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## Serene September in your National Park

Welcome to the [September newsletter](#) for the South Downs National Park. One thing we love about this time of the year is the sunsets! With dusk happening earlier in the evening, we're being blessed with some wonderful warming colours cascading across the sky - getting us in the mood for autumn and cosier nights. This incredible snap was taken at Amberley by Mark Dastmalchi-Round.

In this edition we look forward to the start of our **Dark Skies season** and share some **history-inspired days-out** in the National Park. We also have two amazing

competitions to win a country cabin getaway or luxury South Downs-themed jewellery, so read on!

[Click here to read a PDF version of South Downs News](#)



## Full steam ahead as revamped trail opens!

**A once-bustling Victorian railway station** has been renovated as part of an extended cycling and walking trail in the South Downs National Park.

Following three years of extensive work by the National Park Authority, the **Centurion Way** has now been extended northwards from West Dean, passing Singleton and ending near to Cucumber Farm. The improvements include almost 2km of new trail, two new entry and exit points and around 1.5km of newly-widened pathway alongside the A286 for pedestrians.

Education boards along the extension tell the history of the railway line and signage will direct people to nearby local amenities, such as West Dean Gardens, Weald and Downland Living Museum and Singleton village.

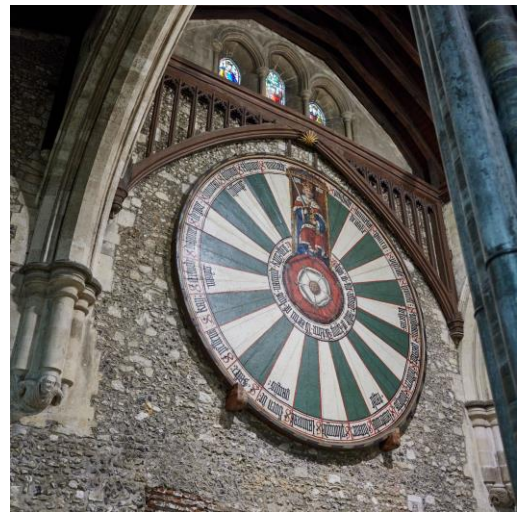
[Find out more here!](#)



## Open days take place across the National Park

Every September scores of volunteers across the National Park organise events to celebrate the amazing heritage of the South Downs region, showcasing everything from archaeology, to historic homes and churches, to military history and museums.

A great chance to discover some hidden gems, **Heritage Open Days** are taking place across the UK from 12 September to 21 September and many venues will be offering free entry.



Learn more about some great days-out!

## Big boost for community projects



Training local teachers to become outdoor leaders, a citizen science project to monitor river pollution and new educational boards are among the exciting projects to benefit from a National Park fund.

A range of initiatives across Sussex and Hampshire have been awarded grant funding from the **Sustainable Communities Fund** (SCF).

[Learn more](#)

## Dark Skies diary

The National Park's very own **"Queen of Darkness" Elinor Newman** looks at what's coming up in our Dark Skies as the nights draw in!

[Find out more](#)



## **Other news from your National Park**



## New art exhibition

A new exhibition exploring the **South Downs Way** through inspirational artworks opens this autumn.

[Read More →](#)

## Safety warning at river mouth

Visitors are being urged not to cross **dangerous fast-flowing currents** at the mouth of the River Cuckmere in East Sussex.

[Read More →](#)

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## Win a stay at country cabin!



If you haven't visited yet, **Westerlands** is a regenerative, family-run farm near Graffham, West Sussex, where everyone is welcome. The farm itself has been on a

transformative journey, having evolved from a former racehorse stud into a haven for biodiversity and wellbeing.

Westerlands' [vision for the next 20 years](#), as set out in its [Whole Estate Plan](#) (WEP), has recently been endorsed by the South Downs National Parks Authority as a 'blueprint' for protecting nature and marks a significant step forward, both in sustainable land stewardship and community engagement.

Westerlands is the perfect place to set off along the captivating pathways of the South Downs, either on foot, on horseback or by bike - or admire the expanse of the stars above, in what is an International Dark Sky Reserve by night.

With a unique collection of sustainably-built cabins, shepherd huts and cottages for [farm stays](#) to suit all budgets - some even with their own outdoor baths - each carefully considered space offers a grounded, rustic setting for guests to relax, reconnect and enjoy back-to-nature experiences.

As well as their [wellbeing escapes and seasonal stays](#), they offer a range of [activities](#) for visitors, including:

- An outdoor wood-fired WildSpa sauna – with aquifer-fed plunge pool and panoramic views.
- Wellness treatments – including Massage, Reflexology, Reiki and Yoga classes – in the calm sanctuary of the Rose Room.
- WildFit outdoor exercise sessions – from Cardio, Functional Fitness, Strength Training, Group classes and 1:1 PT, at the Green Gym Rig surrounded by nature.
- A fully accredited Equestrian Centre – offering Pony Rides, Horse-trekking, 'Quality Time with Horses' connection sessions and even soundbaths with horses. As well as Pony Parties, Pony Mornings and Pony Academy for young horse enthusiasts.
- From 10th September, ['Changing Lives Through Horses'](#) – an alternative education programme created by the British Horse Society launches at Westerlands, to help young people build vital life skills and find positive pathways for the future through immersive learning alongside deeply intuitive horses ; as well as ['Saddle Club'](#) – a similar programme designed specifically for home-educated children.

Why not make Westerlands the starting point of your next adventure in the South Downs this Autumn?

Experience the magic of nature, connection and healing. Find out more at [www.westerlands.com](http://www.westerlands.com) and follow @westerlands\_life for updates and seasonal offers.

## **AUTUMN STAY GIVEAWAY!**

We've teamed up with Westerlands to run a September prize draw to win a two-night weekday stay at their beautiful off-grid Timber Country Cabin (worth over £300), including Wildspa sauna and telescope hire for stargazing.

There are a number of ways to enter the competition! **All new subscribers to the Westerlands AND National Park newsletter during September** will be automatically entered into the draw. Sign up to the Westerlands newsletter [here](#) and sign up to the National Park's newsletter [here](#).

Those who are already signed up can email "Retreat into Nature" to [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk) before the prize draw closes at midnight on 30 September 2025. See competition T&Cs [here](#). Westerlands' prize draw and accommodation [T&Cs](#) also apply.



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**Win bespoke South Downs jewellery!**



At the foot of the South Downs National Park, just a stone's throw from Ditchling Beacon, are the unique workshops and gallery of luxury jewellery designer and bespoke jewellers **Pruden and Smith**. Founded by third generation silversmiths, [Pruden and Smith](https://prudenandsmith.com) blend their 100-year legacy of craftsmanship with unique and unusual jewellery designs inspired by the Sussex landscape.

Their signature Trap (Sussex Shore) Collection, designed by Rebecca Smith, is inspired by the look of pebbles trapped in wood along the ever-changing shorelines of the Sussex coast. The organic curving forms evoke the natural contours of the rolling Sussex downlands, and the ephemeral coastal strandline. Using hammering techniques for a unique finish on each piece of jewellery, this range has been designed to embrace the irregularities of nature. Each design is handmade in Ditchling using recycled gold and platinum.

Pruden and Smith design with the future in mind, from their eco-conscious approach, to their ethos of investing in legacy, they steer away from fast fashion and instead create timeless designs that become heirlooms for future generations. This ethos is also reflected in their redesign service. Whether you have treasured pieces that are too worn or damaged to wear, inherited jewellery with a sentimental story, or even simply items that you no longer wear, Pruden and Smith's redesign service provides the opportunity to breathe new life into your collection by incorporating your own metal and gemstones into new designs. The redesign journey starts with a free consultation with a designer. To book a free design consultation, call 01273 846338 or visit [prudenandsmith.com](https://prudenandsmith.com).

Pruden and Smith are offering the chance to win stunning Trap Diamond Stud Earrings (worth £280) to newsletter readers.

These 6mm square earrings featuring six 1.2mm round diamonds are inspired by the Sussex landscape and were handmade from recycled silver and 9ct yellow gold in Ditchling.

People signing up to the newsletter during September will be automatically entered into the draw to win the jewellery. Those who are already signed up can email “Pruden and Smith” to [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk) before midnight on 30 September.

Sign up to the newsletter [here](#) and see competition T&Cs [here](#).



## Coming up this September



- Calling all art-lovers! The **32nd Artwave Festival** returns with 163 free-to-visit exhibitions and open studios across the Lewes District. Enjoy the trails until 21

September, and discover work by nearly 1,000 artists and makers across this creative corner of the National Park. Continuing its founding mission to make the arts accessible to all, Artwave welcomes a new generation of young creatives this year, with 20 venues featuring work by artists aged under 25!

- Are you aged between 16 and 25 and looking to gain some volunteering experience for your CV? Join us on one of the National Park's **free Youth Action Days!** The next one takes place on Saturday, 27 September in the beautiful landscape of Seven Sisters Country Park. Discover the hidden treasures of this scenic location through guided nature walks, where experienced guides will share their knowledge about the local flora and fauna. Get hands-on and contribute to the ongoing nature recovery projects, helping to preserve the unique biodiversity of Seven Sisters.
- Are you interested in local history? A new archive opens at **Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery** on 30 September and runs until Christmas called "Where the Light Falls: Winifred Joseph's Rural Archive". The archive features over 1,000 negatives capturing the life of an artistic circle in Petersfield between the two world wars. Taken mainly by Winifred Joseph (1894-1966) at the home of Dr Harry Roberts, an East End-based doctor, the house in Hampshire named 'Oakshott Hangers' became a much-used country retreat from the capital.
- ***Coming up next month*** – are you inspired by the South Downs and interesting in weaving? "Weaving the Downs: A Beginners Weaving Workshop" takes place on 11 October at the Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft. Discover the gentle rhythm of weaving in this hands-on day workshop inspired by the colours and textures of the South Downs. Led by museum educators, this relaxed introduction is perfect for complete beginners or anyone looking to reconnect with making. **Book a place here.**