



DOWNLAND THYMES

NEWS FOR THE SOUTH DOWNS VOLUNTEER
RANGER SERVICE ISSUE 84 | SUMMER 2019

SAVING THE GRAYLING BUTTERFLY



On a crisp sunny day in early December I joined a small group of volunteers for the usual weekly task but soon found that this task seemed more critical than many others I have done. Our task was to carry on with work which had already been started to save the grayling butterfly from disappearing completely from the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The grayling had once thrived on the short, sheep-bitten and rabbit grazed, hot, south facing slopes of the South Downs.

The only spot on the SDNP where this rare butterfly is still to be found is at Deep Dene near Wilmington in East Sussex. SDNPA Ranger Tim Squire had already arranged for 15 Exmoor

ponies, provided by the Sussex Pony Grazing and Conservation Trust, to be kept at the site for a while to eat the invasive tor grass, which is a serious problem for the poor grayling.

To read Tim's full account of the project including details of the butterfly itself, its preferred habitat, its decline and a fuller account of the role of the ponies visit southdowns.gov.uk/grayling-butterfly-master-diguise.

Our job on this day in early December was to complete the second stage in the process by using mattocks to dig shallow holes, thereby simulating the action of rabbits. We were fortunate to be joined by Neil Hulme

from the Sussex branch of Butterfly Conservation whose guidance, knowledge and enthusiasm were inspirational. I had the easy task that day, just cutting back gorse but most of the others found it tough going, working on a slope and swinging the mattocks to create a large number of simulated shallow "rabbit holes".

Will we be successful? Well, a similar project has been done before with the Duke of Burgundy butterfly and so, with a concerted effort, perhaps we can save this incredible and unique inhabitant of the South Downs too.

ALAN JONES, EASTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER

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FOR THE
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Main and inset:
Grayling butterfly
©Neil Hulme

Volunteer
work party on
Deep Dean
© Alan Jones



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The summer edition already, how time flies! Still I can't complain, the chalk streams in the west are looking beautiful as ever and this is my prime fly fishing time, so plenty of opportunities to be out in this glorious National Park. We had an excellent AGM this year, well attended, and everyone who came had an opportunity to take home a set of tick tweezers, funded by the VRS Committee. Don't worry if you don't have yours yet, supplies are out with area staff for you to collect and if we need to purchase more we will. Also if you didn't make the AGM but would like to see what was talked about then the presentations are available on the intranet intranet.southdowns.gov.uk/volunteers.

The VRS Committee has had an extraordinary response to this year's launch of the VRS Conservation Fund with 19 applications for funding and VRS help to be considered. These are from partner organisations and cover nearly all areas of the National Park, they range from relatively modest proposals to large projects that are seeking funding and help from several sources. The Lead Rangers will be assisting the VRS Committee in deciding which applications to support and I hope you all will have an opportunity to contribute, at some stage, some of your skills to a project near you.

Finally, let me wish you all a great summer and don't forget to check for ticks after every time you are out working with the VRS!

RON WILDER, VRS CHAIR

UPDATE FROM THE VOLUNTEERING TEAM



Common spotted orchid on Wilmington Hill.
© Daniel Greenwood

THANK YOU TO OUR 300 VOLUNTEERS FOR YOUR ONGOING CONTRIBUTION IN THE SOUTH DOWNS, SUPPORTING IN VITAL MEASURES THAT HELP KEEP THE NATIONAL PARK RICH IN WILDLIFE AND ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE CARED FOR.

January to March was kind to us compared with 2018, when the arctic blast drew much of the UK to a standstill. You got a lot done out there, with 425 volunteer days clearing scrub from the Downs, 238 days coppicing and 183 days hedgelaying. We understand that it's important for volunteers to know why the activities are being undertaken and what the point of the effort is. As many of you know very well, managing scrub is key to keeping the downland open for the orchids and other wildflowers which underpin the rich ecosystems that make the South Downs special.

Coppicing recreates age-old practices that our woods are most used to and encourages a high level of species-diversity, allowing ancient woodland wildflowers and rare butterflies like the pearl-bordered fritillary (once known as the Woodman's Friend) to flourish once more.

Hedgelaying is another traditional practice that creates a habitat superhighway for birds, insects, small mammals and amphibians. A huge amount of hedgelaying has been

delivered in the past 12 months and I'm sure you will look forward to revisiting those sprouting hedgerows in the years to come. The impact for wildlife will be amazing.

As summer is now upon us, please be mindful of the heat out there on those sunny hills and follow all official guidance. It's also a time when ticks become more apparent, particularly for those of you volunteering on heathlands. Ticks are becoming more prevalent and, as Ron has mentioned in his Chairman's Corner, the Volunteer Ranger Service committee have purchased tick twisters for every volunteer to safely remove any unwelcome arachnids that tag along. These were handed out at the recent VRS AGM and the extra stock will be making its way to area teams.

Thank you again for all the time you offer as volunteers and for being ambassadors for the South Downs National Park. We hope you enjoy the summer!

DANIEL GREENWOOD, SDNPA VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

WOODLAND FUNGI ID DAY COURSE

IN AUTUMN 2019 WE ARE OFFERING TWO DAY COURSES – ONE IN THE EAST AND ONE IN THE WEST – WHERE VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER DANIEL GREENWOOD WILL TEACH YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WOODLAND FUNGI IDENTIFICATION...

Fungi is one of the three kingdoms of life and acts as a crucial part of life on Earth. We are dependent on fungi for some of the best things in life – cheese, beer, washing detergent and medicines like insulin. On this training course you can learn how to identify common species of woodland fungi, their place in woodland ecology and how they have helped us as a species over thousands of years. This course is not culinary focused or foraging-based but there will be simple guidance on edibility in a safety context. After lunch there will be a guided walk looking for woodland fungi.

WHEN AND WHERE:

Thursday 10 October, 10am – 4pm
at Buriton Village Hall, High Street,
Buriton, Petersfield, GU31 5RX

OR

Saturday 9 November, 10am – 4pm
at Stanmer Park meeting room,
Lewes Road, Brighton, BN1 9SE

Cost: £5 – you will be given details of how to pay this to secure your place.

Refreshments: Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided – please bring your own lunch.

BOOK NOW!

Please email Helena Lewis at vrs.veofficer@gmail.com to book your place.



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of Downland Thymes is bursting at the seams with interesting articles from right across the National Park and even further afield with one volunteer's visit to Brownsea Island in hunt of the elusive red squirrel (page7).

Discover all you need to know about one of the oldest creatures on Earth – the humble centipede (page 8), read about how volunteers are working hard to save the stunning grayling butterfly (front cover) and find out more about the new signs which you may have seen popping up around the South Downs National Park (page14).

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. As you know this publication wouldn't exist without your articles, poems, handy tips and images so keep them coming.

We have a small editorial team with Russell Cleaver in the west and Alan Jones in the east representing volunteers. If anyone from the central or Wealden areas would like to get involved please contact DT@southdowns.gov.uk – we'd love to hear from you.

Happy summer!



REBECCA SAUNDERS, EDITOR, DOWNLAND THYMES

MY EXPERIENCE AS A YOUNG NATURALIST

SIX YEARS AGO, I GOT INVOLVED IN A LOCAL CONSERVATION PROJECT, REHABILITATING A CHALK STREAM, SURROUNDING WOODLAND AND MEADOW.

Chalk streams are rare, they are found in the UK and some parts of northern France. There are only around 200 in the world and the UK holds approximately 85% of the total.

Chalk streams are associated with areas of chalk soil. The water flowing in the rivers comes from aquifers – underground stores of water. The Downs are largely made up of chalk, and therefore their aquifers provide the source for many chalk streams. As the water rises and leaves through springs, it is filtered by the chalk, leaving it slightly alkaline, gin-clear, and regulating its temperature to a cool 10°C.

These constant factors provide prime conditions for a wide range of invertebrates and aquatic plants to flourish. They are incredibly biodiverse habitats, but fragile ones, threatened by over-abstraction (irresponsible removal of water for public supply), pollution and climate change.

I first got involved in this conservation project with Botany Bay Conservancy by volunteering through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. I continued to volunteer on the project, completing my Bronze and Silver Awards and the John Muir Explorer Award: designed to educate and involve participants in the conservation of wild places.

In my time with the conservancy I have surveyed the stream through Riverfly Monitoring (riverflies.org); investigated the surrounding woodland with camera traps; and helped establish some wildflower areas. The project won the prize for Outstanding Contribution to Wild Trout Conservation in 2017 at the Wild Trout Trust Conservation Awards.

More recently, I have been working with students from local schools and colleges, passing on knowledge I have gained from working with the Conservancy and through courses and fieldwork which I've been able to do thanks to the SDNPA, Wild Trout Trust and Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust.

The main reason for my interest in nature is my parents, who encouraged an awareness of the natural world, building my curiosity. It is so important for parents to involve children in wildlife, in whatever capacity, so they are able to learn, explore and hopefully care for our environment.

My passion has now developed further and I am considering pursuing a career in conservation, after completing my Biology degree. The experience I gained completing the awards and working on conservation projects in the local area and further afield,

helped me make this decision by testing my interest and developing my skills and knowledge in practical situations.

Never before has it been more important for us to look after our wildlife and environment. Small changes have huge impacts. If everyone makes and continues to make small changes; in whatever capacity, be it providing habitat for wildlife or inspiring young naturalists; it will make a huge difference and gather momentum.

JOSEF AMIN, BOTANY BAY CONSERVANCY VOLUNTEER

Botany Bay received a £10,000 grant from the National Park's Sustainable Communities Fund in 2017 towards the outdoor classroom and access bridge.



MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

WHETHER IT'S WALKING YOUR DOG, STROLLING ALONG THE BEACH OR TAKING A JAUNT THROUGH THE COUNTRY, ANYONE CAN MICRO-VOLUNTEER.

You could go on a beach clean, you could monitor local species of birds, butterflies and trees or you can have fun on a "treasure-hunt" looking for elusive geocaches. These little things by individuals can go a long way if enough people get involved, and that was what our Micro-Volunteering Odyssey showed in April.

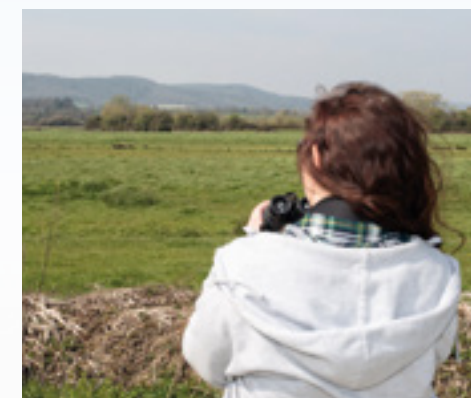
Cameron had been approached prior to this event by a lady who suggested that "people don't have the time to volunteer with the National Park, people are just too busy". She was right! But the thing is volunteering under the umbrella of the SDNPA is great and can do wonders for one's personal development, but doing micro-volunteering can also make a big difference too.

Although our odyssey took us to numerous areas of diversity within the National Park, something which most people would not try to do all in one day like we did, we tried to focus on places where visitors and locals were most likely to travel through or stroll about in. Places like Devils Dyke, the Seven Sisters,

Cowdray Park and Petersfield Heath see many people come and go with their dogs and their admiration for the natural world. The point we hope to have made is that people even in their busy lives can still do their bit for the environment, make it a bit tidier and help the National Park Rangers monitor species and generally improve the quality of the National Park we live in and around.

We hope that we can encourage you all to micro-volunteer in the future from the very old to the very young, and in the process we hope that you tell your friends and family about micro-volunteering because it is a brilliant way to help the environment on a busy schedule and anyone can do it.

KIRSTY FERRIS AND CAMERON MACDONALD, SDNPA YOUTH AMBASSADORS





ST. MICHAELS AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH, BERWICK

During World War II the artists Duncan Grant Vanessa Bell and Quentin Bell (known as The Bloomsbury Group) were commissioned by Bishop Bell (no relation to the artists) to produce paintings for the decoration of Berwick church, a small Grade I listed rural building at the eastern end of the South Downs National Park.

Rural scenes showing the community at work sit amongst the Biblical story and the clear glass windows bring the countryside into the church. The stained glass was destroyed by a bomb in October 1944.

South of the churchyard are panoramic views over the Downs escarpment to Alfriston. In early spring the churchyard is awash with snowdrops and primroses. The Vanguard Way and South Downs Way provide easy access to this most beautiful of churches located just off the A27 near the Drusillas roundabout.

Frank Wooton the RAF's WWII artist lived locally and is buried here as well as Boys Ellman, author of *Recollections of a Sussex Parson*.

The murals are going to be restored and with the help of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund work begins later this year.

Berwick Church is a beautiful place to visit

away from life's hustle and bustle, a space for quiet contemplation.

Should you need food and drink the characterful Cricketers pub is a short walk away providing good food and Harvey's ale brewed in nearby Lewes. For further information on Berwick Church please go to Berwickchurch.org.uk.

LINDA AND KEITH SUTTON, EASTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGERS

Berwick Church received a £2,000 grant from the National Park's Sustainable Communities Fund in 2018 towards the conservation of the Bloomsbury artists paintings.



Berwick Church © Linda and Keith Sutton

A VISIT TO BROWNSEA ISLAND

AS A CHANGE FROM THE SOUTH DOWNS I DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN A NATIONAL TRUST WORKING HOLIDAY HAVING NOT HAD SUCH A BREAK SINCE MY TWENTIES. AFTER A LITTLE RESEARCH I CHOSE A WEEK ON BROWNSEA ISLAND.

I have vague memories of the island having visited it on a family holiday ages ago. This time it was the red squirrel population that was the catalyst to my return and the opportunity to carry out daily surveys.

The foundation of the survey is a transect of which there are five within the National Trust part of the island (another five within the Dorset Wildlife Trust area, the northern half). Each transect is 500m in length and the surveying team were to keep their eyes open within a 'corridor' of 80m in total width. Every survey line was walked at a pace of 50m in 2.5 minutes (1.2kph) interspersed with 2 minute pauses – try it. It's a snail's pace.

Imagine the team is in effect carving a tunnel through the wood 500m long and 40m radius or, alternatively, 4 hectare of ground area. If that's the case on average how many red squirrels might you expect to spot? I accept there are several

variables to consider – time of day, weather, proficiency, etc. Simplistically how many?

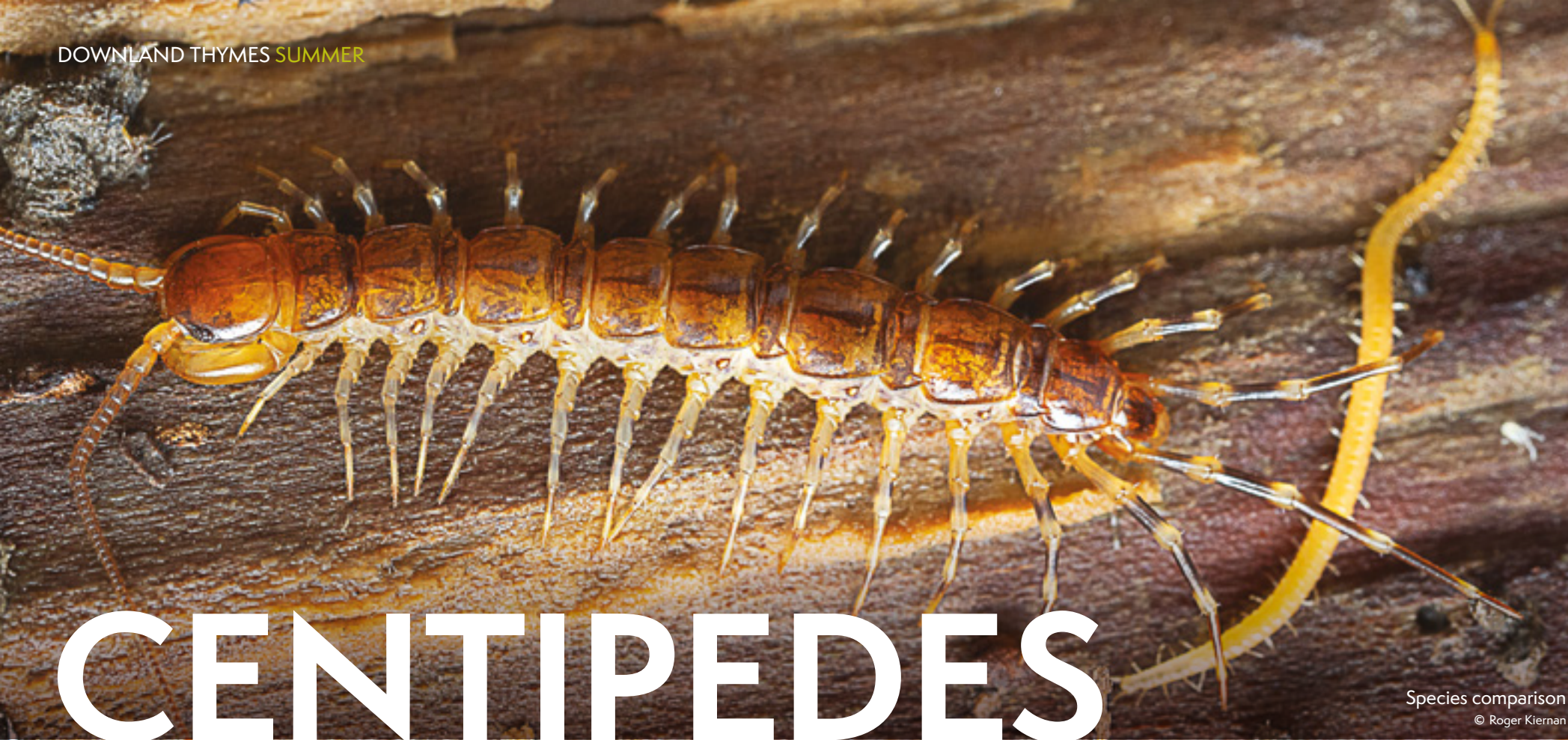
Fortunately the Forestry Commission publication "Practical techniques for surveying squirrels" provides a guide. The best environment is apparently a broad-leaved wood – oak and hazel (lots of acorns and nuts) – in southern England which is capable of supporting 0.9 squirrels/hectare. Bearing in mind Brownsea has its fair share of pine then optimistically I'd expect about 3 per transect.

With my fellow volunteer in successive surveys we recorded 3:1:0:1. Rumour was that another pair had reported eight during the week! Apparently the same environment could support 18 grey squirrels.

JEREMY NASON, EASTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER



Red squirrel
© Daniel Greenwood



CENTIPEDES

Species comparison
© Roger Kiernan

CENTIPEDES CAN BE FOUND ALL OVER THE SOUTH DOWNS BUT, UNLESS YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR THEM, THEY WILL PROBABLY NOT BE SEEN.

They have been found in fossils over 400 million years old, making them one of the oldest creatures on earth. In the UK there are about 60 species of centipedes. Some live in the soil while others hide under rotting timber, bark and stones, where they can keep moist. This is critical for their survival because their tough outer layer is not waterproof, and they can quickly dry out.

UK centipedes differ in colour and length (5-70mm) and with some exceptions their two body forms, short broad brown ones that live on the soil surface under stones (e.g. Lithobius species) and pale yellow long thin ones that live in the soil (e.g. Geophilus species or soil centipedes).

All centipedes have between 15 and 101 pairs of legs (one pair of legs per trunk segment unlike millipedes that have two pairs of legs per segment). Centipedes do not have exactly the 100 legs implied by their name as they all have an odd number of pairs. With all those legs you may be surprised they don't trip over when running. Evolution has dealt with this issue by having alternating long and short legs, so they don't trip over their own feet.

The last pair of legs, usually longer, trail behind the body and are covered with sensory bristles

and act as an extra pair of antennae. A useful feature when your head is far from your rear-end.

The upper and lower side of each of the centipede's trunk segments is protected by hardened shields, and tiny pores in some of these segments are openings for the breathing system which spreads air throughout the body.

Centipedes have simple eyes and poor vision, and some are blind, but they can find prey by using their very sensitive long antennae. Once prey is sensed they use their speed to capture, bite and inject their prey with venom to paralyse and kill it. The venom and bite are delivered by a pair of poisonous claws, which are modified legs on the first segment nearest the head. UK centipedes are not dangerous to us as their claws are very small and for the most part cannot penetrate our skin.

Centipedes are mainly carnivorous and not considered pests. They enjoy a diet of moths, flies, silverfish, slugs, spiders and leatherjackets. They are preyed upon by birds, spiders and anything else that can catch them. They are also cannibalistic, and their most successful predators are other centipedes which is why you will rarely find two cohabiting under the same stone.

**ROGER KEIRNAN, SEVEN SISTERS
VOLUNTEER RANGER**

The Centipede's Dilemma

A centipede was happy – quite!

Until a toad in fun

Said, "Pray, which leg moves after which?"

This raised her doubts to such a pitch,

She fell exhausted in the ditch

Not knowing how to run!

Katherine Craster (1841–1874)

Right/top: Close up of jaws and fangs
© Roger Kiernan

Right/bottom: *Scutigera coleoptrata* (house centipede)
© Roger Kiernan



Working under the Long Man
© Long Man Brewery

THE LONG MAN BREWERY

A PINT OF THE BEST! AND IN MY OPINION IT IS THE BEST – LONG MAN BEST BITTER.



The Long Man brewery is based at Church Farm, Litlington in East Sussex and has been thriving since 2012. It started, as good ideas do, over a few beers in the Plough and Harrow when head brewer Jamie Simm hatched a plan.

The brewery, named after the nearby iconic Long Man of Wilmington, is in the heart of the South Downs National Park. There are 500 acres of barley grown in the surrounding farmland which, after harvesting and malting, are put into the fermenting vessels with locally sourced hops to produce the beer. Water is supplied from an aquifer 60 metres down in the chalk and as much power as possible from the solar panels on the roof.

There are four main/core beers in the range: Long Blonde @ 3.8% for the summer, Best Bitter @ 4.0% for all year round together with American Pale Ale @ 4.8%, a bit stronger and the Old Man @ 4.3% for the winter. In addition there is a wide range of "small batch beers" which are always in demand.

It is an absolute delight to view and taste samples from this local, environmentally friendly brewery. The "Tour and Tasting" guide is now available to book online. The ingredients are all sustainably sourced and although six pints of water are used in the production of each pint of beer, the waste is collected, treated and used to help irrigate the farm. Any waste from the brewing of hops and spent grains is composted on the farm or used as animal feed by local farmers. The workforce from the surrounding towns and villages of some 15-20 staff are all enthusiastic for their product and have every right to be so. Cheers!

**STEPHEN TAYLOR, SEVEN SISTERS
VOLUNTEER RANGER**



Enjoying a tour of the brewery
© Stephen Taylor



Wiston Estate Woodland Day © Helena Lewis

WISTON ESTATE WOODLAND DAY

16 VOLUNTEERS FROM ALL AREAS THOROUGHLY ENJOYED AN INTERESTING, INFORMATIVE AND ENTERTAINING DAY WITH TOBY ASKEW, FORESTER ON THE WISTON ESTATE.

The family owned Wiston Estate is made up of 6,200 acres, of which woodland comprises around 1,200 acres. Toby explained that much of the timber is used for fuelling the biomass boiler at Wiston House. We learnt about High Forest, Mono Culture and other terms used in “silviculture” (care and cultivation of woodlands). It is first and foremost a business and the trees are planted for one purpose –to give an income albeit some of them only pay back in 120 years! They are properly managed to provide an infinite supply of timber for wood mills, fuel, etc.

Poorer quality trees can be felled and used for wood chipping, thus promoting the remaining trees to prosper in better growing conditions, which in turn gives more financial return. Through proactive management the woodlands thrive and their biodiversity flourishes.

After lunch we enjoyed a wander through the bluebell woods with Toby testing us on what we remembered from his talk and showing us different examples of standard oak trees in good, and not so good, condition as well as hazel and sweet chestnut coppice. We all learnt so much and will now enjoy walks in woodlands with increased perception of how they are being managed.

We decided that you need to be patient to be a forester as it will be the next generation who will benefit from your work in many areas – quite a change from the “instant result” culture we live in now.

HELENA LEWIS, EASTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER



Studying the trees at
Stanmer Park
© Helena Lewis

STANMER PARK WOODLAND DAY

Another Woodland day took place at Stanmer Park when Bob Epsom, Woodland Officer for the SDNPA, gave a group of volunteer rangers from all areas a great day. He showed us slides of the woodland areas across the National Park with some excellent photos of his favourite ancient trees. After lunch and armed with our winter twig identification sheets we all wandered through Stanmer Park with Bob pointing out signs of Ash die back, and encouraging us to look at the bark, leaves on the ground, buds, and general canopy of each tree to identify the name and condition of the trees.

HELENA LEWIS, EASTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER



Osprey in flight
© Frank Cone

A SUSSEX HOME FIT FOR AN OSPREY

WHEN I SIGNED UP TO A SCRUB CLEARANCE TASK EARLY LAST YEAR, I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT THIS WAS SCRUB CLEARANCE WITH A DIFFERENCE.

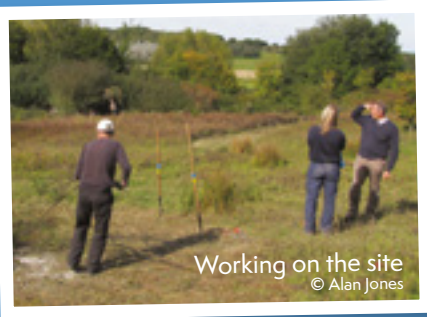
At a location in East Sussex an osprey nest had been constructed on top of a long telegraph pole and we were asked to create a scrub-free area for a 100 meter radius around the nest. The reason? Ospreys are fussy; they like to have a clear view of anything near their nest. Also, we clear scrub to maintain the grassland as part of the countryside stewardship agreement.

A few weeks ago, I met Alex Stephens, the Environmental Performance Officer for South East Water and I enquired if our efforts had been successful. He kindly

invited me to re-visit the site to see for myself and to give me the background to this intriguing project.

The nest had been installed as early as 2014 following advice taken from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust who have successfully introduced ospreys at Rutland water. Further details of this project, including webcams and satellite tracking, can be found at – ospreys.org.uk/category/west-africa-project.

In March, ospreys, once common in England, migrate from West Africa to Scotland, flying over Sussex along the way. The aim of the project is to encourage a breeding pair to settle and breed in East Sussex. Ospreys tend to return to the sites where they first fledge so the hope is to establish an active local site over the long term.



Working on the site
© Alan Jones

As Alex and I approached the nest, I was hoping that he would tell me that our efforts had been successful, but I was disappointed; the nest was clearly empty.

But we have not given up hope. Following further advice from the Rutland Project the nest has been improved and so we wait patiently to see if this magnificent bird can make its home in East Sussex.

ALAN JONES, EASTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER

HEDGELAYING COMPETITION



Mike's hedge
© Jeremy Nason

The forecast for Sunday 16 February could hardly have been better and the weather was set to be sunny after a somewhat chilly dawn. I was aware of a hedgelaying competition near Findon, organised by the South of England Hedge Laying Society. In addition, and probably of greater importance, one of the SDNP volunteers I know was competing. I could hardly let him down especially as my very modest hedgelaying skills are largely due to his (Mike Mason's) tuition.

The hedge selected for laying was deep in the South Angmering estate and by the time I arrived the lots had been drawn for the pitches and the starting horn sounded.

Mike had been assigned to a corner pitch and was well underway working with hand tools; his chainsaw had remained at home. Good decision? I noticed a mix of hawthorn and hazel (and maybe others) in his section and I noted I should improve my bush identification

skills. I left Mike to concentrate on the job in hand and wandered along the hedgerow meeting a gravedigger who kindly stopped to comment on the challenges of field maple and point out that the rising sap was visible in a stem he had just cut; then onto a Dutch competitor who was wielding tools used for rush cutting in the Netherlands. When I drifted back to Mike's corner he had removed a pesky bush and the hedge was taking on a far better profile with the opportunity of an attractive staked corner.

Because of the weather I had also decided to walk part of the South Downs Way over to Amberley so I left the layers to complete their work. Later in the day I discovered Mike's efforts on his difficult pitch had earned him the Joan Streete Memorial Shield – well done Mike!

JEREMY NASON, EASTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER

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 with a picture.

THE THREE MOLES

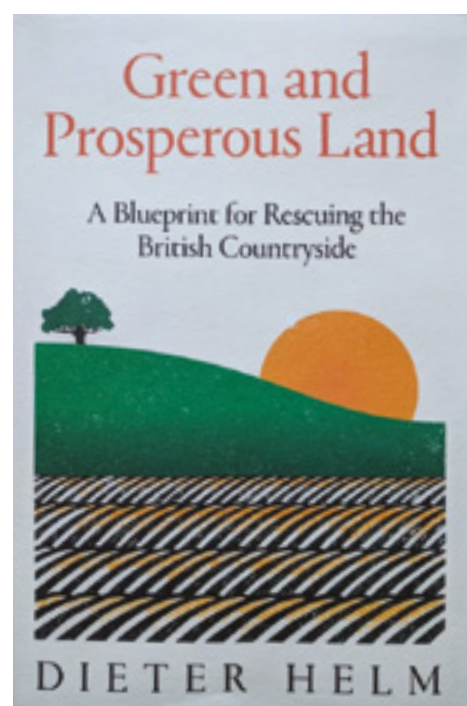
Selham, West Sussex GU28 0PN
thethreemoles.co.uk

With a name like this I had to visit. It is indeed uniquely named, and rather off the beaten track. This is the smallest pub in West Sussex, they have limited seating but fortunately a large garden. The pub is very much part of the community, they cater to the local hunt and darts team, so you must book ahead if you want a meal. As a free house they offer a good range of real ales and staff are very friendly. But why the unusual name? It probably derives from the Mitford family crest which featured moles. They built the pub in 1872 and still own the property.

Find The Three Moles just south of the A272 between Petworth and Midhurst.



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.



BOOK REVIEW

GREEN AND PROSPEROUS LAND

by Dieter Helm

Publisher: William Collins, 2019. £20

The author Dieter Helm is an Oxford professor in economics and also chairman of the Natural Capital Committee. So he is in the unique position of being highly respected in both economics and ecology. He is also a great communicator, for he argues with an elegant clarity on how we are degrading our environment, then offers a vision of how to rectify this.

His solution is sweeping in its scope, for example, we shouldn't pay farmers for

producing food but for managing the land for people and wildlife.

His preferred system completely changes the economic model of farm subsidies and gets polluters to pay for the damage they cause. It's a bold view on how to ensure the future enhancement of nature whilst still increasing our prosperity. He even suggests a 25-year plan to do so.

This remarkable book is set to become an instant classic; its sub-title says it all: *A Blueprint for Rescuing the British Countryside*.

**RUSSELL CLEAVER, WESTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER**

CAPTION COMPETITION



CAN YOU CREATE A WITTY CAPTION FOR THIS PHOTO? EMAIL YOUR IDEAS TO DT@SOUTHDOWNSGOV.UK



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

"IT WAS TOO LATE NOW TO REGRET MISSING THAT TRAINING COURSE: 'DIGGER DRIVING FOR DUMMIES'"

HAL SPOONER, WESTERN AREA
VOLUNTEER RANGER

PIC IN THE PARK

Our English churches fill their walls with stories of past parishioners. Many memorials commemorate the deaths of soldiers or sailors lost overseas; their numbers reflect on the scope of our imperial history. While elsewhere you can often find poignant memorials to lost loved ones.

Here, on the wall of St Andrews Church, Titchborne, Hants, is a charming depiction of a tiny toddler laid to rest in the 15th Century. Rich or poor, infant mortality struck down many in the centuries before the use of modern medicines.



DID YOU KNOW?

THE ENGLISH COASTAL PATH, DUE TO BE COMPLETED IN 2020, WILL BE 2795 MILES LONG.

As such it is the longest managed, waymarked trail in the world. But since it links to the already completed Wales Coast Path, you add another 870 miles to make it over 3,600 miles (give or take any subsequent diversions or overlap).

FIRST PILOT SIGNS ARE UNVEILED FOR THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

BESPOKE SIGNS THAT REFLECT THE UNIQUE HERITAGE OF THE SOUTH DOWNS AND CREATE A SENSE OF ARRIVAL HAVE BEEN INSTALLED AT 19 PILOT SITES AT SPECIALLY CHOSEN LOCATIONS AT, OR NEAR, THE NATIONAL PARK'S BORDERS ACROSS SUSSEX AND HAMPSHIRE.

The signs will help people know that they are in this unique landscape that has been designated for the whole nation and deserves special care and attention.

Every location has been carefully selected at key entry points to the stunning landscape and each sign's size and design have been tailor-made to fit its surroundings.

The signs are made from iron or a mixture of wood and iron – reflecting the history of iron work in the South Downs during the 17th and 18th centuries and that the South Downs has the most woodland of any English National Park. The sweet chestnut wood used in the signs has been locally sourced from the Stansted Estate by English Woodlands. The white lettering reflects the iconic chalk landscape of the South Downs.

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority said: "These beautifully-crafted signs pay homage to the heritage of the South Downs and welcome people to a precious landscape, reminding them that it should be enjoyed with care and respect."

"Throughout history boundary markers have used local materials to reflect a community's pride in its place. These bespoke signs are part of that tradition."

"They add to the National Park's value as a destination to visit in support of local businesses, including our top-quality food and drink producers and the many well-being and leisure opportunities that the South Downs offer."

"We will carefully assess the response to the first 19 sites before deciding whether to proceed with further locations."

The signs draw upon the National Park's Shared Identity, which is used by local partners, stakeholders and businesses to show they are part of an amazing place.

Designer Peter Anderson, who led on the design of the signs, said: "The signs were designed to respect and pay homage to the heritage, beautiful natural form and materials of the National Park."

"The form of the signs echo the rolling landscape of the SDNP and allow a viewing point through the sign to the scenery beyond it. Cor-ten steel reflects SDNP's ironworks heritage, this material rusts organically allowing it to live and breathe alongside its habitat."



From the top down:
Sign at Eastbourne on the A259
Sign at Pulborough on the A29
Sign at Cooksbridge on the A259



TAKE THE LEAD

WITH THE START OF GROUND-NESTING BIRD SEASON AND LAMBS IN THE FIELDS, IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN THAT THE KEY MESSAGES OF OUR TAKE THE LEAD CAMPAIGN BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.

Promoting responsible dog ownership in the South Downs, the Take the Lead campaign encourages dog walkers to follow these four steps to help keep them and their dog safe while out exploring the stunning countryside of the Downs:

- 1 **Keep your dog on the lead around livestock and wildlife** – if you feel threatened let your dog off the lead and get to safety quickly.
- 2 **Bag and bin your dog poo** – any bin will do!
- 3 **Stick to the path during ground-nesting bird season** – 1 March to 15 September.
- 4 **Stay out of Ministry of Defence danger areas when red flags are flying.**

Visit southdowns.gov.uk/takethelead for more information about the campaign and to watch the animation and Canine Confession films.



DISCOUNTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

You'll be pleased to know that several retailers are offering discounts on the sorts of things you'll need in the countryside. The VRS has successfully negotiated discounts with:

Cotswold Outdoor, Snow & Rock, Gatleys, Runners Need, Clusons, JDSports/Milletts/Blacks/Ultimate Outdoor, Goodrowes, Rohan, Roger Gunn and Southdown Bikes. Also Fitzcane's café in Midhurst.

Simply present your VRS photo identity card at the time of your purchase – or use an online discount code. The discount amount varies, but is not available in conjunction with any other discounts or offers and is subject to terms and conditions.

Please visit the Volunteer section of the intranet for full details of each discount.

If you don't have an ID card, or have lost, damaged or mislaid it then please email vrs@southdowns.gov.uk for a replacement. The weekly Update email includes an intranet log-on that you can use if you don't already have one.

JOIN THE SOUTH DOWNS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK?

Sign up for our monthly newsletter for the latest South Downs news, stories, ideas for days out, competitions, to hear about our ranger and volunteers' work and much, much more...

southdowns.gov.uk/newsletter



SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE



Along with about 25 Volunteer Rangers from the Eastern Area (Seven Sisters and Stanmer Park based), I attended the annual gathering with South Downs National Park staff at the YHA in Itford, north of Newhaven on March 1 2019. As always, the staff were extremely appreciative of all the volunteers' hard work throughout the year and keen to update us on various strategic and practical developments as well as give us an opportunity to ask questions.

After a welcome by Philippa Morrison-Price, Lead Ranger for the Eastern Area, Claire Kerr, Countryside and Policy Manager gave a very interesting overview of strategic developments in the National Park, particularly in relation to the impending Local Plan and Partnership Management Plan, both of which will be signed off and implemented later this year. The unknowns of the possible impact of Brexit were acknowledged but not much more could be said until it is known whether it is to be a 'Deal' or No Deal!

Daniel Greenwood, Volunteer Development Officer then provided some facts and figures about volunteer work in the Eastern area where, as to be expected, scrub bashing was the most prevalent task, hedge laying came second but interestingly fencing didn't even make it into the top five! Daniel announced that there are currently no vacancies for any more volunteer rangers but did tell us about the work of the two new Youth Ambassadors who are hopefully going to lead the way for

more youngsters to get involved in the future. Of course this will be essential if the current conservation efforts by Rangers are to be of benefit in the longer term.

Mark Rose then summed up the funding opportunities provided by the Volunteer Conservation Fund which has only two criteria at the moment: to support projects in keeping with the SDNP priorities and involve Volunteer Rangers. The deadline for the first year of applications was the end of March 2019 but more bids for funds will be welcome in the future (up to £5,000 maximum but several smaller awards are more likely). Volunteers or anyone else are welcome to put bids forward see southdownstrust.org.uk/apply-for-a-ranger

Finally, Phil Paulo, Community Landscape Project Officer for the new Truleigh Hill Landscape Project updated us on this inspirational initiative which has been made possible by funding provided through Rampion, Offshore Wind and others. This is a very exciting project as it may be used as a model for future work undertaken by the SDNPA. Further details can be found at southdowns.gov.uk/discover/landscape-geology/truleigh-hill-landscape-project

The morning ended with wide ranging questions from the volunteers and the staff responded as well as they could and offered to follow up where appropriate. I was keen to hear more about plans for involvement

of more school age children and also how verge management and fly tipping could be addressed more effectively in future – subjects which may be on the agenda for next years meeting so do come along if you couldn't make it this time.

Mark kindly took the time to tell me about an approach to verges which is being piloted elsewhere. Instead of leaving the waste from grass cuttings behind (which provides nutrients for even lusher grass growth), the waste is cleared away (along with recent litter!) and with less nutrients, more wild flowers are gradually populating the verges, which not only supports more wildlife but also looks a great deal better. It is considered a cost neutral approach as the cost of clearing waste is offset by less cutting so a potential 'win, win' and let's hope it can be trialled in East Sussex soon!

I was pleased I had attended the meeting as it not only kept me in the picture about what is going on and what is planned, but also gave me and other volunteers an opportunity to share some concerns and ideas we have about the future of this beautiful part of the world. Perhaps my last thought is to ask all rangers to keep sharing their knowledge of the environment we enjoy working in together, as I for one always want to learn more about the fauna and flora around me.

**LIDDY DAVIDSON, SEVEN SISTERS
VOLUNTEER RANGER**

**SOUTH DOWNS
VOLUNTEER
RANGER SERVICE**

**SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK**

Downland Thymes: News for the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service.
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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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