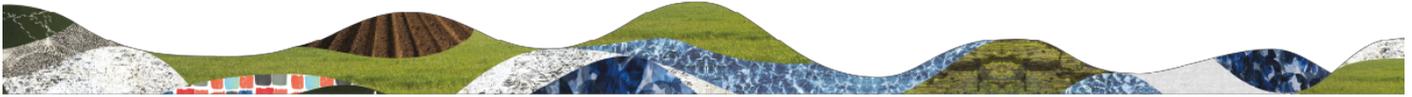


**SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK**
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

SOUTH DOWNS NEWS



THE LATEST UPDATES FROM YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- **Glorious photography** Find out the winners of our photo competition and vote for your own favourite as we launch the People's Choice award.
- **Bringing the National Park to you** As we stay at home and exercise locally, find out how you can still connect with the South Downs and get your daily uplift.
- **Aim for the stars!** We take a sneak preview at our upcoming Dark Skies Festival.
- **The beauty of winter** Learn more about a celebrated artist who loved the frost-covered Downs.

As always please send your comments and ideas to us at newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

Tranquil photo of wintry walk wins popular competition

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 2020/2021.

"Chanctonbury 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 for this year 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 the pandemic.

Meanwhile, 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 the South Downs.

The competition judges were award-winning photographers Finn Hopson, Carlotta Luke and Rachael Talibart, as well as Nick Heasman, Countryside Policy Manager for the South Downs National Park Authority, and Doug Jones, SDNPA Member.

Of the winning image, Rachael said: "I really like the look of trees in winter and there's a soft light hitting some of these trees that I find very pleasing to the eye. The trees



create the effect of this being a safe haven and I love that."

Nick said: "This is the epitome of a tranquil haven. Chanctonbury Ring is an amazing place, shrouded in history and folklore and a real beacon on the South Downs. This image captures its magical beauty exceptionally well."

Carlotta added: "I would like to be right there – it just feels so peaceful."

Photographer Tim, who hails from West Chiltington in West Sussex and receives a £250 prize, said: "I grew up in the shadow of the South Downs and their contour has been the backdrop to my life. Every day the school bus would follow their line and every day Chanctonbury Ring would dominate the skyline. This emphatic grouping of

trees high on a scarp hillside and alone in their mythical company remains an iconic landmark in my life.

"The Downlands are a constant source of inspiration. My photograph of Chanctonbury Ring on a winter's afternoon is an essence of my relationship with those memories and the landscape. A fraction of a second in 80 million years of evolution."

Runner-up prize in the My Tranquil Haven category went to "Dawn over the River Arun", taken by Lindsey Chadwick.



Doug said: "I can imagine hearing the birds singing. To me this is a real haven of tranquility."

Rachael added: "I love the bird. I think as a viewer, your eye goes to the bird straight away and then you start to travel round the rest of the photograph."

Photographer Lindsey, who is from London and picks up a prize of £150, said: "This photo was taken early one midsummer's morning on one of my favourite sections of the South Downs Way. I've always loved the South Downs National Park but this year, the Park has come to mean more to me than ever before – its beauty has been an endless source of comfort whenever I've been able to go there for a walk."

The third prize was awarded to "Shelter from the Sun", taken by Botond Adorjan, who photographed his daughter gazing through an opening in the trees at the chalk escarpment towards Butser Hill in Hampshire.



Finn said: "I really like this peaceful photograph and the human connection it represents. As a family we've spent a huge amount of time this year doing things like this and discovering places we'd never been to before."

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Carlotta added: "I love the story behind it. I have an emotional connection to it. During the lockdown, people have really sought out the South Downs with their children and this represents that in a very positive way."

Botond, who hails from Bognor Regis and receives £50, said: "The first lockdown we spent at home. At the beginning we really enjoyed the time spent together, we baked pizzas, we read stories to my five-year-old daughter, but after a few weeks it became really annoying, so we started to plan an adventure. We needed a challenge. After the easing of the lockdown we decided to hike the South Downs Way. We didn't have time to do all the 100 miles, but in five days we managed to hike nearly half of the route. We definitely will continue the adventure – we plan to finish the South Downs Way in spring."

Winning the wildlife category was Richard Murray with "Winter Runner", a stunning photograph taken in Selbourne, Hampshire.



Finn said: "I've seen a hare once on the Downs and it was fantastic. To capture this moment of a hare in full sprinting mode is very impressive."

Carlotta added: "The hare is caught off the ground, obviously running really fast and its face is looking right at the photographer. I love seeing the snowflakes suspended in the air. You get a sense for how fast the hare is."

Photographer Richard, who hails from Waterloville in Hampshire and wins £100, said: "Looking through my camera's viewfinder and seeing these majestic animals in the falling snow sprinting towards me was an unforgettable experience."

"I feel incredibly privileged to live so close to the South Downs National Park and to have access to such a wide variety of beautiful landscapes and animals to photograph in the area."

The judging panel also highly-commended four images: "Rivers of Mist" by Stuart Hutchinson; "Sunrise through the wildflowers" by Shelley Cornes; "Reflected Little Egret" by John Lauper and "Wheat Ear" by William Johns-Warner.

All the winning and commended images, as well as 13 other shortlisted images, will now be put forward to the People's Choice. People can vote online until midnight on 31 January and the winning photographer will receive £100.

[Click here to cast your vote](#)

Young people take inspiration from Downs



Butterflies, bees, wildflowers and panoramic views to melt the heart – just some of the amazing images taken by young people to capture those tranquil moments in the National Park last year.

The winner in the 11 years to 17 category of the photo competition was "Through the Grass", by Otilie Hartley, of Duncton, West Sussex. She captured a stunning sunset shot of flower-studded grass in her garden.

Otilie said: "I have lived next to the South Downs my whole life so this competition seemed to be the perfect opportunity to celebrate them at their finest. Regarding the photo itself, the Downs are immediately to the left, behind where it was taken.

"The sun always sets in the same position each evening so it was really just a case of getting the right angle of the camera through the flowers and grass.

"Walks on the Downs have been a huge part of my upbringing and the competition was a really fun way of taking a closer look at the details surrounding them."

Winner of the 10 years and under was "Symmetry" by Alice Mills, from Storrington, West Sussex.

Alice said: "The South Downs is a brilliant place to take photos and I am so lucky to have it on my doorstep."



The wildlife winner was "Take a Moment" by Andrew Todd-Smith, of Ringmer, East Sussex

Andrew said: "I enjoy exploring and documenting the South Downs with my camera.

"It's very calming feeling when

it all goes right and I can just sit and watch the world go by."

The winners will receive a prize of a Columbia rucksack and beanie hat. Well done to everyone who entered!

We'll be launching our next photo competition in the spring with a new theme, so look for further details on our website and social media feeds 😊



We know news of a new national lockdown is not the way any of us would have liked to start 2021.

The updated restrictions permit you to exercise locally, once a day with your own household or with one other person. The Government also advises "do not travel outside of your village, town or the part of a city where you live". See the latest Government guidance [here](#).

Our absolute priority is the safety of all those who live in and visit the South Downs National Park. Thank you to everyone who has been following the Government guidance over the past several months by staying local, maintaining social distancing or even staying away until we return to better times.

If we are not your local green space, we promise to keep bringing the South Downs National Park to you through our digital channels.

Kate Drake, Health and Wellbeing Officer for the National Park, said: "The beauty and peacefulness of South Downs is very uplifting at this uncertain time, whether you're able to exercise locally in the Downs or simply admiring a picturesque image on your Instagram account.

"Do try to be part of the South Downs online community if you can – there's some fantastic images and videos being shared each day and it's a great 'pick-me-up' for a lot of people.

"We know nothing can quite replace the real thing, but do give one of our virtual walks a try – they're quite relaxing and you'll also learn about wildlife on the way."

The National Park has a library of virtual walks on our [Facebook account](#), including a recent [mindfulness walk](#) by Kate Drake and [a tour of Lord's Piece](#) by Ranger Charles Winchester.

For parents with children at home, check out the [South Downs Learning Zone](#). Designed for educators, this user-friendly site is packed with downloadable resources on everything from wildlife to woodlands.

For full details on enjoying the National Park, and contacting the Authority during lockdown, please visit our dedicated [website page](#).

Celebrating the starry night's sky above us



Live tours of the night's sky, stunning astrophotography, nocturnal wildlife talks, children's colouring activities and a chance to win a top-of-the-range telescope are among the highlights of the National Park's annual Dark Skies Festival.

The fortnight of cosmic fun begins on Friday, 12 February with an action-packed line-up, including top tips for stargazing from your garden.

The start of half-term on Monday, 15 February will see an interactive Facebook Live session, with National Park Rangers Charles and Kate setting up a stargazing evening in their back garden.

A night-time safari walk, short films on wildlife, talks from astronomers, live Instagram chats with acclaimed authors, and stunning footage of space will be among the highlights of the digital event.

The event celebrates the National Park's status as an International Dark Sky Reserve – one of only 18 in the world and recognising it as one of the best places globally to capture immense views of the stars.

Laura Warren, Events and Engagement Officer for the National Park, said: "Our Dark Skies Festival will be different this year, but we're really hoping to be able to inspire people about how amazing and important our dark skies are.

"There'll be something for all ages and activities you can do while staying at home, so please do join us for some light-hearted cosmic fun."

Every day there will be a question to answer in our giant Dark Skies quiz and prizes include a state-of-the-art telescope and a year's subscription to *Sky At Night* magazine.

Each day of the festival we will also be sharing images from the Astrophotography Competition and revealing the winners.

The full programme will be published at www.southdowns.gov.uk later this month.

Record numbers take part in online quiz



More than 2,800 people took part in the National Park's Advent Calendar quiz before Christmas – a record number for one of our online quizzes.

Congratulations to Susan Burford who wins the competition.

Susan, from Emsworth, Hampshire, wins a £150 hamper of South Downs produce and a bottle of The Grange Estate Pink Sparkling Wine.

Susan said: "I'm delighted to win the hamper, and I really enjoyed researching the answers to the Advent Calendar questions and learnt a lot about the National Park."

Second place goes to Mike Winder, from Worthing, and he'll be receiving a Magnum of Nyetimber's Classic Cuvee.

Third place goes to Sarnia Pooley, from Seaford, East Sussex, who wins a bottle of The Grange Estate Pink Sparkling Wine.

Sarnia said: "That has really brightened my day! Thank you so much from someone who lives and breathes the South Downs and spends hours and hours walking amongst the lovely surroundings."

Thank you to everyone who took part ☺

Are you interested in planning updates?

Did you know that the amount of chalk grassland in a favourable condition increased by the equivalent of 81 football pitches last year?

Or that 2km of car-free paths were created?

All these facts, and much more, are covered in our planning newsletter, which comes out three times a year in spring, summer and autumn/winter.

The Authority is one of the busiest planning authorities in the UK, so if you're interested in timely updates why not subscribe to the newsletter?

Read the **latest issue** and **subscribe here** to receive it in your email inbox three times a year.

Ambitious climate change project is launched



An ambitious vision for the Ouse Valley community to become a national pioneer in tackling climate change and increasing sustainability has taken a major step forward.

The Ouse Valley CARES partnership has won £150,000 of funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to kickstart the project, which aims to bring the whole community together to help the environment and create a more sustainable planet for future generations to enjoy.

The development grant will help the partnership investigate, test and develop ways that the Ouse Valley can increase long-term resilience to climate change. The project area follows the river valley downstream from Barcombe, through Lewes and the villages of the lower Ouse Valley, to the large coastal communities of Seaford, Peacehaven and Newhaven.

Detailed research and engagement across the community over the next year will then be used to work up a much larger National Lottery bid – potentially up to £2.5m – to deliver a series of long-lasting projects that help address the climate emergency and help nature flourish.

The delivery phase of the scheme, if successful, could feature a number of inspiring initiatives including:

- Creating more green corridors across and between communities and connections to the wider countryside and the South Downs National Park, such as tree planting, wildflower corridors and improving habitat quality at nature reserves.
- Projects to enhance wellbeing, knowledge and skills around climate change mitigation, such as community gardens, community orchards, training for groups and schoolchildren, climate cafes, Forest School development, sustainability advice and events.
- Initiatives to reduce carbon footprint such as supporting residents to reduce energy bills, training volunteer 'climate and energy champions', identifying new sites for community-owned energy schemes and helping to increase accessibility to electric vehicles and green travel.
- Projects to ensure on-going funding support for the Ouse Valley through the establishment of two new funding schemes managed by the South Downs National

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
Park Trust – one for nature recovery and the other for community-led projects that benefit nature or encourage sustainable living.

Ouse Valley CARES – which stands for Climate Action, Resilient Ecosystems, Sustainability – is spearheaded by the South Downs National Park Trust alongside a number of partners, including South Downs National Park Authority, Lewes District Council, Railway Land Wildlife Trust, Transition Town Lewes, Seaford Community Partnership, Community Energy South, OVESCO, 3VA and Sussex Community Development Association.

Around 650 projects from across the UK applied for lottery funding and the Ouse Valley is one of 15 successful applicants.

Julie Fawcett, Chair of the South Downs National Park Trust, said: "This is incredibly exciting news for the Ouse Valley and the first important step of what promises to be a really positive and long-lasting initiative around climate action.



"This development funding will allow the partnership to explore and get right to the heart of what might be possible in the Ouse Valley to create a better and more resilient home for both people and nature. Once this initial groundwork and research has been done, we'll be able to submit a strong bid for multi-million-pound funding to make our vision a reality.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK TRUST

"A big part of our ethos is that everyone can play their part in climate action, whether

it be creating a wildlife-friendly garden or taking simple steps to reduce their carbon footprint. It's very much about empowering people to do what they can."

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority, said: "This is a trailblazing project and will be the first of its kind in Sussex, so we're hugely excited to be taking it forward as a partnership."

Councillor Matthew Bird, Cabinet Member for Sustainability at Lewes District Council, said: "I have been involved in work on climate change in Lewes district for nearly 20 years and I think this is the most exciting opportunity we have ever had.

"It is a chance to link existing actions and create new carbon reduction projects and make the district more climate resilient.

"The success of this bid is a testament to the hard work and commitment of all the partners."

Helen Meade, Programme Coordinator for the Railway Land Wildlife Trust, said: "There is such a strong desire to take action on climate change and the ecological crisis locally, and this project will provide opportunities for people to come together and make significant, lasting changes."

A dedicated website has been set up with updates on the project at www.climateactionforum.org.uk

Artist Eric Ravilious and the beauty of winter



Summer on the South Downs, with its wildflowers and ascending skylarks, might seem a distant memory at this time of year yet, for many lovers of this special landscape, wintertime has a beauty all of its own that holds a particular appeal.

Winter on the Downs was a time of year that entranced the painter and designer Eric Ravilious. Ravilious is one of those artists whose work is familiar, even if his name is not. His black-and-white drawing of gentleman cricketers graced the front cover of Wisden, the cricketer's bible, for years. And many greeting cards bear his haunting images of the Eastbourne stretch of the Downs: pictures which capture beautifully the rolling landscape in winter with its chalk paths, dimple-like hollows and flint-strewn fields.

The Downs were known to Ravilious from childhood. He was a local boy who grew up in Eastbourne, in the early years of the twentieth century, where his father ran an antique shop. He went to Willingdon School, Eastbourne Grammar School and then Eastbourne College of Art. His best-known watercolours of the landscape were, however, painted after he had moved away to study design at the Royal College of Art.

Ravilious was drawn back to the area in the 1930s by his friend and fellow artist Peggy Angus. Angus had rented a shepherd's cottage called Furlongs, nestling in the lee of Beddingham Hill near Newhaven. Known as 'Red Angus' for her socialist views, she was famed for the midsummer parties she held in the hollow of a dewpond above Furlongs. Here, her guests danced, sang folk songs and drank home-made elderflower champagne. Furlongs became a meeting place for a circle of artists, designers and architects that included painter John Piper and Serge Chermayeff, the architect of the De La Warr Pavilion in nearby Bexhill-on-Sea – as well as Ravilious.

It was from Furlongs that he set out on painting expeditions in all seasons with Angus, loaded down with easels and equipment. When out on the Downs, the two friends might well have, literally, crossed paths with members of the Bloomsbury Group, another, better-known, collection of artists and writers who were living, working and walking in the same area at that time. These included writer Virginia Woolf, who lived just a few miles

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

across the River Ouse from Furlongs at Monk's House in the village of Rodmell, and her sister, painter and designer Vanessa Bell, at Charleston near Firle. It's intriguing that the two groups, just a stone's throw from each other, didn't mix: probably because they came from very different social backgrounds.

Furlongs, Ravilious said, "altered my whole outlook and way of painting". He was entranced by the pared-back effect of the landscape in winter. His watercolours *Downs in Winter* and *Chalk Paths*, both from 1935, evoke its stark beauty: the muted greens, yellows and browns of the grassland; the play of light and shadow in wide, overcast skies; and the bare branches of hawthorn trees contorted by wind.



In these paintings, Ravilious captures perfectly the chalk so typical of this part of the Downs. He used what is sometimes called a 'starved' brush to achieve this, meaning that he didn't flood the paper with a wash in the way water colourists normally do. This allowed the white flecks of the paper to show through, just as the chalk shows through the weathered turf.

Trained as a designer, Ravilious had a passion for patterns and saw them everywhere in this landscape: in the long lines of ploughed, harrowed or stubble fields criss-crossing each other; in the meandering chalk tracks worn into landscape by walkers; and in the twists and turns of the River Cuckmere snaking off towards the sea. There is a touch of melancholy in these paintings, further heightened by the lack of people. This is curious, since Ravilious was famously gregarious and fun-loving. He loved fireworks, boating and tennis and was known for always whistling. His friends called him 'Rav' or 'The Boy' as they felt the name Eric didn't suit him.

Ravilious's gift for finding beauty in the unexpected and for seeing patterns everywhere mean that his paintings can change the way we perceive the Downs at this time of year. A selection of Eric Ravilious's paintings can be seen at the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne which houses many of his most significant works and has a gallery dedicated to him.

Dr Heloise Coffey

Would you like to contribute an article for the newsletter? We'd love to feature informative pieces about the cultural heritage and biodiversity of the South Downs, or perhaps a personal piece about the what the Downs mean to you. Please contact newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk with ideas. Please note we reserve the right to edit, omit and curate all content submitted.

Pic credits

P3 – Right column – Guy Edwardes

P4 – Left column – Chris Nesbit

P4 – Right column – Benjamin Davies

P5 – Right column – Anne Katrin Purkiss

P6 – Images kindly provided by Towner Art Gallery