



Welcome to the September edition of the
Steyning Downland Scheme Newsletter

Upcoming Events

**Yes it's back -
September is
BIG PICNIC month!**



By popular demand: Come along to Steyning Rifle Range (off Mouse Lane) at 1pm this Sunday (10th September) and try your hand at sumo, bounce on a castle, get up close and personal with donkeys, become a lumberjack, learn how to make Besom Brooms, join a sack race, enter your dog in the Fun Dog Show and much, MUCH more!

FREE ENTRY *(please note: refreshments will be available for sale and donations on the day are always welcome!)*

Nearly forgot: Bring your apples and try out the Steyning Community Orchard apple press:



A huge thank you to the Co-op, Crowther Overton-Hart and H. J. Burt for your very generous support for this year's Big Picnic - thanks for helping to build our community!



Brown Hairstreak intrigue . . .



Image credit: John Woodward

It's been an eventful couple of weeks for butterflies on the Steyning Downland Scheme.

High numbers of Adonis Blue have been seen on Steyning Coombe (Neil Hulme counted 31 in a single visit). This is really good news and shows we are heading in the right direction with our conservation management - they are one of the best indicators of chalk grassland quality. Then we had a fascinating guided walk by Richard Roebuck (Sussex Butterfly Conservation) which turned up some nice Brown Hairstreak sightings, including a female laying her eggs - *(see below, both shots by SDS volunteer, John Woodward)*.

It was around this time that we had a tip off about mysterious plastic ties appearing on blackthorn, the Brown Hairstreak's favoured food plant. Stems adjacent to the ties had been deliberately cut off, probably to harvest butterfly eggs. If you see anyone collecting blackthorn cuttings, do feel free to remind them it's illegal to harvest wild butterfly eggs without landowner consent, or if you don't feel you can approach them, you could take a photo and send it to: SDS@wistonestate.co.uk.



Brown Hairstreak Egg on the Rifle Range. Image credit: John Woodward

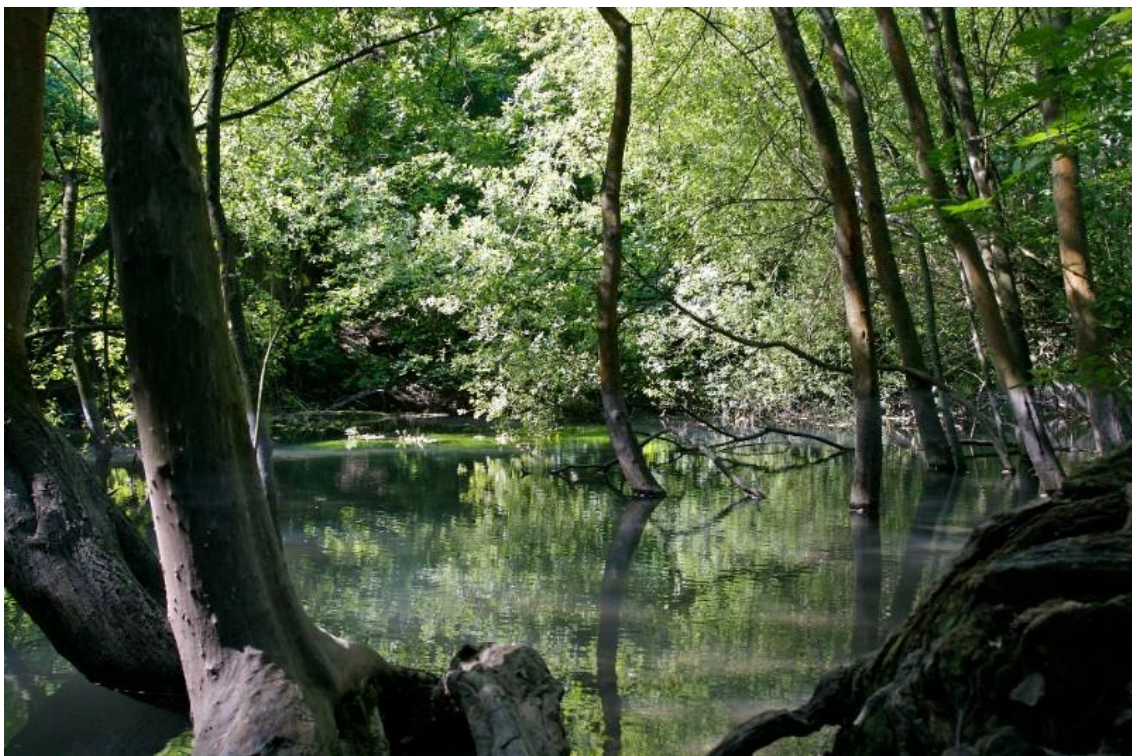
Grazing Update



These are Herdwick sheep and they're our brand new arrivals to the Steyning Downland Scheme. We now have no less than 17 of them (including a few stray Jacobs), munching down the veg. in the chalk pit at the top of Pepperscoombe. They may look a bit soft but rest assured Herdwicks are really tough and perfectly adapted to eating the kind of windswept chalk vegetation we have on the Downs. A huge thank you to National Park Ranger, Tom Parry for loaning us his pets for a while.

We haven't forgotten the Dexters though - these are back on the Rifle Range, tackling the huge amount of plant growth that happened over the summer. They'll stay there through the winter, with perhaps some additions going up to Steyning Coombe. In the next couple of weeks, one proud Dexter will be fitted out with a Swiss cowbell , so walkers can more easily know where they are on the Range.

Videos



A while back Conservation Volunteer, photographer and musician Pete Varkala put together this promotional video for the Steyning Downland Scheme and at last we're able to share it with you via Wistia - just click on the photo above and enjoy!

Let's Be Friends . . .

Don't forget you can help conserve wildlife and involve the local community in nature conservation, all from your armchair at home. Simply set up a monthly donation of £2 or more and becoming a Friend of the Steyning Downland Scheme.

You'll be entitled to a big reduction in the cost of our paid events, be the first to hear about what we're up to and be invited to our special supporters events, such as the SDS Christmas Party and Cream Tea talks.

For more information and to join in, [take a look at our web site](#), or [e-mail Vernon](#).



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