

# SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

HELP US TO #RENATURE  
SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK

## WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- **Nature fun** Our ReNature festival returns with an action-packed line-up of events and activities for all the family! Take action for nature and climate by making a pledge and enter prize draw 😊
- **We Hear You Now** Discover a brand new walking experience in the National Park that will stir the imagination and take in some of the most breathtaking scenery in Britain.
- **Summer strolls** Stick on the sunglasses and discover some of the best walks in the South Downs!
- **Brilliant botany** Win a family ticket to Kew's wild botanic garden, Wakehurst.

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

## Over £5m raised to help nature bounce back

**More than £5m has been raised in just two years to tackle biodiversity decline in the South East of England, thanks to an inspiring initiative led by the South Downs National Park.**

**ReNature** is about creating nature everywhere, for everyone, and involves creating new wildlife havens and improving existing wildlife habitats.

The initiative has already helped to create over 400 hectares of new wildlife habitat – or almost 1,000 football pitches – such as new ponds, grasslands and wildflower meadows, to help nature flourish.

In addition to newly-created wildlife havens, 4,312 hectares of existing habitat has been improved for nature – an area bigger than the city of Portsmouth. This work includes planting over 16,383 trees in the last year and creating or restoring 14 ponds which provide crucial habitat for so many of our species.

There are big plans for the future, with an additional 1,200 hectares already having been put forward for future habitat creation or secured via a **ReNature Credits Scheme**, and the National Park working on over 368 active nature recovery projects with its partners.

The new figures mean that Britain's youngest National Park has made a very encouraging start to its ambitious



long-term goal of creating thousands of hectares of new habitat for wildlife.

ReNature launched exactly two years ago with two primary goals:

- Increase the amount of land that is primarily managed for nature in the National Park from the current 25 per cent to 33 per cent – creating 13,000 hectares of new habitat. This goes beyond current UN-backed conservation targets of 30 per cent by 2030 (30 for 30).
- Ensure that the remaining 67 per cent of the National Park is nature-friendly by 2030 through improving existing habitats across farms, woods, rivers, towns and villages.

This month the National Park will be celebrating the ReNature initiative with a week-long festival full of guided

## Wildfires destroy heathlands



### Last month a devastating fire on MOD land at Longmoor, Hampshire, burned for five days and destroyed 16 hectares of open heath.

It was followed by a second fire on nearby Broxhead Common and is a stark reminder of how vulnerable our landscape and wildlife can be to wildfires.

Lowland heath is a habitat which makes up just 4% of the National Park, but within those small stepping stones of heath, which stretch from Pulborough through to Midhurst and up to Bordon, we find a host of fascinating and nationally rare wildlife species, such as Natterjack toads, sand lizards and nightjar.

Woolmer Forest is unique in Britain as the only place where we're lucky to find 12 out of 13 native amphibian and reptile species. Local firefighters battled the blaze for over 72 hours in very challenging conditions to limit the spread of the wildfire on Woolmer Forest.

Heathlands can be particularly vulnerable to wildfires because gorse, heather, bracken and pine are easily combustible, even when we're not in drought conditions.



Natural phenomena such as lightning can be the ignition source for wildfires, but they are very often caused by humans. Discarded barbecues, cigarette butts and camp fires disproportionately contribute to wildfires.

Here's some advice from Bordon Fire Watch Manager Simon Morford on what to do if you discover a fire, and how to avoid them in the first place:

- If you see a fire in the countryside, please do not try to tackle it yourself as they can spread very quickly and can be unpredictable.
- call 999 immediately and retreat to a safe distance. If you can, try and capture a location, nearby landmark or reference, or use what3words to help direct the crew.
- BBQs are not permitted on heathlands or in any open countryside in the National Park. Bring a picnic instead.
- Take litter home with you and clear away bottles and glasses, including broken glass to avoid it magnifying the sun. Do not discard cigarettes in the countryside, dispose of any smoking material properly and make sure they are completely extinguished.

walks, a competition and online nature-based films, running from 22 July to 30 July.



Jan Knowlson, Biodiversity Officer for the National Park, said: "We have some amazing biodiversity in the National Park, including a huge variety of butterflies, birds, reptiles and amphibians. But even here in the South Downs, nature is

struggling and needs our help.

"We're really pleased to have created this new wildlife habitat that will allow nature to start bouncing back over the coming years.

"Nature recovery takes time and this is just the start of the habitat creation and improvement we can achieve.

"Nature recovery in the South Downs National Park will not be one big 'rewilding' project – it will be achieved through lots of different projects, both large and small, that together create wildlife recovery. Ultimately, we want nature everywhere for everyone."

During the ReNature festival, the National Park will be inviting the public to help nature by taking a pledge to Take Action for Nature and Climate. The pledges includes seven easy things that anyone can do such as making a home for nature, buying local, and recycling. People simply need to fill in the pledge form online before 1 September and they will be entered into a prize draw for a year's membership to The Wildlife Trusts or a family ticket to Marwell Zoo. Visit [www.southdowns.gov.uk/pledge/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/pledge/)

Anyone visiting the National Park's visitor centres in Midhurst or at Seven Sisters Country Park will also be able to pick up a "Pledge and Plant" postcard that is crammed with wildflower seeds. They can simply tick off the pledges as they go and then plant the postcard in the ground and watch the flowers grow!



Among the highlights of the ReNature festival will be a guided walk at Waterhall, a former golf course near Brighton where rare chalk grassland is being restored for wildlife, as well as activities for young people to get involved in conservation tasks and a butterfly walk with top expert Neil Hulme.

Jan added: "There's something for all ages and interests and we hope the festival inspires people to take action for nature."

The ReNature initiative is being led by the National Park Authority in partnership with the South Downs National Park Trust, the official charity for the National Park. Significant funding has been generated through donations and grants from the public and private sector, as well as National Lottery funding.

[Download the festival programme here](#)

## New immersive walking experience for coastline



**An inspiring and thought-provoking walking experience that encourages visitors to discover new stories and reflections on Sussex's iconic Heritage Coast has launched.**

This summer people walking along the beautiful chalk coastline from Seaford to Eastbourne will be able to tune in to 13 unique audio stories, each attached to a 'listening point' in the landscape, such as a bench, gate post or signpost.

The audio content includes stirring, emotive and sometimes surprising stories covering fiction, poetry and even new mythologies for this world-famous coastline.

The talented wordsmiths have worked in collaboration with Alinah Azadeh, project lead and the first-ever Writer-in-Residence for Seven Sisters Country Park and Sussex Heritage Coast.



Alinah explained: "My intention is that our stories and poems act as a welcome, a creative spark – and a marker of radical hope in these precarious times.

"I wanted to make space both for my own work as resident writer and to amplify

other creative voices missing from this pastoral coastal landscape; older women's voices, Black voices, voices of colour, migrant voices, queer and non-binary voices, working class voices, disabled voices.

"Many of us have centred the most crucial voice of all; the voice of the land, and its challenge to us to reciprocate the care, protection, spaces for rest and joy it has always given us.

The experience begins at the Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Centre, near Seaford, and leads the visitor around the meanders and river of Cuckmere Valley.

Then you are taken along the breathtaking chalk coast via Belle Tout Lighthouse and Beachy Head. Visitors can sit and hear the stories, or walk with them.

The audio stories are accessed via any smartphone by simply scanning a QR code or tapping for an NFC code.

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The writers are Alinah Azadeh, Georgina Aboud, Jenny Arach, Razia Aziz, Joyoti Grech Cato, Oluwafemi Hughes, Dulani Kulasinghe, Georgina Parke and Akila Richards.

Their stories include:

- an encounter between a traveller and the chalk cliff in 2053 brings unexpected changes
- a biologist examines Cuckmere's history and speculative future under the shadow of climate change
- a new myth on the origins of the Cuckmere Valley in Urdu, Hindi and English
- a Neolithic ancestor inspired by Whitehawk Woman watches over the land and the People
- a grandmother and granddaughter walk through a twilight portal, transforming them and the landscape forever.
- a bus and life journey with an English working class and African heritage poet, along the coast
- Belle Tout Lighthouse tells of its many lives as it contemplates its last days on land
- expectation and experience collide when a young man and his friends travel from St Lucia to Seaford to fight for Britain in World War I.

Anooshka Rawden, Cultural Heritage Lead for the South Downs National Park, said: "In We Hear You Now, writers of global heritage bring stories of survival, recovery and reverence for land as a living, breathing entity to create new mythologies for this iconic landscape.

"I hope anyone who listens to these stories feels closer to the land under their feet, and to the people and cultures who have been part, and continue to be part of its future."

Print guides with a map and information can be collected from Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Centre, Exceat, near Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 4AD and across partner sites, or downloaded online [here](#).

We Hear You Now is funded by Arts Council England and South Downs National Park Authority. Partners and supporters include Brighton Festival, Writers Mosaic, (a division of the Royal Literary Fund), Writing Our Legacy, New Writing South, Walk the Chalk, Towner Eastbourne, Charleston Trust, University of Chichester, Brighton Dome, and Julie's Bicycle (Colour Green). Editorial support has been by novelist Umi Sinha.



## Plan your summer adventures!



### **There's nothing quite like a long, balmy summer's day on the South Downs.**

The days are so long that you can squeeze so much into the day, whether it be a walk, cycle, sea swim, pub lunch, afternoon tea, museum visit, evening photography, the list goes on!

The fields are full of fresh produce and the grapes are reaching their zenith before harvest.

Our biggest tip on those warm days in July and August is to keep hydrated and bring enough water for your four-legged friend. The weather can quickly turn, so it's always handy to have a raincoat on standby!

Fine summer weather is often accompanied by increasing numbers of ticks, particularly in the mornings and evenings, so it's a good idea to wear clothing that covers your skin to make it more difficult for ticks to access a suitable place to bite.

Slap on the sunscreen and get ready for a summer adventure!

### **Looking for tranquility?**

The Itchen is considered to be one of the best chalk rivers in Britain with its crystal-clear waters filtered over thousands of years through the porous chalk of the South Downs.



Within a three-mile stretch of the Upper Itchen, five footbridges cross the river and you can make use of them to create a lovely circular walk. Don't forget your binoculars to spot lots of wildlife on the river!

**[Download the Itchen walk here.](#)**

### **Looking for a view?**

Ditchling Beacon is located seven miles to the north of Brighton and just south of the village of Ditchling. At 248 metres above sea-level it is the highest point in East Sussex with fantastic views to the sea, across the Weald and along the South Downs.

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Once the site for a warning beacon which was lit in times of imminent invasion, the site is also of archaeological interest with remains of an Iron Age hill fort.



**[Download the Ditchling walk here.](#)**

### **Looking for a day out by bus?**



The pretty village of Alfriston and the River Cuckmere are easily accessible by bus and offer a great excuse to "get away from it all" while not actually travelling that far.

Alfriston is a historic village in the heart of the Cuckmere Valley and was named after Aelfric tun the 'farmstead of Alfric' in Anglo Saxon times. The village was recorded in the Domesday Book and the area is thought to have been occupied since Neolithic times as a number of long barrows can be found in the surrounding Downs.

A highlight of this walk is the White Horse of Litlington, a chalk figure on High and Over Hill. It was carved in 1924 by a man called John T Ade, allegedly overnight by the light of a full moon so as to startle the locals with the sudden appearance of the horse in the morning! Camouflaged during WWII it was restored in the early 1980s and since then has been kept clear of vegetation (and occasionally topped up with chalk to keep it white).

**[Download the Alfriston walk](#)**

### **Looking for your one-stop shop for walk ideas?**

We're delighted to be launching the National Park's brand new walking hub this month.

Crammed with ideas for walks and rambles across the South Downs, the interactive hub is the best place to plan your next adventure in the National Park.



Each walk features Google and OS maps to help guide you on your journey, as well as step-by-step instructions, details of how to get there, places of interest, and fascinating facts.

The hub includes circular walks, hidden landscapes, literary trails, history trails, and audio walks.

As well as the walking hub, we've introduced an accessibility hub where you'll find information on equipment for hire such as mobility scooters, accessible bike hire, and inclusive attractions and nature reserves. The hub also includes details of all the Miles Without Stiles routes, which are designed for people with mobility challenges and families with pushchairs.

Visit the **[walking hub](#)** and **[accessibility hub](#)** and start planning your day-out!

## Runways become meadows



**A former Second World War RAF base that is being transformed into a better place for nature will be hosting an open day this month.**

Gayles Farm sits high on the South Downs above Seven Sisters Country Park. During the war it became RAF Friston and the skies rang with the sound of Spitfires and Hurricane aircraft. In the lead up to D-Day, 1,400 airmen were stationed at the farm.

Fast forward almost 80 years and the former arable farm is currently one of the focuses of Changing Chalk, a pioneering project led by the National Trust to help restore biodiversity in rare chalk grassland habitats.

Thyone Outram, from Changing Chalk, explained: "We've been changing its use, so it better supports the local chalk downland wildlife.

"We've planted the old runways with a meadow grassland mix full of wildflowers. The total area planted amounts to 10 hectares, approximately 25 football pitches, and will help wildlife move across the landscape while the farm provides good food for its animals that maintain the chalk grassland."

The flowers have been blooming and, to celebrate, the National Trust is hosting Glorious Gayles Festival on Sunday, 16 July from 11am to 4pm. There are a range of activities to join including insect experiences, flint knapping, archaeology, meet the sheep and pony and trap rides. More information about the event is [here](#).

Gayles Farm is just one of a long list of successes for Changing Chalk in the first year of the four-year project, which is supported by £2.23m of National Lottery Heritage funding.

The South Downs National Park Authority, which is a partner in the initiative, is currently working with farmers and landowners to establish more conservation grazing to help restore and improve chalk grassland.

The Authority will also be driving the restoration of five dew ponds to help wildlife thrive. The restored dew ponds, all close to the South Downs Way national trail, will have potential for wider interpretation and education.

For more information about Changing Chalk, click [here](#)

## Art competition for children



**A fun art competition has been launched as part of this year's MADhurst and is encouraging young people to get creative.**

Schoolchildren aged 16 or under are being invited to create artwork that showcases the things that inspire them about Midhurst.

The winners will be presented with their special awards at the Midhurst Town Council Summer Street Party on Saturday 26 August 2023, in the Market Square.

The South Downs National Park Authority is supporting the art competition and will be sharing the winning artwork on their social media channels, website and newsletter.

Zara Kelleway (*pictured above*), who leads the reception team at the South Downs Visitor Centre in Midhurst, said: "The National Park has helped to support MADhurst for a number of years and we're pleased to be teaming up for the art competition this year.

"This competition is a chance to let your imagination run wild and depict what you love about Midhurst.

"It might be anything from a tranquil hidden corner, your school, your back garden, a beautiful view, your favourite shop – the choice is yours!

"It's such a wonderful town with so much biodiversity, natural beauty, history and culture and we want to celebrate that! It's also great to be recognising the young artistic talent we have in the area."

The closing date for entries is midnight on 23 July.

To enter visit [www.southdowns.gov.uk/madhurst-2023/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/madhurst-2023/)

MADhurst is the town's annual music, arts and drama festival, celebrating creativity and community in Midhurst.



## Work begins to improve chalk stream habitat



**Work to establish a new wetland habitat in the National Park is well under way, with diggers on site as part of a plan to realign the Cockshut Stream.**

The partnership project will bring an array of biodiversity benefits and reduce the risk of flooding in the Lewes area.

Adjacent to the Lewes Brooks, the Cockshut is a 3km long chalk stream that flows from springs at the foot of the South Downs in Kingston, eventually joining The River Ouse before flowing out to sea. The Cockshut is currently clogged up by a non-native invasive plant called parrot's feather.

By realigning the stream, the old channel can be filled in, eradicating the problem plant, and the stream will flow into a newly created 6.8 hectare wetland, to the east of the Stanley Turner Ground.

Lewes District Council, Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, Lewes Railway Land Wildlife Trust and South Downs National Park Authority are working together on the Cockshut Stream restoration and expect to complete the project by autumn 2023.

Jan Knowlson, Biodiversity Officer for the National Park, said: "Our rivers across the country are in poor condition through pollution and habitat degradation, so this is a fantastic project to enhance one of the National Park's rare chalk streams."

Councillor Emily O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Climate, Nature and Food Systems at Lewes District Council, said: "It's fantastic to see work taking place on this project which will not only enhance biodiversity, help with flood management and carbon storage but also allow the stream to flow unimpeded, unpolluted and with its native plants and wildlife protected. I know I'm not alone in hoping that we might be able to tempt back the internationally rare Ramshorn Snail into the new habitat created.

"The area will be accessible too so that people can enjoy its natural beauty using new walkways and bridges. Everyone across the district will have the opportunity to visit, not least local school children, who will undoubtedly benefit from the learning opportunities it offers."

## Refurbishments completed at gateway to National Park



**A six-year project to restore the glorious heritage of an estate and provide improved visitor facilities has been completed.**

More than £7m has been invested at Stanmer Park to restore parts of the 18th Century landscape and buildings, as well as improve access to the woodland.

Situated in the National Park, Stanmer is Brighton & Hove's largest park and is visited by 500,000 people annually.

The estate has evidence of over 5,000 years of human activity and has no less than 27 listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Stanmer House, Grade II listed stables and Stanmer Church. The estate remains a rare near-complete example of an 18th Century designed landscape.

Prior to the restoration, the walled garden primarily consisted of 20th Century glasshouses and parking areas with restricted access to the public.

Now known as One Garden Brighton, the Grade II listed brick and flint heritage walls have been repaired and an amazing range of new gardens and green spaces have been created to provide an operational kitchen garden.

The estate's farmyard is now open to visitors to wander around, having never previously been publicly open before.

Considerable efforts have been made to help biodiversity, with new areas of coppiced woodland that are now managed by volunteers.

One Garden are now looking to restore the 'Palm House', a beautiful and ornate greenhouse on the estate. Funding for the project came from a £4 million grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund, as well as investment from Brighton & Hove City Council, Plumpton College and the National Park Authority.

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the National Park Authority, said: "This beautiful estate on the city's edge is an important gateway to the wider National Park.

"It's become a thriving hub for heritage, horticulture, walking and biodiversity and it's wonderful to see."

## Celebrating Hampshire Day!



**Halcyon Hampshire...a land of emerald hills, scenic harbours, crystal-clear chalk streams, leafy market towns and two of Britain's most important maritime cities.**

Hampshire makes up a third of the South Downs National Park and many would agree the western end of the Downs has a very different feel to its eastern end. This is a land of steep wooded hills, royal forests, purple heathlands, hop gardens, and hidden valleys.

Today you don't have to step far from the hustle and bustle of urban life in Southampton and Portsmouth to escape to the beautiful tranquility and rich heritage of the South Downs National Park.

It's an area inhabited by humans as far back as 4,000 BCE and has some of the best examples of Iron Age forts, such as Old Winchester Hill.

It's not surprising therefore that this ancient land – which was the seat of the Kingdom of Wessex that later grew into present-day England – is a treasure trove of spellbinding folk tales and myths.



For Hampshire Day on 15 July, Dawn Nelson, a storyteller and interpretation officer for the National Park, shares three of her favourite folklore.

Dawn says: "Hampshire is such an important part of the National Park and very much has its own unique charm and landscape features. It includes the highest point in the ancient chalk ridge of the South Downs, Butser Hill, which stands 271m and offers some breathtaking views.

"The 15th of July is also known as St Swithin's Day. St Swithin was the Bishop of Winchester in the mid-800s and the legend goes that on 15th July, St Swithin would stand on Old Winchester Bridge and should it rain then there would be rain for 40 days thereafter. Should it be sunny then there would be sun for 40 days. We shall have to see what St Swithin's Day brings this!"

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Dawn recorded her stories at the Giant's Head in Queen Elizabeth Country Park, between Waterlooville and Petersfield. The elaborate sculpture, constructed by internationally-acclaimed artist Mark Antony Haden Ford, pays homage to the menacing Hampshire giant Ascapart.

### The Betrayal Of Sir Bevis

The mythology of Britain tells us that many thousands of years ago this land was created by giants. They forged new paths and riverbeds, and shaped the cliffs, mountains and valleys. Over time these giants have been referred to by many different names and one of the giants thought to be responsible for forming the landscape here in Hampshire was called Ascapart. Ascapart was a small giant compared to those of his day and stood a mere 30 foot tall. Nevertheless, Ascapart was more than capable of terrifying the local villages around Southampton.



When Sir Bevis and his horse Hirundelle returned from their travels, Bevis heard of this terrible being and sought to rid the area of this menace. Sir Bevis was a skilled knight with a swift horse, as its name suggests, and he quickly overcame the giant Ascapart. The only reason Ascapart lived, some say, was because Josain, Bevis' wife persuaded Bevis to spare Ascapart's life.

Sir Bevis worried that the giant would eventually betray them but he respected his wife's wishes and, in exchange for his life, Ascapart served Bevis. In a twist to the tale, some records recall that Ascapart did indeed betray Bevis and kidnapped Bevis' wife holding her prisoner. For that Ascapart met his death at the hands of Bevis' supporters and where he fell, his body became a part of the Downs.

### Countless Stones

Stone circles are a unique feature of the British landscape and there are over 1000 in Britain, many of them much further north than the South Downs but there are still some to be found in the downland of Hampshire. Ancient and without a definitive explanation as to why they were built, stone circles have given rise to many stories and local legends.

At Bramdean, beside the A272, there is a stone circle that is thought to be one of those that you simply cannot count. Try as you might you will not get the same number of stones each time you try. This motif is known as countless stones. The circle is thought to have been built at some point in the 1800s, as a monument to a horse that once belonged to Colonel George Greenwood. Other legends tell of how it is the resting place of those soldiers that died in the battle of Cheriton in 1644.

Across the country there are tales of countless stones and what will happen if you do indeed manage to count them. You may raise the devil, you may lift a curse or who knows, in this case, you may get to meet Colonel Greenwood's horse.

To find out more stories and watch the videos [click here](#).

Oh, we do like to be beside  
the seaside!



**From neon signs to painted shop fronts and dazzling pier-side lettering – the typography of the British seaside is about as iconic as fish and chips.**

This summer, Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft invite you to explore the imagery of our coastal towns in their full illuminated glory!

*Signs of the Seaside* will explore how lettering and typography have evolved to play a fundamental role in our experience of the English seaside providing a historical and contemporary perspective on the role of graphic design in identifying our coastal towns.

The exhibition features research and typographic works from Justin Burns and new commissions from graphic artists, signwriters and illustrators, including Anthony Burrill, Amy Goodwin, Marion Deuchars and Emma Carlow; coastal photography by Rob Ball and a brand new poem written in response to the exhibition by poet and host of BBC Radio 3's *The Verb*, Ian McMillan.

Never-before-seen draft designs of Blackpool's Comedy Carpet will be on display, alongside an example of the cast stone type used by artists Gordon Young and Andrew Altmann to create this meticulously detailed piece of contemporary seaside art.

A 5-foot letter 'R', which once graced the entrance to Brighton Pier, has been renovated and reimagined for the exhibition by neon artist Andy Doig.

Ditchling's rich typographic legacy will be represented by work from distinguished type designer Edward Johnston.

This vibrant, family-friendly exhibition is currently open and runs until 3 September. Under 18s go free.

The National Park has teamed up with the venue to offer two pairs of museum tickets. People signing up to the newsletter during July will be automatically entered into the draw.

Those who are already signed up can email "Seas the day" to [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk) before midnight on 31 July. Sign up to the newsletter [here](#) and see competition T&Cs [here](#).

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Discover one of most  
biodiverse places on planet



**Where can you find a wild botanic garden in the heart of Sussex with over 500 acres of diverse landscapes from across the globe?**

It's the world-renowned Wakehurst, of course.

The National Park has teamed up with this beautiful venue to offer two family tickets!

Ellie Dymond, from Wakehurst, says: "At Wakehurst you can discover beautiful ornamental gardens, temperate woodlands, striking valleys, vast meadows and wetlands, as well as a nature reserve teeming with wildlife.

"Wakehurst is also home to the world's largest wild seed conservation project, the Millennium Seed Bank. You can step inside to find yourself in the most biodiverse place on the planet.

"Visitors can watch our scientists in action as they collect and bank seeds that could hold the solutions to humanity's greatest challenges. Situated in the Sussex High Weald, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Wakehurst has something to see in every season!"

People signing up to the newsletter during July will be automatically entered into the draw.

Those who are already signed up can email "High Weald AONB" to [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk) before midnight on 31 July. Sign up to the newsletter [here](#) and see competition T&Cs [here](#).

## Charity day at vineyard



**Would you like to enjoy sumptuous South Downs wine in a gorgeous setting and help raise some money for charity?**

A Nyetimber Open Day, at West Chiltington, is being held on Friday, 1 September in aid of the South Downs National Park Trust.

The event includes a tour of the vineyards, which offer stunning views of the South Downs, and guided wine tasting in the 15<sup>th</sup> century medieval barn. Tickets are £50 per person and spaces are limited. [Buy tickets here](#).



## Things to do in the South Downs this July

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/)



**The End of a Summers Day at Devil's Dyke  
by Paula Wilks**

- Check out all the wonderful [walks and talks](#) taking place for the ReNature festival later this month!
- Head to [Gilbert White's House](#), Selborne, on 16 July for its annual open day with free admission to the museum to celebrate the great naturalist's birthday. This year the Regency Dancers will be performing in the Great Parlour at 11.30am and 2pm. They will also be having a Regency Picnic outside on the lawn, of course dressed in Regency gear. Visitors are welcome to watch the performance and join the picnic!
- Visit [Petersfield Museum](#) for a new exhibition "Anita Klein: Modern Icons". Anita Klein (b.1960) is an acclaimed painter and printmaker. Her art is witty, charismatic, warm, and poignant. This exhibition presents paintings and original prints that explore the intimacy of motherhood and family.
- The [Petersfield Shakespeare Festival](#) returns for another rollicking open-air season from 18 to 23 July. The family-friendly festival takes place in the beautiful surroundings of Wylds Farm, Liss. Start your evening with street food or a picnic and live music at the Bottoms Up Bar, before taking you seats for one of Shakespeare's best-loved comedies, Twelfth Night!
- The "Little Church in the Field", St Hubert's at Idsworth, is hosting a [musical picnic](#) on 23 July with a live band and folk, blues and country music.
- Head to Old Winchester Hill on 29 July for the reserve's very first [BioBlitz](#). This event will be a great chance to learn about one of the best chalk grassland sites in the country. You will be spending the day alongside expert ecologists to collect species records and specimens.

### Pic credits

P1 Gary Jones; P2 (kestrels) Carl Gough; P3 main pic Bip Mistry; P3 left Adiam Yemane; P3 right Naluwembe Binaisa; P2 right Hampshire Fire and Rescue; P3 left Gary Jones; P6 left Lewes District Council; p7 left Jeff Travis; p8 left Emma Croman; p8 right RBG Kew.