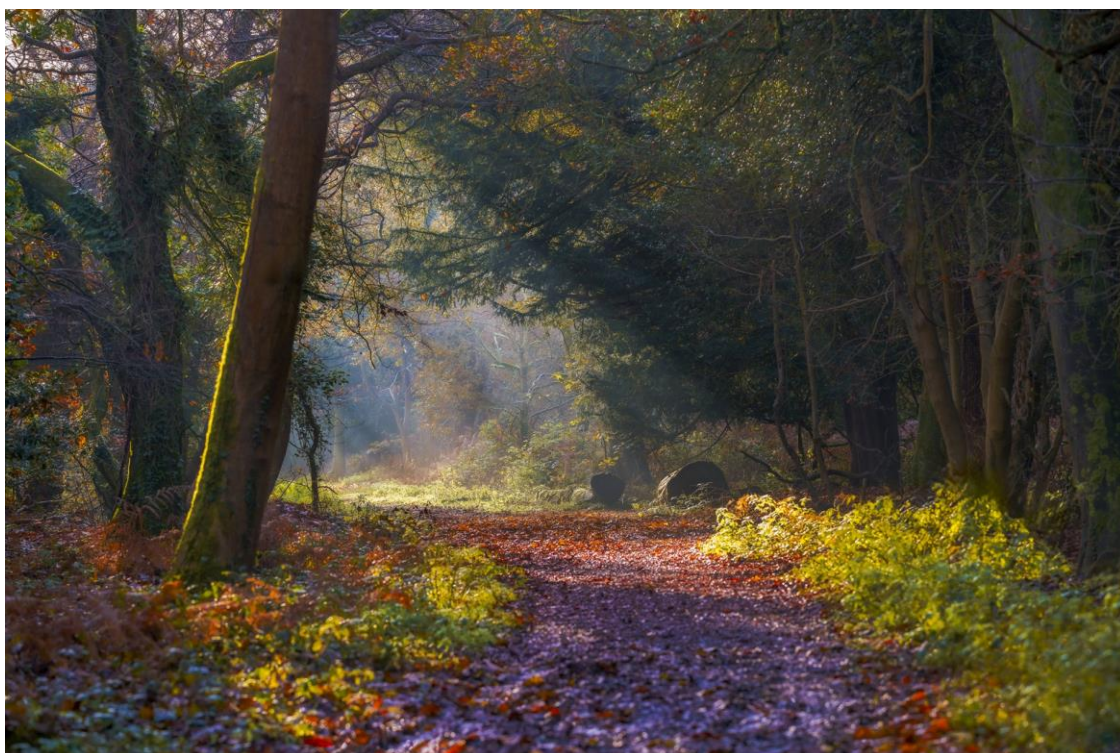


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The mellow magic of autumn

Welcome to the [October newsletter](#) for the South Downs National Park. We have to admit this is one of our favourite times of the year! There's just so much going on visually in the National Park as nature transitions from the warmer to colder months. This year we expect the **colourful tree display** to be even more impressive than ever after a particularly balmy spring and summer.

In this newsletter you can find inspiration for some wonderful autumn days-out and a final call for entries and the chance to win £250 in our annual photo competition. We're also sharing our call to action to help improve the watercourses in the National Park. Plus it's **spooky South Downs** so we're sharing some local tales of the paranormal! There's a fabulous prize for a family pass to one of the south coast's most prestigious museums and learning more about one fateful night in 1912.

Our gratitude to Christopher Pearson for this enchanting photograph from Stansted Forest, near Rowlands Castle.

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



Let's work together to improve our rivers

We're making a renewed call to improve the **health of our rivers, streams and seas** after a new study reveals the state of waterways across the South Downs region.

The key finding is that most bodies of water are failing to meet good ecological standards, with an overall decline from 2014 to 2022. The study covers six river catchment partnerships across a vast swathe of Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey, revealing that 90 per cent of rivers and lakes are not achieving good status for nature.

[Learn more about the issues and how we can turn this round](#)



Embrace the wonders of autumn

“Her pleasure in the walk must arise from the exercise and the day, from the view of the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges”

Powerful words from the great Jane Austen, who loved autumn walks in the South Downs countryside around Chawton, often covering five miles a day or so.

For Austen, autumn was a time of profound reflection, imagination and beauty.

Here are some seasonal ideas to explore what the National Park has to offer at this time of year - including some spooky experiences!

Discover some awesome days-out!

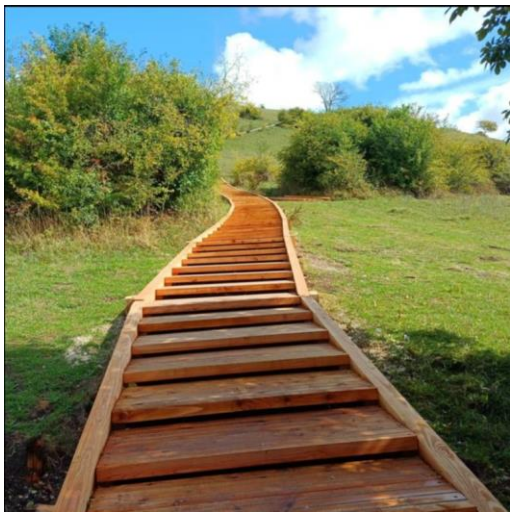
The paranormal South Downs

The South Downs has centuries of **superstitions, folklore and ghostly tales** that have been passed down the generations.

Here are a selection of some **paranormal sightings** and village legends to let your imaginations run wild this Halloween!



Find out some spooky stories!



Improving access to iconic hill in Park

Much-needed improvements are being made to improve access to one of the National Park's most scenic viewpoints.

Funding at **St Catherine's Hill** was provided from the National Park Authority's Community Infrastructure Levy.

[Learn more](#)

Grazers introduced at nature reserve

More than 50 ewes have taken up residence for the winter months at a nature reserve to help wildlife flourish.

[Find out more](#)



Other news from your National Park



Insect discoveries

Two rarely-seen insects have been causing a stir at Seven Sisters Country Park!

[Read More →](#)

Poignant reunion

A special reunion took place among people who fought tooth and nail to create a National Park.

[Read More →](#)

Celebrating tourism

Well over £15,000 has been raised by tourism businesses over the past year to help protect the National Park for future generations.

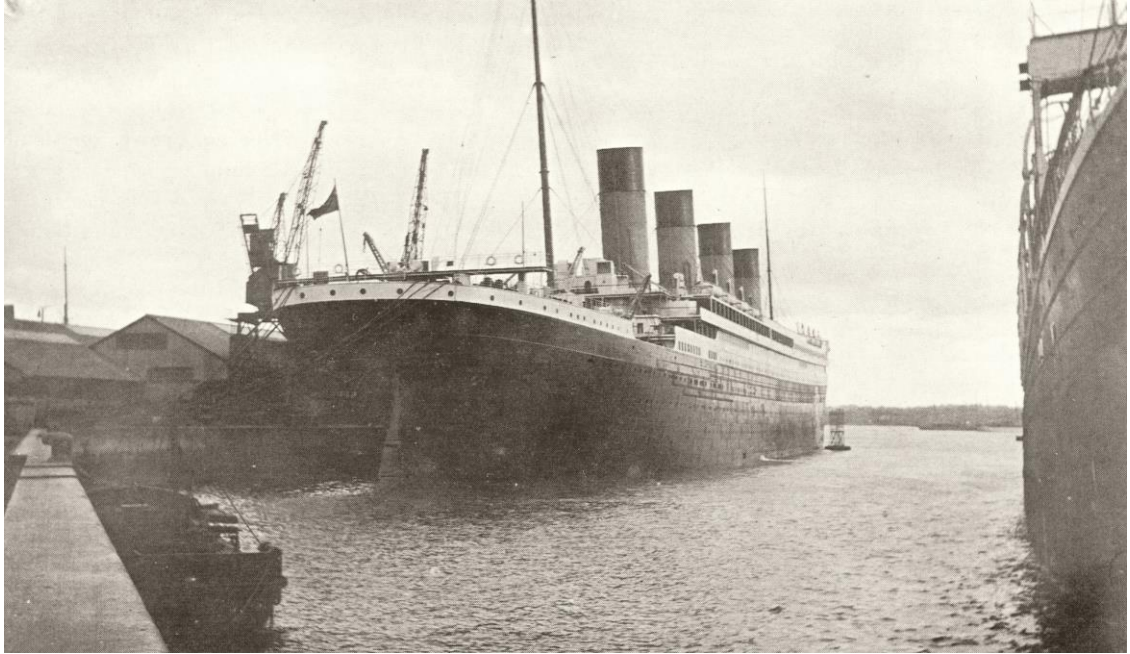
[Read More →](#)

Autumn walks

Need some inspiration for a walk? Check out some ideas here!

[Read More →](#)

Win a family pass to SeaCity Museum!



Just over 10 miles from the National Park boundary is a city famous for its rich maritime history, its ancient city walls and as the place where RMS Titanic (pictured above on 9 April, 1912) and the Mayflower left our shores.

It's Southampton of course.

Sandwiched between the South Downs National Park and New Forest National Park, not to mention the Isle of Wight, it has some of the most breathtaking landscapes in Britain on its doorstep!

At the heart of the city and just a short walk from the railway station is the impressive [SeaCity Museum](#).

The home of Southampton's Titanic story, you can discover the story of RMS Titanic and how the tragedy affected the city and people of Southampton.

The museum features an interactive model of the Titanic, recorded messages of its passengers from that fateful night, and original objects from on board the world-famous ship.

There is also a visual depiction of Titanic's 897 crew, over three-quarters of whom gave a Southampton address when they signed on.

But this amazing venue is not just about the Titanic! The museum follows 200,000 years of Southampton's history, from Roman traders to Saxon settlers, to the Second World War and the introduction of the docks in the "Gateway to the World" and "Southampton Stories" exhibitions. All are bursting with an exciting collection of models, costumes, artworks, photographs, incredible stories and much more!

The National Park has teamed with up [SeaCity Museum](#) to offer a free family day entry ticket.

People signing up to the newsletter during October will be automatically entered into the draw to win the family pass. Those who are already signed up can email "Molly Brown" to newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk before midnight on 31 October.

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



Coming up this October



- Do you know your chanterelles from your shaggy ink caps? Explore Waggoners Wells with Fungi expert Daniel Greenwood and discover more about the magical world of mycelium! Book [here](#) for this guided walk on 18 October which is run in partnership with the National Park's Heathlands team.
- Join a guided walk at Weaver's Down on 28 October for "things that glow bright at night". Discover nature's hidden light show as we explore the rare phenomenon of biofluorescence- when certain plants, fungi and insects glow in vivid colours different from the light they absorb. Book [here](#)
- Are you interested in helping to conserve one of the rarest habitats in the world? South Downs heathland makes up just 1 per cent of the National Park and has some of its rarest wildlife, such as the sand lizard and Dartford Warbler. People are being given the opportunity to do some conservation volunteering at Broxhead Common and Shortheath Common in Hampshire this autumn and winter (current timings are 10am to 3pm on 28 Oct, 25 Nov, 30 Dec, 27 Jan and 24 Feb). Tea and coffee provided as well as all tools. For more information, please contact the local rangers at [**northern.sites@hants.gov.uk**](mailto:northern.sites@hants.gov.uk)

- Don't miss the 18th annual **Bonkers for Conkers Championship** at Langham Brewery! It promises to be a 'smashing' way to spend an autumnal afternoon at the Brewery and Taproom on Sunday 12 October at their 'brewery in a barn' near Petworth, from midday until 8pm. It's just £5 to play, with all proceeds donated to Chestnut Tree House Children's Hospice.
- **Arundel Wetland Centre** will be hosting a "supernatural" October half term week, with the opportunity to make magical memories and experience the wonder of wetlands through making a willow wand, mixing magical potions, making monsters, writing with invisible ink and more!
- Head to Seven Sisters Country Park's Visitor Centre at Exceat between 29 October and 31 October for some fun drop-in **autumn-themed crafts and activities** for all ages.