



# SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

## WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- **Boost for bees** Community rallies round to help protect pollinators and create new wildflower corridors across National Park
- **Milestones** Read about the successes of the National Park over the past year and exciting plans ahead as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaches.
- **Locations to love forever** Find out five of the top “wow” spots in the South Downs and why they are becoming increasingly popular with international tourists.
- **Win a holiday in the South Downs!** A luxury cottage break is up for grabs.

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

## Pollen power! Over £18k raised for Bee Lines campaign

**More than £18,000 has been raised after the community rallied round to help reverse the decline of bees in the South East.**

A flurry of donations and fundraisers over the past few months have boosted the Bee Lines campaign, which was launched on World Bee Day on May 20 by the South Downs National Park Trust.

Now the charity is calling on community groups across the region to get behind the fundraising drive, which aims to restore flower-rich habitats and create a haven for pollinators in the South Downs.

The campaign is aiming to raise £75,000 to help farmers and other landowners create new wildflower corridors – essentially a “road system” for insects – that will link habitats and encourage pollination.

It comes as statistics show that one-third of Britain’s bee population has disappeared over the past decade and a quarter of Europe’s bumblebees are now



threatened with extinction. Bees pollinate around a third of our food crops and 90 per cent of wild plants.

Fundraisers so far have included Live at Langhams, a popular music and beer festival at Langham Brewery in West Sussex that raised more than £500 for Bee Lines, and Brighton’s Wild Chalk event in July.

Nick Heasman, Countryside and Policy Manager for the South Downs National Park and who is leading the project, said: “We’ve been overwhelmed by the public response to the Bee Lines campaign and I think it underlines the real concern among many people about wildlife loss.

## National Park Authority welcomes review



**The National Park Authority has welcomed the ambition of a major independent review that seeks to strengthen links between protected landscapes, face the challenges of climate change and engage with even more young people.**

Seventy years after the Act of Parliament that created the first National Parks, the review – led by writer Julian Glover – was published in the last few weeks and called for bold action to reignite the founding spirit of our great National Park movement.

The review also outlined that climate change, biodiversity loss, and a changing, urban society mean that new approaches are needed to get the most out of England's most-loved landscapes, including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Three central messages run throughout the document:

- All protected landscapes, particularly National Parks, need to rise to the challenge of restoring nature and responding to climate change. The Review proposes a powerful revision of our first purpose to enshrine this ambition: “recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage”.
- National Parks need to rediscover their “original mission” to reach out to the whole of society and should be much bolder in doing so. This is captured in the following revised second purpose of National Park set out in the report to: “actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support understanding, enjoyment and the nation’s health and wellbeing”.
- National Parks and AONBs should be brought together as a single collaborative and more proactive family of national landscapes.

“With climate change and biodiversity higher up the news agenda, people are realising the vulnerability of nature and that we all have a part to play in protecting it for future generations.

“Bees are in trouble because of habitat fragmentation that has seen their foraging grounds reduced in size and number.

“These new ‘Bee Lines’ are an innovative way of joining up these habitats and helping populations to recover and also be more resilient to human impact.”

All donations will go towards projects that link areas of existing flower-rich habitat, including wildflower corridors along Public Rights Of Way and fields.

The Trust also plans to create flower-rich habitats in school grounds to help educate young people about the importance of pollinators, as well as creating education packs to give to schools.

The charity hopes to raise £75k before being open for bids next year. It will be open to farmers, landowners and community groups who wish to plant new wildflower areas.

Nick added: “There’s still a way to go and we would love to hear from any community groups or businesses that would be willing to help with the fundraising. We’re happy to provide charity collection tins and promotional material about the campaign.”

**Any community group or business interested in helping the fundraising should contact Mark Rose, funding co-ordinator at the South Downs National Park Trust, at [Mark.Rose@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Rose@southdowns.gov.uk).**





## Secrets of the Heath are revealed at event

Welcoming the review, Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority, said: "The Report is grounded in a deep love of landscape and strong support for National Parks and AONBs.

"We're pleased to see a strong focus in the report on connecting young people and harder-to-reach groups to their national landscapes.

"It's good to know we are on the right track, with still more we can do. We're already leading the way in terms of engaging with young people and ensuring they can 'spend a night under the stars'.

"Our Dark Skies Festival had a record turnout last year and brought the wonder of our night sky to 3,000 new people. The Festival will be back with an even bigger schedule in February next year.

"So far this year we have met and spoken to over 17,000 people at events in urban areas in and around the National Park, at festivals, at the Southampton Mela and more.

"Plans are already underway for how we can reach even more new audiences during our 10th anniversary in 2020.

"I'm also pleased that health and well-being features prominently in the report."

And Trevor added: "Some of the proposals have a large price tag but the report is clear that 'any increase in ambition will need to be matched with funds'. Meeting these ambitions will require additional funding and legislation, but the South Downs National Park Authority stands ready with our Partners to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

"The government response will be crucial. Its reaction to date has been very positive, with Theresa Villiers welcoming the 'spirit of ambition' and saying that Defra would 'carefully consider' the Review's recommendations."

To see the report visit:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review)



*The National Park's Dark Skies Festival 2019 engaged with a record number of young people*



**More than 2,000 people came to learn about the fascinating history and wildlife of South Downs heathlands.**

Petersfield Heath was brought to life for "Secrets of the Heath" as it was filled with historical reenactments, falconry displays, Saxon shield battles – and plenty of native British reptiles for people to see and hold!

Twenty five people joined the RSPB for a bat walk on the Saturday evening, while people also got the chance to identify different moth species courtesy of Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Dozens of dogs and their owners took part in a fun obedience course and received certificates as part of the National Park's "Take The Lead" initiative, which encourages responsible dog walking in the countryside.

The event was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and delivered by the Heathlands Reunited Project, which is working to reconnect fragmented heathlands and raise awareness of their precious biodiversity.



Katy Sherman, Engagement Officer for Heathlands Reunited, said: "Audiences watched on tenterhooks as the falconry display showed

off the hunting skills of owls, hawks and falcons.

"The birds soared across the site, zipping back to the crowds who could see them in their full glory."

The 1st Liss Scouts worked hard providing food all weekend and raised just under £2,000. This will help them invest in new equipment and run more adventure activities for the boys and girls in the group.

# Milestones and major plans ahead as 10th birthday approaches



**Refurbishing the South Downs Way, creating more habitats to support wildlife and record engagement with young people are among the achievements of the National Park Authority as it looks towards ambitious plans for its 10th anniversary.**

Among the highlights of the past year were helping to maintain and enhance 139 chalk grassland, woodland, heathland and river sites across Hampshire and Sussex, as well as enabling 3,593 schoolchildren from towns and cities to learn outside the classroom in the National Park.

The Authority's Annual Review comes as it looks towards 2020, and beyond, with a commitment to tackle the challenges of climate change and turn the tide on biodiversity loss.

Further highlights include:

- Restoring 288 hectares of heathland – a habitat rarer than the rainforest and supporting all 12 of Britain's native reptile and amphibian species – through the Heathlands Reunited project.
- Laying 1,014 metres of hedgerow, which support many important insect and bird species.
- Over 150 small projects led by rangers across the 1,600 km<sup>2</sup> of the National Park to conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- Fixing broken sections of the South Downs Way from Winchester to Eastbourne after the community raised £120,000 in the Mend Our Way appeal. A total of 34 gates have also been repaired.
- Three projects are under way in the Brighton area as part of the ChaMP initiative to help protect the

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

aquifer of the South Downs and tackle groundwater pollution.

- A total of 19 new entry signs have been installed in the National Park.

The Authority's new Corporate Plan builds on the success of the past year and sets a number of important goals for the next year, including:

- Create new wildflower corridors across the National Park to help halt the decline of bees.
- Create a new outreach programme to connect low-income families with nature through fun outdoor learning experiences.
- Develop social prescribing with local communities and healthcare providers to promote the health and well-being benefits of the National Park.
- Continue to work with farmers to support farmland bird recovery.
- Subject to Government approval, create a climate change hub and restore lost species at Seven Sisters Country Park. The Authority is the preferred bidder to take over from East Sussex County Council.



Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority, said: "It's an exciting time as we approach 10 years since the creation of the South Downs National Park.

"Never has our connection with the natural world been so important for health and wellbeing and for the future of our stunning landscapes and wider environment. So we will continue to think big in searching for new ways to reconnect people to their National Park.

"We welcome the higher national profile that the fight against climate change has acquired over recent months. National Park Authorities possess the right skills and tools to help respond to the climate emergency."

And Trevor added: "Our Corporate Plan prioritises the establishment of the South Downs as a nature recovery network and includes extensive projects to conserve and restore our rare chalk and heathland landscapes, and to strengthen pollinators through our Bee Lines project.

"We will continue to work closely with Defra and our farm clusters to shape the future of farming.

"There are challenges and uncertainties ahead, but we are moving ambitiously forward, finding the solutions and forging the partnerships that will secure the special qualities of the South Downs National Park for generations to come."



# Cherry Soup show captivates audiences



## Sweet, sour, a little unexpected – and what good writing does best.

That was the verdict from audiences who were enthralled by the quirky and thought-provoking show *Cherry Soup – True, and Not So True, Tales of the South Downs*.

The show, written by Lewes-based playwright Sara Clifford, explored the changing landscapes and populations of the National Park – as well as how the history of cherries (blame the Romans for bringing the fruit to these shores) is also the history of Southern England!

The performance was the result of a labour of love by Sara, the Inn Crowd and South Downs Writer in Residence for 2019. Sara spent the Spring chatting to hundreds of people across the National Park and gathering their stories, anecdotes, poems and ideas. These were weaved together into a one person show, *Cherry Soup*, and performed at nine different pub and community venues across the region during September by local actor and comedian Jo Neary, directed by Anna Crilly.

The premise of the performance was a cherry seller sitting by the side of the road and people stopping by to buy fruit and chat. They tell their stories: of ancient farms and modern fetes; of lost skills and identities; of overgrown orchards and the ghosts of the villages – and bring new stories, different ideas and different cultures.

One review read: “Each small history was so beautifully crafted, so rich. Magic carpet stuff. The woman who couldn't stop walking...this is what good writing does best, allows us to experience something without being instructed how to do it.”

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Following the shows, Jo said: “It was great fun performing at unusual venues. The audience members were very friendly, one lady said it lifted her spirits to have a laugh and bought me a box of chocolates! Quite a few people asked how I remembered all those words and others said that they'd no idea what they were coming to see, and were pleasantly surprised by the show. I thanked them for taking a chance on us. One of the funniest comments was from an audience member at the very first show – when I told the audience I have cherry soup in my flask, he shouted out what he has in his = ‘Strongbow!’”



*Playwright and South Downs Writer in Residence Sara Clifford*

Sara added: “This has been the most wonderful project to work on – not only have I had the privilege of meeting a wide range of people of all ages right across the Park, and hear their stories and thoughts, but I also got to work with other talented artists exploring people's responses through creative writing, visual art, music and drama – and that was just the outreach stage!

“It was a challenge to crunch down nearly 300 people's responses into a one person show, but I was very pleased with the result, creating a montage of characters and evoking the beauty of the South Downs and its history - and Jo Neary has been an amazing performer to work with, really bringing the cherry seller to life.

“Audience responses have been fantastic, and we are hoping that the show will have a further life next year - watch this space!”

Sara became the Writer in Residence for the National Park earlier this year in a partnership with Inn Crowd, which is supported by Arts Council England and is managed by Applause Rural Touring.

Inn Crowd offers pub landlords spoken word inspired performances that have been created specifically for pub audiences and to the unique atmosphere and setting of a pub.

# People's Choice is launched for National Park's Design Awards

**People are being invited to vote for their favourite design project in the South Downs National Park as part of its first Design Awards.**

Sixteen unique projects have been shortlisted for the People's Choice Award – including a new woodland activity centre, riverside apartments, a converted hospital, a former brewery depot, and a community garden.

The Design Awards were launched earlier this year to celebrate almost a decade of innovative and inspirational projects that have made a standout contribution to the landscape, heritage, built environment and local communities of the National Park.



More than 60 nominations were received from across Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex across the three categories: Residential, Non-Residential, and Conservation. The judging panel, which includes members of the National Park's Design Review Panel, has shortlisted 12 projects and will be visiting each location over the coming weeks before deciding on a winner for each category.

The last award, The People's Choice Award, will be decided by the public and the project receiving the most votes in the online poll will be crowned the People's Choice winner. People can vote at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/south-downs-national-park-design-award/peoples-choice-2019](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/south-downs-national-park-design-award/peoples-choice-2019)

Voting will close at midnight on October 31.

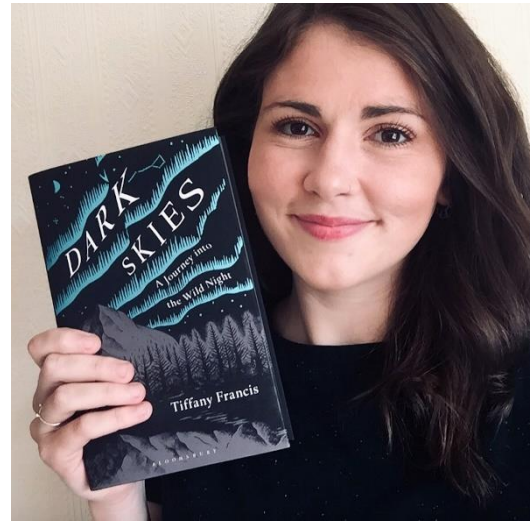
A special awards ceremony will be held on November 12 at the South Downs Centre in Midhurst.

Tim Slaney, Director of Planning at the South Downs National Park Authority, said: "I'd like to thank each and every person who took the time to nominate a project.

"Good design can make a real difference to the quality of our local environments and communities and there's clearly some inspiring work taking place across the National Park.

"Our judges and the public certainly have a difficult task to pick a winner out of such a high-calibre field."

# Star-studded skies inspire new book



**Tiffany Francis-Baker grew up in awe of the South Downs' dreamy starry nights.**

Now the Petersfield-based author has used these nostalgic memories as inspiration to write a new book, *Dark Skies*.

The book follows Tiffany's year exploring the landscape after dark to see how we connect with nature at night.

She said: "I grew up surrounded by the South Downs landscape and now live back here with my husband.

"It's a beautiful place to explore by day, but at night I've discovered hidden worlds under the stars, and been able to see somewhere so familiar with new eyes.

"Exploring the South Downs was the primary inspiration for writing *Dark Skies*.

"I remember listening to a talk by Dan 'Dark Skies' Oakley at a local conference and appreciating how lucky we are to have such great conditions for stargazing.

"I started going for night walks and tuning into my primitive senses to experience the natural world in a new way. There's something incredibly humbling about looking up at the stars – it puts all our problems into perspective and reminds us that we are just one species in an infinite universe."

Find out more at [www.tiffanyfrancis.com](http://www.tiffanyfrancis.com)

The South Downs National Park became an International Dark Reserve in 2016 and is one of only 13 in the world. For more details on the next Dark Skies Festival see

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/events/south-downs-dark-skies-festival-2020/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/events/south-downs-dark-skies-festival-2020/)

# River Meon sees incredible turnaround after decade of work



## **Hampshire's River Meon and its amazing wildlife are facing a brighter future thanks to a concerted community-wide effort to return it to good health.**

And, to coincide with World Rivers Day that took place in September, the Meon Valley Partnership (MVP) is marking key achievements since its formation a decade ago and offering simple steps for the public to keep the river a thriving oasis for wildlife.

The Meon, which runs from its source at East Meon to Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve and then into the Solent, is an internationally-important chalk stream and one of only 200 of its kind in the world. The MVP was formed in 2008 to help introduce projects to restore the waterway to good health as a functioning river and ecosystem. Decades of pollution, modification and invasive species had taken its toll on the river and reduced its biodiversity.

Over the last decade the MVP has:

- Re-introduced Water Voles – an important species of river habitat that recorded as locally extinct in 2003, but has now been returned to 30 locations along the river. Over six years, a total of 2,833 water voles were released along the stretch of the river.
- Helped otters to return – by working with landowners, improved water quality and river restoration has seen otters return naturally to the Meon. Restored natural features of the river – by creating places for fish and insects to hide from predators, as well as improving river banks with native plants, overall biodiversity along the Meon has been improved.

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

- Monitored wildlife – Invertebrates provide the essential component to river ecology and numbers act as indicators to the health of the river. The river is now surveyed monthly by 27 volunteers at 23 locations.
- Encouraged people to care for the river – There have been 15 community talks and eight school activity days where local children could help with releasing water voles.

Elaina Whittaker-Slark, Lead Ranger for the Western Downs, said: "The River Meon is a very rare and important habitat indeed. The chalk geology and sunny climate produce the perfect conditions for an abundance of aquatic invertebrates, as well as a large variety of plants.

"Ten years ago the river was not in the best condition, but the Partnership has made some significant strides to improve the health of the river.

"We still need more hard data on water quality and biodiversity, but there are incredibly encouraging signs such as the return of otters. We also recently saw water voles in the river in the centre of East Meon village and this just shows how well the ecosystem is now functioning.

"There are still challenges ahead, for instance the impact of climate change, but we should also be celebrating the very real turnaround over the past decade."

Members of the Meon Valley Partnership are the Environment Agency, Wild Trout Trust, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust Natural England, Portsmouth Water (Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership), South Downs National Park Authority, Winchester City Council, Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association, East Hants Catchment Partnership (EHCP) and Wessex Chalk Streams Rivers Trust.

The Partnership has some tips for the public to how to look after the river:

- Report pollution incidents:  
If you see dead fish in the water, poaching, possible pollution or anything suspicious in the river please report it to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60.
- Keep it clean but NOT tidy!  
It is tempting to want the river to look tidy, like a garden, by trimming the plants on the banks and removing twigs and wood that fall in the river. These messy bits of tangled vegetation, leaves and woody debris are a fundamental part of the food web of the river and they provide vital cover where fish can hide from the egrets and herons.



# Win a holiday in the South Downs by taking part in new lottery



**A community lottery has been launched by the South Downs National Park Trust to help support vital projects in the National Park.**

The charity is launching the online community lottery to help further protect and enhance the National Park for future generations.



Julie Fawcett, a Trustee and Chair of the South Downs National Park Trust, an independent charity, said: "This community lottery is an innovative way to support the charity's vital work in caring for the landscape,

biodiversity and local communities of the National Park.

"We want to see more rare habitats protected, more local communities thriving and more people able to access the National Park.

"This requires more investment and we want to direct the substantial goodwill that exists for the South Downs to places where it can make a real difference.

"A community lottery is one of the ways we're raising funds to support our work. It adds an element of fun to giving that encourages people to sign up to a regular, modest contribution to the charity.

"With every charity's budget under increasing pressure, it provides a great opportunity to help the Trust raise additional money to fund worthwhile causes."

**With a top prize of £25,000, the first draw will take place on Saturday, 23 November 2019. To mark the launch of the initiative, there will also be a bolt-on prize of a holiday in the South Downs. All tickets purchased before the first draw will be entered for a chance to win this fantastic prize!**

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

The draw will be weekly with a jackpot of £25,000 for a matching sequence of six numbers and other prizes being £2,000, £250, £25 or three free tickets.

Tickets will cost £1 with 50p going towards the South Downs National Park.

A fully-accredited lottery management company, Gatherwell, has been appointed to run the initiative, having already launched similar lotteries on behalf of local authorities and not-for-profits, such as the Fire Brigades Union, with over 5,000 good causes benefitting from their lotteries.

The community lottery will help the Trust fund a number of key projects including:

- Supporting more children to get outside and learn in the National Park.
- Improving walking and cycling routes, including refurbishing broken sections of the South Downs Way and creating new Miles Without Stiles routes for people with limited mobility.
- Working with Butterfly Conservation to plant 550 disease-resistant elm trees to support the recovery of the rare White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly.
- Aiming to re-establish 6,000 metres of historic hedgerow providing wildlife corridors for a range of species.

Each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance to win a prize each week.



***A £300 voucher with Best of Brighton Holiday Lettings will be won on 23 November***

Julie added: "The community lottery is really exciting and I hope that lots of people join in.

"While this is a fantastic and fun opportunity for everyone, we want to remind everyone to play responsibly."

**For more details on the Lottery and to join visit [www.southdownslottery.co.uk](http://www.southdownslottery.co.uk)**

**For Trust updates follow them on Facebook!**

**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK TRUST**



## Five of the best “wow” spots in National Park



**Breathtaking, mysterious, beautiful and inspiring – the South Downs is all these things.**

But there are some gems in England’s newest National Park that have an extra sprinkling of spectacular – those kind of “wow” spots capable of leaving a permanent footprint on your bank of feel-good memories.

And, just an hour or so from the skyscrapers of London, the quintessentially English countryside that inspired Turner’s creative brilliance is arguably one of the most accessible protected landscapes in the world.

So, for World Tourism Day, we recommend the five world-class “wow” spots in the South Downs National Park that will leave visitors truly inspired – and feeling a little bit closer to the natural world!



### **Seven Sisters Country Park, East Sussex**

These brilliant white cliffs have been used as the backdrop for Hollywood movies, including Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves and Atonement.

The view of the Cuckmere Valley and the Seven Sisters is perhaps one of the most picturesque in the world.

The Sisters were created when ancient rivers cut valleys into the chalk, creating seven peaks. Haven Brow, the highest of them at 253 feet, stands majestically to the west of her other sisters who in order are called Short Brow, Rough Brow, Brass Point, Flagstaff Point, Baily’s Brow and Went Hill Brow.

The Country Park is a great place to explore on foot, by bicycle or by canoe, particularly along the spectacular meanders of the Cuckmere River. The landscape

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

combined with an abundance of wildlife make for endless picture opportunities!

The coastline has some fascinating shipwrecks, which you can discover on a series of shorewalks.

For more information visit [www.sevensisters.org.uk](http://www.sevensisters.org.uk)



### **Kingley Vale, near Chichester, West Sussex**

There’s a magic about Kingley Vale that every previous visitor will attest to.

Perhaps it’s the twisted and primordial-looking trees that look straight from a Lord of the Rings movie?

The reserve contains one of the finest yew forests in western Europe, including a grove of ancient trees which are among the oldest living things in Britain.

Kingley Vale also has superb chalk grassland and is one of the most important archaeological sites in southern England, with 14 scheduled ancient monuments.

Look out for green woodpeckers hunting for ants on the grassland, as well as red kites and buzzards. There are also butterflies galore, including the beautiful chalkhill blue, holly blue and brimstone.

A view surely fit for a king!

For more information visit

[www.visitchichester.org/activity/kingley-vale-trail](http://www.visitchichester.org/activity/kingley-vale-trail)



### **Stargazing at Butser Hill, near Petersfield, Hampshire**

This beautiful location is the highest observing

point in Hampshire, with 360 degree views and, on a clear night, you can admire the Milky Way in all its glittering glory. Don’t forget the hot chocolate and camping chairs!

These unspoilt views of the cosmos are a virtue of the National Park’s status as an International Dark Skies Reserve.

For more information see

[www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/dark-night-skies/)



**Cissbury Ring, near Worthing, West Sussex**

One of the largest Hill Forts in Southern England, Cissbury Ring is undeniably one of

the jewels in the crown of the South Downs National Park.

With awe-inspiring views in every direction and the feeling of being “on top of the world”, Cissbury Ring captures the essence of the South Downs.

Just to the north is Monarch’s Way, Britain’s second-longest signed walking trail. It follows the escape route of Charles II after his defeat at the Battle of Worcester in 1651 and runs all the way from Worcester to Shoreham Harbour.

With a history stretching back five millennia and wonderful views across to the Isle of Wight, there are fewer more scenic locations on the south coast of England.

For more information see

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cissbury-ring](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cissbury-ring)



**Blackdown Hill, West Sussex**

A landscape of wavy hair grass, purple heather and pine trees gives visitors a true sense of “wild”.

The views have inspired many and none so renowned as Tennyson himself: ‘You came and looked and loved the view, long known and loved by me, Green Sussex fading into blue with one grey glimpse of sea.’

As you amble down some of the ancient sunken lanes and drove ways, you can feel a sense of timelessness. Traders, shepherds and chert quarrymen have been using these tracks for thousands of years.

Autumn is a great time to visit with the changing colours and crimson sunsets. For the more adventurous why not walk some of the 64-mile long Serpent Trail taking in the rare lowland heath habitat?

For more information visit

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/black-down](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/black-down)



Katherine Beer, who leads sustainable tourism for the South Downs National Park, said: “It’s almost 10 years since the South Downs National Park came into being and our tourism profile is steadily building.

“Our international market continues to grow, particularly among audiences in Germany, Australia and the US.

“We now average more than 18m visitors a year, but it still amazes me how many people have yet to experience the beauty of the South Downs that has inspired so many poets and artists. We’re the closest and most accessible National Park from London, with so many hidden gems and tranquil places to explore.”



# Things to do in the South Downs this October

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



- Join a FREE Youth Action Day during the October half-term holidays. The **Youth Action Days** are for anyone aged between 16 and 25 who is passionate about environmental action and is looking to learn practical skills for helping us to conserve and enhance the South Downs National Park.
- Enjoy a walk in the National Park and take a picture for our **photo competition**. You can win up to £250! The deadline is Friday, 18 October.
- Calling all bookworms! Enjoy **Petworth Festival Literary Week 2019**, with events starting on 26 October. Prue Leith and Hugh Bonneville feature this year.
- **Bonkers for Conkers!** The much-loved conker competition returns to Langham Brewery on 13 October in aid of Chestnut Tree House Hospice Care.
- Calling art-lovers! Explore Butser Hill through art with a celebratory exhibition from young artists at **Merchistoun Hall** in Horndean from 15 to 20 October.

## 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)

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