

# SOUTHDOWNS VIEW 2021

FREE



**Easy  
ways  
to help  
wildlife at  
home**

PAGE 11

**Discover  
the Family  
John Muir  
Award**

PAGE 22



**Happy  
Nature,  
Happy You,  
Happy  
South  
Downs**

**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK**

**WIN** Columbia  
clothing!

# CONTENTS

## 2021

EXPLORE. DISCOVER. ENJOY.....	4
TOP WILDLIFE SPOTS .....	6
FANCY A HEATHLAND HUNT? .....	8
FEATHERED FRIENDS.....	10
HELP WILDLIFE AT HOME.....	11
DISABLED RAMBLING ON THE SOUTH DOWNS.....	14
BLACK TRAIL RUNNERS.....	15
IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS .....	16
INSPIRED BY THE DOWNS .....	17
PHOTO COMP WINNERS .....	18
DARK SKY WONDERSS .....	20
THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT .....	21
FAMILY JOHN MUIR AWARD .....	22



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Front cover photograph; Deer © William Jones-Warner



## The South Downs Centre

Midhurst, West Sussex,  
GU29 9DH  
01730 814810

Home of the National Park Authority, a community hub, visitor information centre and exhibition about the National Park.

### Opening Hours

Monday to Friday:  
**9:00am – 4:00 pm.**  
Saturdays and bank holidays:  
**9am – 2.30pm**  
(1 May to the 30 October only)

## i INFORMATION POINTS

### Aldershot Visitor Information Centre

[visit-hampshire.co.uk](http://visit-hampshire.co.uk)

### Arundel Visitor Information Point

[arundel.org.uk](http://arundel.org.uk)

### Bognor Regis Visitor Information Point

[sussexbythesea.com](http://sussexbythesea.com)

### Brighton Tourist Information Point

[visitbrighton.com](http://visitbrighton.com)

### Burgess Hill Tourist Information Centre

[burgesshill.gov.uk/leisuretourism](http://burgesshill.gov.uk/leisuretourism)

### Chichester Tourist Information Centre

[visitchichester.org](http://visitchichester.org)

### Eastbourne Tourist Information Centre

[visiteastbourne.com](http://visiteastbourne.com)

### Haslemere Visitor Information Centre

[haslemere.com/vic](http://haslemere.com/vic)

### Horsham Visitor Information Centre

[visithorsham.co.uk](http://visithorsham.co.uk)

### Lewes Tourist Information Centre

[visitlewes.co.uk](http://visitlewes.co.uk)

### Littlehampton Tourist Information Centre

[sussexbythesea.com](http://sussexbythesea.com)

### Petersfield Town Visitor Centre

[visitpetersfield.com](http://visitpetersfield.com)

### Seaford Tourist Information Centre

[seafordtown.co.uk](http://seafordtown.co.uk)

### Worthing Visitor Information Centre

[discoverworthing.uk](http://discoverworthing.uk)

### Winchester City Mill and Shop

[visitwinchester.co.uk/winchester-city-mill-shop](http://visitwinchester.co.uk/winchester-city-mill-shop)

### Winchester Tourist Information Centre

[visitwinchester.co.uk](http://visitwinchester.co.uk)

Please check websites to find out which information centres are currently open.

Keep up to date with all South Downs news by signing up to our monthly newsletter – [southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter](http://southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter)



## Happy Nature, Happy You, Happy South Downs.

It has been a hard year, a cold winter, and we're all looking forward to getting back a bit of normality this summer, whatever that may be!

In amongst the trials of the year, many of us have discovered a renewed (or new!) love of nature and what it has to offer. A walk in the countryside has been a welcomed escape from the monotony of home working, seeing spring buds appear on trees and plants has given us a hint of warmer days to come, and the chance to meet our friends and family outdoors has given us a better appreciation of our beautiful green spaces.

As restrictions slowly ease it is a great time to start planning some adventures. Whether it is a staycation in one of the South Downs' picturesque market towns, a day trip exploring some of the stunning and rare heathlands the National Park has to offer or even a morning dog walk on top of the Downs. There is something here for everyone to enjoy and help look after.

Throughout this magazine are details of just a few of the many South Downs attractions, museums, galleries and countryside sites which are opening up ready for your visit when restrictions lift. Please make sure you plan ahead, opening times are subject to change and most attractions require a pre-booked ticket so get planning to avoid disappointment.

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

To ensure you have a safe and fun visit join us with our motto "Happy Nature, Happy You, Happy South Downs". Make your trip to the South Downs a memorable one by following these simple tips:

- **Leave no trace** – enjoy the South Downs, but please take all litter home, do not light fires and close gates behind you.
- **Plan Ahead** – some visitor hotspots may get very busy, so always have a plan B and check ahead for parking facilities, toilets and opening times.
- **Stick to the paths**, particularly during ground-nesting bird season (March to September).
- **Keep your dog on a lead around livestock.**

As always we'd love to see what you've enjoyed most about your time in the South Downs so please tag us in your posts on social media #southdowns.

**Enjoy and please stay safe.**



Rebecca Saunders  
Editor

## Competition Time!

**Win a stylish Columbia rucksack and beanie combo, getting you ready for an adventure in the great South Downs. To be in with a chance of winning these brilliant prizes simply answer the following question.**

This May sees the launch of the updated Serpent Trail guide – a fantastic long-distance route through stunning South Downs heathland. But can you tell us how long in miles this meandering route is?

Send your answers, along with your full name and postal address, to competition@southdowns.gov.uk. Closing date is midnight on Friday 27 August 2021.

**Good luck!**



WIN  
Columbia  
Rucksack and  
Beanie Combo



# Explore. Discover. Enjoy.

Get ready for some culture, history, good food and family fun in the South Downs.

**A**s we emerge from lockdown, a range of visitor attractions across the National Park and in nearby towns and cities are welcoming people back with open arms. Many have spent the past few weeks and months painstakingly incorporating Covid-secure "Good to go" safety measures to ensure everyone can have a fun and safe experience.



## Gilbert White's House and Museum

Stroll the gardens once walked by naturalist Gilbert White (open Tuesday – Sunday 10.30am–4.30pm), enjoy a snack at the Lawn Café and visit White's house from 18 May. Pre-booking essential – [gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk](http://gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk)



## Hinton Ampner

Soak up the peaceful atmosphere in the gardens, parks and countryside of this stunning National Trust property. The café with outdoor seating is open. Pre-booking essential – [nationaltrust.org.uk/hinton-ampner](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/hinton-ampner)



## Butser Ancient Farm

Explore Iron Age roundhouses, a Roman kitchen garden, rare-breed animals and lots more at this experimental archaeological site. Pre-booking essential – [butserancientfarm.co.uk](http://butserancientfarm.co.uk)



## Chawton House

Enjoy the beautiful gardens and parkland at the house inherited by Jane Austen's brother, open Wednesday to Sunday. Pre-booking essential: [chawton-house.artickets.org.uk](http://chawton-house.artickets.org.uk). The Scullery will be operating a takeaway service with visitors able to order food and drinks and use the outdoor seating area or picnic on the lawn. The House remains closed to visitors.



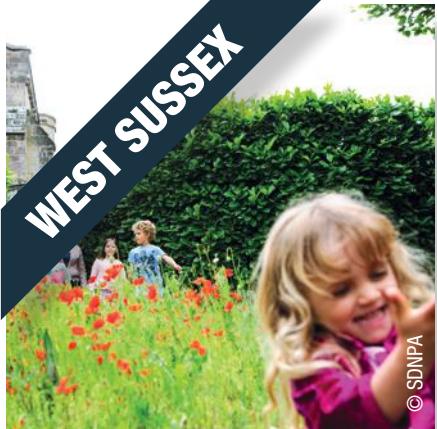
## Petersfield Museum

Opening in May, visit the newly refurbished museum which, as well as telling the 10,000 year story of Petersfield and the surrounding villages, will house temporary exhibitions on the work of Petersfield artist Flora Twort and Shackleton's Antarctic Artist, George Marston. Visit [petersfieldmuseum.co.uk](http://petersfieldmuseum.co.uk) for full details.



## Also in Hampshire...

**Bird World** – pre-booked tickets only.  
**Marwell Zoo** – pre-booked tickets.  
**Winchester Science Centre and Planetarium** – working towards re-opening on 22 May  
**Hollycombe Steam in the Country** – Hoping to open beginning of July for its 50th anniversary.



## Arundel Wetland Centre

Keep your eyes peeled for water voles, enjoy a boat ride and learn everything there is to know about wetland loving creatures. Pre-booking essential.

[wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/arundel](http://wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/arundel)



© SDNPA/Dick Hawks

## Arundel Castle and Gardens

Explore the stunning gardens and gaze up at the impressive castle walls. (The castle's interior will open on 18 May at the earliest.) Pre-booking essential.

[arundelcastle.org/gardens](http://arundelcastle.org/gardens)

## Weald and Downland Living Museum

See, touch and even smell what it was like to live in years gone by at this beautiful living museum. Pre-booking essential – [wealddown.co.uk](http://wealddown.co.uk)



© SDNPA

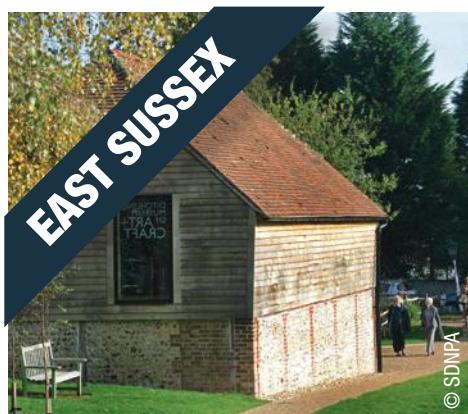
### Also in West Sussex...

**Petworth House** – gardens open for pre-booked visits.

**Parham House and Gardens** – Garden only open – pre-booking essential.

**West Dean Gardens** – open for pre-booked visits.

**Amberley Museum** – planning to re-open 19 May.



## Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft

Visit this award-winning museum in the beautiful village of Ditchling and celebrate its reopening with a new exhibition of works by illustrator John Vernon Lord and Friends 'Taking a Line for a Walk'. Pre-booking essential.

[ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk](http://ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk)

## Charleston House

Walk in the footsteps of the famous Bloomsbury Group in their picturesque gardens – the house and exhibitions are set to open from 19 May. Pre-booking essential – [charleston.org.uk](http://charleston.org.uk)



© SDNPA

## Towner Art Gallery

Reopens 18 May 2021, including the shop, cafe and two major new exhibitions – John Nash: The Landscape of Love and Solace, and John Akomfrah: Vertigo Sea. Gallery 1 and the Ravilious Gallery will re-open on Saturday 29 May. Towner Cinema will re-open later this Summer.

[townereastbourne.org.uk](http://townereastbourne.org.uk)



© Towner Art Gallery

### Also in East Sussex...

**Lewes Depot Cinema**

Kitchen and bar re-opening 12 April, with cinema from 17 May.

**Glyndebourne** – Tickets go on sale to general public from 18 April.

**Royal Pavilion and Museums**

**Brighton** – Museums remain closed but Royal Pavilion and Brighton Museum & Art Gallery will reopen from 17 May. Pre-booking essential.

# TOP WILDLIFE SPOTS

With a mosaic of different landscape types weaved together, the South Downs National Park has a wealth of wildlife waiting to be discovered.

**Whether you like birds, insects, mammals or reptiles, there is something for everyone. Here are just a few things to look out for on your visit.**



## Adder

Britain's only venomous snake, look out for these beauties basking in the sunshine on one of the stunning heathland sites in the South Downs.



## Adonis Blue Butterfly

Look for the stunning sky-blue males flitting across the south facing chalk grassland slopes of the Downs. The females are chocolate brown – both sexes have distinct black lines on the white fringes of their wings.



## Water Voles

These shy creatures are elusive! You may just hear a little 'plop' as they jump into the water on hearing you arrive. Essentially ecosystem engineers, their burrowing and feeding behaviour along the edges of watercourses creates excellent conditions for other animals and plants to thrive.



© Sarah Humphrey

## Skylark

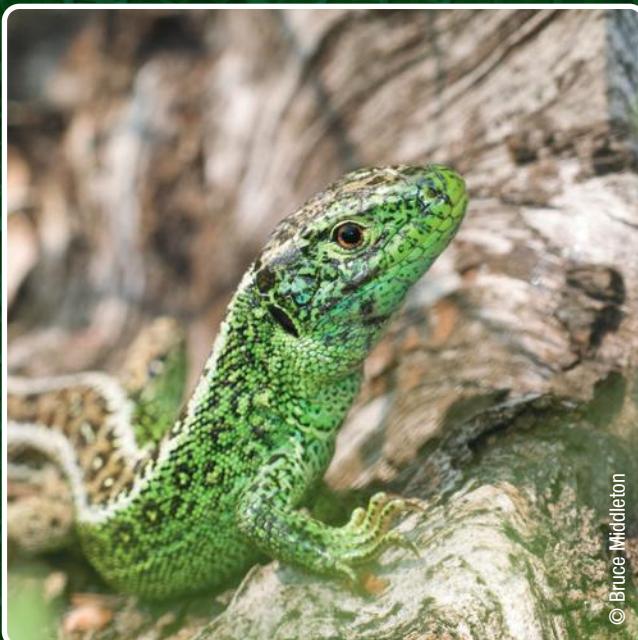
One of the distinctive sounds of the Downs, you'll hear these tuneful birds before you spot them. Look for their dramatic vertical flight up in the air over open grass or farmland.



© iStock, CreativeNature\_nl

## Otters

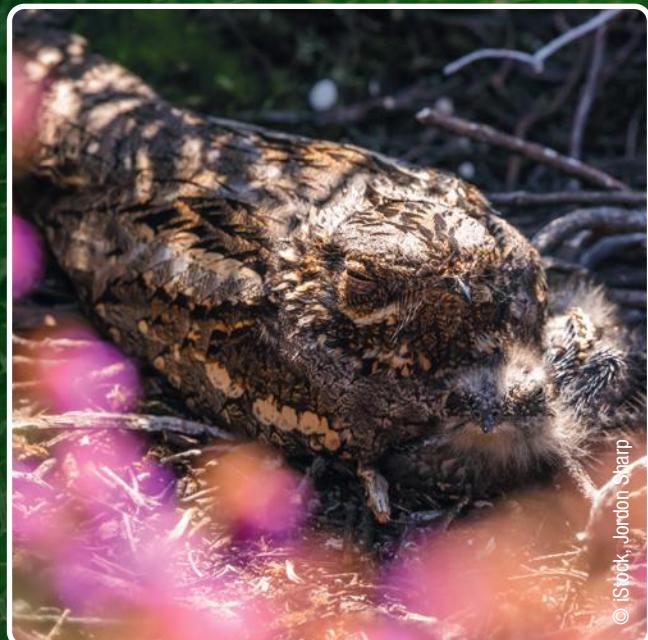
Thought to be locally extinct in Hampshire until a few years ago, otters have made a comeback on the River Meon thanks to a reduction in river pollution. It's believed there are now three breeding females on the River Meon.



© Bruce Middleton

## Sand Lizard

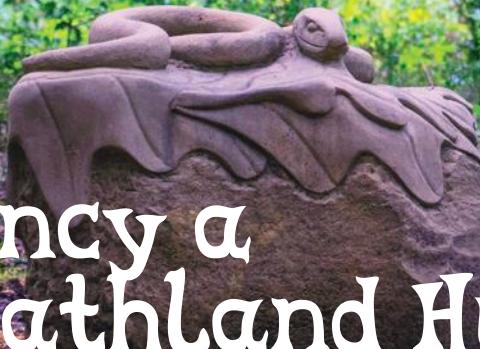
Found on dry, sandy heathland sites, the males are easiest to spot in April and May when their flanks turn an especially bright shade of green to attract a mate.



© iStock, Gordon Sharp

## Nightjar

Spot these ground-nesting, nocturnal birds hunting food at dusk or dawn, with their pointed wings and long tails giving them a similar shape to a kestrel.



# Fancy a Heathland Hunt?

Intricate pieces of art that tell the story of the history, wildlife and people of the South Downs heathlands are waiting to be found.

Inspired by stories from communities and drawing upon sources as diverse as the poet Tennyson and a 391-year-old local map, the Heathland Sculpture Trail links seven precious heathland sites in the National Park.

## EXPLORE THE NEW LOOK SERPENT TRAIL

As its name suggests, the Serpent Trail is a waymarked path that twists and turns through stunning areas of lowland heath from Haslemere to Petersfield.

A 65-mile trail, which can be broken down into 11 shorter, manageable stages – have a go and find out more about the beautiful and extremely rare heathland habitat in the South Downs National Park.

Designed as part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded Heathlands Reunited project, the Serpent Trail guide helps you to discover the diversity of this precious habitat. Stages are of varying lengths and the newly updated Serpent Trail Guide helpfully gives public transport options for each section so that you can travel sustainably and leave the car at home. Each stage has a slightly different character and highlights the stunning wildlife you might see as well as describing features of the historic settlements you will pass.

Heaths are home to some wonderful wildlife so keep your eyes and ears open for sand lizards, Dartford warblers, nightjars and silver studded blue butterflies.

#SerpentTrail

Download the new Serpent Trail guide here – [southdowns.gov.uk/getting-know-serpent-trail](http://southdowns.gov.uk/getting-know-serpent-trail)

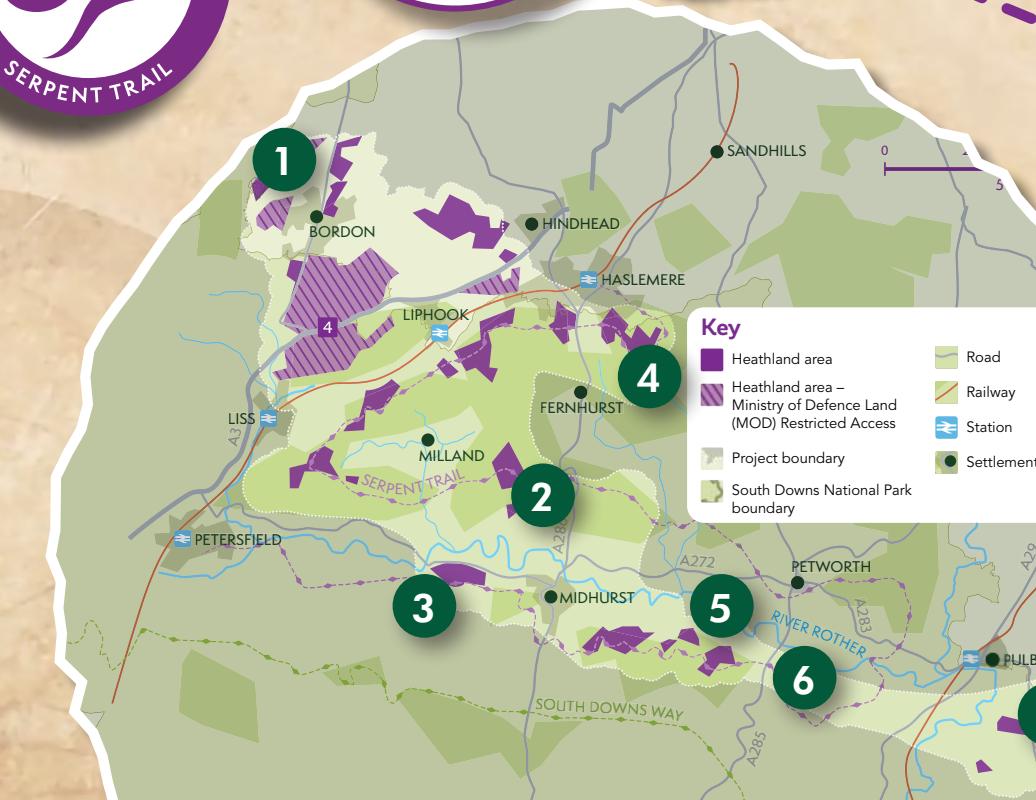
## CAN YOU FIND ALL SEVEN SCULPTURES?

Tell us about your adventure on the Heathland Sculpture Trail by tagging us in your photos on social media #southdowns and #HelpTheHeaths.

Download the leaflet and use our helpful interactive map for more clues on where to find each sculpture – [southdowns.gov.uk/heathlands-reunited/heathlands-sculpture-trail](http://southdowns.gov.uk/heathlands-reunited/heathlands-sculpture-trail)



3



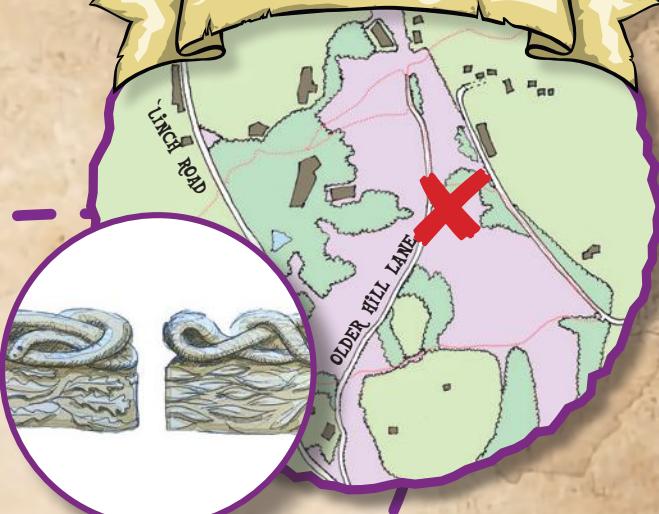
1

**SHORTHEATH**  
Cranberry on the mire



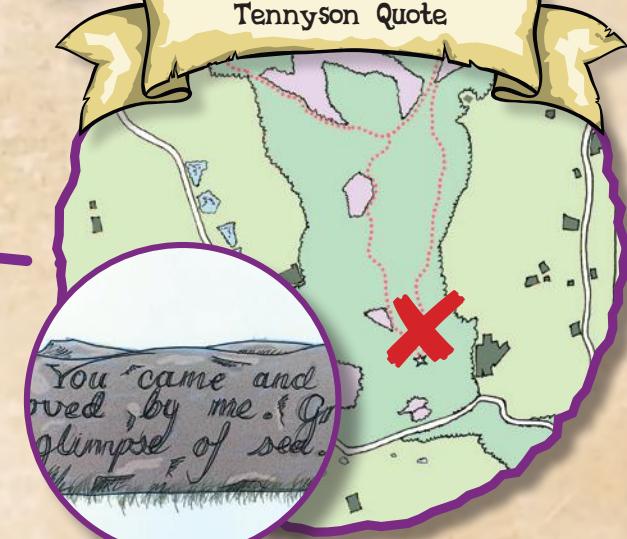
2

**WOOLBEDING**  
Resting Reptiles



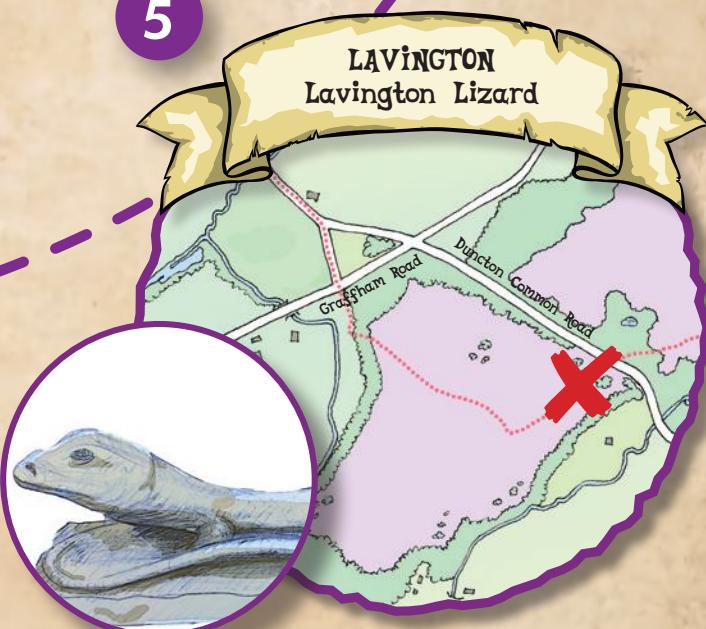
4

**BLACK DOWN**  
Tennyson Quote



5

**LAVINGTON**  
Lavington Lizard



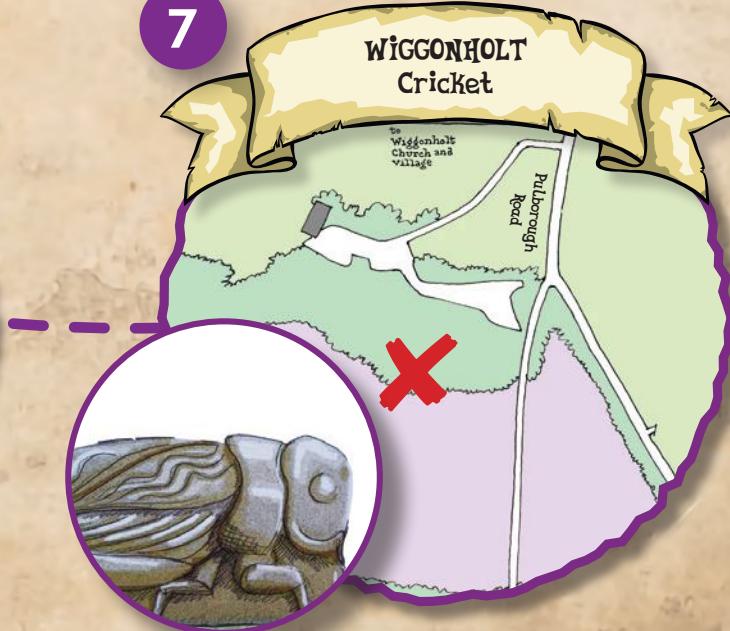
6

**GRAFFHAM**  
Sheep Pig



7

**WIGGONHOLT**  
Cricket



# Feathered Friends

**Every year, thousands of visitors flock to the South Downs National Park, but not just of the human kind.**



Nightingale © Sara Humphrey

Pied Flycatcher © Sara Humphrey



**T**he South Downs is an important place for wildlife, particularly migratory birds. Many of the UK's most threatened breeding bird species pass through each year. Some stop here to breed, while others like striking ring ouzels and pied flycatchers just stop to refuel.

I can plot my year by arrivals and departures; nightingales serenade in spring, turtle doves purr through summer and curlew calls mix in with winter flocks of geese and wigeon.

For the last few years, I've been documenting the wildlife here with my camera, sharing the images to help raise conservation awareness. You don't need fancy camera kit either, you'd be amazed at the close-up captures you can take just with a mobile phone. It's an easy and accessible hobby to get into, especially

for families wanting to help connect kids to nature!

Common species like goldfinches, rabbits and kestrels are easy enough to find with a little observation, but if you look closely at the wildlife around us, more unusual species will start to stand out. The cliffs at Seaford host an incredible summer colony of kittiwakes, while an early autumn trip to Cuckmere Haven will almost guarantee whinchat or wheatear sightings.

Discovering rarer species takes time and patience though. I take long hikes mapping out where I'm most likely to find the species I want to see; from foxes and adders to purple sandpipers. I'll head to coastal cliffs for peregrines or woodland glades for cuckoo, then listen for their calls. For complete beginners, I'd recommend visiting a nature reserve where staff and volunteers are on hand

to help you get started, like RSPB Pulborough Brooks in West Sussex.

My method of working as I walk through the countryside has taught me a lot about the role visitors play in protecting our landscape too. Until learning about species and habitats, I hadn't realised that a fragile patch of kidney vetch could sustain a colony of rare small blue butterflies, that birds like skylark nest right on the ground, or that people, dogs and drones repeatedly disturbing roosting birds can really put them at risk.

By sticking to the paths, taking your litter home and taking care not to disturb wildlife, you can help protect the incredible biodiversity on our doorstep while you discover it for yourself.

**Sara Humphrey**

Wildlife photographer and naturalist

[www.instagram.com/sussex\\_sara](http://www.instagram.com/sussex_sara)



Adder © Sara Humphrey



Fox © Sara Humphrey



# Help Wildlife at Home

## Put up a bird or bat box



Somewhere near a bush or tree to provide cover is best.

## Feed the birds



Seeds in winter and fat balls in spring.

## Build a Bug Hotel



There are lots of DIY bug & bee hotels online, many use up plastic bottles.

## Plant flowers



Pick native species, plant in beds, pots and on windowsills and help pollinators like butterflies and bees.

## Provide some water



A sunken pot of water or small pond – any will help in warmer months.

## Don't worry about weeds



Wildlife love weeds! A great excuse to skip the endless task of weeding.

## Let your grass grow



Four weeks not mowing allows grass loving plants to flourish, providing food to caterpillars and insects.

## Plant a hedge instead of a fence



They provide a home, shade and food for lots of wildlife.

## Grow ivy and other climbers



These provide a great hiding place/home for lots of insects, and some much-needed food through the winter.

## Reduce pesticides



Aim for organic ways of maintaining your garden.

## Create a hedgehog highway



Simply leave/cut a space in fences to allow hedgehogs and other wildlife to move between your neighbours gardens.

## Start composting



Another way to reduce your waste going to landfill and create free compost for a healthy garden – win win!



# SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

Our priority is keeping our visitors and communities safe. Please follow the latest Government guidelines and COVID-19 restrictions. We are all custodians of this beautiful landscape so please support our farmers, communities and wildlife by sticking to the path, keeping your dog on a lead around livestock, taking your litter home and avoid disturbing ground nesting birds and other wildlife. #staysafeoutside

## Key

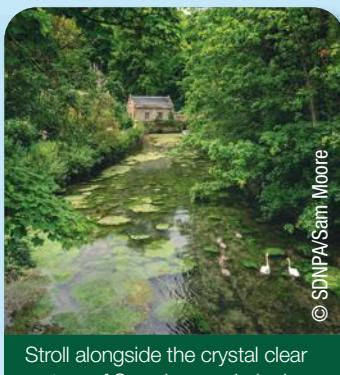
- South Downs Way
- South Downs Way (footpath only)
- Railway stations
- Railway
- Countryside sites
- Settlement
- Visitor Information Points



# WHERE WILL YOUR ADVENTURE TAKE YOU...

- ① Winchester City Mill
- ② St. Catherine's Hill
- ③ West Walk
- ④ Beacon Hill
- ⑤ Hinton Ampner
- ⑥ Old Winchester Hill
- ⑦ Chawton House
- ⑧ Alice Holt Forest
- ⑨ Gilbert White House & Oates Collection
- ⑩ Selborne Common
- ⑪ Woolmer Forest
- ⑫ Ashford Hangers
- ⑬ Butser Hill
- ⑭ Queen Elizabeth Country Park
- ⑮ Uppark House
- ⑯ Harting Down
- ⑰ Durford Heath
- ⑱ Kingley Vale
- ⑲ Goodwood Sculpture Park
- ⑳ Drovers
- ㉑ Heyshott Down
- ㉒ Weald and Downland Museum
- ㉓ Goodwood Country Park
- ㉔ Iping and Stedham Common
- ㉕ Woolbeding Gardens
- ㉖ Woolbeding Countryside
- ㉗ Marley Common
- ㉘ Black Down
- ㉙ Swan Barn Farm
- ㉚ Ebernoe Common
- ㉛ The Mens
- ㉜ Petworth House and Park
- ㉝ Lavington Common
- ㉞ Bignor Hill
- ㉟ Bignor Roman Villa
- ㉛ Slindon Estate
- ㉜ Arundel Castle
- ㉝ Arundel Wildfowl & Wetland Trust
- ㉞ Amberley Working Museum
- ㉟ Amberley Wildbrooks
- ㉛ Pulborough Brooks
- ㉝ Warren Hill and Sullington Warren
- ㉞ Chanctonbury Ring
- ㉟ Highdown Hill
- ㉛ Cissbury Ring
- ㉜ Bramber Castle
- ㉖ Mill Hill
- ㉗ Southwick Hill
- ㉘ Devil's Dyke/Fulking Escarpment
- ㉙ Saddlescombe Farm/Newtimber Hill
- ㉚ Woods Mill
- ㉛ Wolstonbury Hill
- ㉜ Ditchling Beacon
- ㉝ Black Cap
- ㉞ Castle Hill
- ㉟ Lewes Castle
- ㉞ Lewes Downs/Mount Caburn
- ㉛ Monks House
- ㉞ Charleston House
- ㉟ Long Man of Wilmington
- ㉛ Lullington Heath
- ㉟ Alfriston Clergy House
- ㉞ Friston Forest
- ㉟ Seven Sisters Country Park
- ㉞ Seaford Head
- ㉟ Birling Gap and Seven Sisters
- ㉛ Beachy Head

National Trust sites RSPB sites



Stroll alongside the crystal clear waters of Swanbourne Lake in Arundel.



Go butterfly spotting at Mill Hill Nature Reserve.



Explore the historic market town of Lewes.



Enjoy stunning views from the top of Firle Beacon near Lewes.

# Disabled Rambling on the South Downs

We ramble on the South Downs near Worthing, have done for many years – it gives us a sense of purpose and is so uplifting and rewarding.

**W**e have all-terrain, really tough mobility scooters called Trampers which can cope with a host of different terrain including mud, hills and ruts.

One of our first rambles was at Hightown Hill near Worthing and close to the Hightown Gardens. To access the hill we needed the gate from the car park to be unlocked, and here we found the Head Gardener very willing to be of assistance. We then led a super but quite challenging, ramble from Hightown Gardens car park right along to the village of Angmering with wonderful views over the surrounding vista, Worthing and Chichester in the distance.

We have been to many different places along the South Downs such as Cissbury Ring, Chanctonbury Ring, Jack and Jill Windmills, Ditchling Beacon, Stanmer Park near Brighton, Beachy Head, Birling Gap and Kingley Vale, to name a few.

One of my favourites is from a road off the A27 coming from Worthing towards Shoreham up a little road over the Downs to Steyning. There is a car park/layby at Titch Hill and from there you can do a wonderful circular ramble of about 6.5 miles taking in all the superb views of the surrounding countryside and

passing by Cissbury and Chanctonbury in the distance, a lot of it is along the South Downs Way and the views are amazing. Lovely gentle, rolling farmland with cattle and sheep grazing in many of the fields and big flocks of crows and starlings feeding on the cattle's fodder bins adds to the truly uplifting atmosphere of this iconic area.

Our scooters are not infallible and we can't traverse every by-way but there are so many that we can do. Helpfully we have found so many farmers, rangers and Authorities are only too willing to help if possible. We have been able to achieve such a lot with the help of these people, for which we are so grateful. We find it is always best to ask the question and request something be improved or perhaps, a gate be replaced or unlocked – the answer can either be "no" or "we'll do what we can" thus making a route possible for us on our trusty scooters!

The atmosphere of the South Downs is unique, it is like another world when you are in the middle of those folds and slopes and is food for the soul. We belong to a group called The Disabled Ramblers, [www.disabledramblers.co.uk](http://www.disabledramblers.co.uk). Worth having a peep if you are interested in rambling.

**Val Rawlings**

Member of The Disabled Ramblers

## Miles Without Stiles

If you're looking for some new routes which are suitable for people with limited mobility, wheelchair users or families with pushchairs, have a look at our Miles Without Stiles routes – [www.southdowns.gov.uk/miles-without-stiles](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/miles-without-stiles).

These routes show parking locations, hill gradients, toilet facilities and are designed for ease of access so you can get out into the countryside and enjoy the beautiful views and wildlife.



© SDNP/Charlie Hellwell

**I**f you're bored of pounding the same old pavements, or you are just starting out on a couch to 5k – there are lots of paths and tracks in the South Downs, many with stunning views, waiting to be explored.

Led by keen runner Phil Young and five other active founding members, the Black Trail Runners is a new thriving community who seek to increase the inclusion, participation and representation of black people in trail running. The group is a force of inspiration for a growing number of people in black and ethnically-diverse communities who want to connect with the outdoors. Phil explains why he helped to form the group last year, partly in response to the Black Lives Matter movement.

"It started with half a dozen people across the UK who share a love of the outdoors and share a love of running," says Phil, who lives in south London. "First of all it was to see if there were other people out there like us – of which there were, and also to promote it, so that people who maybe wanted to try trail running, but perhaps felt nervous about being in the outdoors, could access information in a voice that they can identify with."

"One of the issues we face as people of colour in the UK is that the world is not always portrayed in a way that makes everyone feel they belong. If you look at it historically for people of colour in the UK, we live in urban environments. A lot of accessing the outdoors is handed down generationally – how to behave in the outdoors, maybe your parents took you camping. We don't necessarily have that. If you look back to the 40s and 50s, our grandparents were too busy finding somewhere to live and work – they didn't have that leisure time to go out and explore."

"Because our communities didn't have that connection, it's very difficult to hand that down to the next generation. So we find that young people especially are asking how do they access the outdoors? It's difficult for them to just say "Let's go for a hike in the countryside".

"What we're doing with the Black Trail Runners is showing that there are other people who are going out and enjoying the outdoors. We are saying 'Why don't you come with us and we can introduce you to the outdoors in a way you feel comfortable?' "

# Black Trail Runners



**Trail running is often described as 'running in nature'. It's about more than the typical relentless progress focus of road running, it's about exploring the outdoors, whether that's traversing a mountain or splashing through the puddles next to a meandering river.**



Two key members of the Black Trail Runners, Simbarashe Mugomba and Rachel Dench, have now been featured in a moving short film made in conjunction with Adidas which recounts their personal journey to becoming trail runners. The film aims to provoke thought, look at some of the perceived barriers and ultimately inspire – [vimeo.com/530447610](https://vimeo.com/530447610).

Simbarashe, 38, is a big fan of the South Downs National Park. He says: "I love the trail running on the South Downs – you kind of feel like you're in the wilderness when you're on top of the Downs. You also feel that connection with nature. On a windy day with the wind blowing your side at the top of Ditchling Beacon, it's an experience!"

Phil is keen to share the knowledge of how to experience, enjoy and care for protected landscapes. He adds: "I've

been to the South Downs a few times and it's an incredible space. There's great trail running and mountain biking. The terrain is really unique – rolling chalk hills. One of the main beauties of the South Downs is its proximity to London – you can have a day out and be in a space where you have acres and acres of fresh air, sea views and biodiversity that you don't see in the city.

"We want this environment to last. If people in the city aren't aware of the natural environment, how can they be expected to care for it? So I think it's important that all communities come outside and learn and explore so they can take care of the planet and have an emotional investment in saving our landscapes."

For more information on the Black Trail Runners visit [www.blacktrailrunners.run](http://www.blacktrailrunners.run)

# In their Footsteps

## A NEW WALKING TOUR APP

**W**ith the arrival of spring, we are all keen to brush away the cobwebs of a long winter in lockdown and start getting out and about in nature once again. To celebrate we have launched a free walking tour app that gives you the chance to experience your beautiful National Park from a completely new perspective.

Writers, artists, poets and musicians have long drawn inspiration from the landscapes of the South Downs. The South Downs National Park Authority has worked with three heritage venues in East Sussex to tell their stories: Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft, Monks House in Rodmell, and Charleston near Firle. Using this immersive audio guide, you can walk in the footsteps of the artists and writers who lived and worked in these unique communities.



### CHARLESTON

Begin at Charleston Farmhouse and journey through the countryside, finishing at Berwick Church. This tour follows the lives of the artists who sought retreat here, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, and explores what life was like here during the Second World War.

Choose from three walking tours that each tell the story of the characters who once lived there.

The app is free to use and easy to access – simply visit your app store on Apple or Android and search for “**In their Footsteps**” to download directly on to your phone.

Now you can tread the paths of those who once lived and worked in these unique communities and celebrate how they shaped the arts for future generations.



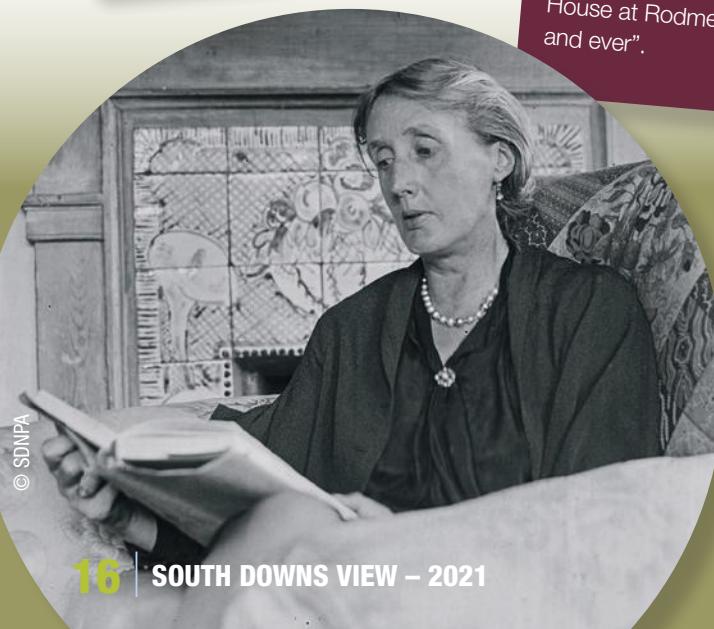
### MONK'S HOUSE

Starting at Southease Railway Station, walk the same paths that Virginia Woolf once walked, passing through Rodmell and along the banks of the River Ouse. Hear about the huge impact the South Downs had on Virginia's life, including her love of House at Rodmell her “address for ever and ever”.



### DITCHLING

Ditchling was home to a community of artists and makers in the 20th century. Many of their works are now held at the Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft and are recognised as having both national and international significance. This tour guides you through the local landscape, highlighting landmarks linked to the artists and makers that lived here. Against a background of industrialisation, rural living was felt to be where independent craftspeople could produce authentic work.



Virginia Woolf reading at Monk's House, undated. C: Houghton Library, Harvard College Library



# Inspired by the Downs

Alinah Azadeh  
Writer, Artist and Social Activist

I am a writer, artist and social activist, born in the south east to an English father and Iranian mother and have lived in Lewes with my family for 15 years.

I have created art projects for museums, galleries and across diverse communities for over 20 years and since 2016 I have focused much more on my creative writing, with short stories, interviews and articles published in print and online, including in the Hidden Sussex anthology (*Writing our Legacy*, 2019).

I am thrilled to be taking up the inaugural post of Writer-in-Residence for the Seven Sisters – as it comes into South Downs National Park Authority ownership – until the end of 2022. My work will reflect the stories of the wider Sussex Heritage Coast.

My earliest memories of the South Downs are visiting Beachy Head, with my tiny hand firmly clasped in my vigilant mother's, bending backward into the strong winds, spotting the red and white outcrop of the lighthouse in the creamy blue sea. My partner, two children and I have always enjoyed regular wanderings into the ancient woods and chalkland hills around us, and my current favourite spot is close by, a hidden valley within the Malling Down Nature Reserve, where I have seen deer, Adonis blue butterflies and birds of prey circling overhead as I circumnavigate the steep slopes of the valley on my daily walking ritual.

Especially since the Covid crisis began, like many who live near the Downs, I go there to connect with nature, stay mentally balanced, download new ideas and dream ahead – note, sketchbook or voice recorder in hand. From there I develop ideas for projects or the outline of a poem or story. I feel very strongly that the South Downs National Park is incredible medicine for the soul and a free space which could be far

more widely accessed and socially inclusive and am very excited to be part of making this happen.

My mother, whose deep love for her Iranian culture and for political freedom, gender equality and inclusivity – in the face of bigotry and oppression – still influences my work and life, loved the epic vistas of the Sussex coast, where she first lived in Eastbourne, on arriving to train as a nurse in 1965. When I first visited Iran with her in my twenties, I had a similar reaction to the monumental grandeur of the mountains there as we travelled, discovering family connections and the extraordinarily rich heritage of this politically troubled country together.

I am currently completing my first novel, inspired by my mother, who died in the sea and which ends on the Seven Sisters at Birling Gap, where her ashes were cast at her request. From this story ending and research into the rapid erosion of the cliffs, came the idea for We See You Now, an audio story I wrote and recorded ([www.alinahazadeh.com/live-works/we-see-you-now/](http://www.alinahazadeh.com/live-works/we-see-you-now/)) which invites listeners to reflect on their own sense of belonging and relationship to our shared coastal land and future.

Loss, migration, identity and the impermanent nature of life and our landscape due to climate change are therefore close to my heart and concerns as a writer and artist, as is the power of the creative imagination through story and the direct experience of nature in solidarity with others, to inspire a change of perspective and action together.

As part of my residency, I will be exploring and using the heritage and rich metaphors of the coast to write new stories for an audiowalk series that



© Haydn West

follows on from my first audio story and reflects the full diversity of who we are now as a nation living through polarised and precarious times, as well as exploring decolonised ways of looking at landscape and our place and identity in it. I will also be co-creating a wider participation programme inspired by the central themes of the writing, in close partnership with the National Park Authority team and supported by a major project grant from Arts Council England. This will introduce other emerging writers, local communities and be delivered with a range of organisations, including Writing Our Legacy, New Writing South and ONCA, actively amplifying voices, histories and a full and diverse spectrum of experiences of landscape and coastline, rooted in racial, gender, class and other forms of diversity.

Our two year programme will include – writer retreats, workshops, outdoor walks and live events, podcasts, online/social media events, creative commissions and a publication (subject to Government guidance and restrictions on COVID). I hope it will act as a bridge to a post-Covid world with a stronger sense of connection to the power, beauty and importance of this landscape from which we imagine new futures and collective, creative possibilities.

**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK**



Chanctonbury Ring © Tim Kahane



# Photo Comp Winners

A stunningly serene picture of walkers on a sunny winter's day is the winner of the South Downs National Park's Annual Photo Competition.

**C**hanctonbury Ring, by Tim Kahane took the top spot in the popular photography contest, which attracted over 400 entries, a record-breaking number for the competition.

The theme was "My Tranquil Haven" and judges agreed that Tim's peaceful photograph met the brief perfectly, capturing a moment of serenity amid the uncertainty of 2020.

The competition also included a separate category for best wildlife image – with first place going to an extraordinary photograph of a hare sprinting across a snowy field in Selborne, Hampshire, by Richard Murray.



Winter Runner © Richard Murray

# Youth categories

For the first time we also ran youth categories in the competition with the following winning images:

## WIN £250 IN THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PHOTO COMPETITION 2021

**How does the South Downs and its amazing nature and landscape make you happy?**

"Nature Makes Me Happy" is the fun and uplifting theme of this year's Annual Photography Competition, which has a **first prize of £250**.

Our judges will be looking for awe-inspiring images that capture the natural world at its beautiful best – whether that be wildlife, rolling hills, rivers, coastline, sunrises, sunsets, woodlands, blue skies, mysterious mists or a mixture of everything!

We're looking for stunning photographs of the South Downs that brighten your day – and will provide uplift to other people.

**Second prize will be £150, third prize will be £100 and fourth prize will be £50.**

Meanwhile, there will be two further categories for budding young photographers – 10 years and under, and 11 to 17 – with some great prizes on offer!

The deadline for entries is midnight on 31 October, visit [southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/photocompetition2021](https://southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/photocompetition2021) for full details.

PHOTO  
COMPETITION



Symmetry © Alice Mills



Take a moment © Andrew Todd Smith



Through the grass © Ottlie Hartley

# Dark Sky Wonders

A mesmerising shot of the Milky Way over an Iron Age hillfort and a crab venturing out for a night-time forage are among the stars of the South Downs National Park's astrophotography competition.

**M**ore than 150 entries were received for the National Park's first cosmic photography contest and a judging panel chose the winners across three categories. Judging the contest was Dan Oakley, "Dark Skies" Ranger for the National Park, Graham Bryant, a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and Petersfield-based Tiffany Francis-Baker, author of *Dark Skies*.



## LIVING DARK SKIES CATEGORY

In the Living Dark Skies category, first prize was awarded to "Starry Crab", by Anthony Whitbourn, who captured a captivating shot of a shore crab at Cuckmere Haven.



## SOUTH DOWNS DARK SKYSCAPES CATEGORY

Taking the top spot in the South Downs Dark Skyscapes category was "Milky Way from Cissbury" by Neil Jones. The stunningly-intricate shot shows off the chalk landscape of Cissbury Ring with an immense view of the Milky Way, as well as night-time views of towns and cities near the National Park.



## OUR MAGNIFICENT MOON CATEGORY

Taking the top spot in the Our Magnificent Moon category was "By The Light Lord's Piece" by David Oldham, with a hauntingly-beautiful shot of



## THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE CATEGORY

Carpenter and amateur photographer Connor Lamb's awe-inspiring shot of the night's sky and the Rampion Offshore Wind Farm took the top spot in the public vote that ran throughout March.

# Things that go Bump in the Night

**As the sun starts to set, a cathartic calm settles over the land. One of the best things about working as an ecologist is you have a perfect excuse to be out and about at dusk and dawn and all the hours of dark in-between, searching for bats and the other mysterious and intriguing creatures of the night.**

**C**ome the evening, hues of gold, orange, pink and magenta paint the twilight skies eventually making way to unveil the darkness.

**As the busying human activity and hubbub of the daylight dissipates, a tranquillity takes over the land with the wind and air pressure typically dropping too – this, I have read, is something to do with the cooling of the earth.**

However, not all is quietening, as the twilight world becomes busy with the emergence of crepuscular strategists and our wonderful nocturnal wildlife rising from their daytime resting places. Chafer beetles, bugs and flies are joined by beautifully diverse moth species, dancing in the moon and starlit skies. They play a vital role in pollinating many of our native plant species while we rest and slumber. This in turn attracts the aerial acrobatic displays from our amazingly athletic bat species catching their insect prey on the wing. We have 17 breeding bat species here in the UK, all of which have differing habitat and feeding preferences, although they are all insectivorous.

Listen closely and you may hear the hooting calls of the tawny owl – with the “twoo” sound usually made by the male as a territorial marker, hopefully with the responding female’s “twoo” or sharp “keewick”. Together making the classic and well-loved duet of “twit twooooo”. They are often perched on oak tree branches on the lookout for a bat or the scurrying of a field mouse or vole to feast upon.

Foxes pierce the dark with their mating screams, badgers bustle and

ferret for worms, and hedgehogs scurry, crunching the leaf matter between their feet, munching up slugs, and other tasty morsels. Amphibians such as toads, frogs and newts become more active too, moving around and dispersing to breeding or feeding spots depending on the time of year.

Barn owls silently appear as striking apparitions, and glow worms light up the ancient, untampered grasslands, both increasingly rare and treasured sights.

Last spring I was treated to the sound of the beautiful melodies of a nightingale singing loud and proud during the hours of darkness. It was the highlight of my year – the last time I heard a nightingale was a decade ago. So very, very uncommon these days, and this time brought about by the quietening of the roads during the first 2020 lockdown, when wildlife seemingly took back the streets.

Our local wildlife is sadly becoming rarer and is unquestionably suffering at the demands of indefatigable development pressure and agricultural burdens. Gardens, patios, windowboxes, parks and semi-natural habitats are becoming all the more important as havens for nocturnal wildlife – especially when native wildflowers, trees, ponds and wilder areas of flowering grasses are welcomed into the mix. I, myself, consider ‘weeds’ as the ornamental flower species that offer nothing but superficial gratification, and make a keen point of managing my garden for our wildlife by encouraging native flowering grasses, wildflowers, nettles and bramble scrub; all important for supporting larval and feeding stages. You too can help nocturnal wildlife flourish in your outdoor

space, however small, by making some simple changes. Take a look at the handy pullout in this edition of South Downs View for some top tips on helping wildlife at home and join me in supporting these beautiful and unique beings.

As the light and wildlife of daytime lifts our spirits, my advice is definitely to find some time, throughout the seasons, to venture out at dusk (and dawn for that matter) to enjoy the tranquillity of that other world, and hopefully catch a glimpse of some of the incredible creatures that can go bump in the night!

**Kim Dawson, Sussex Bat Group**



© Tawny owl – D. Middleton



© Frog – D. Middleton



© Elephant Hawk Moth – Neil Huime

# Family John Muir Award



JOHN  
MUIR  
AWARD

wild places:  
DISCOVER  
EXPLORE  
CONSERVE  
SHARE

© Anne Katrin Purkiss

**2020 was a different year for us all, however in amongst the stress and uncertainty, lots of us found more time for nature. Some families even took on the Family John Muir Award challenge.**

**E**ncouraging people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places, the Family John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme for people of all backgrounds, it's non-competitive, inclusive and accessible.

To achieve your Award all you need to do is 25 hours or more of activities which will help you to discover, explore and do something to care for a wild place, and then share your experience with others.

Along the way you also discover more about John Muir and other conservationists, as well as either visiting

or virtually exploring the South Downs National Park.

In an unusual year the South Downs National Park Authority was lucky enough to partner up with **Enable Ability**, a Portsmouth based charity which supports children and adults with a range of disabilities, to run some John Muir sessions for children and their carers.

**Name:** James Donougher  
**Job:** Project Leader, Enable Ability  
**Favourite outdoor activity:** Playing golf  
**Favourite animal:** Cheetah  
**Inspired by:** John Muir – of course!

**How did you first get involved with Enable Ability?**  
I have been working with children and young adults since 2002, however after being made redundant in 2016, I found myself in a rather unfamiliar role of hosting wine tasting evenings across Hampshire for just over a year. The Enable Ability job advert was spotted through a church website. The one perk of the previous job was the free leftover wine but my job with Enable Ability has many more perks, the main one being supporting the young people we work with to find their independence in life, this is extremely rewarding!

**How did Enable Ability get involved with the Family John Muir Award in the South Downs?**  
We first contacted the South Downs National Park Authority a few years ago about volunteering opportunities for the young people we work with. In 2019 we then started to advertise the Family John Muir Award. Enable Ability found this initiative to be the perfect programme to provide a vehicle for our young people to gain new skills, encouraging them to venture into the countryside more and gain confidence by receiving the John Muir Award at the end of the programme. By making the project an initiative where unusually our parents and carers are invited to the activities too, we thought this provided a new element which we had never tried before. I'm pleased to say it works!

**What are your aspirations for future Enable Ability outdoor sessions in the National Park?**

In November 2020, it was agreed between the National Park and Enable Ability to use the John Muir Award as a means of helping to transform the outdoor space of a care home based in North Boarhunt. We are delighted Winscombe Care Home has invited us into the grounds of their incredible care home and given our young people an opportunity to get involved in so many projects. The end result will not only benefit our young people but also the amazing residents of the care home which we have already grown good bonds with. We hope to deliver further work at Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Stansted Park, Weald & Downland Living Museum, Butser Ancient Farm and The Whitelands Project. Watch this space!

**Why is time spent in nature so important to you and those involved with Enable Ability?**  
Other than the obvious mental health benefits of being away from the city, rural days out can provide great comfort to those with stressful lives. Enable Ability is always seeking new experiences or opportunities for our young people, the majority who are faced with significant barriers to achieve their own independence in life. Time in nature can provide such opportunities to find a new skill or interest which in turn gives them great satisfaction and happiness.



**Name:** Zak Ashmore

**Age:** 13

**Favourite animal:** Dog

**Favourite outdoor activity:** Skateboarding

**Inspired by:** Bear Grylls and Steve Backshall

**Why did you first get involved with Enable Ability?**

So I can do activities. Its helped me to have fun and make things.

**Why did you sign up to join the Family John Muir Award in the South Downs?**

Mum picked it for me because I like to go to the countryside and do activities.

**What did you like best about your first John Muir session?**

Playing games outside.

**What else would you like to do in the South Downs National Park?**

Obstacle courses, Bmx riding, explore the Forest of Bere and Queen Elizabeth Country Park, climb trees, make dens, Streamex (wading in streams), take photos.



**How does being in nature help you?**

It makes you stronger and more relaxed.

**Who else do you think would benefit from some time in the South Downs?**

Everyone because it's good!

**What word sums up your time in the South Downs?**

Tired. From all the exercise, in a good way).

**Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience of taking part in the Family John Muir Award in the South Downs?**

I'm excited to go back.

**Name:** Georgina Hill

**Age:** 22

**Favourite animal:** Dolphin

**Favourite outdoor activity:** Walking

**Inspired by:** David Attenborough

**How did you get involved with Enable Ability?**

I first got involved with Enable Ability for weekend activities and later for volunteering and developing independence. It has helped me with communicating with others, giving me a social life and developing key skills.

**What did you like best about your first John Muir session?**

Exploring Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

**What was the most interesting thing you learnt?**

The age of trees can be worked out from the number of rings on the tree trunk.

**What else would you like to do in the South Downs National Park?**

To follow a trail and explore more.

**How does being in nature help you?**

Feel less stressed and keeping fit.

**Who else do you think would benefit from some time in the South Downs?**

Everyone!

**What word sums up your time in the South Downs?**

Happy!



#### Get involved with or support Enable Ability

If you think you have a young person who may benefit from the services the charity provides, contact our office on 023 9267 1846 or email [enquiries@EnableAbility.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@EnableAbility.org.uk).

**uk.** You can also get in touch with our office if you have an opportunity for our young people which you think they would greatly benefit from. You can also support the charity as a volunteer or Trustee and you can even donate directly to our charity. Find out more at [www.enableability.org.uk](http://www.enableability.org.uk) or find us on FaceBook at /hampshireyp.

**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK TRUST**



# PROTECT OUR POLLINATORS

By making a donation to the Bee Lines campaign you are helping key pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, to thrive in the South Downs.

Donate at:  
[southdownstrust.org.uk/beelines](https://southdownstrust.org.uk/beelines)

SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK TRUST

## On the hunt for something new to listen too?

Fancy a story while you're out exploring the stunning countryside of the South Downs? Then look no further as Applause Rural Touring and South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) announce Full Harvest – a series of audio stories and poems inspired by the South Downs landscape.

Seven writers have been commissioned to pen ten audio stories/poems, each focusing on one of the magical rivers that weave across the South Downs landscape.

The writers are an exciting mix of established and early-career authors who will each provide their unique perspectives on the much-loved South Downs, spending time engaging with the communities that live and work in the landscape to explore the untold stories of everyday people.

The ability to access open space has been highlighted through lockdown and Full Harvest champions the positive impact outdoor space can have on well-being and resilience,

aiming to link more people to their local landscape, its history, its wildlife and habitat.

Anooshka Rawden, Cultural Heritage Lead for the South Downs National Park, said: 'The rivers of the South Downs are its lifeblood, reflecting both its chalk geology and the complex ecosystems of habitat, animal and plant life that make this place so special. The Full Harvest is a chance to celebrate those rivers through the eyes of contemporary writers, who will draw on history, geography and place to weave new stories. It's always exciting to experience the landscape in different ways.'

The podcasts will be launched during the summer of 2021 and will be available to download and listen from [southdowns.gov.uk](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk), [www.applause.org.uk](https://www.applause.org.uk) and popular listening platforms such as Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

audio stories  
& poems  **Full,  
Harvest**