



**Welcome to our
Christmas Special News!**



Well, somehow we've made it through another year - almost anyway! A ginormous thanks is certainly due to everyone who helped to make the Steyning Downland Scheme happen through a tricky 2021: From the Conservation Volunteers and Lookers battling rain, wind and hail out on the downland, to Julia and Fiona, our volunteer administrators (and your Venerable Editor's ever-patient handlers) here in the office, to our faithful Friends who give financially so generously each month, and to everyone in between - THANK YOU!

Looking back, 2021 has managed to yield a surprising number of highlights, from some fantastic youth and children's events, to wellness walks and bat expeditions, and that's despite a liberal smattering of lockdowns, some mind-numbing vandalism, a record amount of discarded litter and loads of Ash trees deciding to collapse willy-nilly ...

A great example is the Cowslip planting day, organised by Sarah Quantrill,

when over 1,500 Cowslips were planted for our expanding colony of the very rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly [see pic. above - slightly edited]. The Cowslips were planted and grown from locally harvested seed by SDS volunteers. It was a fantastic team effort - we're looking forward to seeing the Duke grow from strength to strength in years to come.



A look back at the wonderfully fun 'Mini-Big Picnic' in August

But it's not over yet! Our Christmas Wreath making event is back at the Star Inn this Saturday [update: sold out!] and on Sunday we have places left for the last Woodland Singing event of the year - see below to book.

Wishing everyone a very happy and safe Christmas 2021!

Upcoming Events

Due to various venue limitations and Covid-related challenges, regrettably the SDS will not be holding a Christmas party this year. We very much hope to be back, bigger and better than ever next year *[did we say that last year??]*. Anyway there's still time to book onto our last event of year:



WOODLAND SINGING:

Unmoved by the onset of wintry weather, Rebecca Askew is back this Sunday, for more open air singing:

[Sunday 12th December, 2pm - Book Here](#)



MTB Dig Day: Free! Take a day with SDS volunteers, Paul and Percy, maintaining Steyning's premier mountain biking location. Sponsored by South Downs Bikes, who will be filming and giving away MTB goodies!

[Saturday 15th January from 9am - Book Here](#)



Conservation Volunteers Training Day: Is it time to fight that flab, get out and do something active which also benefits our local wildlife? Then join the Conservation Volunteers! Just fill in our [New Volunteer Form](#) and come along to our next free training day, which is on Saturday 22nd January, 10am - midday - just two places left! [Book Here](#)

An SDS GIANT



Despite the many visitors the SDS welcomes each day, there are still new and exciting things to discover! The latest is this HUGE old Ash coppice stool. It sits inconspicuously about half way up the Allotments Path, overlooking the Rifle Range and it's a real biggy - 7.98 metres in circumference to be exact, which makes it the 5th largest Ash in Sussex! Although none of its stems are particularly ancient, the size of the coppice bowl they sit on suggests it could well date right back to the Middle Ages. It's a bit of living history and thankfully, still free of Ash Dieback disease.

To find out more about local notable trees, checkout the Woodland Trust's [Ancient Tree Inventory](#).

Relief at last for Nightingale Lane



After years of doggy deposits, Nightingale Lane (off Mouse Lane) had been in danger of morphing into the archetypal 'dog poo alley' but thanks to the Conservation Volunteers and a very generous donation from [Crossways Vets](#), we're hoping to witness a remarkable change.

Nightingale Lane is now sporting a brand new poo bag dispenser with FREE biodegradable dog poo bags *[except they seem to run out remarkably quickly - please be patient!]*. We're hoping this will coax the

local dog walking fraternity to do the necessary. Meanwhile, a big 'thank you' to everyone involved in putting it up!

CHALK



Now you can support the Steyning Downland Scheme, just by eating!

The Goring family, who founded the Steyning Downland Scheme and continue to be our biggest givers, have found a new way of supporting the SDS: They've opened a brand new restaurant! Called 'Chalk', it's located in a lovingly restored Sussex barn, they use local ingredients, the food is fantastic but even better, £1 is donated to the SDS from every bill! Our unabashed opinion is Chalk is without doubt the best restaurant in Britain - [definitely worth a visit](#).

Annual Report Out!



Hot off the press, the Steyning Downland Scheme's all new Annual Report for 2020-21 is out! Copies will be sent forthwith to the Charity Commission and to Companies House, but of course our readers get to see it first - you can see the whole report [here](#).

Friends



Would you like to help,
but you're just too busy?

No problem! You can
make a real difference to
our work, simply by
joining the Friends of the
Steyning Downland
Scheme - it's only £2 per
month!

*Join the
Friends
here!*

*Thanks for reading - have a wonderful
Christmas and New Year break!*



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