



DOWNLAND THYMES

NEWS FOR THE SOUTH DOWNS VOLUNTEER
RANGER SERVICE ISSUE 83 | SPRING 2019



WIND POWER... NOTHING NEW

DID YOU KNOW?

Green energy has long been generated in the South Downs National Park by windmills and watermills. While no longer economically effective, the historic structures that remain are cherished and popular.

Apart from the Weald & Downland Living Museum at Singleton and the City Mill in Winchester, few mills are open more than once a month, even in high season. Nevertheless, they are well worth the effort of making a special visit, not just for their heritage value but also because they can become the focus of an enjoyable walk.

To find out which mills can be visited near you, explore websites such as: sussexmillsgroup.org.uk and hampshiremills.org. But to see a mill working it's probably easiest to visit the two sites mentioned above. Many other mills listed on these websites have disappeared or are now adapted into residential buildings, but a handful of restored mills can still be approached, even if not open. See right for a listing. All of them enhance the landscape they sit in.

Will we think similarly of our huge wind farms in years to come?

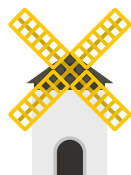
RUSSELL CLEAVER
VOLUNTEER RANGER, WESTERN DOWNS

Sussex: Coultershaw Beam Pump, nr Petworth; Halnaker windmill; High Salvington windmill; Jack & Jill windmills, Clayton; Oldland windmill nr Ditchling; Polegate windmill; Rottingdean windmill; West Blatchington windmill.

Hampshire: Chalton windmill, nr Clanfield; Chase Mill, Bishops Waltham
(Some of these mills lie just outside the National Park boundary.)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 UPDATE FROM THE VOLUNTEERING TEAM
- 4 4X4 OFF-ROAD DRIVER TRAINING
- 5 EXOTIC TREES AND DORMICE AT ALICE HOLT ARBORETUM
- 6 COPPICING AT LEWES GOLF CLUB
- 7 REMEMBRANCE DAY UP ON THE DOWNS
- 8 GRASSHOPPERS VS CRICKETS
- 9 CLEAR OUT AT OXENBOURNE DOWN
- 11 TALE OF A TRAIL AND A TAIL
- 14 SDNPA VALUES
- 16 YOUTH AMBASSADOR UPDATE



.....
Halnaker Windmill
© 2020vision/Guy Edwardes



Tell us your story. Email your Downland Thymes articles to the editorial team dt@southdowns.gov.uk



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Spring is the time of year when I always find the greatest change, both in the landscape coming to life with new growth and the arrival of more wildlife to enjoy. Change is something we often resist but it is something that is always happening, in nature and in our own lives. Undoubtedly there will be profound change on the way for us all this spring, as I write this Brexit can't be agreed and by the time this issue arrives through our doors I don't expect we will have had much clarity on exactly what the future will hold. Change will also feature in our work – many of us now operate from different tool stores or meeting places and we may be organised slightly differently from how we first started – this is good in that we should be receptive to new ways of doing things and embrace change.

I and the Committee are looking forward to seeing many of you at this year's AGM, on **Saturday 30 March** at the South Downs Centre in Midhurst. The guest speaker promises to be something special and the variety of afternoon guided walks should interest everyone. Additionally, I'm pleased that we will be offering you all a set of tick removing twisters at the AGM and, if you're unable to attend, then passing them out through area teams – spending some of the funds available to the committee to improve your volunteering experience! I'm also pleased that our education courses on Woodland Management have been so well supported this spring – please do send us any suggestions on further topics you would like to Helena Lewis, our Volunteer Experience Officer, so she can see what we can put in place for the autumn.

RON WILDER, VRS CHAIR

UPDATE FROM THE VOLUNTEERING TEAM



WELCOME BACK TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE NATIONAL PARK. WE HOPE YOU HAD A RESTFUL FESTIVE BREAK AND YOU'RE READY TO DO MORE GREAT WORK IN 2019.

There's no better place to be in January (weather depending) than out in the countryside keeping warm with a spot of woodland, wetland or downland work with a fire burning in the background. I hope the weather is good to you at a time of the year when it can get rather grizzly out there.

This is a good opportunity for me to say that if you are expecting to receive a copy of the Downland Thymes by post but have not, please contact us to let us know you want to receive a copy of this beautiful publication (if I may say so!). We will continue to send out the electronic copy by email to ensure everyone can read it.

You may recall in the last issue of the Downland Thymes that I mentioned a new volunteering database that can provide statistics on the work you have been doing out there on the Downs. We now have about 6 months of coherent

data on the system and we know that in 2018 we had 300 individual volunteers who were involved, contributing over 16,000 hours.

The tasks you have undertaken in 2018 have led to over 1000 days in support of Access Land sites, 600 days managing scrub and 500 days supporting partner organisations. The 'days' are the number of volunteer attendances that have taken place, rather than the total number of taskdays held. The partner organisations who have benefited most from your volunteering have been Adur & Worthing Councils with 70 days and the Woodland Trust with 69 days. These statistics capture the very essence of the Volunteer Ranger Service's involvement in the National Park, working in partnership to deliver on the shared aims and objectives of the South Downs. It is something to be proud of.

DANIEL GREENWOOD, SDNPA VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



IN EAST MEON, HAMPSHIRE, STANDS AN OLD HOUSE WITH A CURIOUS NAME: "BOTTLE ALE COTTAGES" – SURE ENOUGH, YOU CAN SEE THE DIAMOND SHAPE OF FOUR BOTTLE ENDS SET INTO ITS FLINT WALL.

You might think these are a modern fixture, but you'd be wrong, for there's an old photograph depicting the same pattern which is possibly 90 years old (see inset above pic). The cottage is listed and dates from the 18th Century.

Today, nobody can remember why or when these cottages were so named, and local websites haven't helped. So, it's a mystery that walkers can ponder over as they pass by. Such odd names all add to our appreciation of local heritage. If you know more details about this name, or if you know of other oddly named places or properties, do take a photo and send it to us at *Downland Thymes*. dt@southdowns.gov.uk

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The days are lengthening at last. Congratulations to all of you who have continued volunteering throughout the darker, colder months. You are a hardy bunch! As a runner I understand the benefits to be gained by getting outside 'whatever the weather' and although the muddy trails of winter have their own peculiar charm I am now looking forward to some firmer footing, warmer days and birdsong to accompany me.

I thank those of you who have been in touch with interesting articles of things you have seen (grasshoppers or downland flora), things you have done (4x4 off road driving or monitoring dormice), social gatherings and plans for challenges in the months ahead. If you have a burning desire to contribute something for a future issue please send it to dt@southdowns.gov.uk.



Alternatively have a chat with Russell Cleaver in the Western Downs or Alan Jones in the East, who help us to round up interesting stories for your *Downland Thymes*. Generally, we ask that you keep any submission to no more than 300 words and accompany it with a high-quality photo or two. The deadline for the June issue will be **April 25**.

CHARLIE HELLEWELL, EDITOR, DOWNLAND THYMES

Trying out new skills. VRS on task above the Long Man at Wilmington

4X4 OFF-ROAD DRIVER TRAINING

IN NOVEMBER 2018 THREE VOLUNTEERS (STEVE BROOKMAN, STEVE NEWHAM AND MYSELF, MARTIN BRIDLE) FROM THE EASTERN AREA UNDERTOOK THE NEXT STAGE OF LAND ROVER TRAINING – OFF ROAD DRIVER TRAINING.

Due to a lack of local availability the session was undertaken at Ash Tree Farm in West Malling, Kent, necessitating an early start to the day.

We started with some classroom training where basic safety and legal issues were covered, also specifics applicable to 4x4 driving including:

- Types of 4x4. The workings of a differential. Avoiding getting stalled or cross-axled.
- Route assessment. Driving through ruts and water. Ascents and descents.
- The use of high and low ratio gears and 'diff lock'.

Armed with the above knowledge and after a welcome cup of coffee, we started the practical element of the training where we each took turns driving the Land Rover off road, with our trainer and fellow trainees

giving us feedback. This included driving over muddy and grassy ground, along and through water filled ruts and driving on what we would later come to think of as nursery slopes.

After lunch we were expecting more of the same but covering more scenarios. In the event we were taken to a different area of the farm where we had to descend into a wooded area entering via a steep slope. We each had to drive a circuit which comprised of a narrow and winding track through trees. In many places the gap between trees was only slightly wider than the Land Rover. The course was very muddy and included many deep and flooded ruts, ditches and steep climbs/descents. We also had some more practice driving on grassy slopes.

At the end of the day we were given individual feedback and guidance.

Overall the day was informative, enjoyable and at times got the adrenalin pumping.

The conditions on the course are likely to be more extreme than we will encounter on tasks, but it is always good to be prepared.

The following day Steve Brookman and I had a scrub clearing task adjacent to the South Downs Way, above the Long Man of Wilmington. We were both able to put our new skills into immediate practice by sharing the driving on the day. Hopefully we will all continue to build upon and improve our skills as we put them into practice in the future.

MARTIN BRIDLE, VOLUNTEER RANGER, EASTERN DOWNS

For more information about training and courses available to volunteers please contact **Daniel Greenwood**

Images © Martin Bridle



Alice Holt VRS group
© Gemma Evans

EXOTIC TREES AND DORMICE AT ALICE HOLT ARBORETUM

THE ALICE HOLT ARBORETUM RESTORATION PROJECT VRS GROUP, OPERATING IN THE FAR NORTH OF THE NATIONAL PARK UNDER THE WING OF THE WESTERN DOWNS AREA RANGER TEAM, HAS HAD ANOTHER BUSY YEAR.

Work at the arboretum in the warmer months focused largely on controlling bracken and brambles and keeping last year's tree plantings watered during the long drought.

As usual we were very grateful to the wider Western Downs VRS for helping our small group of eight regulars, with some of the larger and more specialist tasks during a visit in October. Now it's January and we're back into another tree planting season.

Between 2012 and 2018 we planted 79 trees of 62 species. This year we've got another 15 trees to go in, all of different species, some quite rare, mainly from Japan, China and the USA. We enjoy an excellent relationship with Forest Research at Alice Holt Lodge who pass on young trees from the Forestry Commission's Westonbirt National Arboretum and its pinetum at Bedgebury. Our colleagues at Forest Research have also produced standard arboretum labels for all the new plantings, so together with the 30

trees on the existing Tree Trail we now have in excess of 100 trees labelled for the interest of the public.

Planting exotic specimen trees is one of the more satisfying aspects of what we do, not least because of the prospect of a worthwhile legacy for future generations of tree lovers. The frequent encouragement and thanks we get from the many walkers who pass through the arboretum while we are at work also goes down well. The new plantings sit in an arboretum landscape of mature oaks, yews and beech, and fine stands of redwoods, alders, thuja and other conifers.

It's not all trees, however, and this year we have increased the number of dormouse nest-boxes around the arboretum to 70, which now allows us to contribute data to the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme (NDMP) run by the People's Trust for Endangered Species. Fortunately, a local colleague who is a licensed dormouse handler is able to assist us with

the monitoring. To our delight, our first entry on to the NDMP database in October 2018, included dormice present in four of the boxes, and another four boxes with unoccupied but recently used nests.

Butterfly Conservation's Bentley Station Meadow Reserve adjoins the arboretum so we seek to manage our open spaces to provide habitat for butterflies and moths, including the silver-washed fritillary and white admiral.

Although we are somewhat isolated geographically from the bulk of the National Park, we feel very much part of the VRS family and are grateful to Laura Tong and her colleagues at the Western Downs Area Office for their continuing support and encouragement.

COLIN HALL, DICK BEALES
JOINT TEAM LEADERS, ALICE HOLT



COPPICING AT LEWES GOLF CLUB

LEWES GOLF CLUB SITS ON TOP OF CHAPEL HILL SO HAS COMMANDING VIEWS OF LEWES AND THE OUSE VALLEY.

Eastern Downs Ranger Jan Knowlson is leading the work with Lewes Golf Club to help them improve biodiversity for their site. Head Greenkeeper Lawrie Tremlett is very interested in wildlife and would like to manage the golf course in a way to benefit this. We agreed to help them get started two years ago on a small area as a wildflower meadow, and this year we are focusing on getting a neglected wooded area back to life.

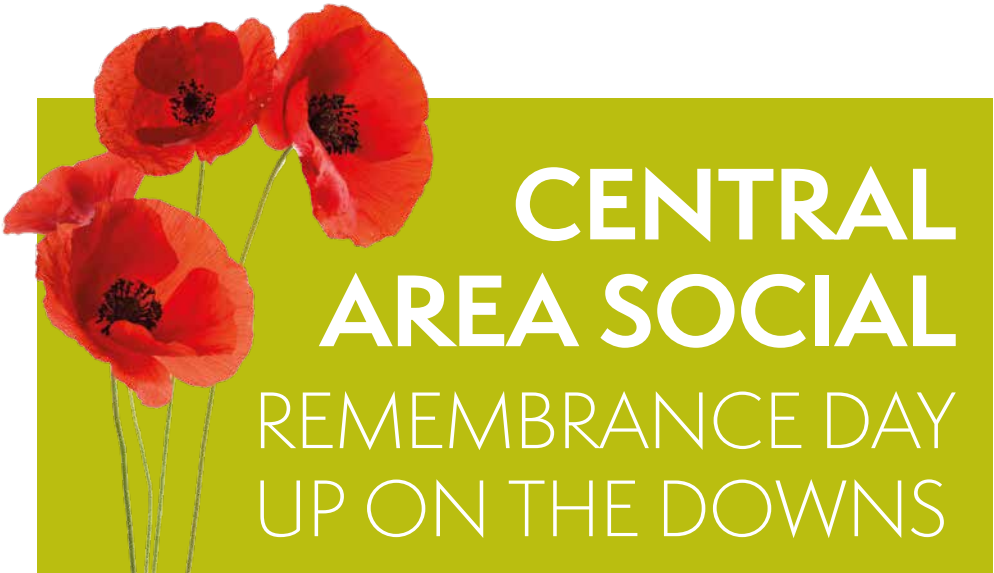
There are bluebells in this wood, which are an indicator of ancient woodland. On a freezing cold day we started coppicing parts of it and clearing the way for the bluebells to spread throughout the area, this will also diversify the age structure within the wood, generally create more light and improve it for wildlife.

The woodland probably once covered the golf course and beyond and there are a few trees remaining that are evidence of this. One such tree looks as though it had been coppiced 100-200 years ago at least, a sign of old management. Once we have got the woodland back to a manageable state, Lawrie and his team will be able to look after it themselves without too much effort at all. The woodland will thrive once again, with just a bit of help from the volunteers.

MARK SCOTT, VOLUNTEER RANGER, EASTERN DOWNS



Main: View from Lewes GC tee towards Ditchling Beacon
Inset: Lewes GC clearing finished
© Mark Scott



LAST NOVEMBER ON REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY A GROUP OF THE CENTRAL AREA VOLUNTEERS AND TWO WELL BEHAVED DOGS, ENJOYED A WALK FROM AMBERLEY STATION UP TO RACKHAM BANKS ON THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY.

At 11am we stopped to listen to the Last Post playing out from a mobile phone and were silent for two minutes before the Reveille so we could remember those affected by war.

After a short reading of a poem we set off again passing the dewpond and back along Stoke Road to enjoy a delicious lunch at Riverside café. Friendly chatter and banter were constant with smiles all round.

The weather was kind with just a few brief rain showers showing off an amazing rainbow with spectacular views for miles around making the steep climbs worthwhile.

Now for ideas for next year's Central Area social event – all suggestions welcome!

HELENA LEWIS VOLUNTEER RANGER, CENTRAL DOWNS



Left: Admiring the dew pond
Bottom: Rackham Banks

© Helena Lewis



GRASSHOPPERS

LAST SUMMER WHILE WORKING ON LULLINGTON HEATH I SPOTTED WHAT I ASSUMED WERE CRICKETS, HOWEVER A COLLEAGUE CORRECTED ME AND SAID THEY WERE GRASSHOPPERS. I THEN REALISED I DIDN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE, SO I INVESTIGATED.

VS



CRICKETS

Grasshoppers and crickets are classified in different families in the insect order 'Orthoptera' and can be spotted from spring through to autumn in the UK.

The main visual difference between grasshoppers and crickets is that the former has short antennae and the latter have long antennae.

Grasshoppers are vegetarian and prefer long grass habitats whereas crickets not only eat vegetable matter but also other insects including their own nymphs (if they can catch them) and they prefer shrubby habitats.

Males of both orders attract females by stridulating (singing) but have different mechanisms for doing this. Crickets stridulate by rubbing their wings together, while grasshoppers sing by rubbing their long hind legs against their wings.

Crickets are crepuscular, preferring to sing at dawn and dusk while grasshoppers sing during the day, preferably when it's warm and sunny.

They also detect sound differently – Grasshoppers have sound detection organs at the base of their abdomen whereas crickets have them on the front legs. Females of both orders do not stridulate.

Most species of grasshoppers can fly. Crickets have wings, but most do not fly. The preferred mode of locomotion for both

orders is walking while their strong rear hind-legs enable them to jump away from a threat. With some exceptions identification down to species level is challenging even for experts.

The life cycles of both orders are similar as both go through incomplete metamorphosis – meaning they have just three life stages (egg, nymph and adult) there is no pupal stage. Hatching from eggs as extremely small nymphs looking similar, but not identical to adults. Paths to adulthood vary depending on the species and the weather but can take up to 3 months. Incomplete wings and lack of full-length antenna are a good visual indication that you may be looking at a nymph. Adults live for a couple of months.

Crickets are not considered pests and in the absence of conditions leading to grasshoppers turning into locusts and swarming they are also not considered a pest in the UK. Global warming may change that in the future.

ROGER KIERNAN VOLUNTEER RANGER,
SEVEN SISTERS, EASTERN DOWNS

Left: Field grasshopper
at Lullington, *Chorthippus brunneus*

Right: Dark bush-cricket
at Lullington, *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*

© Roger Kiernan

BIG NEW YEAR CLEAR OUT AT OXENBOURNE DOWN

BEAUTIFUL OXENBOURNE DOWN IS PART OF THE DESIGNATED NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE OF BUTSER HILL, AT QUEEN ELIZABETH COUNTRY PARK NEAR PETERSFIELD.

Although it lies in close proximity to the A3 linking Portsmouth with London, it definitely lives up to its reputation as "the quietest spot in QECP". South Downs National Park Authority is working with Hampshire County Council on the management of this site.

Arriving at a narrow lane leading from a slip road, you quickly find yourself in a peaceful valley, the nearby motorway inaudible and no sounds to be heard, apart from birdsong and the breeze rustling the surrounding ancient woodland.

This peace was shattered, however, when the Western Downs Monday volunteer group arrived with a trailer full of brush cutters, a chain saw and a brand-new, shiny, lime-green motor mower to make light work of the lower slopes.

The task was to clear a huge area, clogged with dogwood, blackthorn and bramble. Instructed to "cut down everything", the volunteer rangers proceeded to do just that and with plenty of dead wood and brush lying around in dry piles, a roaring bonfire was soon ablaze.

Both Oxenbourne Down and Butser Hill are fine examples of chalk downland, home to rare species of butterfly: Duke of Burgundy, green hairstreak, grizzled and ding skippers. In particular, Oxenbourne Down specialities include the silver spotted skipper and the chalkhill blue. All these butterflies thrive on a chalk downland habitat but this needs to be managed and kept clear of brush, allowing the native flora to thrive. Hopefully, next year, cowslips will re-emerge, as well as primroses, and dark green and silver washed fritillaries, providing the perfect habitat for these rare butterflies.

By the end of the day we had already noticed an enormous difference with a large area cleared and, with other groups following us throughout the week, we expect the flora of Oxenbourne Down to be greatly improved. If you visit there in spring, hopefully the ground will be covered with wild flowers and butterflies will be fluttering happily among them.

VANESSA HARVEY, VOLUNTEER RANGER,
WESTERN DOWNS



Testing the new mower
at Oxenbourne Down

© Vanessa Harvey



SDNPA YOUTH AMBASSADOR KIRSTY FERRIS, TELLS US WHY SHE VOLUNTEERS.

I HAVE BEEN VOLUNTEERING REGULARLY FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SINCE FEBRUARY 2017 AND LAST AUTUMN TOOK ON A NEW ROLE AS ONE OF SDNPA'S TWO YOUTH AMBASSADORS. I'VE BEEN ASKED TO GIVE MY TOP 10 REASONS WHY I VOLUNTEER.



Top: Kirsty Ferris © Jonathan Dean

Middle: Kirsty heads off to the Europarc Conference 2018 with fellow volunteer ambassador Cameron (left) and South Downs Education Officer Jonathan © Jonathan Dean

Bottom: Kirsty shaving laths at the National Trust's Slindon Estate © Kirsty Ferris

1. LEARNING NEW SKILLS

How to use a scythe, putting up fences and surveying for dormice are just some of the vast number of new skills I've learned since I started volunteering for the South Downs National Park. I'm also learning communication skills and putting them into practice – for example, in this article!

2. DEVELOPING MORE CONFIDENCE

When I first started volunteering, I was scared to even join in conversations with the rest of the team. Two years later I've gone to a conference and spoken to people from all over Europe.

3. FUN

Many tasks involve cutting things down and burning them which I personally find really fun. I look forward to volunteer days as I come home feeling exhausted but happy every time.

4. BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Spending time in nature has helped me to deal with anxiety and depression. Having time to breathe in fresh air and knowing that I'm making a difference has benefitted my mental health. During stressful exam periods volunteering has given me the chance to relax and think about something else.

5. GAINING INVALUABLE WORK EXPERIENCE

Through my volunteering I've gained more than just practical experience. I have learnt about working with landowners and stakeholders, about site designations and about working within a team and with multiple organisations. Volunteering has meant that when I leave university I will be in the best position to start my career in conservation.

6. FEELING MORE CONNECTED TO NATURE AND THE COMMUNITY

Seeing butterflies skip around a previously overgrown area after

you've spent hours scything or enjoying the wildflowers after clearing an invasive species is incredibly rewarding and makes you feel like you've helped nature return to the way it should be.

While we're working, members of the public often walk past and ask us about what we're doing and thank us, so it feels like we're also helping people that live in and enjoy the area.

7. MEETING NEW PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS

The South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service is open to everybody and through volunteering I have met people from lots of different backgrounds and become friends with people who I would never have spoken to otherwise.

8. THE JOY OF GIVING SOMETHING BACK

From a young age I've spent many hours exploring the South Downs, from walking the South Downs Way to camping under the stars. Volunteering has meant that I can give something back to an area that has given me so many happy memories. The work I do with the Volunteer Ranger Service helps to keep the National Park the amazing place it is.

9. FEELING LIKE A VALUED MEMBER OF A TEAM

Working within a team to complete a task every week has meant that I really feel like a team member. Each member is valued and everyone takes an interest in your life outside of volunteering. If someone misses a session we feel their absence throughout the team.

10. HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT

In a time when the environment is becoming more damaged every day, carrying out work that directly helps it is immensely rewarding and gives me such a sense of pride.

KIRSTY FERRIS, VOLUNTEER RANGER CENTRAL DOWNS

TALE OF A TRAIL AND A TAIL

WHAT BETTER WAY TO SPEND A BEAUTIFULLY CLEAR, COLD, SUNNY DAY THAN DISCHARGING MY DUTIES AS A SOUTH DOWNS WAY (SDW) VOLUNTEER WARDEN AND CHECKING AND WALKING THE STRETCH FROM KITHURST HILL TO THE RIVER ARUN?

Views to Kithurst; **Inset:** Tilly and her tail © R Reed



I live in Amberley so parked my car up at nearby Kithurst Hill with a friend and my dog Tilly, an English springer spaniel.

Everything went swimmingly well and we were enjoying the panoramic views to both sides of the SDW. All the furniture was in good condition and we were looking forward to the end of our walk as we descended Amberley Mount. Suddenly we were alerted to the plight of Tilly who was squealing and running around in manic and ever decreasing circles.

Our first thought was that she must have been caught in a trap put out for vermin but on closer inspection found that the hair on

her un-docked tail had become entangled in a loose length of barbed wire and the more she struggled the more entwined her tail feathers had become with the wire.

Initial attempts to cut her free with a small penknife proved fruitless so my friend set off for the local farm in search of wire cutters while I stayed with Tilly and phoned my wife to bring some scissors. Unfortunately it transpired that my friend had parked his car in front of the garage so she couldn't get the car out. Nobody was at home at the farm but a series of phone calls to friends in Amberley mobilised a posse of friends who appeared on the horizon with an impressive array of wire cutters, saws and other tools. After being

trapped for over an hour Tilly was eventually set free none the worse for her ordeal and we were able to complete the walk and retrieve the car from Kithurst Hill.

Unfortunately I never did complete my survey so Tilly and I will be back another day making a mental note to steer clear of any barbed wire.

JAMES TOLSON, VOLUNTEER RANGER, CENTRAL DOWNS

Note: Always keep your dog on a lead around livestock. For more top tips for a fun and safe visit with your dog to the South Downs please see southdowns.gov.uk/takethelead

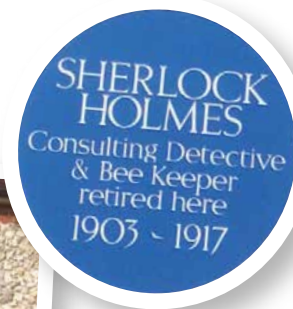
PIC IN THE PARK

Have you seen this intriguing blue plaque attached to an old cottage by the village green in East Dean? Many visitors have been taken in by its message but might need reminding of the fictional nature of the named character.

The story goes that in Conan Doyle's last book, the hero decided to retire to a village in East Sussex and, according to the good folk of East Dean, the brief description of the village given in the book was definite proof that the author meant their village!

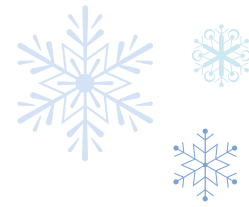
I wonder if there is a more intriguing plaque anywhere else in the South Downs.

ALAN JONES, VOLUNTEER RANGER EASTERN DOWN



Main & inset: Sherlock Holmes plaque in East Dean © Alan Jones

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 THOMAS LORD WEST MEON, HAMPSHIRE GU32 1LN

Named after the 19th century cricketer and founder of Lord's Cricket ground, The Thomas Lord is owned by the Upham Brewery and offers an excellent range of real ales, as well as superb food. The interior, with wooden floors and open fires, is comfortable and welcoming whilst the gardens host a vegetable garden and a brick-built pizza oven. So, in warmer weather this makes a lovely spot to eat out. The pub even offers accommodation, check the website for details: thethomaslord.co.uk

Its location, near the River Meon and Old Winchester Hill, as well as lying at the northern end of the Meon Valley Trail, makes The Thomas Lord an ideal stopping point for local walks or cycle rides.

Find the Thomas Lord
near the Meon Valley Trail



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

THE ORDNANCE SURVEY PUZZLE BOOK BY ORDNANCE SURVEY

Publisher: Trapeze; the Orion publishing group. £14.99

This book was my favourite Christmas present. It kept me busy for hours, and if you enjoy maps, you'll love it too. There are 40 puzzles to do – based on lots of clips of OS maps from the past and present. And while the questions in each are rather repetitive, the puzzles are all introduced by fascinating facts: for example, did you know that Bram Stoker used OS

maps? In the first chapter of 'Dracula' he writes how good Ordnance Survey maps are.

But the OS are not perfect, for I found a few mistakes in the text. One was in puzzle 23, but you'll have to buy the book to work it out...

RUSSELL CLEAVER,
VOLUNTEER RANGER
WESTERN DOWNS

Q WHAT DO YOU CALL A HEN LOOKING AT A PIECE OF LETTUCE?

A CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD



CAPTION COMPETITION

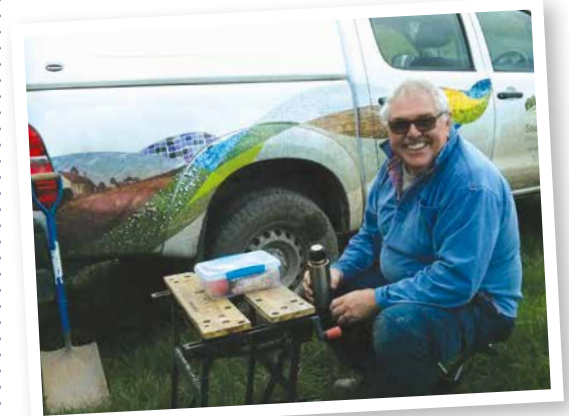
CAN YOU CREATE A WITTY CAPTION FOR THIS PHOTOGRAPH? EMAIL YOUR IDEAS TO DT@SOUTHDOWNSGOV.UK



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

**"IT'S NOT A WORK MATE,
IT'S MY LUNCH MATE"**

MIKE ELLIS, VOLUNTEER RANGER



100 MILE CHALLENGE FOR VRS MEMBER



In April 2019, Western Downs volunteer ranger Ruth Holland will be taking on the challenge of **walking the complete South Downs Way** over six days, from Winchester to Eastbourne.

Not satisfied with just getting fit, Ruth is also raising funds for Spaniel Aid UK after an experience she had last year. On her way home from a bat survey in the Meon Valley she nearly ran over an injured, abandoned spaniel. Ruth contacted the charity Spaniel Aid UK who saved the dog's life by covering her vet bills and finding her a lovely new 'forever home'. Ruth would like to help repay this kindness. Read more of her story and donate online justgiving.com/RuthHolland648

POETRY CORNER

HAZEL WOOD IF I COULD

I'm a Coppice Novice
At Joiner Copse and Stanmer Park.
Up with the lark
to look at Hazelwood bark.
Armed with billhooks and silkies
Choppers and loppers.
Gathered in a group
by a cant or a coup.
Told we can be environmentally destructive
In order to be sustainably productive.
Every seven to ten years.
It occurs.
Take a stand to cut to the ground
then only stools will be found.
Creates light, no mistake!
Makes it bright!

So primroses, violets, bluebells
Anemones and marigolds can abound.
Cutting rods, poles, binders and stakes
for hedge laying, hurdles and gates.
Or for creating fences and yurts at later dates.
Binders and stakes tied in a faggot or a bundle.
Off to a field or store they trundle.
Even the brash over which I'm tripping
can be shredded for chipping.
Out in the fresh air
without a care.
Managed woodland back in repair.
The Copse no longer in despair.

ROGER READ, VOLUNTEER RANGER,
EASTERN DOWNS



Weaved hazel fence
© R Read

SDNPA VALUES

IN 2018, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH STAFF AND MEMBERS WE LAUNCHED OUR SDNPA VALUES: **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND RESPECT.**

SDNPA recognises the importance of a good organisation culture which basically mean the underlying beliefs, assumptions, values and ways of interacting which contribute to the unique environment that we work in.

This includes our organisation’s expectations, experiences, philosophy, as well as the values that guide our behaviour.

These values tie in very closely with the work and roles undertaken by volunteers every day in the National Park and so we would like to share them with you so that together we can create and enjoy a positive working environment.

Collaboration

The nature of a National Park (in more ways than one) is dependent on partnership working between organisations across a large geographical area. In the South Downs we have a volunteering network of over 150 organisations delivering 91,000 volunteer days annually. The Volunteer Ranger Service works with more than 20 partner organisation and in 2018 delivered more than 500 volunteer days in support of their work.

Innovation

Volunteering in itself is a creative way of meeting the needs of a cause, in this case that of the National Park’s purposes. Volunteer roles have been created to meet a wide range of needs, from typical practical conservation tasks, ecological and archaeological monitoring to public engagement at events. We are always open to ideas from volunteers of how you think your experience can be improved.

Respect

The work and dedication of the Volunteer Ranger Service is respected across the South Downs, with such a large amount of work done over a period approaching 40 years. Volunteers are also key ambassadors for the South Downs National Park, working in the public domain. Our volunteers are from varied backgrounds, abilities and levels of expertise – everyone can contribute something. A friendly, approachable and inclusive attitude is crucial to being a volunteer in the South Downs National Park.

If you have any questions about the SDNPA values and how they relate to volunteers please get in touch with Daniel Greenwood, Volunteer Development Officer.



CASH FOR CONSERVATION!

THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT RESPONSE SO FAR FOR THE VOLUNTEER CONSERVATION FUND, BUT THERE’S STILL TIME TO APPLY FOR FUNDING TO HELP A CONSERVATION PROJECT YOU MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN.

In January the South Downs VRS Committee, alongside the South Downs Trust, launched the new Volunteer Conservation Fund with up to £5,000 available each year to support deserving conservation projects within the National Park.

If you, a friend, a colleague, a volunteer group etc. have an idea – why not apply?

The application process is simple – with the most deserving of the submissions awarded funds by the VRS Committee and Lead Rangers in May.

These projects can be almost anything, so long as they aim to enhance our National Park and involve the VRS in some meaningful way.

Applications close for this year on 31 March 2019.

Further information and the short application form is available at: southdownstrust.org.uk/volunteer-fund. Good Luck!

MIKE ELLIS, TREASURER, VRS COMMITTEE

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/Millets/Blacks/Ulimate 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 NEWSLETTER

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT WAS 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



YOUTH AMBASSADOR UPDATE

STATISTICS SHOW THAT VERY FEW PEOPLE AGED 18–30 CURRENTLY VOLUNTEER WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK. WITHOUT A VOICE FROM A YOUNGER REPRESENTATIVE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THINGS WILL CHANGE.

One of my first tasks as Youth Ambassador for volunteering in the National Park, was to attend the Network Meetings in November. Having a presence at such meetings will hopefully spread the word about representation and give a perspective on how things can change in the future.

The Network is a South Downs inclusive scheme that brings together various charities, councils and companies from within the National Park and its peripheries to work in tandem to diversify the range of volunteering opportunities available to support the South Downs National Park (SDNP). Representatives from Brighton and Hove City Council, Hampshire County Council, Community Transport Sussex (CTS) and Voluntary Action

Arun and Chichester (VAAC) to name but a few were in attendance at the meetings in Midhurst and Lewes.

We explored and delved into current projects as well as ongoing tasks to improve the National Park and the surrounding area. My role was to bring the youth perspective, and with the guidance of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto that was released in September 2018, present ideas of my own that aim to include more younger volunteers into the National Park.

Finally the Partnership Management Plan currently being reviewed for the period 2019–2024 by the National Park and its partners will aim to improve on the points above, diversifying the variety of tasks and

volunteers. Some of the projects that were discussed during the meetings are hopefully implementable in the short term and will play key roles within the wider plan. Although the plan is under review at the moment, it is vital that we are all inclusive towards each other and create a future that will help bring more young people generally into the National Park, and also bring an upsurge in volunteer numbers for the Park.

As many of you already know, volunteering in itself offers many key life lessons and if people do not feel they can be included, they may miss out on attaining these important skills.

**CAMERON MACDONALD,
VOLUNTEER YOUTH AMBASSADOR**

Main: Youngsters volunteering their time to help with a watervole release at East Meon

© SDNPA

Inset: Cameron Macdonald © SDNPA

**SOUTH DOWNS
VOLUNTEER
RANGER SERVICE**

**SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK**

Downland Thymes: News for the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service. Issue 83, March 2019. © SDNPA.

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.

Design: The Way Design (1454)

Paper stock: Printed on Cyclus Offset, 100% recycled paper. Please recycle after use.

By using this recycled paper rather than a non-recycled paper the environmental impact was reduced by: 32 kg of landfill; 14kg of CO2 of greenhouse gases; 141 km travel in the average European car; 754 litres of water; 150 kWh of energy;

52 kg of wood. Source: Carbon footprint data evaluated by FactorX in accordance with the Bilan Carbone® methodology. Calculations are based on a comparison between the recycled paper used versus a virgin fibre paper according to the latest European BREF data (virgin fibre) available. Results are obtained according to technical information and are subject to modification.