



## WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- **Golden leaves** We embrace the coming autumn and offer tips on how to make the most of the seasonal delights of the South Downs.
- **The beauty of Seven Sisters** Have you ever wondered what makes this 280 hectares of coastal countryside so special? Find out seven reasons why it's so remarkable.
- **Writing talent** Find out the winners of our short story competition.
- **Tree-mendous!** Learn more about the National Park town that has big plans for tree planting.

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

## Enjoy the magic of the South Downs this autumn season

**Tis the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, with cool morning breezes, birds twittering in the skies, golden leaves, and crimson sunsets.**

It's not hard to see why autumn has inspired some of our greatest literary figures, from Keats to Shakespeare.

As we say the long goodbye to summer and enjoy the last of its comforting warmth, September and October are some of the best months of the year to experience the stunning beauty of the South Downs National Park.

It's also a great time of the year to enjoy taking photographs in the National Park, which stretches for almost 100 miles from Winchester to Eastbourne and includes some of the UK's most picturesque hills, valleys, rivers, streams and forests.

With almost two months left of the National Park's annual photo competition, people are being encouraged to capture the serenity of this special season in the South Downs.

The theme for this year's competition is "Nature Makes Me Happy" and judges are looking for uplifting images that capture the beauty of the natural world – whether that be landscape, wildlife, rivers and coastline, woodland, a piece of history, or people enjoying the National Park.

The broad theme could also cover those "happy places" in the South Downs that replenish the soul.



The top prize for the adult category will be £250, with a runner-up prize of £150, third prize of £100 and fourth prize of £50.

The youth competition returns this year for budding young photographers – with categories 10 years and under and 11 to 17. There will be a prize of a family pass to Marwell Zoo for the 10 years and under category, while the prize for 11 to 17 category will be a family pass for a Forest Segway outdoor adventure ride at Go Ape.

Nick Heasman, Countryside and Policy Manager for the National Park and chair of the judging panel, said: "Autumn really is a magical time to enjoy the South Downs National Park.

"The sunrises and sunsets are particularly impressive, with the 'golden hour' of photography happening at a more convenient time for most people as the sun rises later and sets earlier.

"All the gorgeous reds, oranges and pinks that we see in the sky are partly because the sun stays near the horizon

for longer and the sunlight has to pass through more of the Earth's atmosphere before it hits our eyes.

"Taking photographs can be a great family day-out as people of all ages now have excellent cameras on their smartphones and you could perhaps combine the trip with a woodland walk, nature spotting or a pub lunch.

"We hope people enjoy experiencing the autumnal magic of the South Downs!"



Here are three ideas for autumn days-out in the National Park, combined with snapping some awesome shots on your camera or mobile phone:

• **Woodland walks** – There's nothing quite like a forest adventure with the sound of trilling birds and crunchy autumn leaves underfoot. Did you know that almost a quarter of the National Park is covered by glorious treescape, with more woodland than any other National Park in England and Wales? The South Downs is blessed with some very tranquil woodlands, often with openings in the trees offering majestic views of the chalky hills. Why not try Alice Holt, Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Slindon or Friston?

• **A walk and pub fare** – Who could fail to be charmed by a crisp autumn walk, followed by a steaming supper by a log fire at a wood-beamed inn? The National Park has some fantastic eateries and a bit of online research (**CAMRA** is a good place to start) and booking ahead is all it takes to round off your day-out with something really special.



• **Miles Without Stiles** – With the weather turning a little colder, many of us just want a gentle stress-free walk and the chance to fill our lungs with some fresh, clean air. Our Miles Without Stiles routes, designed for people of all levels of mobility and fitness, are a wonderful choice for an autumn stroll. Check out the [website](#) for downloadable walks at locations in Hampshire and Sussex.

Entries for the photo competition close on Sunday 31 October. Find out more and download the entry form at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/photocompetition2021/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/photocompetition2021/)

For inspiration and downloadable guides on where to walk this autumn visit [www.southdowns.gov.uk/get-active/on-foot/walking-trails/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/get-active/on-foot/walking-trails/)

## Rangers on tour! Pop-up events prove popular



**People got the chance to speak to rangers and find out more about the National Park as more than 40 pop-up events took place this summer across Hampshire and Sussex.**

Well over 3,000 people were chatted to as rangers and staff toured the National Park, setting up information kiosks at dozens of popular sites such as Butser Hill, St Catherine's Hill, Blackdown, Kingley Vale, Stansted Park, Cissbury Ring, Midhurst Common, The Trundle, Truleigh Hill, Malling Down and Seaford.

Following the lockdown, the pop-up events were a chance for the public to chat face to face with rangers and National Park staff, including finding out ideas for walks, discover more about the biodiversity and pick up tips on how to care for the landscape.

The weekend events ran since the start of April and included help from a number of partners, including police and fire services, National Trust, Natural England, Forestry England, the Wildlife Trusts, and farmers.

Laura Warren, Events and Engagement Officer for the National Park, said: "It's been a fantastic summer of engagement with the public and it's been lovely to be able to chat to people face-to-face again.



"Unable to organise larger-scale events in the spring meant our focus went into doing small-scale pop-up events and it's worked really well. It's been a great opportunity for people to learn more about the amazing wildlife and local history in the National Park and our giant map of the South Downs is always a hit. People are always surprised by the size of the National Park and that it stretches for 100 miles!

"We've also been sharing our 'Happy South Downs' messages which is all about simple things people can do to help keep nature happy, such as picking up dog poo and not dropping litter. The whole initiative has been very well-received and it's great to see this renewed interest in helping nature and the environment."

Local signage with the "Happy South Downs" message has recently been put up at popular locations such as Kingley Vale, continuing to offer simple tips on caring for nature as we head into the autumn and winter.

# Why is Seven Sisters such a special place?



**We recently took ownership of Seven Sisters Country Park and will be working throughout the autumn and winter on renovations, totalling almost £2m, to improve the visitor facilities. Here we explore seven reasons why this 280 hectares of stunning coastal countryside is so remarkable!**

## 1. Chalk cliffs

These captivatingly-beautiful cliffs have been featured in many a Hollywood movie, including *Harry Potter* and *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. They're an amazing geological phenomenon – the chalk being formed under an ancient sea that existed between 65 and 100 million years ago, when T-rex and Velociraptor still roamed the earth!

The chalk is the remains of tiny sea creatures that lived in this sea and millions of years of deposits resulted in a huge chalk dome that now covers a vast area across Southern England and Northern France. Geological forces and coastal erosion from the English Channel means the chalk landscape rises spectacularly out of the sea, giving us these brilliant white cliffs to admire.

Today narrow ledges in the cliffs support many breeding bird populations, including kittiwakes, fulmars and peregrine falcons. It's important to stay well away from cliff edges and bases when admiring the views as cliff falls can happen at any time.

## 2. Chalk grassland

This remarkably rare habitat formed through centuries of sheep grazing and was one of the reasons for the designation of the South Downs National Park. Its biodiversity is mind-boggling!

You really have to get close to the ground to understand why this is often called "Europe's tropical rainforest in miniature". A single square metre can have 40 different flowering plant species, while there can be well over 20 different species of butterfly on the wing during the summer.

## 3. History

Seven Sisters is part of the Sussex Heritage Coast and features multiple layers of archaeology and history, revealing glimpses of the people who have lived here in the past. There's an assortment of burial sites, defensive

structures, abandoned settlements, agricultural features and historic navigation aids.

One of the oldest visible sites in the Heritage Coast is the Neolithic burial mound near Exceat, a communal burial site for some of the earliest farming communities.

The Napoleonic Barracks, south west of Foxhole Farm, and Second World War anti-tank obstacles have, at different times, protected the Cuckmere River from attack.

## 4. Diverse freshwater, wetland and marine habitats

So many animals and plants rely on this aquatic and semi-aquatic environment at Seven Sisters.

The area provides a diverse range of habitats – a mix of fresh and saltwater, ponds, ditches and the fast-flowing Cuckmere River.

Cuckmere Haven remains one of the best sites in Sussex for dragonflies that thrive in the water meadows.

Closer to the shore and there are several very special

animals and plant species. The vegetated shingle provides a home to waxy-leaved Sea Kale with its white flowers and the Yellow Homed Poppy, with its bright yellow flowers, are easy to spot in the summer.



## 5. Bird paradise

A visit to Seven Sisters is a real treat for anyone who loves birds. Look to the skies or waters and you'll normally see a different species and the avian inhabitants will change depending on the season. Early spring sees the gradual departure of winter "whistling" wigeon, teal, little grebe, curlew, geese, oystercatcher, a mixed bag of gulls and regular kingfisher sightings as they head away to breed. Their departure heralds the onset of the migrating season. Watch the wetlands for more unusual waders, such as black-tailed godwits, alongside the more familiar redshank, dunlin and ringed plover.

## 6. Natural beauty

The natural beauty of Seven Sisters is truly captivating and has the power to replenish the soul.

Sunrise and sunsets are particularly spectacular at the park and are a photographer's dream. The way the sunlight hits the landscape, sometimes with mysterious early morning mists or pink and crimson sunsets at dusk, creates a magical combination that produces incredible photography.

## 7. It's unique!

Seven Sisters represents a fragment of largely unspoilt coastline amid a heavily-developed south coast. The fact that it exists at all as it does today should never be taken for granted.

Back in 1926 a mysterious group of property developers wanted to build a new town above the cliffs. A group of early environmentalists – including poet Rudyard Kipling, the mother of a dead WWI soldier, a famous pilot and a walking group – led a passionate campaign to oppose the plans. Opponents were only given a month to raise £17,000 – the equivalent of £509,000 today – to buy out the developers and halt construction.

It was an almost unassailable target, but the campaign, proved to be successful and the land above the cliffs was saved for generations to come.

## Young people show off their writing talents in contest



Young wordsmith Ottilie Smith, a winner of the competition

**Tales of horse-riding adventures, heart-stirring memories of visiting the South Downs and the magnificence of Seven Sisters are among the winning stories in this year's MADhurst South Downs National Park Children's Competition.**

More than 140 young people from across the region let their imaginations run wild as they wrote intriguing short stories inspired by the South Downs National Park.

The fiction has now been brought vividly to life through the story-telling powers of actor Hugh Bonneville, who read the stories aloud for a film recording at the South Downs Centre in Midhurst.

Hugh, best known for his role in historical drama series *Downton Abbey*, said: "I was delighted to read the winning entries for the MADhurst short story competition, inspired by the South Downs and the wonderful landscape of the National Park. Thank you to everyone who entered."

The prize-giving ceremony took place at Midhurst Town Council Street Party, which is part of the MADhurst 2021

Festival. Prizes included a goodie bag of items donated by the South Downs National Park Authority and book tokens purchased jointly by MADhurst and the National Park.

Winning the five to nine years category was Ottilie Smith, seven, who attends Windlesham House School and lives in Shipley, West Sussex. Ottilie impressed judges with her short story entitled "A South Downs Adventure: City Girl to Country Girl".

Ottilie said: "I was so happy to hear that I'd won a prize! It's the longest story I've ever written and took me over a week to finish, working in break time and after school. I



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started with the idea of the town mouse and country mouse and that made me think of my move here three years ago and all the new adventures I've had. My great grandparents lived in Midhurst so it feels very special to be part of the festival."

Winner of the 10 to 13 years category was Holly Lambert, 11, who lives in Amberley, West Sussex, and attends Midhurst Rother College. Holly wrote a beautiful and moving tale entitled "A Place to Remember".

Holly said: "I was shocked to win first prize but was very excited to hear I had. The inspiration for my story was from living in Amberley which is where I've lived since I was born and the nature surrounding the village, the beautiful buildings particularly St Michael's Church and the friendly people."



The winner of the 14 to 18 years category was 14-year-old Jude Tedder, who lives in Alton, Hampshire, and attends Eggars School. Jude penned "A reflection at the end of the world", inspired by the splendor of Seven Sisters.



Jude said: "I first found the competition from a teacher, and entered as writing about a place seemed to be interesting. I have never personally been to the Seven Sisters, which is where I chose to write about, but the entire place was quite amazing to look at. I really enjoyed writing about it, and imagining being somewhere like that.

Overall, I am really happy to have been part of the competition, thank you to everyone at the South Downs National Park Authority."

Runner-up in the five to nine years category was Henry Hayes, seven, and third place went to Audrey Laver, nine. Runner-up in the 10 to 13 years category was Joshua Hermon-Taylor, 11, and third place went to Teddy Enrich, aged 12. Runner-up in the 14 to 18 years category was Matilda Gray, 16, and third place went to Darcy Morey De La Cruz, aged 14.

All the stories can be read online on the South Downs National Park website [here](#).

Anooshka Rawden, who leads cultural heritage for the National Park and was one of the judges, said: "The competition was a joy to judge. We had comedy, mystery, fantasy and suspense, and every single entry had its own magic.

"I hope all the young people who participated continue to write and let their imagination run wild in the South Downs. Personal highlights for me included a story about an invisible octopus, a magnificent mermaid and Bob the cat and his magic box, but they were all wonderful. The winners showed not only great imagination and storytelling, but a strong narrative linked to this special landscape."

The Hugh Bonneville video is available to watch on the South Downs National Park's YouTube channel.

MADhurst is an annual music, arts and dance festival and you can find out more at [www.madhurst.co.uk](http://www.madhurst.co.uk)

The sessions have had such a positive impact on the families involved.

## Community work is truly inspiring!



**We've had an action-packed summer of outreach work, connecting dozens of families with the wonders of the National Park. Siân Jones, Families Outreach Officer, gives an update.**



It's been wonderful to be working with families and community groups in person again. This summer has seen two groups progress with their Family John Muir Awards and a range of other groups experience taster days across the National Park.

Forward Facing, a Brighton-based charity, discovered the new wheelchair accessible path in Stanmer Park and spent time exploring the One Garden. All the families said that having experienced how accessible it was they would be returning to explore more on their own.

A small group of children doing a summer art project with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services collected natural materials to make a mandala and heard folktales on the transformation in Stanmer Park.

The Rural Refugee Network gathered around the pizza oven in Queen Elizabeth Country Park, sharing recipes and exploring the area.

The Rackham Ramblers, a home education group, achieved their Discover Family John Muir Award spent time discovering, exploring, caring for and sharing about Lychpole Hill.

Enable Ability, a Portsmouth-based group that works with children and adults with disabilities, has continued its work to create a garden at a care home as part of its award activity.

The Lithuanian Families of the South Coast have had some activities provided by Heathlands Reunited and South Downs Youth Action and SDYA during their camping gatherings on Stedham Common.

A couple of sessions were cancelled due to inclement weather and Covid; a visit to Seven Sisters with a group of Young Carers, and a walk up Butser Hill with Enable Ability. However, the good news is that both of these sessions are rescheduled for the autumn.

This project is engaging a really diverse range of family audiences, many of whom have not engaged with the National Park before.

## Muddy route is no more!



**A bridleway in the South Downs has re-opened after extensive work to refurbish the path.**

Bridleway 504, which stretches from Binsted and Kingsley to Frithend in Hampshire, was reopened to the local community during an official ceremony over the summer. The makeover will enable horse riders, cyclists, and walkers in the area to benefit from a safe, off-road route.

The bridleway was considered nearly impassable earlier this year, due to deep mud and flooded ditches.

It meant people were forced to take alternative routes, including the B3004, a road heavily used by HGV lorries.

The work has helped to connect more than 50 miles of route including the historic Shipwright's Way and Alice Holt Forest.

The project was funded by the British Horse Society (BHS), the Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund and several local organisations, including the National Park Authority.

Tracy Casstles, Director of Fundraising at The British Horse Society, said: "We are thrilled that work on the bridleway has been completed and local equestrians, cyclists and walkers can now use this route."

National Park Ranger Chris Lickley, who attended the opening event, said: "This important work has transformed this popular route, giving local people year-round access to the heart of the National Park and some really beautiful countryside."



AJ Barlow, Chair of Alton Ramblers Group said: "Alton Ramblers Group are delighted to help to see this bridleway repair completed and for it to be newly enjoyed



by walkers and riders alike.

"We hope the community coming together to contribute has ensured this path will be used and enjoyed by everyone."

Petersfield to meet the new challenges posed by global warming.”

Read the full report [here](#).

## Getting active with Olympic legend for physical and mental health



**Olympic champion Sally Gunnell is helping to inspire people to get fit in the great outdoors.**

Sally, who was the first female 400 metres hurdler in history to win the Olympic and World titles and break the world record, was filmed at Firle Beacon in the National Park as part of a nationwide campaign to help people with both their physical and mental wellbeing.

It came as National Parks Partnerships teamed up with The Outdoor Gym Company to produce a digital fitness programme that can be accessed via smart phone.

The course promotes the physical and mental health benefits of walking or jogging in beautiful National Parks across England, Scotland and Wales.

Sally turns walks into workouts with over 75 bodyweight activities throughout the course and moves for all ages to build stamina, muscle strength and bone density over time.

Sally, who lives in Steyning, West Sussex, said: “My activity has changed a lot since my competitive days on the world stage. Today, staying active is as much about my mental wellbeing as my physical health. Like all of us, I just want to feel good about myself and movement is one of my keys to a happy life. I want as many people as possible to make the most of free outdoor activity.”



Kate Drake, Health and Wellbeing Officer for the South Downs National Park, added: “We were delighted to welcome Olympian Sally Gunnell for her outdoor workout. With over 2,000 miles of rights of way and the internationally-renowned 100-mile South Downs Way, there are so many opportunities to walk, jog, run or cycle, breathing in fresh air and beautiful views. National Parks really are places to replenish the soul, both physically and mentally.”

## Town tackles climate change with innovative tree planting bid



**A “citizen science” project has revealed the tremendous potential for more tree planting in one of the National Park’s largest towns.**

Last year the charity Petersfield Society organised a community survey of public green spaces in the parish that might have potential for tree planting. A total of 34 citizen science volunteers carried out the survey, which has now been published by the Society in collaboration with Forest Research.

A key finding showed that 95 per cent of the 450 plots surveyed in the town were considered suitable for tree planting.

A majority of the roads in the town contain sites where new tree planting appears possible.

The South Downs National Park, East Hampshire District Council and Petersfield Town Council have accepted and offered full support to the main findings of the report.

A ‘Tree Summit’ is now planned for the autumn, when councils and relevant agencies will be invited to develop a joint Action Plan for new tree planting in Petersfield parish.

Sonia Lorenzo Martín, who leads on woodlands for the National Park, said: “I’m delighted to endorse this report.

“We’re in a climate and biodiversity crisis and trees play an important role in tackling climate change. With rising temperatures and changes in climate patterns, increasing tree cover around communities can help reduce the temperature in our towns and cities, decrease pollution, prevent flooding, protect soils and improve our wellbeing, as well as store carbon.

“This study provides a good example of how local groups can support national government and local authority initiatives to increase woodland cover. I hope it will really stimulate tree planting in Petersfield. The survey has identified that sizeable areas of grass verges and other green spaces in the town have capacity for more trees.

“The recommendations from the survey will help with the prioritisation of sites where tree planting can take place to enhance the urban landscape.”

Dr Andy Moffat, one of the authors of the report, said: “It is now vital to consider a large tree planting programme in

TGO Activate will donate 33% of course profits to National Parks for reinvestment in the conservation of their beautiful green spaces.

To find out more and look at the workouts click [here](#).

## 'Woolf beautifully captured the sense of freedom of open spaces'



Local writer Dr Heloise Coffey takes a look at one of Britain's most celebrated and revolutionary authors, who found comfort as well as inspiration in walking the South Downs.

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Today we're familiar with the idea that walking and being out in nature is good for our mental as well as physical wellbeing. It's even been given a name – 'green therapy' – and has been described as 'the Natural Health Service'. The idea that nature does us good has gained official recognition with recent news that the NHS are now

### **Calling all history buffs! Heritage Open Days return**

This September offers an amazing chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences.

The annual festival returns from 10 September to 19 September and, as a wellspring for wonderful cultural heritage, the National Park will have plenty of options for a great day-out, with many venues offering free entry on specific dates.

Here are some of the highlights in the South Downs:

#### **Gilbert White's Brewhouse**

Visit Gilbert White's home for free and the venue will also be opening Gilbert White's Brewhouse, built in 1765 by White himself. Meet the brewers, taste the beer and learn more about brewing!

#### **Arundel Museum**

Discover the story of Arundel, the town, the castle, the river and its people. The Museum is located opposite the entrance to the castle.

#### **Petworth Heritage Weekend: Town Walking Tours**

Discover the unique local heritage of Petworth.

#### **RSPB Pulborough Brooks Nature Reserve**

Visitors can enjoy the woodland trails of Wiggonholt Common and explore the visitor centre. There will be free access to the childrens' play area.

#### **Coromandel Chinese Lacquer Screen at Lamb House, Lewes**

In the 18th century, Chinese lacquer screens were used as a type of decorated 'wallpaper' in English Houses. The wall panels in Lamb House may be a unique example of a lost decorative tradition.

There are lots more events to see at

[www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

experimenting with 'prescribing' nature to supplement treatment for depression and anxiety. The importance of open spaces has been even more topical since the start of the pandemic, during which time people have flocked to the countryside in their thousands.

The South Downs National Park is the perfect place for a dose of green therapy. Home to the South Downs Way, it has 160 kms of paths wending their way past breath-taking sea views and chalk cliffs, and through grassland, meadows and wooded valleys.

Just over a century ago, writer and Bloomsbury Group member, Virginia Woolf, found that taking long walks on the Downs just south of Lewes eased the symptoms of her mental health issues. Woolf lived with what might now be diagnosed as bipolar and depression. She may not have known the name for endorphins, but she certainly seemed to understand their beneficial effects. I "walk myself calm, walk myself serene," she wrote. Together with her husband Leonard, Virginia Woolf had bought Monk's House in the village of Rodmell in 1919 for £700, thereafter dividing her time between the Sussex Downs

and the squares in Bloomsbury, London with which she's more commonly associated.

A keen walker from an early age, Woolf walked with friends such as Vita Sackville-West (whom she described as striding out for a walk like a general in charge of an army) but mostly walked alone. Locals got used to seeing this tall, solitary figure on the Downs, sometimes accompanied by her spaniels Sally or Pinker. She would leave Monk's House by a gate at the end of the garden and walk out into the meadows bordering the River Ouse with views of Mount Caburn. Here, she wrote, "all of nature is to be had five minutes". She had favourite walks along the Ouse towards Piddinghoe and delighted in discovering new ones. "I am extremely happy walking on the Downs," she said, "I like to have space to spread my mind out in."

Monk's House was also a writing retreat for Woolf. It was there that she worked on some of her most famous novels. Her routine was to write in the morning and walk in the afternoon. "I slip easily from writing to reading with spaces in between of walking," she wrote. As she walked, she would say the sentences she was working on out loud, honing and refining them as she walked. "I walk, nosing along, making up phrases," is how she described it.

Woolf beautifully captured the sense of freedom and feeling of exhilaration that comes from being up on the wide-open spaces of chalk downland. She compared striding the crest of the Downs to taking to the air and flying. She also had a real 'feel' for the landscape and left some lasting descriptions of it; the golden appearance of fields in late summer as being "the colour of lions"; or the "grey hollows and gold cornfields and the first ploughed land shining white, with the gulls flickering".

It's been said that many things can be "solved by walking". Although not a panacea or cure-all, walking can provide space to spread our minds out in, as Virginia Woolf so perfectly expressed it. A pleasure in its own right, it has so much to offer from the ground beneath your feet to sky above with everything else in between: the wildflowers, the birdlife, the animals, the rivers, the undulating hills. The South Downs National Park has all of this to offer, and so much more.



## Things to do in the South Downs this September

Please follow the links as booking may be necessary. Find these and more events across the National Park and submit your own events at [southdowns.gov.uk/events/](https://southdowns.gov.uk/events/)



- Come and say hi! We have an information van every day from 10am to 4pm at Exceat, Seven Sisters, offering ideas for days-out and general information about the National Park. The lovely ice-cream kiosk is also next door!
- Enjoy a “Journey Through Nature” art exhibition from 10 to 12 September in The Old Workshop on the Holt Estate at Upham. The natural history art exhibition shows off the work of Sarah Morrish and will take place from 10am to 4.30pm.
- Listen to traditional music from yesteryear at the [Weald and Downland Living Museum](#), near Chichester, as musicians play historical melodies at different locations in the landscape.
- Looking ahead to next month, East Hampshire will be hosting its first ever Nature and Literary Festival from 2 to 10 October. The festival will celebrate local literary greats and their love of the East Hampshire countryside. Follow in the footsteps of author Jane Austen, our first ecologist and naturalist Gilbert White, the wartime poet Edward Thomas and lots more. You can enjoy short guided nature walks, writing and poetry workshops, garden tours, trails and yoga. The full programme of events will be posted [here](#).

## 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? Or would you like to pen your own article about why you love the South Downs? Please let us know!



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