asked about his career he indicated that he just fell into things, "mostly luck I think", he would say. To have a look at the body of work he did, Google 'Jake Wright IMDB' and I am sure you will find a film you like that he worked on. He will be missed by both staff and volunteers. My condolences to Jake's daughters, grandchildren and family.

**CRIS SAVILL,  
VOLUNTEER SUPPORT OFFICER**

Above: Jake's 90th Birthday celebrations.  
© Anne Bush

# PETER ROLFE

"...KIND, CONSIDERATE AND HARD WORKING..."



**PETER WAS THE LONGEST SERVING MEMBER OF THE VRS GROUP THAT STARTED IN WEST SUSSEX IN THE LATE 1980S (APART FROM CRIS SAVILL!).**

When I became Volunteer Co-ordinator in 1996, Peter was already an old hand and it quickly became apparent he was a great source of advice, guidance and help when it was needed. One of the first Volunteer Rangers to become a first aider, to be trained in driving our Land Rovers and able to lead a group of volunteers independent of a staff member, if you needed help at short notice you knew he would lend a hand if he possibly could.

A number of people have sent us their thoughts about Peter. Glen Redman, former National Trust task leader, worked with VRS groups including Peter for over 20 years – "I liked Peter he was a real stalwart and a thoroughly nice man. I enjoyed working with him, he did a lot of good work."

"He was always kind, considerate and hard working on all the tasks that he did and I know he shall be sorely missed by everyone." – Lee Walther, National Trust.

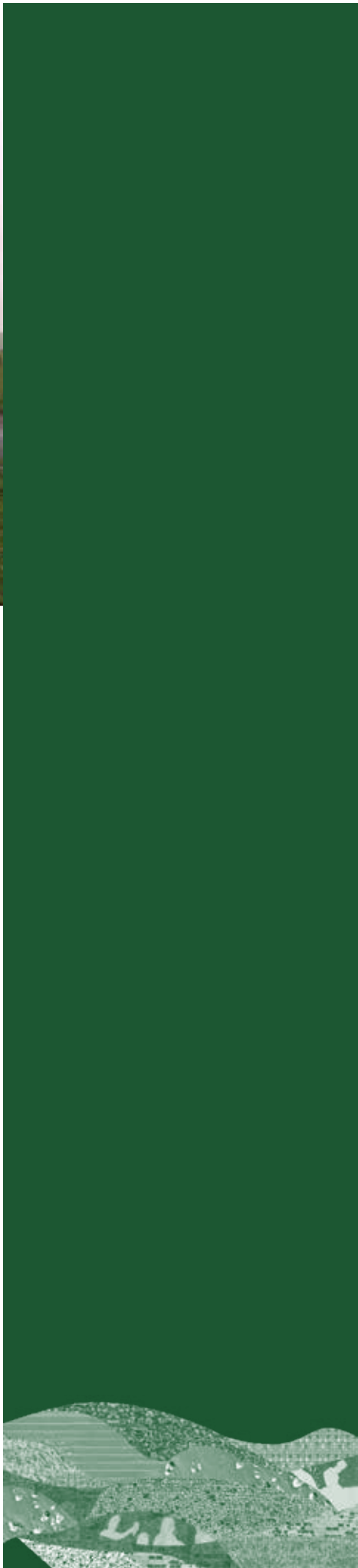
Volunteer ranger Chris Chandler worked with Peter in the Royal Naval Reserve. They met again through the VRS in Stanmer and worked together on tasks until Peter had to stop late last year: "I was moved quite often by Peter's courage and stoicism throughout his long illness – 'I govern it, it does not govern me'. He always had a presence and a quiet confidence about him. At sea he handled high powered Mirrlees diesel engines and later, Napier Deltic. He could twist these lumps of metal and make the ship fizz through the water. When you met him on deck he always had a grin of satisfaction – well, most of the time! His fencing and gates were not bad either; he will be missed."

**IAN HARTLE,  
VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR**

Above: Peter (2nd left) at the end of a job with fellow volunteers Bob Granger, Marilyn Marchant and Chris Chandler.

© Philippa Morrison-Price

**"PETER WAS A STALWART, ONE OF THE MOST LIKEABLE, ACCOMMODATING, CO-OPERATIVE AND HELPFUL VOLUNTEER RANGERS WE'VE HAD." – PHIL BELDEN, SDNPA.**







## NEW STARTER

In August 2015 I had my taster day out with the Seven Sisters Thursday volunteer ranger (VR) group. I'd been well briefed by Sarah Brett, and also Ron Wells VR so arrived without incident and didn't forget my flask and sandwiches.

It was a good turnout and the Thursday group greeted me warmly, as did the weather. After posting a parking permit in the car and helping load the tools, I joined the team in the back of the Land Rover for my first experience of scrub clearance. This is a task that I have become familiar with now but I have picked up other 'hands-on' skills along the way, e.g. a bit of hedge laying and helping put up an electric fence.

The day went really well, I discovered a number of muscles that required honing (some improvement to date) but loved being out on the South Downs as a participant rather than an observer. I've continued to get out every Thursday that I can since that taster day; the VRs and rangers are really friendly, well informed, skilled and always happy to educate me and other 'newby' VRs on all manner of subjects relating to the South Downs from Iron Age history to resident spiders.

Several of the Thursday group have been VRs for many years and I continue to be inspired by their 'can do' attitude, knowledge, resilience and levels of fitness. I'm hoping this bodes well for my own future knowledge and health!

### HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THE SDVRS?

I'd always planned to do something voluntary and outdoors on semi-retirement in July 2015 that had nothing to do with my 37 years employment in the NHS. My sister Sue has been a VR with the Stanmer group for a number of years so she introduced me to the possibilities – thank you Sue!

### DO YOU HAVE AN UNUSUAL FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

Up until last year, I was a full-time Community Mental Health Nurse working with young people with a diagnosis of Psychosis, a specialist area that throws up unusual incidents on a daily basis. This kind of work is unusual and unfamiliar to most people thankfully and no, I don't miss it! I also love growing chillies and am increasing the range of varieties, some more successful than others.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY IN THE SDNP.

Becoming a VR has introduced me to parts of the SDNP that I'd never previously explored, despite them being on my doorstep. My love of walking has been rekindled and I like nothing better than to explore lesser known paths and routes with friends, sometimes getting a bit lost but always finding one of the South Downs hostelleries eventually.

# SPOTLIGHT

## WESTERN DOWNS

### IT'S NOT EASY TO DESCRIBE VOLUNTEERING IN THE WESTERN DOWNS AREA. WE HAVE SUCH A WIDESPREAD AND DIVERSE ROLE WITH NUMEROUS TASKS, PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY ALL THE TIME.

We benefit from some extremely well motivated, knowledgeable, inspirational and engagement-focused rangers. While we are aware of staff changes around the corner, we know that the Western Area is going to continue to go from strength to strength.

In general, most tasks are self-led, without rangers being present – they brief us before we set out and debrief us on return. However, new sites are introduced and the required management explained in the field to us by staff before they then leave us to get on with the manual labour. Not that there is only manual work – most of us have additional qualifications such as chainsaw qualified volunteers for tree felling, brush-cutter operators to make light work of the extensive

scrub bashing the Downs invariably need, hazardous chemical handlers for treating cut stumps in addition to the normal first aid and 4X4 drivers. We also have specialist knowledge teams involved with projects such as building and installing barn owl boxes, water vole habitat surveys leading to re-introduction and monitoring of their activity, through to river fly monitoring to name but a few of the more diverse work areas we enjoy. All of us involved in this work have benefited from the additional specialist training that is organised by the National Park Authority for us.

It is the enjoyment factor that really makes our volunteer groups tick, that and the motivation that we get through the bonhomie we generate on a task day. Some of our volunteers work independently, rather than in groups on some projects including office work, engagement with the public at events and direct landowner liaison so as to ease the burden on staff time. Therefore, it is especially good for us, as the Western Downs volunteers, that we have six monthly meetings open to everyone who volunteers, no matter in what role, with the Area Manager

and his team explaining policy and developments from the SDNPA. We also like to have contact with the HQ strategy leads at these meetings and appreciate how we are assisting in achieving the *Partnership Management Plan* and pursuing the 2050 vision. It also gives us an excellent chance to give feedback to our staff team and to establish some networking between different volunteer groups, so that best practice can quickly be disseminated.

Finally, I'd better reveal it's not all work – as an area we hold about three social activities a year, a pub skittles competition, an annual BBQ at Butser Ancient Farm and a dinner night around Christmas, all of which we enjoy with our partners.

#### RON WILDER, WESTERN DOWNS VOLUNTEER RANGER

Above: Installing barn owl boxes.

© SDNPA

Top right: Water vole.

© Environment Agency

Bottom right: Ron carrying out riverfly monitoring.

©Sarah Wilder







MY IMMEDIATE THOUGHTS WERE: 'I KNOW IT'S BEEN CLEARED, STUPID. I WAS ONE OF THOSE THAT DID IT!'

# FINDING FLINT TOOLS ON THE DOWNS

AS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST SPECIALISING IN PRE-HISTORY FLINT TOOLS I AM CONTINUALLY BROUGHT FLINT ITEMS FOR VERIFICATION OF THEIR AUTHENTICITY AS MANMADE TOOLS. OFTEN I HAVE TO DISAPPOINT BECAUSE THE FINDER HAS PICKED UP A NATURAL FLINT, SO HERE ARE SOME NOTES TO HELP ANY FUTURE FLINT FINDINGS.



## RIGHTING THE WRONGS OF WAY

EVERY QUARTER THE WESTERN VRS TACKLES TWO OR THREE PROJECTS IN CLEARING RIGHTS OF WAY (RoW). A POPULAR TASK AMONG VOLUNTEERS BECAUSE INVARIABLY WE VISIT RURAL PATHS WE'VE NOT EXPLORED BEFORE. OFTEN WE DON'T KNOW THE LOCATION UNTIL A FEW DAYS BEFOREHAND.

With literally thousands of miles of footpaths and bridleways to maintain, Hampshire's Rights of Way team are delighted to have the VRS help out, which is nice for us too as we all like to feel appreciated. So this spring off we went again, this time towards a byway at Colemore, a quiet corner some 4 miles south-west of Selborne.

However, once we arrived on site I realised I recognised this particular byway, as last autumn I'd walked this area with my wife when we'd found the route so badly overgrown I decided I'd better report it.

Hampshire have an online system for reporting problems on RoWs and, lo and behold, several months after I'd logged my report I found myself back here again undertaking the necessary clearance.

When I mentioned this fact to the guys it was, of course, the cue for much VRS banter "You complained? That's given us more work to do. What are we doing next week, your back garden?" You get the picture...

So amidst the usual joshing, fun and insults, brush-cutting proceeded with vigour. By the afternoon, the byway that had once been obstructed now bore the results of being attacked by a dozen well-armed volunteers, bearing billhooks and chainsaws. The path was revealed to be 1km long and of carriage width.

Another task ticked off to the satisfaction of all.

Yet this wasn't quite the end of the story, to my surprise about a fortnight later I was to receive an official email from Hampshire

Countryside regarding my report on overgrown vegetation on a RoW, it said: "This obstruction has now been cleared to our satisfaction. Thank you for taking the time to contact us regarding this issue."

My immediate thoughts were: 'I know it's been cleared, stupid. I was one of those that did it!'

But then I realised I had received an online, automatic email and you don't get a dialogue with a computer.

**RUSSELL CLEAVER, WESTERN DOWNS VOLUNTEER RANGER**

.....  
Above: Clearing the path.  
© Russell Cleaver

At the end of the last Ice Age temperatures increased, plants and trees flourished in the warmer climate and animals returned to southern England swiftly followed by our immediate ancestors, the Homo Sapiens, hunter gatherers. This was 11,500 to 12,000 years ago when Britain was very different, being a peninsular on the north east corner of Europe.

The south of England was a very hospitable place as the Downs gave clear areas away from the Weald forests, an ideal place for hunting. The weapons of the time were sharp sticks and of course, the local occurring stone, flint

The usage of flint as a tool depended upon the activity of the people. Hunter gatherers gradually changed, over thousands of years, to farmers and then to dwelling builders and settlement makers. In every period flint was made into different tools and today we find many of these tools that were lost or discarded.

So how do you recognise man made or "struck" flints?

Flint is crypto crystalline – that means it has no structure, like glass it can fracture in the direction of the impact. The fracture is caused by a shock wave that travels through the flint and leaves a distinctive pattern of wavy lines. This is called a conchoidal fracture named after the radiating shock that looks like a conch shell.

A struck flint has three elements; the platform, the bulb of percussion and the conchoidal ripples. The 'platform' is the place where the flint was struck and is very distinctive with small scars at the actual point of impact. The 'bulb of percussion' is a swelling just below the platform – the first wave of the shock wave and the largest. Lastly the ongoing ripples of the shock wave radiate out from the platform.

Flint can be affected by frost and when this happens small flakes

pop off and are easily mistaken for struck flakes but can be recognised because there is no platform and the swelling or shock bulb is in the middle of the flake. Also flint can suffer from starch fractures that look like parallel sided blocks but are completely natural, though often mistaken for worked flint. You can also find thousands of flint flakes on the South Downs that are just waste material from tool making but are still struck by man.

Flint tool recognition can be quite difficult but I am always happy to look at flint finds and will respond to an email to [Rrfturner@aol.com](mailto:Rrfturner@aol.com). I have also produced a book with History Press called: *Flint Knapping: A Guide to Making Your Own Stone Age Tool Kit*

**BOB TURNER, SECRETS OF THE HIGH WOODS VOLUNTEER RANGER**

'FLINT IS CRYPTO CRYSTALLINE – THAT MEANS IT HAS NO STRUCTURE, LIKE GLASS IT CAN FRACTURE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE IMPACT.'

.....  
Main: A traditional flint wall.  
© SDNPA



# YOUR REVIEWS

This section is all about sharing reviews of your favourite things. Tell us about books you've read, pubs you've visited, tools or gadgets you've used or even websites that you'd recommend to other volunteers. Email your reviews, of up to 100 words, to [dt@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:dt@southdowns.gov.uk) with a picture.



Volunteers, if you know of a pub that deserves this award, please let us know. We're talking about good old-fashioned public houses, rather than gastro pubs or themed inns. We want to know about places where you don't need to take your boots off before crossing the threshold! Send us a photo and 100 words explaining why the pub you nominate should be recognised.

## THE CRICKETERS ARMS BERWICK, EAST SUSSEX, BN26 6SP

The Cricketers is a lovely pub down a quiet, dead-end country lane nestling underneath the South Downs escarpment. The lane quickly turns into a bridleway with links up onto the top of the Downs, although the pub itself is within 200 metres of the A27 (still single carriageway in this part of East Sussex).

The cottages have been an alehouse for over 200 years and have typical low ceilings (and some doors!) and flagstone floors. During the winter the bars are cosy and warm; during the summer there are lovely gardens at both the front and back. They serve good home-cooked food and, best of all for a beer drinker, the pub is owned by Harveys of Lewes.

IAN HARTLE, VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

## REVIEWS

### THE TREE POPPER

The Tree Popper is a robust uncomplicated tool, based on a lever, that is operated by one person to extract unwanted woody plants roots and all.

Originally designed to deal with invasive woody species it was introduced from Australia to assist with habitat management and scrub removal. It is available in three sizes, large, medium and small. Costing from £240 (small) to £285 (large).

More info from [treepopper.com.au](http://treepopper.com.au) or look up 'Tree Popper' on YouTube to see



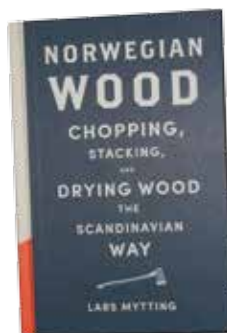
an Aussie video of the gadget in operation.

This could be the very gadget to help your scrub bashing. You simply fit the jaws around the basal stem of a plant then push down on the lever and the tree just pops out of the ground. It sure beats coppicing thorns.

### NORWEGIAN WOOD BY LARS MYTTING, 2015. QUERCUS PUBLISHING. £20 HARDBACK.

A surprising, world-wide bestseller, this simple book about logs also offers lessons about life. As the author explains; "a wood stack is unaffected by share prices, it won't complain, it won't rust, it won't sue, it just sits there and waits for winter."

Also suppling sculptural and architectural evidence, this is the book that wood burner and open fire enthusiasts have been waiting for. Everything you wanted to know about wood but were afraid to ask. I loved



it, it is my book of the year and because it is so eminently quotable, you can bore all your friends with it. A book that resonates across the...wood.

MARTIN COWELL, WESTERN DOWNS VOLUNTEER RANGER

## WANTED

### INQUISITIVE VOLUNTEERS

Do you like discovering new places? Do you like delving into history? Do you like finding a cosy pub and putting your feet up in front of a roaring fire? If you answered yes to any of the above then this is the job for you! The Downland Thymes team are looking for at least one volunteer from each area of the National

Park to help uncover the best pubs, the most interesting landmarks, the fascinating books and much more. You don't need to be a professional writer, we can help with that, all you have to do is get out into the Downs and discover its hidden gems. Please email [dt@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:dt@southdowns.gov.uk) stating your interest and volunteering area.

## PIC IN THE PARK

Benbow Pond, Cowdray Estate. SU 915222. Beside the A272, opposite a small car park to the Cowdray estate, this charming folly was built in 2000 to enhance Benbow pond. It is actually a memorial temple to the late Viscount Cowdray and it bears several bronze panels dedicated to the 3rd Viscount, not that you can see them as the folly is inaccessible, being situated on the far side of the pond. However, a panel in the car park can be read by visitors which gives the name of the temple's designer.



## CAPTION COMPETITION

CAN YOU CREATE A WITTY CAPTION FOR THIS PHOTOGRAPH? EMAIL YOUR IDEAS TO [DT@SOUTHDOWNSGOV.UK](mailto:DT@SOUTHDOWNSGOV.UK)

The winner of last edition's caption competition was...

'ALICE, I DON'T CARE IF THE MAD HATTER HAS JUST POURED YOU A CUP OF TEA, COME OUT OF THERE NOW!'

SARAH STICKLAND, SECRETS OF THE HIGH WOODS VOLUNTEER RANGER





# CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS SUMMER EVENTS

We have another jam-packed summer season of events this year which kicked off at the end of March. For those of you who aren't familiar with our events stand, we have a van and a selection of marquees which we take out to different events throughout the National Park and beyond to help raise the profile of the South Downs and encourage everyone to come and enjoy the National Park responsibly.

Our stand includes activities such as feely boxes, badge making, sand pit archaeological dig, animal skull matching game and a giant puzzle, as well as a huge variety of inspiring free

leaflets and a very popular map of the whole National Park.

We rely heavily on staff, Members and volunteers to help run these events so if you haven't already signed up to one please speak to your area ranger or contact Ian Hartle. They are always great fun and offer a brilliant way to meet new people, learn even more about the National Park and the Authority, as well as getting to go to a new event or discover a new part of the South Downs.

Thank you in advance for any help you can offer!



The SDNP stand at Parham Foraging and Estate Life event.  
© SDNPA



Hani on reception.  
© SDNPA/Maria Brunton

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Hanife and Ellie from Treloar School near Alton participated in three half-days of work experience at the South Downs Centre. They both wanted to work with the SDNPA because of their interest in environmental conservation. Hanife worked with the reception team and Ellie worked with Comms on writing social media content for Facebook and Twitter. Here's what Hani said about her time at the National Park Authority:

"My name is Hani and I am a student at Treloar College in Alton. I am here for work experience and have been helping on reception. I told people when their visitors arrived and they came down to reception to collect them. I've been giving leaflets to people who came into the centre looking for information. I made three phone calls to different people. I also meet and greet visitors who come in and get them to sign in and give them a visitor's badge. I have enjoyed it so much and I would like to do something similar to this in the future, before I start looking for a paying job. I would recommend others to try work experience here as it is an amazing place and the staff are really friendly."

## SDNPA RESTRUCTURE

As you know the South Downs National Park Authority has been going through a restructure. After several rounds of consultation with staff, the final structure was confirmed and by the time you read this issue of Downland Thymes it will be fully in place (from 1 June 2016).

You can view all of the structure charts and read more about the consultation process on the Intranet,

[intranet.southdowns.gov.uk/staff/restructure-budget](http://intranet.southdowns.gov.uk/staff/restructure-budget). If you have any questions about what this means for volunteers please contact Ian Hartle or speak to one of the rangers who will be happy to answer your queries. Don't forget that you can keep up to date with all SDNPA related news, including details of job vacancies and new staff members, via the weekly e-newsletter Update.



Left: Petersfield railway station.  
© SDNPA

## MAKE THE STATION YOUR FIRST STOP FOR ADVENTURE

More hikers, cyclists, horse-riders and picnickers are using public transport to travel around the South Downs.

The South Downs National Park attracts some 46 million day visits every year and research suggests that car use dropped by 5 per cent from 2014 to 2015. In the meantime train, cycling, walking and coach tours all increased.

We want to encourage even more people to follow the trend and have an adventure by bus or train in the South Downs National Park this year. Watch our new film on our website to get inspired, [southdowns.gov.uk/make-the-station-your-first-stop-for-adventure](http://southdowns.gov.uk/make-the-station-your-first-stop-for-adventure).

Find more ideas for adventures in the South Downs National Park and information on bus and train services at [southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy](http://southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy).





# APPLE AND ALMOND PUDDING CAKE

## INGREDIENTS

- 150g unsalted butter (although I use Stork margarine for cakes as it is easier to cream with the sugar)
- 125g caster sugar
- 2 medium eggs
- 1 teaspoon almond extract (optional)
- 75g self-raising flour
- 75g ground almonds

For the apples:

- 4 dessert apples (I use Cox's)
- 25 g unsalted butter
- 1 heaped tablespoon granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

## METHOD

1. Grease a 20 cm spring form cake tin and line with baking parchment.
2. Peel, core and quarter the apples and then cut into about 3 wedges.
3. Melt the 25g of butter until it sizzles gently, then add the granulated sugar. Stir until the mixture bubbles.
4. Add the apples, sprinkle the cinnamon and cook over a medium heat for about 5 minutes, turning occasionally, until the apples are tender and caramelised (I tend to do it for about 10 mins). Remove from the heat and allow to cool.
5. Cream the butter and caster sugar in a large bowl using an electric mixer (or by hand – my preference).
6. Break in an egg and beat well, then add the second egg with a spoonful of flour.
7. Add the ground almonds, sift in the remaining flour and fold into the mixture.
8. Transfer the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth over with a palette knife. Arrange the apples on top and trickle any remaining buttery juices over the top.
9. Place in a preheated oven at 170°C and bake for 45 to 50 minutes.

It can be served on its own or with cream, custard or yoghurt. Enjoy!

Recipe based on one from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's *River Cottage Every Day*

**DIANE JORDAN, WESTERN DOWN'S  
VOLUNTEER RANGER**

**SOUTH DOWN'S  
VOLUNTEER  
RANGER SERVICE**

**SOUTH DOWN'S  
NATIONAL PARK**

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The information contained in this newsletter was, as far as known, correct at the date of issue. The South Downs National Park Authority cannot, however, accept responsibility for any error or omission.

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