



# SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

## WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

Welcome to the newsletter for the South Downs.

Send your comments and ideas to us at [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)

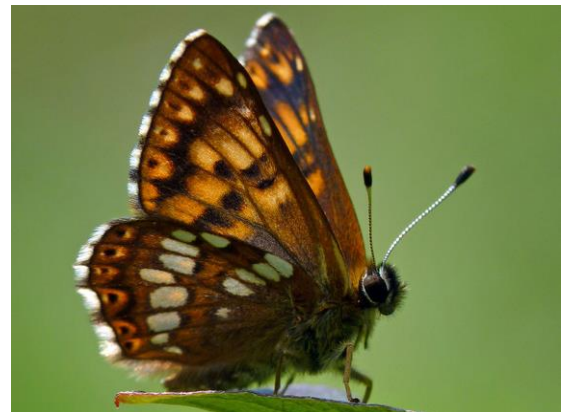
## WILL 2017 SEE THE DUKE RETURN TO STEYNING?

Do you have an annual 'spring is here' moment? That first day when the air starts to smell warmer and greener, your first sight of fruit blossom, the first cuckoo you hear? One South Downs community is on particular tenterhooks this spring.

As they enjoy the bloom of 3,000 newly planted primroses and cowslips the people of Steyning are waiting to see if this will be the year that the Duke of Burgundy butterfly returns to the hills above their town.

The South Downs chalk grassland is well known for its bright blue butterflies – the Adonis, chalkhill, common, silver studded etc. But rarer still is the tiny Duke of Burgundy. This orange and brown butterfly originally lived in woodland but, when this habitat was lost with the decline in traditional coppicing, the species moved out onto rare chalk downland. Only a handful of populations remain in Sussex.

**“In 2012 there were fewer than 100 colonies of Duke of Burgundy butterflies left in the UK.”**



“In 2012 there were fewer than 100 colonies of Duke of Burgundy butterflies left in the UK, most of which were very small and vulnerable,” says Tom Parry, Lead Ranger for the Central Downs part of the National Park. “On peak days of the flight season no more than 5,000 butterflies would be on the wing, and in most years far less. There was little doubt that it would take focussed and determined efforts to save its future.”

The Duke of Burgundy became one of the first species to benefit from the South Downs' new National Park status. In 2012, working in partnership with 27 other organisations and local authorities, the National Park Authority was able to secure government funding to improve and join up chalk grassland at key points along the South Downs.

As well as rare butterflies this habitat is key to the survival of endangered farmland birds such as corn bunting and lapwing but has been in decline as this short, species-rich sward only thrives when animals like sheep or cattle are grazed.

**“The seeds were divided between 25 green-fingered locals and Kew at Wakehurst and together they managed to grow some 3,000 plants.”**

So what differences have they seen on the ground so far? While their ultimate goal is to attract the Duke of Burgundy, all chalk grassland-loving butterflies will benefit. Thirty volunteers have now been trained to carry out butterfly surveys and after the first year of the project they collected 1,934 records finding 35 different species on the site. Last summer they finally spotted their first silver-studded skipper. Steyning Grammar School students have also been helping. “We went up on a sunny day last spring when the butterflies were on the wing and they were clearly amazed by seeing so many fluttering around them.”

So will 2017 be the year that the Duke finally returns to Steyning? Sarah is cautiously optimistic. “It’s still early days. Our plants have survived the winter and look strong and healthy but the Dukes do prefer their primroses and cowslips to be mature. That said we know they are breeding above Washington, less than 3km away. We’d be delighted if they do come this year but if not it hopefully won’t be long.”

Find out more about the project at [steyningdownland.org](http://steyningdownland.org) or by emailing [sdsvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:sdsvolunteers@gmail.com)



## LOCAL HERO

With 2017 declared as the ‘Year of Literary Heroes’, SDNPA’s Nick Heasman takes a look at how the South Downs’ landscapes influenced the work of poet Edward Thomas, who died on 9 April 1917.

*...Fast beat*

*My heart at sight of the tall slope  
Of grass and yews, as if my feet  
Only by scaling its steps of chalk  
Would see something no other hill  
Ever disclosed.*

Three years of scrub clearance and conservation grazing improved conditions for the small colony of Duke of Burgundy at Chantry Hill above Storrington. In the meantime other nearby sites were improved to be ready to host new colonies – including the hills above Steyning, just 8km away as the butterfly flutters.

Local charity the Steyning Downland Scheme has been working with the local community and connecting young people with local nature and countryside on these hills for nearly ten years. For the past two years, thanks to support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and SDNPA amongst others, they have got even more of the community involved to bring the Dukes back to Steyning.

“We’ve had a fantastic response from the start,” says Sarah Quantrill, who runs the project for the Steyning Downland Scheme. “The trouble is the Duke is so fussy! Its caterpillars live on just two plants – the cowslip and primrose – and these only thrive when the grass is properly grazed.”

There are only so many tasks you can reasonably expect your human volunteers to carry out so, on a muddy spring day in 2015, four Dexter cattle joined the regular team of volunteer scrub bashers. After a tricky journey up the steep track to their new home, which involved hitching two South Downs land rovers to the front of their trailer, they were soon to be seen and heard smashing through the densest brambles, quickly getting to grips with their job. An additional group of locals are signed up as lookers who check on the Dexters every day to make sure they’re all ok.

With the ground work well underway the next task for the community was having something to feed those, hopefully, hungry caterpillars. “Our volunteers collected an amazing 40,000 seeds from existing plants on the site,” continues Sarah. “The seeds were divided between 25 green-fingered locals and our project partners Kew at Wakehurst and together they managed to grow some 3,000 plants.”



“We had an amazing few days last September planting these out on the hills and we’re already enjoying the first spring primroses and looking forward to the cowslips later in the season.”

There is a rhythm to the work of Edward Thomas that makes me feel as if I am striding the chalk hills of the South Downs with him, slightly out of breath and probably a few paces behind.

In recognition of the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's death, 20 years since the first Harry Potter book and a number of other milestone anniversaries, Visit England has declared 2017 to be a 'Year of Literary Heroes'. This year also marks 100 years since the death of one of my heroes, Edward Thomas, who left us on 9 April 1917.

A poet Ted Hughes called "the father of us all," Thomas lived in Steep, Hampshire in the years before the WWI. This area, now in the South Downs National Park, influenced much of his work.

The experience of walking was more than just a hobby for Thomas, it was his medicine. He understood that in moving he was almost standing still – as he stepped in time with the changes in the landscape that surrounded him.

*The past is the only dead thing that smells sweet,  
The only sweet thing that is not also fleet*

In his work Thomas described his insatiable drive to 'go on and on over earth' offset by a desire to 'settle for ever in one place', to find some normality in a pastoral life in the foothills of the Hangers.

*A house that shall love me as I love it,  
Well hedged, and honoured by a few ash trees*

Sadly Thomas' life was not a rosy world of romance and fun. He was plagued by depression but hoped that through his walking his wellbeing would be improved, or he'd at least find some respite.

*And I rose up, and knew that I was tired, and  
continued my journey*

find out more about the life and works of Edward Thomas at Petersfield Museum from this April [www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk](http://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk)

Get involved with Visit Britain's Year of Literary Heroes [www.visitbritain.org/year-literary-heroes-2017](http://www.visitbritain.org/year-literary-heroes-2017)



## WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON PICKING UP POOP?

After the bombardment of global politics in recent months it was actually a relief to see 'dog poo' trending on twitter this March. Then we found out that it was up there because of a parliamentary debate on the subject. Ah well.

Don't get us wrong. We hate to see those little plastic bags swinging from the trees or sat at the side of the path as much as the next person. We are just as tired of reminding people that, sorry Tinkerbell, there is no such thing as the dog poo fairy. We make this pretty clear to the poo-tree ninjas in our **Take the Lead campaign film**.

However we cannot agree that flicking your dog poo into the undergrowth is a better solution – that's like saying that throwing litter into a stream where it sinks out of sight is better than leaving it at the side of the road for everyone to see.

*"But it's just one little dog poo."*

Did you know that there are more than a million dogs living in south east England. Our [2015 visitor survey](#) showed 16 per cent of visits to the National Park were for dog walking. That's in a protected landscape that receives 46 million day visits every year. Let's just take a moment to think about the quantity of dog poo being generated. Urgh!

*"But poo is natural. Wild animals and farm animals are out pooing in the countryside."*

Yes, the countryside is full of poo, but dog waste is different. For a start dogs eat meat which means their poo smells considerably worse than animals that eat only plants. And yes, we know that foxes eat meat too but there are far fewer foxes out there than dogs – just 195,000 across the whole of England according to the [Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust](#).

Worms and diseases from dog waste can infect people, livestock and wildlife and even pollute your local water supplies.



Our 2015 visitor survey showed 16 per cent of visits to the National Park were for dog walking. Let's just take a moment to think about the quantity of dog poo being generated.

Henry Brown is a farmer at the eastern end of the National Park who is struggling with the volume of dog mess left on their grazing pasture. "We have more than 200 dogs a day passing through the field and too much dog waste gets left behind. We are now finding that our animals are suffering from infections which can be carried in dog poo. When we sent our lambs for slaughter last year a number of their livers were condemned due to a parasite called *cystic tenuicollis*. We also had some abortions in the cows last year too, which the vet suggested could be caused by *neospora*, which again can be found in dog waste."

If the problem persists Henry thinks they may no longer graze these pastures, and a huge number of rare plants and insects can only thrive when the ground is grazed.

Finally let's just take a moment to think about all the other users of the National Park. The unsuspecting school children getting the chance to learn outside the classroom, the military on exercises, the runners, the ramblers, the horse riders, the cyclists.

Leaving poo bags on trees is disgusting but 'sticking and flicking' really isn't much better. We know that the vast majority of dog owners love the countryside and would be devastated to think they, and their animals were causing harm.

Dog poo is bad for people and bad for the countryside. Good dog owners know to bag and bin it – any bin will do.

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Watch a special newsletter preview of the Canine Confessions of Felicity, a dog who knows to Bag and Bin [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xctziE-Us1k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xctziE-Us1k)

Watch more confessions now and see the interview with 'Felicity's' owner later this week at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/watch-canine-confessions/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/watch-canine-confessions/)



## UPDATE ON PONDTAIL WOOD

We can confirm that the Pondtail Wood site, subject to a planning Enforcement Notice, (EN) issued by the South Downs National Park Authority and Forestry Commission Restocking Notice, has now been sold.

This site remains as private land. The (now) former owner has chosen to withdraw his appeal against the EN and we have issued an amendment to the EN to take account of the fact that the requirement to restock the trees is subject to separate legislation and Restocking Notice (still in place) to be pursued by the Forestry Commission. The requirement of the amended planning EN is "to grade and level the surface in keeping with the soil type to allow regeneration of replanted trees".

The amendment to the EN also provides the new owner six months to remove the waste from the site. Such a timescale is considered to be both reasonable and achievable for the new owner. In any case, the site cannot be restocked with trees until the new planting season commences in autumn.

We believe this is a positive outcome for the National Park, providing certainty for the future management of the planning breach – not only has the appeal been withdrawn but the new owner, along with the former owner of the site, have signed an agreement with the SDNPA that they will not lodge any challenges to the amended EN.

We look forward to working with the new site owner to restore the site in accordance with the requirements of the amended Enforcement Notice.

This update is published on our website at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/pondtail-wood-update-site-sold/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/pondtail-wood-update-site-sold/)

## FIVE THINGS TO DO IN THE SOUTH DOWNS THIS MONTH

Find these & more events across the National Park and submit your own events at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/events/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/events/)



- Join the South Downs' 7<sup>th</sup> birthday walk from Midhurst
- Go bunny orienteering at Selborne
- Find out how the South Downs and Brighton inspired Constable in a new exhibition
- Take part in the Brighton Mayoral charity bike ride and walk
- Discover Saddlescombe, an ancient downland farm that was once owned by the Knights Templars.

## ON THE GROUND

Don't forget to say hello if you spot our Rangers and volunteers out working in the National Park.

Here's a taste of what they achieved in March 2017.



- Developed **15 new National Park walks, horse rides and cycle rides** to publish on View Ranger.
- **Talked to dog walkers and owners** to promote our Take the Lead responsible dog walking campaign at eight key sites including Devil's Dyke, and Seven Sisters Country Park.
- Planted locally sourced plug plants at Truleigh Hill butterfly bank to **encourage priority butterfly species**.
- Erected electric fencing on a SSSI above Beeding where we are **working in partnership with the landowner to introduce goats**.
- **Work on South Downs Way** included repairing all signs at Seven Sisters, the steps and interpretation

panel at the Eastbourne end of the trail and installing five new finger posts near Amberley

- **Collected litter at Tide Mills and Seven Sisters Country Park** with Duke of Edinburgh Scheme students.
- **Carried out chalk grassland restoration on SSSIs** in Clayton, the Long Man of Wilmington and Mill Hill local nature reserve.
- **Cleared invasive scrub at Steyning bowl** and Storrington Hill SSSI and Lancing Ring LNR/SNCI and installed **50m of post and rail fencing** around Lancing Ring dew pond.
- Worked with the South Pond Group in Midhurst to **install bat and bird boxes** and start water quality testing.
- **Trained 11 volunteers to carry out riverfly monitoring** on the River Meon, Rother and Hamble.
- Worked with the Wild Trout Trust on the second phase of **Meon river restoration in East Meon**.
- Created heat maps for farmers in the central downs **showing number of records for key indicator species**.

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/on-the-ground](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/on-the-ground)

## MOST ASKED...

Send us your questions about a particular area of work in the National Park.

Answering this month is:

**Lillian Wakely, Community Infrastructure Liaison Officer for the SDNPA**



### YOU ASK

What is the Community Infrastructure Levy?

### LILLIAN ANSWERS

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations, introduced in April 2010, allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise funds from developers who are undertaking new building projects. In most cases gaining planning permission to carry out development will increase the value of the land. At the same time most developments will have an impact on local infrastructure. Through the CIL developers have to give some of this financial gain back to the community in the form of creating new, or improving existing, infrastructure.

### YOU ASK

I look after a 12<sup>th</sup> century church in the National Park and the small parish has to meet a bill of several

thousand pounds in the coming year. The CIL was mentioned to me. I wonder if you could suggest how I could find out whether it applies.

### LILLIAN ANSWERS

Pulborough Parish Council are developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, in which case, once the Plan is 'made', the Pulborough Parish will be entitled to 25% of CIL monies. Whilst there is no NDP in place, the Parish will be entitled to 15% of CIL monies. The Parish Council must use CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the local council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure.

The South Downs National Park will be charging CIL from 01 April and we will be liaising with Parish Council's on the spending and allocation of CIL monies in due course.

Read more of Lillian's answers and find useful links [www.southdowns.gov.uk/most-asked-lillian-wakely-cil-officer/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/most-asked-lillian-wakely-cil-officer/)

## NEXT MONTH: The South Downs National Park

Does the National Park give value for money? Why doesn't the SDNPA own any land in the National Park? Why does the SDNPA allow houses to be built in the National Park?

Send your questions for Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive for the South Downs National Park Authority [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)



## YOU SAY: BOOMTOWN

Do you have a story you want to tell about the National Park? A burning issue that you think needs to be addressed? Please let us know.



Michael Beer from Cheriton says:

*I see much interest and enthusiasm for night skies and environmental preservation in your documentation. Is this not a complete sham and disingenuous bearing in mind the Boomtown event which [you] actively condone. This is of substantial interest to residents who live in the park.*

Tim Slaney, Director of Planning for the South Downs National Park Authority says:

*The possible impact of the Boomtown Festival on the special qualities of the National Park was given important consideration when our Planning Committee gave approval for the Matterley Estate to hold one large music festival and one large sport endurance event a year on a temporary basis for five years.*

*This permission is subject to a number of conditions including noise, lighting and environmental monitoring. We also now have a legal agreement in place to secure improvements to the Site of Special Scientific Interest on the site, the South Downs Way which passes through the site and the Cheesefoot Head car park.*

*As with almost everything that happens in the South Downs, we have to find a way to balance people's enjoyment and appreciation of the National Park with keeping these landscapes special for future generations. We know that young adults, aged under 25, are unlikely to know about national parks in general and the South Downs specifically.*

*This is something that we want to address. Boomtown is an opportunity to talk and meet a different group of people to our usual event attendees and support them to discover this part of the National Park. This year we will have a small presence at the event but we hope to do more with Boomtown in the future so that those attending know they are in a National Park and have the opportunity to learn about it and support its future.*

*Our officers are actively involved in the monitoring and review of the festival and do appreciate that there are short-term impacts to the local community. However these are short-term and as part of our ongoing work with the estate and festival organisers, we are looking at improvements they can make to minimise these at future events. In the meantime these events should assist the estate to continue to care for and improve our landscapes across the rest of the year.*

To submit a comment for our newsletter please email [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk).  
For a fast and direct response to your questions please email [info@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:info@southdowns.gov.uk)

Please note that only contributors who submit their full name and address can be considered for publication though we will not publish your full address. Please make it clear whether you are speaking on your own behalf or that of an organisation you represent. We reserve the right to shorten comments and edit where necessary.





## WIN TREATS FOR YOUR DOG!

Show us how you Take the Lead in the South Downs and you could win delicious treats for your dog, courtesy of local pet food company Arden Grange.

To enter follow us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, take a snap of your dog leading you on a walk in your favourite location in the South Downs National Park, then share it using #TakeTheLeadTo.

The two entries each month from April to August will be selected for the winners gallery and put to a public vote in September.

Find out more at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/photo-competition](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/photo-competition) and check out the entries [@sdnpa](https://twitter.com/sdnpa) and [@southdownsnp](https://twitter.com/southdownsnp)



## WATCH OUR BARN OWLS

We're excited to see this breeding pair of barn owls back in their nest box. Last year we watched them raise two chicks - albeit from a slightly strange angle after they knocked the camera off centre.

Will they be successful this year?

Watch the South Downs barn owl cam at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/barn-owls-live-2017](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/barn-owls-live-2017)



## NEW FOODIE TOURISM SERVICE FOR HOTELS, GUESTHOUSES AND B&BS

Sign up your business now at [www.southdownsfood.org](http://www.southdownsfood.org) if you'd like to be one of the first hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs to use the free Local Food Detective, helping you stay ahead in attracting foodie guests to stay with you!

*"The Natural Partnerships' South Downs food project is a fantastic idea, and will allow visitors exploring the famous national park to find and enjoy local specialities like English sparkling wine and wild venison."*

Environment Secretary Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP

Locals and visitors can find out where to eat, buy and enjoy local food at [www.southdownsfood.org](http://www.southdownsfood.org)



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