### SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

May 2018

# SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

#### This month we are:

- Saying a big thank you as we reach 60% of our #MendourWay campaign target
- Discovering top tips for tackling the South Downs Way and finding bluebells
- Asking exactly what is a Gateway to the National Park
- Answering your cycling questions such as: when will the Centurion Way be finished?
- Giving away a Columbia Sportswear Powder Lite ™ jacket

As always please send your comments and ideas to us at <u>newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk</u>

# CAMPAIGN TO FIX BROKEN SOUTH DOWNS WAY TRAIL REACHES 60% OF TARGET

The campaign to raise £120,000 to carry out much-needed improvements on the South Downs Way has reached more than 60 per cent of its target with six months, and the main summer walking season, still to go.

More than £75,000 has been donated to the 'Mend our Way', a campaign led by the South Downs National Park Trust, asking people who've enjoyed the South Downs Way to support significant repair work on four broken sections of the national trail.



"The cold, wet winter has taken its toll on the damaged sections but because of your love for the South Downs Way we're more than 60% towards our target – and being able to carry out these much-needed improvements.

"With the warmer weather and bank holidays ahead we're looking forward to seeing more people enjoying walking, cycling or riding the trail. It's an amazing resource and, if you love the South Downs Way, please consider supporting our campaign."

"Thank you so much, we are blown away by your generosity! More than 20,000 long-distance walkers, cyclists and riders complete the 160km South Downs Way National Trail every year and many millions more explore a section of it which causes a lot of wear and tear. Existing funding allows the National Park Authority to make most repairs but there are four significant projects which can't be tackled using existing funds. Each year, as the erosion gets worse, they become harder to fix.

The 'Mend our Way' campaign is being run by the South Downs National Park Trust, a new charity which works with partners to protect the National Park for future generations. The charity is supported by the National Park Authority who will cover the Trust's core costs for the first three years, meaning all funds raised can be focused on important projects within the National Park.

Find out more and pledge your support at **www.southdowns.gov.uk/mendourway** 



# TOP TIPS FOR TACKLING THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

South Downs Way ranger Ben not only spends most of his days out on the National Trail, he also cycled it over three days in 2015. As it's National Walking Month this May we asked him for some tips.

 Which direction? The official trail guide will send you east to west so that you finish by collecting your Wayfarers Dole – a small glass of ale and a piece of bread – from the Hospital of St Cross in Winchester. However travelling west to east means the prevailing wind will be at your back and you'll finish with the dramatic white chalk cliffs by the sea.

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Factor in time if you're planning to stop at pubs or cafes – and why wouldn't you? There are so many gems just a little way off the trail so get exploring

- Be realistic. Think about how far you can, and want to, travel each day. Do you want to leave enough time to stop and absorb the atmosphere, smell the flowers? Factor in time if you're planning to stop at pubs or cafes – and why wouldn't you? There are so many gems just a little way off the trail so get exploring.
- Plan, plan, plan National Trail Website has a lot of useful info you'll need for your adventure. For example the interactive map shows accommodation, water points, circular routes, cycle repair shops, info for horse riders and much more. You don't have to do it all at once – see our guide to taking on the SDW by public transport. Book accommodation in advance. Particularly in the summer. Youth hostels and B&Bs get booked up.
- 4. Don't do what I did! Overpacking is a big mistake on a long distance route and what seems like a small thing at home can become a bit of a burden over 100 miles. Travel light but dress for the weather – sunscreen, sun hat, waterproofs. For walkers the main thing is comfy boots or shoes with a good grip, preferably waterproof. Don't forget a warm layer, even in hot weather there's often a good strong breeze on the tops. For cyclists it's not very technical but can get muddy so you'll need a mountain bike, a spare inner tube, and the tools and knowledge to at least repair a puncture. You'll need a bell to warn people if you're overtaking and, of course, a helmet.
- 5. **Carry a mobile phone and charger**. You'll want it for the photos fingers crossed nothing else but if anything does go wrong you'll be glad you have it.

"what seems like a small thing at home can become a bit of a burden over 100 miles"

- 6. Take a map and guide book so you know where you are and what you're looking at. If you use a GPS you can download the GPX file from the website. Apps like Viewranger or OS are useful but be aware that there isn't always a signal!
- 8. **Share the path**. Other people will also be enjoying the route. Watch out for people who may be travelling at slower speeds, particularly horse riders.
- Remember that you're in a farmed landscape and you'll pass sheep and cattle along the way and go through farm yards – watch out for tractors! Keep dogs under control & clean up after them.

Help us fix the South Downs Way! If you've enjoyed the trail please consider donating to the Mend our Way Campaign to help repair broken sections – you'll probably have noticed them along the way!

www.southdowns.gov.uk/mendourway



# TESTED TOUGH

# South Downs rangers' new uniform revealed...

South Downs National Park rangers will be protected from the elements come rain and shine from May 2018 thanks to new uniform from Columbia Sportswear, part of a nationwide partnership making the company an official supplier to all 15 UK National Parks.

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"The partnership with Columbia represents a real investment in our National Parks. Enabling us to focus our resources on looking after the South Downs' precious landscapes."

The new South Downs National Park kit, in black with a fuse green shirt, is revealed in a short film called '24 hours in the South Downs'.

The film features endurance athlete Max Wilco; Mark and Miranda from 'The Common Wanderer' travel blog; South Downs rangers Matt Dowse and Charlotte Wray; and South Downs Way National Trail manager Andy Gattiker. Together the group explore the South Downs and test out Columbia kit with a day of trail running, hiking and mountain biking.

The 22 South Downs rangers and assistant rangers will be part of 300 rangers from National Park across the country challenging Columbia's #TestedTough claim as they work outdoors in snow, sun and, of course, rain.

This is the first time that UK National Parks have entered into a partnership of this kind which also includes uniform for nearly 2,000 other National Park staff to wear for outreach with schools, at shows and events and other public occasions.

"At Columbia, our mission is to help people enjoy the outdoors longer," says Andy Barker, General Manager UK & IR Columbia Sportswear. "That's why we consider it our responsibility to be conscientious stewards of our shared environment. Our continued partnership with the UK's National Parks is an unrivalled opportunity to highlight the amazing work conducted by rangers and staff."

"The partnership with Columbia represents a real investment in our National Parks," says Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive for the South Downs National Park Authority. "Enabling us to focus our resources on looking after the South Downs' precious landscapes."

Columbia Sportswear is showing a strong commitment to the UK's National Parks with this partnership. Providing clothing for more than 2,000 staff is a very significant contribution, supporting the very heart of our work. Columbia will take a leading role in helping to increase public understanding of our wonderful National Parks by sharing the stories of our people and our Parks.

Watch the film at <u>www.southdowns.gov.uk/24-</u> hours-south-downs/



### GATEWAYS

When Gilbert White & the Oates Collections in Selborne relaunches this May it will also become the newest 'gateway' to the South Downs. For a National Park with no border fences we hear this phrase a lot. So what do these mysterious portals look like and how do they have the power to magically transport us out into the countryside?

"People love maps. They love to know how big the National Park is and where they are placed within it – maps give the essential geographical context visitors need." As the National Park Authority's Place Interpretation Officer it's part of Stephen Sibbald's job to get people's attention and give them the tools to go out and discover the South Downs for themselves. The National Park's place branding (known as the Shared Identity) also has an important role to play. Whether it is the distinctive and beautiful graphics, the engaging imagery or the alluring narratives, the Shared Identity provides a consistent thread in all the work we do.

### "People love maps. They love to know how big the National Park is and where they are placed within it"

It's particularly fitting that as a visitor arriving at the newly renovated museum, which celebrates the lives of the world's first naturalist, Gilbert White and two incredible explorers, Frank and Lawrence Oates, , one of the first things you'll see is the Shared Identity and mapping which shows local destinations as within the context of the National Park.

"People may have come here because they have a very specific interest in natural history or Arctic exploration, or entirely by chance. We want them to leave knowing that the stories and places they encounter are inextricably linked to the landscape that surrounds them. They come away with fuller appreciation of the UK's newest National Park and how they can get the most out of it." The same applies for any attraction. For

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example you might go to Winchester City Mill because of an interest in historic buildings and engineering but leave with the story of the River Itchen – a gin-clear chalk stream home to wild brown trout, otter and white-clawed crayfish and a great idea for a walk there.



South Downs National Park gateway at Winchester City Mill

Orientation is just the first stage. The next is inspiration. If you've been brought to a standstill by a huge vinyl image of the South Downs with a perfectly matched quote from a local author, chances are Stephen will have been involved. For Selborne this required sifting through Gilbert White's writing, usually quite prosaic, until Stephen found just the right line in the poem The invitation to Selborne: 'Here nature hangs her slopy woods to sight, Rills purl between and dart a quivering light.' A quote from another famous local author, Jane Austen, hints that you are only four miles from the museum at her former house.



One of the new panels that will go on display at Gilbert White & the Oates Collections

The best gateways sit in places where people are comfortable. "If you're hungry or distracted by where the toilets are you're not going to stop and look at a map or photo, let alone care." Cafes make a great location for informal learning and you can find one of the first gateways that Stephen worked on in the courtyard café at YHA South Downs in Southease.

### "It's not an exhibition – I'm not here to tell you the whole story. A gateway is a jumping off point for adventure."

Gateways are always a collaborative effort with the partners that Stephen is working. Given the range of partners the Authority work with, these gateways come in all shapes and sizes. Forty miles south east of Gilbert White's, he is working on a very different project with the Steyning Downland Scheme, a charity that works with the local community to conserve wildlife and get more people engaged with their local wildlife. They've purchased an old shipping container for storage which they are now planning to clad with wood and panels telling the story of the National Park, local wildlife and geology and encouraging people using the area, from dog walkers to mountain bikers, to treating each other and the landscape with respect.

Which leads on to the final principle of a National Park gateway – exploration. "It's not an exhibition – I'm not here to tell you the whole story. A gateway is a jumping off point for adventure. We've got your attention and now we're going to redirect you into the local area and beyond so you can go and discover more." This could mean providing information about other nearby attractions or trails or, in the case of the forthcoming gateway at YHA Truleigh Hill, take the form of a set of walks, graded easy to difficult, leading people out into the South Downs' landscapes.

"Even better, we might entice you back to visit the National Park another time." This links to a wide stream of work to increase the value that being a National Park adds to communities by encouraging people to spend longer here. "A day visitor might buy lunch here but an overnight visitor will make a much bigger contribution to the economy."

"Even better, we might entice you back to visit the National Park another time. A day visitor might buy lunch here but an overnight visitor will make a much bigger contribution to the economy."

Gilbert White & the Oates collections relaunches on Saturday 12 May **gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk**/ For more information about National Park gateways contact **stephen.sibbald@southdowns.gov.uk** 

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## **BLUEBELL TIME**

Did you know that the South Downs is England's most wooded national park? The soils in our ancient woodlands have been left undisturbed for hundreds of years, allowing great mobs of bluebells to thrive. With thoughts of a bank holiday ahead of us we asked South Downs Woodland Officer Bob Epsom where to find some.

"Many people will have a favourite bluebell wood that they visit every year but I often prefer the ones you stumble across – spotted out of a car window or on longer cycling or walking routes," says Bob.

"Car parks near bluebell woods are often jammed at this time of year. If possible please consider public transport, or travelling under your own steam. And remember to stick to the public rights of way so you leave them undamaged for everyone to enjoy!"

 Great Wood, Stanmer Park
 "This ancient wood is surprisingly close to the edge of Brighton." Stanmer Park is a short walk from Falmer train station and a regular stop for buses running between Brighton & Lewes.

 www.brighton-

hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-andlibraries/parks-and-green-spaces/stanmerpark

Butchers Wood, Hassocks

 "An ancient oak wood, managed by the Woodland Trust, which sits behind the downs on the weald." Just a fifteen minute walk from Hassocks station, if you're travelling north you can enjoy the bluebells on your right just before the train pulls in.

<u>www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-</u> woods/wood/4354/butchers-wood/

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#### • Slindon Estate

"There are many woods in this National Trust estate where you'll enjoy a stunning display of bluebells but don't forget to look out for other spring flowers too!"

The Compass 85/85A bus stops nearby, see the national trust website for details. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/slindon-estate

- Stansted Park Estate

   "Public footpaths and permissive paths surround and cross the woodlands here."
   <u>www.stanstedpark.co.uk/visitor-attractions/stansted-woods-and-parkland.html</u>
- Hinton Ampner
   "Another National Trust site where you can find plenty of bluebells, both in the formal gardens and surrounding woodland"
   Buses connect the site with train stations at Winchester and Petersfield

#### www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hinton-ampner

Upperford Copse

"The Forestry Commission's Forest of Bere includes woodland, open spaces, heathland, farmland and downland. Find bluebells under the mature beech trees of Upperford Copse." Cycle or walk there along the Meon Valley Way shared path

<u>www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/englandham</u> <u>pshirebereupperfordcopse</u>

*"Bluebells are spectacular but don't forget to look out for other spring woodland flowers whilst you're there"* 



Wild garlic, Orchis mascula

"Bluebells are spectacular but don't forget to look out for other spring woodland flowers whilst you're there," says Bob. "The early purple orchid *Orchis mascula* is one of the first to flower, you can recognise it by the dark spots on its leaves. You'll likely smell the leaves of Ramsoms *Allium ursinum*, better known as wild garlic, before you see it. I also love wood-sorrel, *Oxalis acetosella*, with its delicate white flowers with distinctive veins."



Wood-sorrel, Oxalis acetosella

# WIN A COLUMBIA POWDER LITE ™ HYBRID HOODED JACKET

Spring is definitely here but there's still a nip in the air and, let's face it, it's breezy year round on the South Downs' hill tops. What you need is a light, warm, water resistant layer to pull on when the temperature drops.

The lovely people at Columbia are not only kitting out all the rangers across UK National Parks, they're giving us one of their top selling Powder Lite <sup>™</sup> hybrid hooded jackets to give away. Just perfect for early mornings and evenings by the tent.

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Anyone who signs up as a new member of this newsletter during May will automatically be entered but to make sure our existing readers don't miss out you can also enter by emailing us at the address below before 31 May 2018.



To enter the draw email us with the subject 'I want that beautiful Columbia jacket please' to **newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk** 

Terms and conditions apply, please read them here <u>www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-</u> <u>content/uploads/2018/05/South-Downs-News-</u> <u>sign-up-Columbia-jacket-draw-Terms-</u> <u>Conditions.pdf</u>

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

Find these & more events across the National Park and submit your own events at <u>southdowns.gov.uk/events/</u>



- Mark the Celtic start of summer by **burning a Wickerman** at Butser Ancient Farm
- Admire the **newly refurbished at the Gilbert White** & **The Oates Collections**
- Take a tour of the **garden at Alfriston Clergy House** with the National Trust
- Join in **an evening of poetry and prosecco** at St Hubert's Church, Idsworth
- Make friends with some cattle at the 'Hairy not scary' event with Heathlands Reunited

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### ON THE GROUND

From meeting with farmers, offering training and support to local communities, leading walks, organising and training volunteers, controlling invasive species and supporting key species, South Downs National Park Rangers are out in the National Park every weekday and many weekends over the year.

Don't forget to say hello if you spot them out working. Here's a taste of what they achieved in April 2018:

- Installed an **interpretation panel at the Bronzeage barrow at Long Burgh**, Alfriston in partnership with Historic England
- Started this year's South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative surveys, with lapwing surveys at South Stoke, Offham and in the Arun to Adur Farm Cluster area
- Carried out patrols to encourage dog owners to #TaketheLead
- Carried out three **moth surveys at Mill Hill** with the Sussex Moth Group
- Cleared organic matter left from scrub clearance from the **Long Man of Wilmington**
- **Met with local farmers** at the eastern end of the National Park to talk about scrub clearance
- Cleared reed mace as part of **Glynde dew pond maintenance**
- **Removed stumps** left after scrub clearance at Mill Hill.
- Erected electric fencing Beeding Hill SSSI so that goats can graze for chalk grassland management and installed infrastructure to enable grazing at Steyning Bowl Local Wildlife Site
- Made up and began installing ten new finger post signs to go out on the South Downs Way
- Led a Heartsmart walk for 23 people at Slindon and supported MIND volunteers at Graffham Down
- Started up a new volunteer group with West Sussex County Council and East Clayton community farm and had the first task to stockproof a field



- Installed a barn own box near Treyford
- **Planted 800 primroses**, donated by Binsted Nursery, along hedgerow at Binstead.
- Planted cowslip plug plants along field margins near Noar Hill to support rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly with Winchester Downs Farm Cluster and Selborne Landscape Partnership.
- Met up with water vole surveyors ahead of the 2018 survey season and put out latrine floats to monitor breeding populations on the River Meon.
   Breeding signs have already been spotted at one site.
- **Recovered a lost geocache** and began work to find a new location for it
- Uploaded data for River Monitoring Index and butterfly surveys to national databases
- Removed invasive rhododendron from Stedham Common and Ambersham Common, this can be safely removed during April as it is not used by birds to nest in.
- Helped with a community tree planting at Easebourne school
- Cleared and burned holly scrub at Ebernoe to improve habitat for rare bats and invertebrates
- Helped capture and release to translocate field crickets from Lord's Piece to RSPB Pulborough Brooks following work to into improving the heathland habitat

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: Alister Linton-Crook, Cycling Projects Officer for the South Downs National Park

### THERE'S A FOOT PATH WHICH I WANT TO CYCLE DOWN. HOW CAN I GET IT CHANGED TO A SHARED PATH OR BRIDLEWAY?

There isn't a simple answer and it's important to remember it's not desirable to convert every route to allow bicycles. Some paths will only ever be suitable to access on foot – this might be because they're narrow, pass through sensitive habitats or some other reason.

You could try to approach the landowners, who have the power to grant permissive access – known as higher rights – either privately to selective groups or publicly to everyone. If you want to have the status of a path changed it becomes a more complicated legal process. The first stage would be to contact the Rights of Way team at the relevant Highway Authority – in the National Park this would be Hampshire County Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council or Brighton & Hove City Council.

# WHEN WILL THE EGRETS WAY / CENTURION WAY BE FINISHED?

I'm afraid there's still a lot of work to be done on both of these trails. When developing new long distance trails like these, the best strategy is to work in sections with landowners and stakeholders, applying for planning permission and sourcing funding for each section as we go.

In the case of the Egrets Way we continue to work with the Ouse Valley Cycle Network who have just secured planning permission for two new sections of path and we are actively pursuing funding to develop these – for example we're working with Newhaven Town Council to bid for Coastal Community Funding. We're committed to completing this route all the way from Lewes to Newhaven but expect it to be a few years before the dream is realised.

For Centurion Way we've been able to carry out extensive habitat surveys and route feasibility studies for the next stage running from West Dean to the South Downs Way at Cocking thanks to funding from the National Park Authority's strategic fund and Coast to Capital LEP. This has involved working with lots of stakeholders to develop a route alignment that largely follows the former railway line whilst avoiding the tunnels due to sensitive wildlife designations and protected habitats. We hope to get the planning application in for this section during the summer and then we can apply for funding to actually build the route. It's still our long-term goal to get the route all the way to Midhurst but realistically that will take at least five to ten years.

# ARE YOU ORGANISING ANY RIDES OR WALKS IN THE NATIONAL PARK?

Yes, we're excited to be organising the family ride for the Winchester Cycle Festival again on 10 June. This is a great opportunity for cyclists of all levels to see the sights of the city on closed roads before the serious criterium racing gets

#### underway.www.winchestercriterium.org/

We're also working with the Eastern Area Team to develop a series of bike rides and walks in East Sussex as part of the Active Access for Growth programme which will give cyclists and walkers the opportunity to enjoy rides and walks into the National Park from Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford. Look out for more information in the newsletter later this summer.

Read more of Alister's answers at <u>www.southdowns.gov.uk/asked-alister-linton-</u> <u>crook-cycling-projects-officer/</u>



### NEXT MONTH: Life on the South Downs Centre front desk

Tania Hunt and Diana Adamson answer your questions about answering people's questions – send them to **newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk** 

### YOU SAY:

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.



To submit a comment for our newsletter please email <u>newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk</u>. For a fast and direct response to your questions please email <u>info@southdowns.gov.uk</u>

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.



### VISIT THE SOUTH DOWNS CENTRE IN MIDHURST

The South Downs Centre sits in the heart of the National Park, in Midhurst, and is open on Saturdays and Bank Holidays throughout the summer.

There's a small exhibition telling the story of the South Downs, its geology, history, habitats and some of the people who have been inspired by our landscapes. You can have a go at brass rubbing some of the plants and animals you'll find here.

We also have information about walks, bike rides and attractions to visit, as well as a small selection of souvenirs. Why not pop in after a visiting one of Midhurst's many coffee shops and a stroll around the ruins Cowdray house.

www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-parkauthority/south-downs-centre/



### CHECK YOUR TRAIN TIMES!

The time for all trains from Great Northern, Southern and ThamesLink timetables will change from 20 May. This includes almost every train running through and to the South Downs National Park.

Visit **<u>www.railplan2020.com/timetables</u>** to find out more.

### NEW PRIVACY POLICY

New Data protection laws are being introduced in May 2018. As a result we are publishing a new privacy statement to explain your rights under the new legislation. We won't be changing the way we use your information, but the new notice will outline the rights you have, which include the rights to:

- Access your data
- Have your data rectified
- Restrict how your data is used

• The right to object to your data being used

The privacy notice will be effective from 25 May 2018 and will relate to all personal data processed by the South Downs National Park Authority

View the privacy statement at <u>www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-</u> <u>authority/transparency/privacy-statement-2/</u>