

OUTSTANDING

# CHILTERNNS

Explore & enjoy in 2019/20

## WHAT'S ON

Enjoying the Chilterns landscape throughout the year

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The Country of Larks by Gail Simmons

## BIRDWATCHING

Tips for spotting farmland birds

## ARTS & CRAFTS

See the Chilterns makers at work

Photo: Dave Olinski



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# WELCOME

to Outstanding Chilterns, the annual magazine showcasing the best of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



As you read through this magazine, I hope that you'll agree the Chilterns is a very special place, filled with history, heritage and bursting with vibrancy, creativity and many wonderful communities. Be prepared to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors as Dr Wendy Morrison takes us on a journey through the fascinating prehistory of our area. Discover the delights of the modern Chilterns market town of Amersham and meet some of the talented craftspeople who create crafts and gifts inspired by the beautiful landscape.

For those looking for practical advice and information, we discuss the impacts of light pollution and provide some tips for best practice. There is advice on felling trees, and Nick Marriner gives us some great tips for spotting farmland birds in the Chilterns.

I hope you enjoy the topics covered in this year's magazine, if you have any ideas or comments for future editions please contact me at [vpearce@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:vpearce@chilternsaonb.org).

P.S. Don't forget to take advantage of your exclusive Outstanding Chilterns reader offer of 25% off Gail Simmons' new book "The Country of Larks: A Chiltern Journey" on pages 22–23.

Vicki

Victoria Pearce  
Editor

Sign up to our monthly e-newsletter for the latest news and events happening across the Chilterns AONB: [bit.ly/CCBsignup](http://bit.ly/CCBsignup)

## About the CCB

Established in 2004, the Board is a public body with two key purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB
- To increase understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB

In fulfilling these purposes, the board also seeks to foster social and economic wellbeing in local communities. It has 27 members drawn from across the Chilterns and a staff team based in Chinnor.



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### Chilterns Conservation Board:

90 Station Road, Chinnor, Oxon OX39 4HA  
Tel: 01844 355500 Email: [office@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:office@chilternsaonb.org)  
[www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org)

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[Samantha@qwertyltd.com](mailto:Samantha@qwertyltd.com) 0118 930 2222



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# CHIEF OFFICER'S LETTER

Welcome to the latest edition of Outstanding Chilterns magazine. I hope you will find this an inspiring read, whether you work or live in the area, love visiting or are planning a visit for the first time.



Photo: Angela Nicholson

It is an important year for the Chilterns, as we publish our five-year Management Plan that sets out the steps needed to conserve and enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Our ambition is to care for the Chilterns forever and for everyone, and as individuals we can all contribute. We've created a list of "ways you can help care for the Chilterns" highlighting the small steps you can take to ensure our precious landscape is cared for generations to come. I hope you will join me in helping in any way you can.

As you read through this edition you will see that we continue to progress with new and existing projects to conserve and enhance the Chilterns AONB. Our Beacons of the Past project to protect the Chilterns' Iron Age hillforts is well underway, and you can read all about a new £2.4 million National Lottery funded Landscape Partnership Scheme "Chalk, Cherries & Chairs" on page 14–15 an ambitious project to restore and enhance the wildlife habitats, landscape features and cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns.

Although many positive steps are being taken to safeguard the future of the Chilterns, the landscape still faces many challenges. Increased pressure for development, and as you will discover in this issue, the critical state of our precious chalk streams both lead to a time of serious concern.

Although these challenges loom large, we must remain positive and be thankful as we mark the 70th anniversary of National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. When established, the Act was the start of protecting our most treasured landscapes and public paths, allowing people to connect with nature and experience the beauty of our countryside.

This 70th milestone is a celebration, but it's also a time for reflection. In May 2018 DEFRA announced that a review of all National Parks and AONBs will take place to ensure designated landscapes are fit for the future. The review is particularly timely as The Chilterns Conservation Board has agreed to request consideration of National Park Status.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a farewell as I depart the CCB to pursue new challenges. I am delighted to be succeeded by Dr. Elaine King who joins the CCB from her role as Director of Wildlife and Countryside Link. Elaine has a longstanding career in the environment sector and passion for the Chilterns countryside, making her the perfect choice for the role.

Thank you all for your continued support over the past four years, I hope you will continue to cherish and enjoy the Chilterns as much as I do.

*Best wishes,*

**Sue Holden**

*Chief Officer – Chilterns Conservation Board*

## HOW CAN YOU HELP CARE FOR THE CHILTERNs?

- Volunteer for a wildlife or conservation group in the Chilterns
- Reduce your environmental footprint – save water, recycle & car-share
- Take two – each time you take a walk in the Chilterns, pick up and dispose of two pieces of rubbish
- Donate to local wildlife and conservation charities
- Buy local – support local producers and farmers
- Make your garden pollinator friendly – plant native shrubs and flowers
- Get involved with one of the CCB projects
- Read the Chilterns Design Guide if you're thinking about undertaking a home improvement project
- Use your Rights of Way and let your local Rights of Way officer know if you find a problem
- Please do not feed the Red Kites

We can all do more to care for the Chilterns now and for future generations. To read our Management Plan in full please visit:  
[www.chilternsaonb.org/management-plan](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/management-plan)

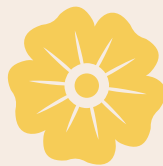


# ENJOYING THE CHILTERN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

We're so lucky to be able to visit and enjoy the Chilterns at any time of the year. Visitors might assume the beauty and tranquillity of this landscape means it's a sleepy place, but it's a region thriving with bustling market towns, busy communities and extraordinary locations.

Local people are proud of the Chilterns and all it has to offer; we all seek to ensure that the Chilterns way of life continues, so that residents and visitors alike can enjoy not only the natural surroundings, but our history and heritage, the growing arts and crafts scene, and the rich variety of drama and literary events.

So what kinds of events are the Chilterns renowned for through the seasons? We've picked out a few we think you should look out for...

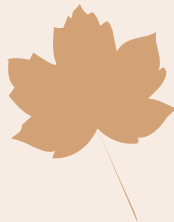


## SUMMER:

June hails the start of the Festival season, which runs throughout the summer and includes a whole variety from Pendley Shakespeare Festival and Henley Country Craft Show, through to river festivals like The Goring and Streatley Regatta. Bucks Art Weeks, an annual event which runs in June, is entirely free and promotes local artists and galleries. We recommend combining a scenic Chilterns walk with a visit to an open studio.

The Chilterns are extraordinary in hosting events in unusual locations. You can watch outdoor cinema in the Hellfire Caves of West Wycombe, or savour opera in the beautiful surroundings of the Wormsley Estate.

For sporty types, the Chilterns hosts a number of annual cycling events – including this year L'Etape UK which arrives on 14th July and is the official amateur Tour de France held in the UK.



## AUTUMN:

Glorious beech woods carpeted in leaves provide the backdrop for autumn in the Chilterns. And if you were away and missed the summer music festivals, check out Little Missenden Festival, or enjoy the autumn scenery with the Chilterns Walking Festival – both take place in October.

There are some amazing events unique to the Chilterns like the Graham Greene Literature Festival in September, which celebrates his life and works in his hometown of Berkhamsted. Tring Book Festival takes place in November and includes debates, interviews and workshops hosted in a selection of wonderful venues.

If you're a foodie, you won't fail to find some tasty events in the Chilterns. Our towns and villages are well-stocked with farm shops, breweries and distilleries. October heralds the Hughenden Manor Apple Festival, celebrating over 40 varieties of apples, many grown in the walled garden.



Photo: Paul Keene



Photo: Adam Trigg

Pendley Manor  
Shakespeare Festival

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**WINTER:**



Christmas markets usually start late November into December. Tring High Street is transformed into a Christmas Market – fun and games and much merriment all round! Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway puts on a festive train; meet Santa during the ride and receive a special gift. Several stately homes host magical Christmas events: check out Waddesdon, Hughenden, Cliveden and Stonor.

And of course, there's always a great selection of pantomimes and Christmas extravaganzas at Aylesbury Waterside, Wycombe Swan and The Grove Theatre in Dunstable.

After the Christmas festivities, New Year is perfect for enjoying a bracing walk followed by a welcoming pub with a log fire. In February visit breathtaking displays of snowdrops and also snowdrop-themed teas in various woods and stately homes across the Chilterns. Chiltern Arts Festival takes place in February; a week's celebration of musical excellence.

**SPRING:**



Springtime in the Chilterns is picture-perfect: lambing days in March are followed by April's swathes of bluebells – and if you miss those, don't forget the garlic flowers which carpet the woods in May.

Amersham Festival of Music and Tring Spring Fayre are two glorious events in April heralding the fresh arrival of spring. Oxfordshire Art Week follows in May, with amazing art in hundreds of wonderful places across the county – all absolutely free.

Whatever you choose to enjoy this coming year, it's sure to be glorious – set against the beautiful backdrop of the Chilterns landscape. Visit our website at [www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org) for more details. Have fun!

by Fran Momen



Photo: Chris Lacey

Christmas market at Waddesdon Manor



# A WORD ON WATER

It may not always feel like it, but we live in one of the driest areas of the UK. The Chilterns area actually has less water available per person than Morocco, South Sudan and Brisbane in Australia.

The Chilterns also has one of the highest rates of water use per person in Europe. This clearly isn't a good combination, particularly for the globally rare chalk streams that (should) flow here. There's only so much water to go around – the more water we pump out of the ground for our own use, the less is left for the local rivers.

Our use of water is a long running and growing problem. This year there's extra pressure as we are still feeling the effects of last year's exceptional summer. In Summer 2018 southern England recorded its driest June since 1925, it was also the joint warmest summer since the current series of records began. Some rain gauges in the South East recorded more than 50 consecutive dry days. The result of this was that the soils became very dry and much of the rain that fell during winter was either soaked up by the dry soils or ran off the surface. Less than half the total winter rainfall was able to percolate down into the chalk to recharge the groundwater store.

All this means that at the end of winter, when the chalk aquifer should be full and streams flowing strongly, we are facing a situation where the groundwater level is below normal and all nine of the chalk streams in the Chilterns are currently suffering from low flows, or have no flow at all! The river Ver is currently dry for 11km of its 27km total length. The river Chess has been dry in Chesham since September 2018 and although a trickle of flow has appeared in April, this will disappear again soon. There is currently no flow in the Hamble Brook and the Hughenden Stream is only flowing for the last 1km of its length. Although officially a drought has not been called yet, it is clear that our chalk streams and the wildlife they support are already suffering and this situation is likely to worsen. Unless the summer turns out to be exceptionally wet, it is likely that our parched chalk streams will have to wait until the autumn for some much-needed relief.

Although we can't control the weather, we can help our chalk streams by doing something about our water consumption. We are in desperate need of a big change in our attitude to water use. Much has been written about the "Blue Planet effect". In a recent speech Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency said, "In the last two years we've changed behaviour on plastic. We need water wastage to be as socially unacceptable as... throwing your plastic bags into the sea."

The good news is that saving water can be incredibly easy to do. People living in and around the Chilterns currently each use over 10-litres a day, more than the national average, and over 20-litres more than the most water-efficient areas of the country.

Chalk streams are extremely rare habitats – 85% of the world's chalk streams are found here in England. They are hugely important for wildlife and they are also a distinctive and defining part of the Chilterns landscape. The impacts of climate change and a growing population are placing even greater pressure on their health and so it is more important now than ever for us all to use less water so that our precious chalk streams can continue to flow.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:**  
[www.chilternsaonb.org/chalk-streams](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/chalk-streams)

52% of Chiltern chalk streams are currently dry



Photos: Chilterns Chalk Streams Project





## Top water saving tips

### FIX LEAKS

A leaky tap could waste 15-litres per day, a leaky loo could waste up to 400-litres a day!

### TAKE A SHORTER SHOWER

Try to keep to 4 minutes. Showers can use between 5 to 15-litres per minute

### IF YOU HAVE A DUAL FLUSH TOILET

Make sure you know which is the half flush button and use this when you can

### OTHER SIMPLE STEPS

- Put a bottle of water in the fridge in warm weather. Waiting for a tap to run cold can waste 10-litres a day
- Turning off the tap when brushing your teeth could save 6-litres per minute
- Be water smart in the garden – use a watering can instead of a hosepipe, install a water butt to collect rainwater, plant drought resistant plant and use mulches to conserve water and suppress weeds

A water butt can hold as much as 100-litres of water.



Chiltern Society

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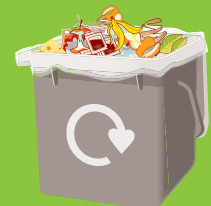
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# WHAT DOES THE CHILTERN'S MEAN TO YOU?

## WINNING PICTURES FROM THE CHILTERN'S AONB COMPETITION 2018.

Our theme "What does the Chilterns mean to you?" inspired hundreds of entries to the 2018 Photography competition. With categories for both adults and children there was an opportunity for everyone to get involved.

We were thrilled by the breadth and depth of submissions – from seasoned photographers and amateur enthusiasts alike – which showed just how important our Chilterns AONB is in people's lives. The winners were judged via an online poll and we presented 1st and 2nd prizes in each age category. Prizes were generously donated by several local businesses: Pretty Like Pictures, Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway, The Crown at Sydenham, Ten Mile Menu, Mama Dor's Kitchen and Go Ape.

Interestingly, a very "green" theme emerged from the online judging process – suggesting that those who voted value our Chilterns AONB for its green spaces and beautiful natural environment above all else.

Inspired? Why not show us your photos of what the Chilterns means to you. Just mention @chilternsaonb on Twitter, share to our Facebook page or tag #ChilternsAONB on Twitter or Instagram!



Winner of first prize in the adult category was Catherine Andrews with this wonderfully detailed study of Marlow Common.



The foliage theme continued in the U16s category – with Max Barnbrook's beautifully composed shot of woods near Hambleden winning top spot.



Winning pictures

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**Runner-up**

Continuing the theme of trees, Peter Ford's haunting misty photo of Ashridge Forest won second place in the adult category.

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**Runner-up (junior)**

Eleanor Webb's fantastic image of cowslips set against a sunrise/sunset took the runner-up spot in the U16 age group.

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# A WALK IN TIME

## THE PREHISTORY OF THE CHILTERN

The Chiltern Hills have been a focal point for people for thousands of years. Any walk or ride through the AONB will take you past sites and monuments that stretch across huge spans of time and yet have survived the ravages of millennia and subsequent human activity. We take a look at some of the places where you can visit the past and walk in the footsteps of the ancients.

### ICE AGE

In between Ice Ages, the region was sporadically occupied by people in search of game to eat and flint for making tools. These ancient artefacts are found all over the Chilterns, left by hunter-gatherers from 150,000 years ago up until the last of the Ice Ages. The warming landscape was filled with herds of deer and horse which were the main diet for the Mesolithic people. The chalk streams and valleys were the perfect location for these nomadic groups.

The first substantial human alterations to the Chilterns begin in the Neolithic when farming technology began to be practiced. Although the homes people lived in have long disappeared, we can see traces of what they were up to at places like **Waulud's Bank**, a monumental enclosure in Marsh Farm, Luton. We also know some of the places they buried their dead, in long barrows at Halton, Gerrards Cross and **Whiteleaf Hill**. Some of the trackways they used to get around the landscape are still in use today.

### BRONZE AGE

The introduction of metals in the Bronze Age (2200–800 BC) to the Chilterns opened up a lot of possibilities to the people living here. We can see the field systems that outline their agricultural activities at **Pitstone Hill** as well as their cemeteries – collections of barrow mounds – at **Dunstable Downs** and at **Ivinghoe Beacon**, where the Chilterns' earliest hillfort was built around 1100 BC and where an incredible bronze sword was found. The enigmatic earthworks collectively known as **Grim's Ditch** are seen at various points across the AONB, but can best be visited along the Ridgeway National Trail between Nuffield and Mongewell. Although little is known about these features, this particular section of Grim's Ditch has been dated to the Late Bronze Age.

### IRON AGE

The period we call the Iron Age ushered in the ability to increase production of grain. Iron tools meant that more difficult soils could be tilled, surplus crops could be grown, and the resulting prosperity meant that some people could express their wealth and power through the construction of enormous earthworks. Some of our Chiltern hillforts were certainly these kinds of expressions of power. Some, however, may have had more humble functions, such as places of refuge during conflict or enclosures for livestock. In the Chilterns we have at least 20 hillforts, varied and unique, and with stunning views. Visit **Pulpit Hill**, **Cholesbury Camp**, **Church Hill** or **Medmenham Camp** to take in a sample of these ancient monuments.

The Chilterns are steeped in prehistoric remains, and a new LiDAR survey of the entire area is revealing hundreds of new features. No matter where you walk, hike, bike, or drive throughout the AONB, you are not very far from reminders of our ancient past.

by Dr. Wendy Morrison



# PREHISTORY TIMELINE

C. 11,000 YEARS' AGO

UPPER PALAEOLITHIC  
*(end of the Ice Age)*

9000-4500 BC

MESOLITHIC  
*(Middle Stone Age)*

4500-2200 BC

NEOLITHIC  
*(New Stone Age)*

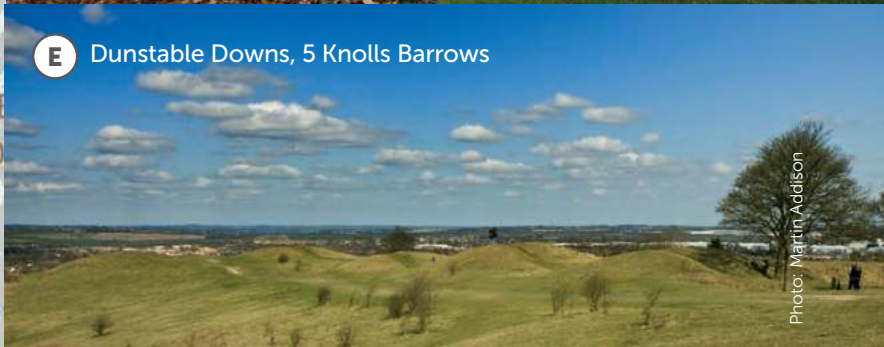
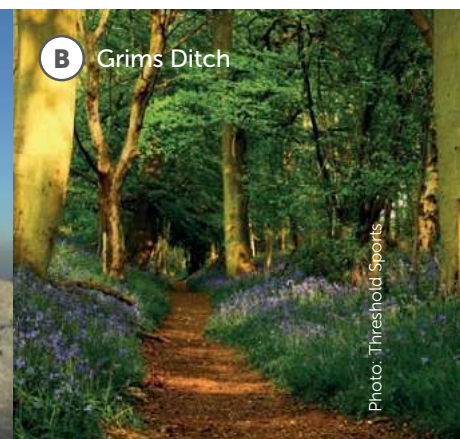
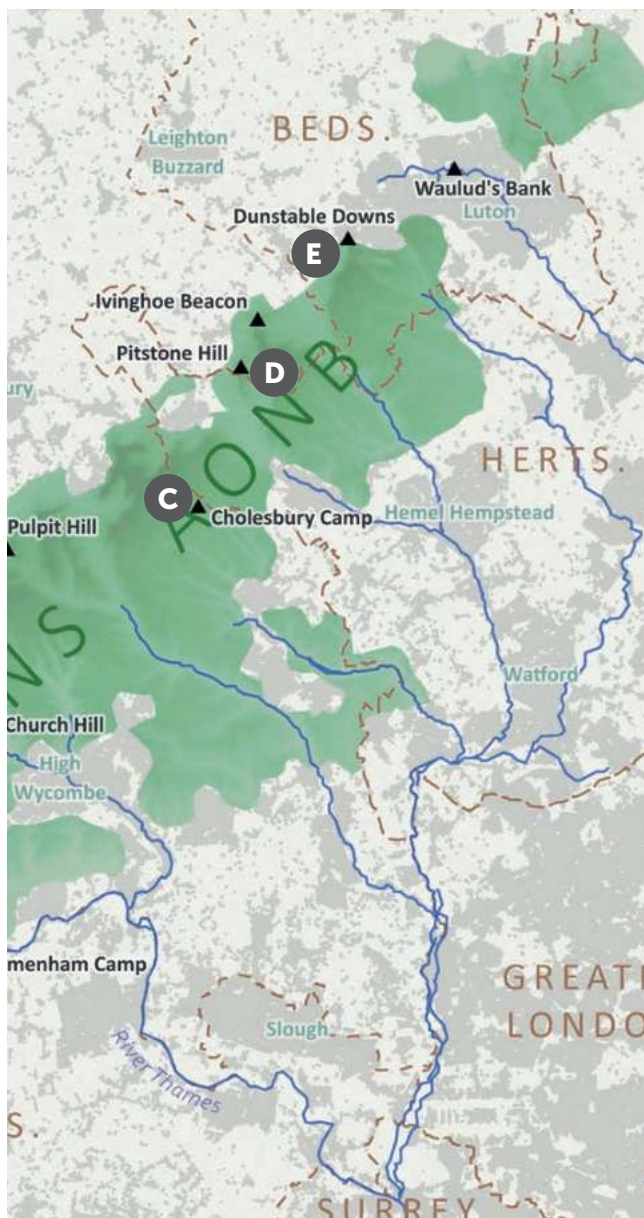
2200-800 BC

BRONZE AGE

800 BC-43 AD

IRON AGE

Of course, we have just scratched the surface with this taster of ancient locations. Be sure to explore whatever corner of the Chilterns in which you find yourself – you won't be disappointed by the depth of history this fascinatingly beautiful part of Britain has to offer.



# ARTS & CRAFTS IN THE CHILTERN

The Chilterns is a living, working area of beautiful countryside that's character has been shaped by agriculture, industry and the artists and craftspeople who have lived and worked here over the centuries.

The abundant beech woodlands made the Chilterns a centre of the furniture making industry in the 1800s and the area was once a thriving industrial hub for pottery and brickmaking, straw plaiting, lace and hatmaking. The beech woodlands would have been alive with the sounds of the "bodgers", skilled craftsmen who set up camp in the woods to mass produce chair legs for the famous Windsor chair. Although the woodland chair makers are long gone, their legacy remains; in the place names (e.g. the Crooked Billet pub in Stoke Row, Potters Row), the ancient coppiced woods and the lumps and bumps in the landscape where clay or flints were dug out of the ground.

The creativity and passion for the landscape remains. There are many skilled artists and craftspeople dotted around the Chilterns, new studios have opened up and there are galleries, attractions and events throughout the year. In an age of mass production, interest in quality craftsmanship is greater than ever.



## ART & CRAFT ATTRACTIONS IN THE CHILTERN

Thanks to a grant from the Radcliffe Trust, the CCB has been able to promote Chilterns art and craft attractions on its website. There are ideas of places to visit, art and craft events, open studios, taster sessions and courses to help you get creative.

Read on for a taster of what's on offer, and for full details visit: [www.visitchilterns.co.uk/crafts](http://www.visitchilterns.co.uk/crafts)

- There is a cluster of studios and galleries at Layby Farm near Stoke Mandeville, ideal for viewing a wide range of high-quality work and sourcing gifts 'of the Chilterns'. At the heart of the complex, you'll find the Buckinghamshire Craft Guild featuring the work of artists based in and around the Chilterns. It provides a year-round showcase and the opportunity to "meet the makers". The Guild has a permanent shop at Layby Farm which is also home to other galleries and studios including: Obsidian Art, Fabric HQ, Freya Jones Spinning & Fibrecraft and By Hands Books. Nearby Wendover is a charming market town with a gallery and independent shops in the Barn Courtyard.
- The beautiful Hambleton Valley is home to many artists, their studios tucked away down twisty country lanes. In the village of Turville (opposite the Bull & Butcher pub) you'll find Turville Studios, six working studios occupied by local artists, creating and showcasing works in various media, from fine art to photography, printmaking and ceramics. Visitors are welcome to drop in to see the artists at work, view and potentially purchase work. The studios are open on the first Saturday of the month. In the



## MEET THE MAKERS

To see Adam, John and other Chilterns Makers at work, visit our website for a series of short videos [www.visitchilterns.co.uk/crafts](http://www.visitchilterns.co.uk/crafts)

Photo: Kate Wilkinson

nearby village of Hambleton there is a monthly local producers' market where several local makers sell their work.

- There are many art shows and events in the Chilterns, ranging from large regional events such as Bucks Art Weeks to smaller community events. These events often take place in beautiful and interesting locations, a great way to get off the beaten track and see the hidden Chilterns.
- Why not have a go at painting, potting, plaiting or whittling? There are short taster sessions and longer courses. Susan Gray runs painting days from her studio in Wendover with visits to local beauty spots. You can join David Willis in the woods for a day's whittling and outdoor cooking around the campfire. Or stay at Missenden Abbey for a weekend or Summer School course in art, craft or textiles.
- The Chilterns has inspired famous artists whose work is celebrated at a number of venues. The River & Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames displays the work of John Piper who made his home at Fawley Bottom and created the stained glass for many of Chilterns' churches (as well as his renowned windows made for Coventry Cathedral). The Museum also houses galleries of temporary art and photography exhibitions. Further along the river at Cookham is the Stanley Spencer Gallery in a converted Wesleyan chapel, celebrating the work of one of our greatest British painters. Spencer painted many Biblical scenes as well as the landscapes around Cookham and local village life.



### Woodcraftsman Adam King

The Chilterns is home to some long-standing crafting families, with skills passed on through the generations. Woodcarver Adam King learnt the trade from his father, renowned craftsmen Stuart King, and is now keeping the traditions alive:

*"When people buy my spoons they are buying a piece of Chilterns heritage. It provides a connection with the place, sometimes with a particular tree from a particular wood! People appreciate the time and craftsmanship that has gone into making them".*

### Ceramicist and potter John Nuttgens

John Nuttgens works from his studio at Idlecombe Farm near Turville, tucked away down an ancient holloway flanked by beech woodlands.

*"At Idlecombe Farm there has been a long tradition of the creative arts, crafts and music. Through the 60s and 70s Idlecombe was the venue for the Folk and Jazz club which had the active support of no less than the poet John Betjeman! In more recent years, Idlecombe has been the home of painters, saddle-fitting and ceramics. In my own ceramics practice I borrow some aspects of the landscape. It is a dynamic landscape which changes with the seasons. This is reflected in some of my work which is based on the local flora and natural forms around me".*



Photo: Nicola Schaefer

## CHILTERN CRAFT WALKS

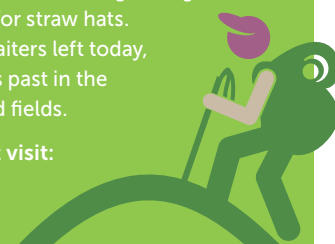
### The Chilterns Straw Plaiters Walk

A scenic 3.5 mile circular walk from the Motte and Bailey pub in Pirton, Hertfordshire.

Pirton once sustained an important cottage industry, straw plaiting for the Luton hat trade from the 17th century to the 20th century. The village sign depicts hands plaiting straw and behind once stood the plaiting school.

The chalk-sprinkled fields you can see on your walk may help explain why straw plaiting developed here. The thin Chilterns soil provided ideal conditions for growing the soft pliable wheat needed for straw hats. Although there are no straw plaiters left today, there are many reminders of its past in the cottages and lanes, hedges and fields.

To download the walk leaflet visit: <http://bit.ly/pirton-walk>



# CHALK, CHERRIES & CHAIRS

## LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

Protecting the central Chilterns landscape for future generations.

Have you heard about the largest partnership conservation project taking place in the central Chilterns right now? Read on to find out all about the 18 projects planned over the next five years, and how you can get involved in protecting the landscape for future generations.

### ABOUT THE SCHEME:

The Chilterns Landscape Partnership Scheme is an exciting new conservation project designed to restore and enhance the wildlife habitats, landscape features and cultural heritage of the central Chilterns, whilst educating and inspiring communities to become protectors of their local heritage and landscapes.

The five-year project is a partnership of over 30 organisations including local authorities, statutory bodies and the charitable and voluntary sector. Consisting of 18 individual, interconnected projects, There are six projects under three different themes: Wildlife and landscape, Heritage and landscape, and People, communities and landscape.

Primarily thanks to National Lottery players, with further funding provided by High Speed Two Ltd through the Community Environment Fund, Wycombe District Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy and partner organisations, Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will leave a lasting legacy of improved conservation and land management, partnership working, skills development, increased number of volunteers, and more engaged and aware communities caring for the future of wildlife and their heritage.



### ABOUT THE PROJECTS:

**LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS:** Together with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and Natural England, we will work with over 50 farmers and landowners to create, restore, manage and connect habitats – chalk grassland, ancient woodland and chalk streams – in critically important biodiversity areas.



#### WATER IN A DRY LANDSCAPE:

This project will identify, map and quantify the biodiversity value of headwaters in the Central Chilterns and provide practical support for habitat creation, restoration and management projects. It is understood that this is the first river catchment-scale study of its kind and will leave a legacy of continued investment in, and management of chalk stream bank-side habitat.



**CHILTERN ORCHARDS:** This exciting community-based project will restore or create Chilterns orchards, with a strong emphasis on volunteering.

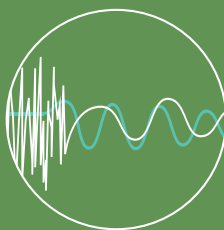


#### ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES:

Working with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and many Parish Councils, environment groups and wildlife charities, this community-based project will increase the biodiversity value of smaller, local and often overlooked sites and inspire communities of interested people to create, manage and appreciate them.



**ECHOED LOCATIONS:** Created in conjunction with the National Trust, this fascinating project will build a sonic sound map that will encourage people to slow down and take in the sounds of the Chilterns.





## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs has designed projects to help address the real and immediate challenges facing the central Chilterns area such as housing and development infrastructure, wood-lotting and disappearing hedgerows. The project will create, restore and link existing wildlife habitats which will help nature to flourish.

As well as the physical conservation and protection that this project will deliver, it is only one part of this story. We need to inspire a new generation of people to care for and take action for our precious landscape. That's why many of our projects have a strong emphasis on volunteer and community engagement.



Photo: John Morris

### WOODLANDERS' LIVES AND LANDSCAPES:

Working with Buckinghamshire New University, this community social history project is designed to support volunteers in collecting oral histories from local individuals and families, and researching in local archives to reveal fresh perspectives on the unique industrial heritage of High Wycombe and the Chilterns.



**CHERRY TALK:** This project will connect young people with older generations and increase the awareness of the cherry orchard heritage of the central Chilterns. It will capture the words of those who knew the orchards when they were at their height and transform those words into stories for the modern day through spoken-word performance art including poetry, songs and video.



In addition to the individual projects the **CHALK, CHERRIES & CHAIRS FESTIVAL** will take place each September from 2020 to 2024 to coincide with national Heritage Open Days. People will be able to learn traditional skills, take part in kite-flying picnics in the countryside, storytelling events, bodgers' tours round local pubs, guided nature and history walks, and more!



Photo: Allen Beechey



Photo: Colin Drake

If you feel inspired by any of the projects we've talked about, or would like to read more about the other projects we have planned, please visit:

[www.chilternsaonb.org/projects/landscape-partnership-scheme](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/projects/landscape-partnership-scheme)

To receive all the latest news and updates on the project sign up to the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs newsletter: <http://bit.ly/CCC-Newsletter>

# SHEDDING LIGHT ON LIGHT POLLUTION

Many National Parks and AONBs cherish their dark skies and have been designated as International Dark Sky Parks or Dark Sky Reserves. Although all AONBs are classified as Intrinsically Dark Zones, unfortunately the Chilterns is one of the most light polluted of all protected landscapes.

The Chilterns suffers from sky glow from London and nearby towns, and transport corridors like the M25 and M40, as well as light spill from homes and businesses within the AONB. However, the good news is, light pollution is completely reversible.

The benefits of dark skies are obvious. It saves carbon emissions, saves money and helps wildlife (bats, moths, plant germination). There is growing popularity for astro-tourism, with local communities and visitors coming to dark sky areas for stargazing events. It allows us to re-discover the beauty of the

night sky. We might remember the first time we gazed up at the wonder of a starry night, and imagined ancient people looking up at the same constellations. It is something worth protecting, so that the younger generation and those to come can also share this experience.

For this reason, the CCB has selected new policies on light pollution in our new AONB Management Plan. **We are not advocating a ban on all lighting, but we would like to see good lighting.**

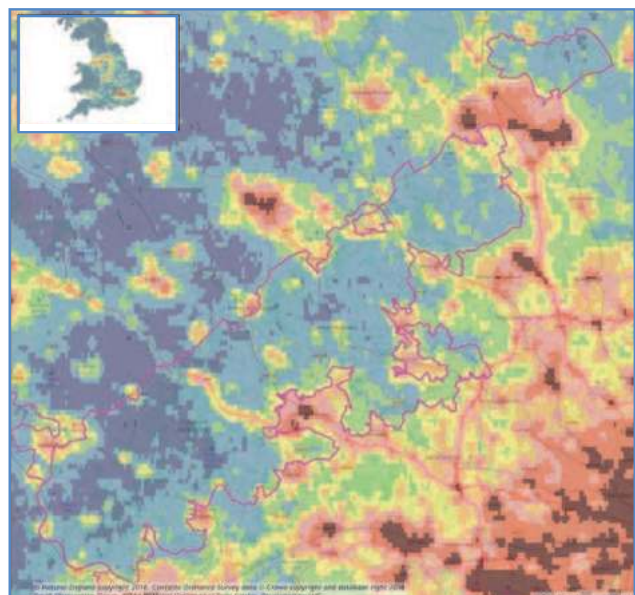
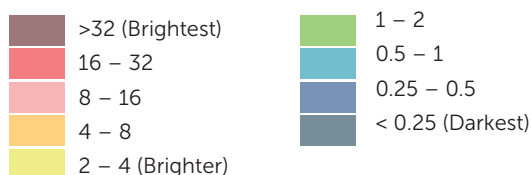
## Great Britain's Light Pollution and Dark Skies

Each pixel shows the level of radiance (Night Lights) shining up into the night sky. These have been categorised into colour bands to distinguish between different light levels. Please see the report for more information on this.



AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

NIGHT LIGHTS (NANOWATTS / CM<sup>2</sup>/SR)



We are seeing some worrying trends among householders to add unnecessary lighting, for example to upright trees, set lights into walls around entrance gates, or string fairy lights along drives.

There are now dark sky-friendly lights available, so if you are thinking of replacing your lighting, whether you live the AONB or not, it's a great opportunity to do your bit for dark skies and upgrade to better models. Here are some pointers:

1. Think about whether this lighting is necessary, and cut down on any you don't need.
2. Choose lights of the right brightness. Don't be a light polluter – go for a lower lumens.
3. There is no need to light up the sky. When choosing light fittings, look for designs that only light downwards, not sideways and never upwards. If you have existing external lights with adjusters, it's easy to point lights down so that they light up the ground and only in areas that you want to light like doorways or steps.
4. Instead of leaving lights on all night, save energy by installing a curfew timer, so that lights go off at a certain point in the evening. Lights with motion sensors can minimise the total time lights are on, although may need careful adjustment so that they do not flick on when not needed.
5. Avoid architectural designs for new buildings or extensions which have large areas of glazing. Bifold doors and triangular windows of fully glazed gable ends are currently fashionable, but often have no blinds and can spill light outside.
6. Choose 'warm white' rather than 'cool white' lights. Most lights for sale nowadays will be energy efficient LEDs, which use only a tiny fraction of the energy of incandescent bulbs. However, the 'cool white' versions are blue-white and have a higher colour temperature.

This blue-white artificial light is like daylight and is especially disruptive to wildlife and natural processes. In the AONB we recommend a colour temperature of 2700 kelvin or below which is in warm white and looks gentler too, with a yellow white hue more in keeping with rural character.

7. Talk to your councillors about street lighting. Many councils are replacing older yellow and orange glowing sodium lights with LEDs. This is fine as long as lighting is the minimum necessary, shielded and are warm white LEDs under 2700 kelvin rather than the cool white LEDs. These lights are an investment and have a long lifespan, so it's important that the right decisions are made now so that we don't as a society regret the choices made.

**With good lighting,  
everybody wins.**

Want to know more? See our new policies on lighting or contact AONB Planning Officer Lucy Murfett at [planning@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:planning@chilternsaonb.org)



# OUT AND ABOUT

## A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO AMERSHAM

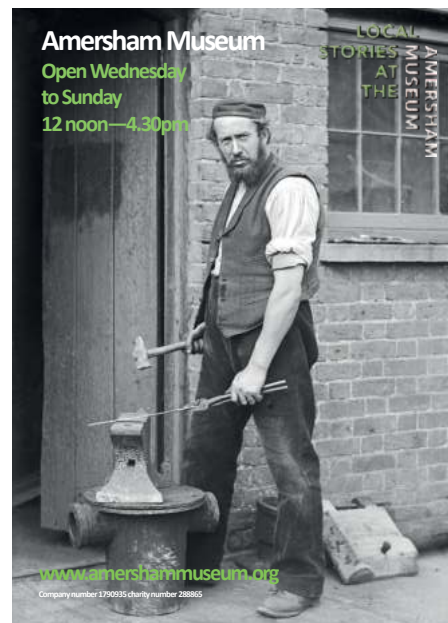
Just 45 minutes from London, Amersham is a thriving market town nestled in the beautiful Chilterns countryside. Once at the heart of the Chilterns lace and perfumery industries, there's so much to enjoy in this charming town today.



Amersham is a town of two halves: the modern town on the hill and medieval twin in the valley below. The town was once renowned for producing exquisite black silk lace: 16th century craftswomen created fine silk veils and flounces of black lace in an industry which continued late into the 19th century because almost everyone, from kings to babies, wore lace on their clothing. Amersham was also the home of the famous Goya perfume factory which once operated throughout the Second World War, and played a vital role in the town's post-war history.

There are signs of Amersham's rich cultural and industrial heritage everywhere. Discover graves in the shape of wool sacks, spot flints used from railway excavations at St Mary's Church, find an 18th century water pump (although ale was preferable), or a red lion standing proudly above a lintel, marking the spot where a pub and stable for brewery dray horses once stood.

Why not pop into the King's Arms Hotel, former posting inn made famous by the 1994 British romantic comedy 'Four Weddings and a Funeral'? The inn once served as a place to change the horses on the London to Oxford route, and perhaps give weary travellers some respite after enduring the bumpy road from London. It looks quaint and olde-worlde, but the majority of the facade is in fact "Brewery Tudor", added by the local brewery about 100 years ago to cover up an unsightly earlier facade. False



frontages are common in market towns like Amersham, as successive owners attempt to modernise their old-fashioned structures.

### Metroland

Amersham has been a destination for London dwellers for generations. The railway was built in 1892, and advertising campaigns praised the accessibility of the town, easily reached from the Metropolitan tube line, as a gateway to the beautiful Misbourne Valley. Today, this once quiet corner of the Roman Empire is now a busy Metroland corridor, linking London highways with Chilterns byways. But it still offers train-to-trail countryside escapes and a tranquil space for everyone to enjoy. A visit to the Amersham Museum is a must if you'd like to find out more about Amersham's fascinating history.

### River Misbourne – the 'missing' stream

A protected Chilterns chalk stream, the Misbourne (Latin for *missing stream*), meanders through the centre of town, behind houses, through a meadow and under bridges. Today, as in years past, the Misbourne suffers from fluctuations in water level, due to variations in rainfall as well as ongoing extraction of water for domestic and commercial use.

### Go with a guide

Amersham Museum offers a range of guided town tours. Visit <https://amershammuseum.org> for more information.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

You can discover more about Amersham, including how to get there, exploring the surrounding countryside and our other Chilterns market towns.

Check out [VisitChilterns.co.uk](http://VisitChilterns.co.uk) and [TheChilterns.blog](http://TheChilterns.blog) for more inspiration.

by Mary Tebje, Chilterns Tourism Network

# A GUIDE TO SPOTTING FARMLAND BIRDS IN THE CHILTERN

Linnet



Male Winchat



Skylark



Our farmers do a great job in not just feeding us but also feeding many of our common and more elusive bird species. Whatever time of year there will always be something interesting to see.

## In the spring

**Listen** out for the unmistakable song of the Yellowhammer's, "a little bit of bread and no cheese", this phrase perfectly sums up the quick string of five to eight notes, ending with a much longer note. Often perched on top of hedges the vivid yellow colour of the male is a stunning sight.

**Look** out for the Linnet with its red cap, grey head and bright pink breast. They will often sit on overhead wires so don't forget to look up!

**Check** arable crop fields for Yellow Wagtails. Arriving back in spring from wintering in warmer climes, its brilliantly fresh yellow plumage and constantly wagging tail are clues to a treat of a bird.

**Inspect** the top of your nearest hedge. If you think you have heard someone jangling a bunch of keys then you might have found a Corn Bunting. Its large beak, designed to crack even the toughest of seeds is a clue to one of our more endangered farmland birds.

**Look up** if you see a bird rising up directly from the ground singing as it goes until its almost out of sight then you may have found a Skylark. A constant and cracking backdrop to any day out in the Chilterns.

## In the winter

**Check** patches of over winter stubble often left for game cover. The abundance of seed and other food, especially in February and March will often attract large numbers of Finches, Buntings and Pipits.

**Observe** berry trees. Where there is a berry there is likely to be a Winter Thrush. Redwings and Fieldfares flock to the UK from continental Europe to enjoy our warmer winters and can strip a tree of berries in no time!

## If you are really lucky

Short-eared Owls migrate to the UK in their hundreds in the winter, to feed off our abundance of small mammals living in our farm-fields. Keep an eye out at dawn and dusk for these incredible owls quartering over field margins to find food.

Photos: Roy McDonald



Yellowhammer

### Have a go at “Viz-migging”

“Viz-migging”, or visible migration watching is a great way to watch some of the millions of birds on the move, heading South or arriving for the winter from the North and East.

Pick a spot on top of a Chilterns high point (Steps Hill and Ivinghoe Beacon are great examples) in April and October and take some time to see birds literally visibly migrating above your head. Flocks of finches or pipits can be seen en route to or from the Chilterns.

If you are lucky a Ring Ouzel might stop to refuel, an Osprey might drift over, or watch a Whinchat or Wheatear spring from a fence post to catch insects.

Whatever you chose and whatever you find, birdwatching in the Chilterns can be a real treat and add excitement to a family walk or a picnic with the kids.

If you need a little help why not buy a field guide or download an app to help with some of the birds that are more tricky to identify?

by Nick Marriner, Landowner and Engagement Officer (Chalk, Cherries and Chairs)

### Corn Bunting



Stop, look and listen as you pass different habitats and see what you can find. Don't forget to let us know on Twitter what you do find we'd love to know and see your photos @ChilternsAONB #chilternsbirds



Sir John Johnson KCMG

## TRIBUTE TO SIR JOHN JOHNSON

1930–2018 Chairman (2004–2010), Chilterns Conservation Board

Sir John, as he was always called, both out of courtesy and affection, was a passionate champion of the Chiltern Hills. Home, after a career in the diplomatic service, was Old Amersham, the ideal base from which to explore the Chilterns of which there was no part he did not know intimately.

He was the first chairman of the Chilterns Conservation Board (2004–2010) having been chairman of its precursor, the so-called Shadow Board from 2001. Prior to that he had been vice chairman of the Chilterns Conference since 1995. All the while he had been a Vice President of The Chiltern Society. Nobody was more involved in the conservation of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or more enthusiastic about encouraging local people and visitors to enjoy it. We could not have wished for a better champion, leader, mentor and friend.

Sir John hailed from Manchester where he attended the Grammar School and then went to Keble College, Oxford. A long and distinguished career followed

as a diplomat, including appointments as High Commissioner in Zambia and his beloved Kenya, for which he was knighted. As a lifelong walker who completed all the Munros, he was an ideal choice as chairman of the Countryside Commission (1991–1995). It was during his tenure that he took a direct interest in the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, at that time considered forgotten Cinderellas to the better-known National Parks. Stemming from that time all AONBs now have staff, overseeing organisations and much enhanced funding; it's little wonder he was held in such high esteem across the country by all those who knew what a difference he had made.

He always found time for his Chilterns' duties despite holding a raft of honorary positions which included President of the Long Distance Walker's Association and The Friends of the Lake District, vice president of the Youth Hostels Association and, most importantly to him, The Chiltern Society.

He will be sadly missed but his legacy is enormous and will be long lasting for which we, residents, visitors and lovers of The Chiltern Hills, will remember him fondly and with enormous gratitude.

Steve Rodrick,  
Ret'd Chief Officer (1994–2015),  
Chilterns Conservation Board

# INTERVIEW WITH GAIL SIMMONS, AUTHOR OF **THE COUNTRY OF LARKS**



“The Country of Larks” is the description Robert Louis Stevenson gave the Chilterns when he journeyed between High Wycombe and Tring in 1874. He wrote up his three-day journey across the Chiltern Hills in an essay titled: “In the Beechwoods”, penned a decade before he found fame as an author. Former resident and lifelong enthusiast of the Chilterns, Gail Simmons, has written a book tracing the history of its natural environment, how it has changed over the last 150 years and how it is likely to be transformed in future years.

Just as Stevenson spoke to people he met along the way, Gail encounters those whose lives will be affected by HS2: a tenant farmer, a retired businessman-turned-campaigner, a landscape historian and a conservationist. We caught up with Gail who shared some personal reflections of her experience walking through the Chilterns and meeting local people...

## Where does your love of the Chilterns stem from?

Gail: After a nomadic army childhood we settled in the Chilterns when I was eight, and I lived there until leaving for university at eighteen. Our home was in a typical Chiltern commuter village, with fields and beechwoods behind, which my younger brother and I spent many happy hours exploring. Those were the days before smartphones and tablets, and we were outside much of the time.

## What was your favourite landscape or view as a child and is it still your favourite?

Gail: I used to love going to Ivinghoe Beacon, with its sweeping views over several counties. It’s a haven for wildflowers and butterflies and the starting point of the Icknield Way and Ridgeway long-distance paths — both of which I’d love to walk one day.

## Did your experiences during the walk reinforce your childhood memories?

Gail: Chalk landscapes like the Chilterns are special to me, probably because of my childhood memories. Walking across these mellow hills again certainly brought back recollections of rambles with my family in the local woods, cycling along lanes frothing with cow parsley in early summer and exploring the meadows and hedgerows surrounding our village.

## In retracing Robert Louis Stevenson’s footsteps, how much has the landscape changed since his time and what have been the main causes?

Gail: On the surface, much has changed. The lanes Stevenson walked along are now busy roads, and the towns and villages have expanded hugely. And of course there’s intensive agriculture, and the depletion of wildlife that has resulted. But once you get deeper into the countryside much also remains. On my walk I took some maps which were drawn up about the time that Stevenson walked here, and I was struck by how many of the fields and woodlands have survived. And although few Chiltern residents are farming these days, there’s still a real sense of community.

## How do you think HS2 will impact the landscape of the Chilterns?

Gail: The saddest thing for me will be the destruction of the historic Misbourne Valley, a landscape that has changed little in the past four hundred years. Ancient lanes will be severed, field systems that have stayed much the same since Tudor times will be decimated, mature hedgerows — the habitat of birds and other wildlife — will be destroyed.



Robert Louis Stevenson famously wrote about “a wonderful carolling of Larks” which followed him as he walked across the Chilterns. Were you struck by the breadth of wildlife you came across?

Gail: When I grew up here in the 1970s, wildlife was much more abundant than it is now. A recent WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) report stated that globally we’ve lost some 60% of our wildlife between 1970 and 2014. This is also happening in the UK, so it’s understandable that I heard far less birdsong than Stevenson did. The skylark that he heard in such profusion has suffered a serious decline in recent decades, and is now listed by the RSPB as an endangered species.

Based on the conversations you had on your encounters, how do you think family businesses and rural communities in the Chilterns will be affected by HS2?

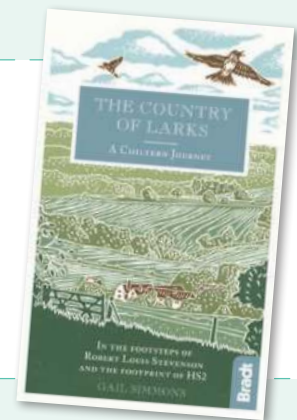
Gail: In many ways, HS2 has brought people together. One activist I spoke to on my walk told me he had met people he never would have otherwise, and that the campaign had created an amazing sense of community. A tenant farmer I spoke to said, nearly two million tonnes of spoil from the construction of HS2 will be dumped on his land — possibly rendering his farm unviable. He believes its eventual removal will take four years, and it will take another five years to restore the land. And as a tenant rather than a landowner, his compensation will be minimal.

Has your view of HS2 changed?

Gail: Generally I am pro-train travel, and although I was sceptical about HS2 before I started my walk I hadn’t understood just how much it will affect the people, landscape and wildlife of this part of the Chilterns AONB. Also, many experts believe the economic case for HS2 has been overstated, and the costs are increasing all the time. And there’s no doubt that the environmental impact will be huge – so no, I personally don’t believe HS2 is justified.

The Country of Larks is a delightful and poetic reflection of the Chilterns past, present and future; anyone captivated by the Chilterns will be equally enthralled by Gail Simmons’ account.

Bradt Travel Guides is offering readers of Outstanding Chilterns a special 25% discount on copies of The Country of Larks. To claim your discount, purchase the book at [www.bradtguides.com](http://www.bradtguides.com) and enter code OUTSTANDING at checkout. Offer valid until 30 June 2020.



## UPDATE ON HS2

The decision to construct HS2 was given royal assent by Parliament back in 2017, but the project continues to draw controversy and still today there are rumours that it may not go ahead at all.

Aside from the economic issues, environmental arguments have weighed heavily against HS2 along the length of the route and significantly across the Chilterns. Organisations and residents within the Chilterns have campaigned hard against the likely impact of HS2. The Chilterns Conservation Board is now focussing on its role within the Review Board, reviewing infrastructure designs such as viaducts, cuttings and tunnels and aiming to reduce the impact of HS2 across the Chilterns AONB.

## MITIGATING THE IMPACTS

The Chilterns Conservation Board and partners work hard to reduce the impact of HS2 on the landscape.

Just some of our work includes:

- Influencing design and work on projects to maintain green corridors, and provide wildlife biodiversity and connectivity through the HS2 Review Group.
- Submitting funding applications for environmental projects to mitigate damage. Recently we secured funding from BLEF, a programme to support local businesses and tourism affected by HS2. In addition, our Chalk, Cherries & Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme also includes a number of projects around the central Chilterns area that will improve and enhance wildlife habitats and heritage of the area. You can read more about Chalk, Cherries & Chairs on pages 14 and 15.

# BEACONS OF THE PAST LIGHTING UP THE LANDSCAPE



Now into its second year, the Beacons of the Past project is starting to receive some fascinating results as it uncovers the prehistory of the Chilterns Hillforts. Dr Wendy Morrison, Project Manager for this exciting project, tells us what's been achieved in the past year.

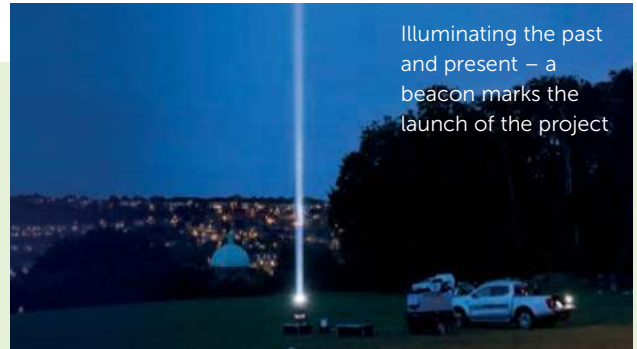
Beacons of the Past was created with the ambition to captivate local communities and encourage them to discover, protect and enjoy the Chilterns' Iron Age hillforts and their prehistoric chalk landscapes.

Now more than 12 months into the project we are starting to see some great results: the UK's largest bespoke archaeological LiDAR survey has been flown, we've met and engaged with many new people and communities, and have started to undertake a number of practical works including scrub clearance and targeted excavation.

We held an official launch for the project at Desborough Castle Park in High Wycombe in September 2018, with an afternoon of prehistoric crafts including an Iron Age cooking, with samples of bread, butter, cheese and more – all made with prehistoric techniques and ingredients. There were also flint tool making demonstrations and prehistoric bushcraft – using nettles and other plants to make string, rope and jewellery. We will be holding many more Iron Age discovery days throughout the duration of the project, so please keep a look out on our website for an event near you.

LiDAR is a survey technique used by archaeologists to aide in the discovery of new sites, and is particularly important for its ability to show archaeology beneath vegetation.

Our LiDAR survey was flown by Cyient Europe during the winter months and covered 1,400 km<sup>2</sup>. We are only now beginning to process all the data this generated, and soon will have it available to share with the world. Using the power of Citizen Science, we are inviting the public to log on to our Online Portal (Launching in late July 2019) and help us spot the Chilterns archaeological features from the comfort of their own home.



Illuminating the past and present – a beacon marks the launch of the project

## Getting Involved

For those who like to get more involved outdoors, we have been running a series of conservation events, from litter picking on monument sites to 'scrub-bashing' – removing damaging and invasive vegetation from the earthworks.

We have also been running training workshops in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), LiDAR interpretation and topographic surveys. There will be more opportunities for these sorts of training sessions over the next two years all around the Chilterns AONB. And of course, no archaeological project would be complete without a little digging in the dirt – in September 2019, there will be an excavation at Burnham Beeches aimed at learning more about an Iron Age feature we know very little about. The dig will be open to the public every day to view, and to participate upon application. On 14 September we will have an Open Day with a host of prehistoric crafting activities and living history. Save the date!

If you would like to get involved in any volunteering opportunities, attend an event or simply keep up-to-date with the project progress, please sign up to our quarterly eNewsletter at: [bit.ly/ChilfortsNews](http://bit.ly/ChilfortsNews)

Alternatively you can email, Wendy Morrison at [wmorrison@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:wmorrison@chilternsaonb.org)

Beacons of the Past is a 3.5-year project part funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Chiltern Society, and the National Trust, amongst others.



# THINK BEFORE YOU FELL

With more trees suffering from diseases such as Ash Dieback and Acute Oak Decline, felling can be necessary to help keep trees and woods safe. But felling a tree incorrectly or without obtaining the correct consent can lead to fines and other problems. John Morris explains the considerations and why you should think before you fell.

## NECESSARY FELLING

Felling is a normal part of woodland management and has been carried out for centuries. It is one of the reasons many woods are still here today.

Most ancient woods have been repeatedly cut back to ground level to stimulate growth and provide firewood or timber. Young trees require thinning to give more space for others to grow. As timber is a renewable resource, we can grow more, and the carbon fixed by young growing trees can be stored indefinitely if their timber is used for buildings or furniture.

## FELLING FOR SAFETY

With recent storms, droughts and diseases causing more dead, damaged and dangerous trees, felling due to safety reasons will undoubtedly occur. However the level of risk, linked to the location of the tree, should be considered before a decision is made to fell it.

An option could be to fell the tree but then leave it in situ to slowly decay and become an important part of the woodland ecosystem; this decision may depend on the economic value of the tree(s) and the ease of timber extraction.

## GETTING THE RIGHT PERMISSIONS

If you decide that you need to fell the tree it is important to obtain the correct permissions or licence before doing so. Woodland management is regulated by the Forestry Commission in England and they issue felling licences for an agreed programme of work, often linked to a woodland management plan.

There may be other constraints to consider, for example District Councils may have put a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on individual trees or woods, so their consent may be needed too. Bats and nesting birds are among the protected species that must be taken into account so the season when work takes place should be considered.

Remember, there can be fines for getting it wrong and felling without permission, so please think before you fell.

Cut stump of a hollow decaying Ash over a public bridleway



Dead Oak tree by a footpath marked with red paint 3 for felling

If you're thinking of felling a tree and are not sure of the next step to take, the Chilterns Woodland Project is able to offer advice and assistance to landowners to select and mark suitable trees for felling. They can also assist with applications for felling permission. Please contact John Morris at [woodlands@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:woodlands@chilternsaonb.org) for more information.



# CHILTERN YOUNG EXPLORERS

## Make your own Bird Feeder

There's no better way to attract birds into your garden than by providing them with a delicious snack! Birds love seeds and need fat so they can survive the cold winter when food is scarce. With more of our countryside disappearing, it's really important to help our birds survive, so why not try making this Pine Cone Feeder yourself?

Things you will need...



Now for the fun part...

### STEP 1

In a large mixing bowl, combine the dry food ingredients with the lard and cheese, and squeeze them together with your hands until they form a squidgy mixture.

### STEP 2

Tie a long piece of string around the top of your pine cone, ready to be hung up later. Then cover the pine cone with the gooey mixture, making sure you cover all the holes.

### STEP 3

Wash your hands and then put your feeder in the fridge until the mixture goes hard.

### IT'S READY!

Then it's ready to hang up for the birds! (yum yum).

### TOP TIPS

To be in with the best chance of spotting some birds...

- Hang your bird feeder from a branch or bird table that you can see easily, preferably from inside through a window. This means you don't have to be quite as quiet and you can still watch the birds when it's cold outside.
- Make sure the feeder is hanging far enough from the ground or the tree trunk and in the open, so cats can't sneak up on them (at least 1.5m).
- If you have a small pair of binoculars, keep them handy so you can see all the amazing coloured feathers.
- Borrow a book from the library or look up photos of birds online so you can learn the names of the birds you spot.

### WHAT BIRDS MIGHT YOU SEE?

Greenfinches and Chaffinches love seed mixes so watch out for those. Otherwise you may see Blue Tits, Great Tits, Sparrows and Goldfinches. Nuthatches and Starlings will love the lard, so look out for those birds too. And of course, you may see Robins and Blackbirds, which commonly live in gardens.

We've hidden five Chalkhill Blue butterflies on these pages, can you find five more like this?



## Chilterns Wildlife Wordsearch

W Z S M U N T J A C W R Y  
 B O Q Q B E E C H T R E E  
 L N O B U T T E R F L Y L  
 U E M D Y I R J R R D M V  
 E P T T P R R E L R V T M  
 B P Y I Y E G R O T R Y Q  
 E B J T K D C B E Z N G D  
 L D R W A D I K T L J R Y  
 L E B B V N E G E Z M Q J  
 E Z W Y M M K R Y R D N J

- Red Kite
- Bluebell
- Beech Tree
- Muntjac
- Butterfly
- Woodpecker
- Badger
- Cherry Tree
- Squirrel
- Robin



## BIRD QUIZ

- 1 Which birds particularly like eating seeds?
- 2 Which birds think lard is delicious?
- 3 Why should you hang a bird feeder at least 1.5m from the ground?
- 4 Why do you need to stay quiet and still when you're birdwatching?



BIRD QUIZ ANSWERS:  
 1. Chaffinch & Greenfinch  
 2. Nuthatches & Starlings  
 3. So cats can't catch the birds  
 4. Because any noise or movement will frighten away the birds

# HOW CAN YOU HELP LOOK AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT?



2019 is the “Year of Green Action”, with the aim of seeing young people involved in improving the natural world.

But why should you care about the environment and what can you really do to help?



To find out, we caught up with Paul Stack, Education and Community Projects Manager at Chiltern Rangers, a company on a mission to improve the local environment and enrich the lives of local communities through its volunteering opportunities.

**Q** Why is it important for young people to care for the environment?

**A** The obvious answer is because it is their environment and the only one they will have for the rest of their, and their children's, lives. But also, I see the infectious enthusiasm of children and young people as they get involved in looking after and discovering different habitats and wildlife with us – which reminds older people how special our world is.

**Q** What advice would you give to someone who would like to do more to care for the environment?

**A** You could start in the garden at home and create a ‘Say no to mow patch’. Let the grass and wildflowers hidden in your grass grow up and provide food for bees and butterflies. Mow and rake in the autumn. Get involved in conservation volunteering and encourage your school to create wildlife areas just like you can at home.

**Q** Who are the Chiltern Rangers and what do they do?

**A** The Chiltern Rangers provide woodland management, advice and practical volunteering opportunities that helps local communities get involved, and be a part of improving the local environment. We all love being outdoors and getting lots of children, young people, families and older people all working and learning together to look after a huge variety of different habitats.

**Q** What is a typical day like?

**A** My job is very varied. I could be outdoors leading a Junior Ranger event with a group of young people – learning to use saws and loppers to cut down scrub, with a big fire (always popular) – or running a Forest Ranger School session. Or I could be designing wildlife areas in school grounds or hospital gardens, or writing reports and funding bids to do these projects.

**Q** Have you got any exciting projects planned for this year?

**A** We are working with lots of schools all over the Chilterns to develop their grounds for wildlife, with pupils helping us design wildlife areas and then to do the work of coppicing, planting, sowing, building planters and fabulous bird boxes.

I am also looking forward to getting groups into the River Wye to restore sections of it back into good condition. We will be building berms and deflectors and other structures to bankside habitats and much more!

**Q** What is the best way to get involved with the Chiltern Rangers?

**A** Email us at: [info@chilternrangers.co.uk](mailto:info@chilternrangers.co.uk) and ask to be put on our youth and family projects and conservation volunteering email lists. We also have a work experience programme. If you are part of a youth group who might want to come out and volunteer with us. Or if you'd like your school or you would like your school to get more involved, let us know and we can try to find funding to work with you.

To find out more about the Chiltern Rangers, visit their website at <https://chilternrangers.co.uk>.



## Help care for the environment



Isla is a 6-year-old girl on an eco-mission! For over a year she has been litter-picking in the Chilterns, volunteering at local events and doing everything she can to reduce, reuse and recycle. In one school term she collected 16 big bags of rubbish on her way to school...by herself!

We asked Isla for her top five tips to help care for the environment, here's what she said:

- 1 Buy a metal water bottle instead of using single use plastic ones
- 2 Say 'no' to plastic straws
- 3 Don't eat chewing gum because it contains plastic, have mints instead
- 4 When you go shopping choose fruit and vegetables that are not wrapped in plastic and take reusable shopping bags
- 5 Join in on organised litter-picks or organise one yourself

**1930s THEMED**

♦ **EST. 1929** ♦

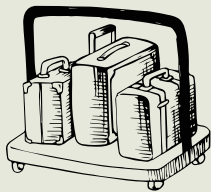
**CELEBRATION**

**90<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**

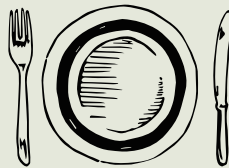
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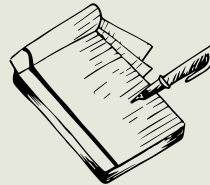
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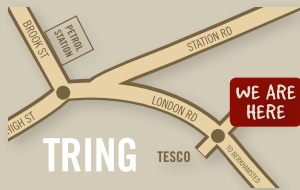
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