



# SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

## WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- Lest we forget. **The 'day Sussex died' is remembered in music and animation**
- An update on the **A27 bypass at Arundel**
- The **disabled ramblers test a new route in the South Downs** thanks to Gatwick Airport
- Local businesses are being invited to **join our 'Visit, Give, Protect' community**
- **Win a family day out at RSPB Pulborough Brooks**

As always please send your comments and ideas to us at [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)

## Lest we forget

On 30 June 1916 more than 1,300 men from the South Downs and Sussex were killed or injured in just one day in just one battle.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice Sussex composer Damian Montague and artist Russell Cobb have released a new collaborative animation remembering the Battle of the Boar's Head, now come to be known as 'the day that Sussex died'.

Composer Damian Montagu was inspired to write his new piece 'The Boar's Head' after hearing the story of 'the Day that Sussex died.' On 30 June 1916 men from the

"This piece came to me whilst walking in the South Downs National Park. I had recently learned how so many local families were bereaved as a result of the terrible loss of life resulting from the Battle of the Boar's Head," says composer Damian Montagu. The story is of the men from the 11th, 12th and 13th Southdowns Battalions of the Royal Sussex Regiment who had been ordered to make an attack at the Battle of the Boar's Head in an attempt to divert German attention ahead of the Battle of the Somme.



"I was struck by the contrast between our beautiful landscape, the horror of war, and the selfless bravery of those Sussex soldiers who sacrificed their lives for our freedom."

Crossing bridges over drainage ditches left the men exposed to German guns, the men who made it past no man's land were caught in their own smokescreen and others were trapped in an unnoticed dyke before the Germans forced a British retreat. In total 366 men were killed and more than 1,000 wounded or taken prisoner – the majority of those that died came from the South Downs part of Sussex and are thought to have included 12 sets of brothers.

*"I was struck by the contrast between our beautiful landscape, the horror of war, and the selfless bravery..."*

The story of these men's terrible sacrifice, told through Damian's music, is brought to life in a heart-breaking animation by Sussex artist Russell Cobb based on archive photography of the real men who fought that day. Russell based some of his figurative portraits on archive photography of the real men who fought that day.

"My drawings are a response to the soundtrack itself, and then subsequent discussions that we had about the project, sketchbook notes and photographic reference," says Russell. "Some of the figurative drawings are original portraits, others are WW1 re-enactors that I have photographed."

"It's wonderful to see my work fused together with Damian's music and moving image."

Nick Heasman, Countryside and Policy Manager for the South Downs National Park, continues: "This is a fitting tribute to the 4,500 soldiers, men from the South Downs, who went into battle that day. Every community in and around what is now the Sussex part of the National Park was touched by loss that day. In the future we hope to support the creation of a new wood in Sussex in their memory."

Collaboration is an important part of Damian Montagu's work, with the actor Hugh Bonneville having contributed and narrated written reflections on debut album 'In a South Downs Way' and with ex-Paul Weller trumpeter Stewart Prosser, Damian's partner on the whole project. For 'The Boar's Head' he has once again worked with Stewart and with local orchestrator Robert Sword on musical production and as instrumentalists.

The animation is available to watch on the South Downs National Park website

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/lest-forget-day-sussex-died/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/lest-forget-day-sussex-died/)

The track will be released on Friday 9 November on the 'Walk upon England' label

[www.walkuponengland.com](http://www.walkuponengland.com) as well as available to download and stream on all major online platforms including iTunes, Apple Music and Spotify worldwide. <https://listnin.co/TheBoarsHead>



## A27 UPDATE

Highways England has informed the South Downs National Park Authority that they intend to publish information on all route options for proposals for a bypass on the A27 at Arundel. They have confirmed this will include their analysis of all five route options inside and outside the National Park. They have said that their further consultation, in spring 2019, will give the public and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on 'any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated' for all routes.

Margaret Paren, Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority, said:

"We are pleased that Highways England has now agreed to re-consult on options for the A27 bypass at Arundel. People should have the right to make informed comment based on all the information available and taking into account the National Park, including new evidence that Highways England will be tabling in the spring. Since this answers the reasons why the National Park Authority was pursuing a Judicial Review, this will now be withdrawn and I am pleased that Highways England are paying all of SDNPA's legal fees incurred in bringing this challenge."

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/a27-update-november-2018/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/a27-update-november-2018/)



## Gatwick gives South Downs £60,000 to help open new disabled access routes

The Disabled Ramblers officially opened the first of a series of new 'Miles without Stiles' routes in the South Downs National Park on Friday 26 October made possible thanks to £60,000 support from Gatwick Airport.

The South Downs National Park Authority's 'Miles without Stiles' routes allow people to explore iconic scenery without worrying about obstacles such as steps, stiles or steep gradients. In addition to being accessible for wheelchair users, the routes are also suitable for families with pushchairs, the elderly and people with visual impairment.

The first route to be modified was proposed by the Disabled Ramblers and is a 10km (6 mile) circular route taking in Jack & Jill Windmills and Ditchling Beacon. Gatwick's sponsorship extends across the next three years and is helping to fund work to create new routes, including: the removal of stiles, replacing unsuitable

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gates, resurfacing of rough tracks and ensuring trail information is accessible for all.

"We came up with the idea for this route at the end of 2017, when we were out reccyng a group ramble," says Val Rawlings, regional representative for the Disabled Ramblers. "Obstacles like a log step and tricky gates might seem small to other people but made it off-limits to us so it's exciting to be able to finally explore it. Now we're looking forward to bringing a whole group of Disabled Ramblers here on one of our rambles into the South Downs National Park next year."

The sponsorship forms part of Gatwick's wider community engagement programme and specifically ties in with the airport's focus on accessibility.

"We are delighted to be supporting this incredibly important scheme, which will open up the beauty of the South Downs for everyone to enjoy, regardless of age or ability," says Melanie Wrightson, Gatwick Airport Community Engagement Manager.

"Accessibility is a key focus for the airport and 'Miles Without Stiles' forms part of Gatwick's wider community engagement programme to ensure the same opportunities are available for all to experience."

Allison Thorpe, who leads on access & recreation for the South Downs National Park Authority, continues: "As one of England's most accessible National Parks the South Downs really is here for everyone and the new routes will appeal in particular to people using off-road mobility scooters and families with buggies or pushchairs. Thank you to Gatwick Airport for helping us enable even more people to experience the physical and mental benefits of getting closer to nature."

Gatwick continues to engage with a broad range of disability groups to help ensure the airport makes it services accessible for everyone and continues its journey to becoming the most accessible airport in the UK.

Want to try out the new route for yourself? Find it for free on the Viewranger app (leaflet coming soon)  
WAITING FOR LINK FROM CHARLIE



# Five things to do in the South Downs this November

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



- Learn how to **build your own photography hide** at Arundel Wetland centre
- **Start feeling festive at Bolney** Wine Estate Christmas Fayre
- **Make your own Christmas Decorations** at Gilbert White's House
- Enjoy **live music and fish & chips** at Langham Brewery
- **Discover how Gilbert White created his garden** at Selborne



## Work begins on developing next priorities for South Downs National Park

Conservation and heritage organisations, rural economy representatives, water companies, farming groups and volunteer networks are just some of the groups being challenged to help set out the priorities for the South Downs National Park for the next five years and the practical action they will take to help achieve them.

The work is part of a five-year review of the Partnership Management Plan for the National Park.

The first South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan was published by the National Park Authority in 2014 following extensive consultation. The

plan sets out a shared vision for how the SDNPA and the partner organisations would like the National Park to be in the future and identified the key priorities for how they would work together over five years to achieve this. It's now time to put together an action plan for the next five years.

"The Partnership Management Plan is about conservation and enhancement not preservation," says Margaret Paren, Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority. In setting priorities for the next five years we must do all we can to respond to both the opportunities and challenges that face this wonderful living, working landscape to keep it thriving.

"Everyone who cares for or benefits from the National Park has a role to play and we will be engaging with partners, communities and other stakeholders over the coming months to put together an exciting future for the National Park."

*"Everyone who cares for or benefits from the National Park has a role to play"*

The new Partnership Management Plan will launch in autumn 2019 alongside a campaign encouraging members of the public to get involved in caring for the National Park



## Businesses invited to join our 'Visit, Give, Protect' community

A new scheme bringing local businesses together to encourage customers who love the South Downs National Park to make donations to support it is being launched after the success of a pilot by Deans Place Hotel in Alfriston.

Since May 2018 Deans Place Hotel have asked guests to add an optional donation of £2 onto their bill as part of the South Downs National Park Trust's 'Visit, Give, Protect' pilot. They have found that guests are happy to support the landscapes that they are visiting and have already raised an impressive £1,394 for the new charity.

James Dopson from Deans Place Hotel, said: "We know our visitors care about the National Park's special landscapes and we're proud to show them that we do too.

"With just a £2 voluntary donation from each booking we can help to make a lasting difference to the environment, wildlife and communities of the South Downs."

The Trust are now inviting more local traders to join the Visit, Give, Protect community of South Downs businesses who are placing the National Park at the heart of what they do and showing they support the landscapes that attract their visitors.

Jo Carr, a Trustee of the South Downs National Park Trust, said: "Whether it's for tranquil breaks, exhilarating outdoor adventures or tasting delicious local food and drink, the South Downs National Park is gaining a reputation as an important part of our local businesses' visitor offer.

"There are many different ways to get involved. You could, as Deans Place Hotel have done, encourage

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guests to make an additional £2 voluntary contribution; you could ask guests to round up their food or drink bill; or you could add a voluntary donation to the price of a ticket or entry fees."

Visitors will be able to find the businesses who support the National Park on the Trust's website and the charity plan to run networking events to support the 'Visit, Give, Protect' community and help them learn from each other.

The South Downs National Park Trust is 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 are covering 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 by emailing  
[visitorgiving@southdownstrust.org.uk](mailto:visitorgiving@southdownstrust.org.uk)



## Grayling butterfly, master of disguise

Once common on our hills, the 'chalk race' of grayling butterfly is now just hanging on in one small site in the South Downs. Ranger Tim Squire tells us how ponies are lending a 'helping hoof' to bring the species back.

The grayling butterfly is fantastic at hiding. It is perhaps the best camouflaged of all our butterflies. It always lands with its wings closed and the cryptic pattern of the underside makes it disappear as soon as it lands. It will however sometimes give a flash of a black eye spot on an orange background, perhaps a tactic to warn off predators. The grayling is a butterfly of acid heathland and is widespread but declining in the UK.





There are no longer any grayling on our heaths in the South Downs, the last being lost from West Sussex in the 1980s. It does however hang on in one secluded valley called Deep Dean near Wilmington. This is considered the last remaining population of the "chalk race" of grayling. The chalk race of grayling was once common along the whole of the chalk ridge of the South Downs but disappeared over the course of the twentieth century. It once thrived on the short, sheep-bitten and rabbit grazed, hot, south facing slopes of the South Downs but large scale destruction of the downland habitat, subsequent lack of grazing management and the introduced rabbit disease myxomatosis has caused the butterfly to disappear across the rest of the National Park.

The plight of this enigmatic butterfly is very serious. A concerted effort from Butterfly Conservation volunteers this summer has discovered that the last remaining population is in a very precarious situation with very low numbers seen flying. Maximum day counts of individual butterflies were in the low twenties. The site has been assessed and two of the problems identified are lack of chalk scree, which is created by rabbit activity, and an invasion of the tussock-forming, coarse tor grass which is a problem on many chalk grassland sites.



Urgent action is required. The sheep that have been grazing the site for a number of years are great at keeping the chalk grassland down to a nice short turf but they won't touch the tor grass. It is clearly not very tasty to the sheep and too tough for them to chew. However help is at hand in the shape of fifteen Exmoor Ponies provided by the Sussex Pony Grazing and Conservation Trust. These ponies love tor grass and have already chewed most of it off. The Volunteer Ranger Service will also be on site later this winter to manually remove some of the small wayfaring trees that are also invading the grayling's slope. Uprooting the saplings will hopefully replicate the effect of the loose soil created by rabbit scrapes.

Butterfly Conservation will monitor the numbers again next year and hopefully we can see an improvement in the fortunes of the poor grayling. They have also submitted a funding bid for a project to protect grayling which will seek to create suitable habitat nearby that hopefully the grayling can colonise. It is clear that a single population is very vulnerable to extinction so having more than one site where the butterfly can live will be a first step in preserving the species. However much higher numbers will be required on the site at Deep Dean if there is any hope of it spreading to nearby sites. But we have done similar before with the Duke of Burgundy butterfly so with a concerted effort perhaps we can save this incredible and unique inhabitant of the South Downs too.



## Win a family day out at RSPB Pulborough Brooks

Winter may be on the horizon but there's still plenty to see in the National Park if you know where to look. In fact many species of ducks, geese and waders choose this time of year to stop by for their annual visit.

The lovely people at RSPB Pulborough Brooks are kindly offering one family the chance to win a day at the reserve (up to two adults and four children). Look out for the winter highlight - one minute everything is calm with the wigeon gently whistling as they graze, the next it's immediate chaos as thousands of birds take to the air, panicked by the peregrine falcon out hunting.

All you need to do to enter is sign up to the South Downs newsletter before 30 November 2018.

Anyone who signs up as a new member of this newsletter during November 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 30 November 2018.

To enter the draw email us with the subject 'RSPB tickets please!' to [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)

Terms and conditions apply, please read them here [LINK](#)

Find out more about RSPB Pulborough Brooks [www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/pulborough-brooks/](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/pulborough-brooks/)



## Community Heroes

There are many benefits to living in a tiny South Downs village, but easy access to a grocery store and a place to meet and get to know your neighbours aren't always among them. The people of Fittleworth were determined to tackle the issue head on and this October, after a lot of hard work, opened a new community shop, hub and playground.

In its first three weeks Fittleworth stores sold 1,146 coffees, as well as a fair amount of cake and sausage rolls. They've come a long way since January 2016 when a group of residents first approached the South Downs National Park Authority with the idea of creating a community shop for their village, population approx. 1,200 people.

"We were so excited about the project we thought we would have it up and running in 18 months," recalls local resident and parish councillor Alison Welterveden. "One of the first people they spoke to was Mark Rose, who manages the National Park Authority's Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF). "Our timeline was clearly a bit ambitious but it's fair to say that it would have taken twice as long without his help."

The first grant the project received was £10,000 from our Sustainable Communities Fund.

"Mark talked us through the National Park's grant process, what other funding might be available, and put us in touch with the Plunkett Foundation, a charity specialising in supporting this kind of community project," continues Alison.

Much hard work and a lot of community engagement followed. "People had really strong views," says fellow resident Sammi Leese, "and what they wanted more than anything was a place to meet as well as somewhere where they could get ordinary groceries at an affordable price."

The plans developed, with the recreation ground at the centre of the village chosen as a location. Since the most logical site was over the tired old playground the project expanded to include plans for a new



playground and even a site for older kids and teenagers to gather.

Building awareness and interest across the village right from the start has clearly paid off but the group admit that they are very lucky with the level of skill and enthusiasm they have been able to draw on. Nearby Barlavington Estate donated all the wood that has been used in construction and to clad the building and a local retired engineer oversaw the build. As well as large grants from the National Park Authority's SCF, Leader, the National Lottery, Chichester District Council and West Sussex Big Society the group sold £42,000 in shares and raised a further £200,000 through individual donations and fundraising events. It's fair to say that Fittleworth isn't your average village!

Fittleworth Stores opened on 1 October 2018 and is already proving its value. "It's been lovely to see so many new faces. People who've lived here for ten years and more are telling us that they've met for the first time," says Sammi.

Two members of staff are joined by an army of 50 volunteers. Meals and cakes come from a local caterer

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Kate Knight, the coffee is blended by local Honeybee Coffee Roastery and meat from a nearby butcher. Meals cost less than £5 and with the village school next door the cookies are proving popular."

Alison and Sammi are two of seven board members for the store, which has been set up as a community business society. They're very grateful for all the help they've received and would love to share their own experience with anyone thinking of taking on a similar project.

"Anybody can do this," continues Sammi. "Come and have a coffee with us and see."

*Photo shows (left to right): Deborah Wright, volunteer; Alison Welterveden and; Sammi Leese.*

Find out more about Fittleworth Stores at <http://www.fittleworthstores.co.uk/>

Find out more about the Sustainable Communities Fund at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/sustainable-communities-fund/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/sustainable-communities-fund/)

## 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 with our volunteers in October 2018:

- **Removed scrub and parrots feather** (a non-native invasive plant) at Burnthouse dew pond.
- **Led three walks** as part of the Eastbourne and Lewes Walk Fest
- **Cleared scrub** at: Mill Hill Local Nature Reserve, Willingdon Down Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), from a Scheduled Monument cross dyke at Telscombe Tye, at Westmeston SSSI.
- Installed a new gate, resurfaced and constructed a gully to **create a new disabled access route** as part of a series supported by Gatwick airport
- Took the National Park events van to Mill Hill LNR and talked to local people, in particular dog

walkers, before sheep are introduced to the site next month



- **Cleared a SSSI bridleway in Upper Beeding** to improve chalk grassland and access
- Joined Butterfly Conservation to brushcut at Kithurst to **improve the habitat for rare Duke of Burgundy butterflies** and replaced a vandalised gate at the car park
- **Completed water vole latrine surveys** on the River Meon for the 2018 breeding season and showed that water voles are breeding and established on more than 30 sites along the whole of the River Meon from sea to source. River habitat surveys will be feedback to landowners with advice on how to improve their section of the river
- **Copiced hazel and laid hedges** at Norton Farm

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



## MOST ASKED...

Answers to questions about a particular area of work in the National Park – some sent in by you and others that we get asked all the time.

Answering this month is: **Daniel Greenwood, Volunteer Development Officer**



### WHAT VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE IN THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK?

There are lots of organisations, big and small, who need your help to make a difference in the National Park. Visit our volunteering map to find a project near you <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/volunteering/volunteering-map/>

The Volunteer Ranger Service is an independent organisation affiliated to the National Park. They have around 450 members who regularly get involved with conservation tasks. They gave about 5,200 days of time in 2017. Visit our website to find out more about their work and current opportunities

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/volunteering/volunteering-ranger-service/volunteering-opportunities-2/>

### WHAT TRAINING CAN I GET AS A SOUTH DOWNS VOLUNTEER RANGER?

All new members of the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) receive a day of training introducing them to the National Park, its natural history and cultural heritage. When people have been volunteering with us for a while there are opportunities to get trained in first aid, scything,

chainsaw and brushcutter use, off-road driving, water safety and leadership.

### WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO GET MORE YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING?

Young people are currently underrepresented in the National Park and we're working with some of our younger volunteers to try to fix this. We are piloting volunteer Youth Ambassador roles to give young volunteers a louder voice and influence the opportunities we offer to make them more appealing.

### CAN YOU HELP ME TO GET MORE VOLUNTEERS FOR MY PROJECT?

Yes, join our Volunteering Network and add your opportunities to our volunteering map. You can also join our twice-yearly network meetings and find out how other people in the National park are recruiting volunteers. One area to think about is how you're promoting your project through social media – for example there might be a local community group on Facebook you could ask for help.

Read more of Daniel's answers at

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/asked-daniel-greenwood-volunteer-development-officer](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/asked-daniel-greenwood-volunteer-development-officer)

### NEXT MONTH: Lead Ranger in the National Park

Elaina Whittaker-Slark, Lead Ranger for the western end of the South Downs National Park, answers your questions.

Send them to [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)

## NEWS FROM OUR HEATHS

Heathlands Reunited is a partnership of eleven organisations, led by the South Downs National Park Authority, who have joined forces to expand and connect rare heathland in the National Park, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Heathland is home to some of Britain's rarest wildlife including all twelve of our native reptiles and amphibians. Over the five years of the project they are creating wildlife corridors forming an area of heathland greater than 1,200 football pitches.



### Fire management is focus for heathland experts

Heathland professionals from across the South East met in Midhurst on the 7 November. The Heathland Forum brought together individuals and agencies involved with heathland management and conservation in and around the South Downs National Park. Land managers, landowners, conservationists, ecologists, countryside rangers, land management advisors and volunteers all came together to share learning and best practice.

This year's discussions focused on the theme of fire management, particularly relevant after this summer's heat wave. Attendees discussed fire planning and defensive land management with the West Sussex Fire and Rescue service. Partners also considered controlled burns, safety equipment, resources and action.

Colin Carre, Heathlands Reunited project manager, said: "This is a vital opportunity for heathlands managers to come together to learn and share how we can protect this rare and threatened habitat from modern day threats, including increasing summer temperatures. By working together we can draw on expert knowledge to help future proof these fragile and precious sites."



### Heathland story book

A dedicated team of ten heathland heritage volunteers have begun to create stories for a heathland heritage book aimed at 7-11 year olds. The stories have unfolded through oral history and archive research tasks carried out by the volunteers.

At the beginning of 2018 Heathland Reunited heritage volunteers signed up to go out into the community to interview local residents about their local heath. The recorded interviews, known as 'oral history' have revealed new stories. Some volunteers also took part in archival research – delving deep in to museum archives trying to uncover forgotten secrets from the past.

The volunteers have now completed writing up the stories and are working with an illustrator and editor to create a story book sharing their favourite stories for children aged 7-11. This fits with the project's ethos of connecting local communities with these sites.

The stories focus around seven heathland sites and include exploits of a highwayman, a fisherman's unhappy tale and the life of a World War 2 evacuee.

Find out more about the Heathlands Reunited project at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/heathlands-reunited/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/heathlands-reunited/) and follow all the partners' work on social media using **#HelptheHeaths**

## 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 [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.

## SIGN UP TO THIS NEWSLETTER

Sign up to receive this newsletter by email every month. With the latest South Downs news, stories, ideas for days out, competitions, to hear about our ranger and volunteers' work and much more...

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter/)