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Chilterns evolution

unveiling the new
Chilterns National
Landscape

Seeding sustainability

the vital role of
Farming in Protected
Landscapes

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just 30 miles
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Discover West Wycombe

exploring a hidden
gem in the heart of
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who are Tracking
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Chilterns
National
Landscape

Welcome

A note from the Editor



Welcome to the latest edition of Outstanding Chilterns magazine, your guide to experiencing the best of the Chilterns National Landscape.

This year we're thrilled to showcase the Chess Valley, a picturesque gem easily accessible from London. Explore its beauty and plan your next day trip on pages 12–13. Alternatively, you can discover the charm of West Wycombe on pages 18–19, or dive into the world of film and TV with our feature highlighting some of the most recent blockbusters filmed in the region on pages 10–11.

Did you know there are 160,000 species of moths worldwide and contrary to popular belief it is not the moth itself that chews through your favourite woolly jumper, but rather the moth larvae?! Learn more about this and other fascinating facts as Linda Seward demystifies misunderstood moths on pages 20–21.

Explore the fantastic projects of the government's Farming in Protected Landscapes initiative on pages 14–15. From new orchards and a new plant nursery benefitting local communities, to the restoration of Bledlow Cross – one of only four chalk carvings in the Chilterns, there are many amazing projects taking place that support nature recovery, mitigate climate change and provide opportunities for people to discover and enjoy the Chilterns landscape.

Whether you're reading this magazine on the go or relaxing at home with a cuppa, let it inspire you to explore the Chilterns countryside. Visit our website for hundreds of ideas for walks, rides, activities and day trips: www.chilterns.org.uk/visit-chilterns

Vicki

Vicki Pearce, Editor
vpearce@chilterns.org.uk

We'd love to hear from you! Share your experiences or ideas for future articles by contacting us at communications@chilterns.org.uk

About the Chilterns National Landscape

The Chilterns National Landscape covers 833 square kilometres across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. With breathtaking views, sweeping chalk hills, peaceful pathways, flower-filled woodlands, grand and historic attractions, quaint market towns, excellent local produce and myriad places to stay, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

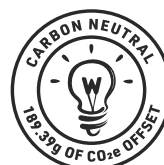
The Chilterns National Landscape is cared for by the Chilterns Conservation board (CCB), an independent body established in 2004 to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty and increase awareness and understanding of its special qualities. The CCB also has a duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of communities within the landscape.

The CCB has a staff team of 28 based in Chinnor, Oxfordshire.

More information: www.chilterns.org.uk



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Chief Executive's Letter

I'm delighted to be introducing Outstanding Chilterns magazine to you as the Chief Executive Officer of the newly rebranded Chilterns National Landscape. All areas of outstanding natural beauty in England and Wales have become National Landscapes to highlight their importance to the nation and this gives us an exciting opportunity to celebrate the special qualities of the Chilterns. As one of 34 National Landscapes in England, we want to be leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for our natural and cultural heritage.

As a team, we are very proud to be part of a family of National Landscapes that, working with a whole host of partners, make positive change for people and for nature. We want to help ensure that these special places are havens for nature, store carbon to tackle the effects of climate change, safeguard against drought and flooding, and provide us with food.

The decision to adopt the title of National Landscape originates from a key recommendation in the Landscapes Review, which explored how protected landscapes can be a positive force for the nation's wellbeing in a country that is changing fast – more diverse, more urban, under increasing pressure from development, and at the same time facing a nature and climate crisis. Learn more about this transformation in my interview on pages 4–5.

We know that people feel happier in the natural environment, or in places steeped in history or with striking visual appeal, so it's important that we can welcome more people to the Chilterns so that they can benefit from all it has to offer. There's something for everyone, whether it be delicious locally made food and drink from one of our cafés or farm shops, enjoying a stroll alongside one of the Chilterns' rare chalk streams or in one of the many beautiful beech woodlands, visiting one of our iron-age hillforts and imagining how our ancestors lived over 3,000 years ago, or taking part in one of the many activities and events on offer.

Another pivotal recommendation from the Landscapes Review was to highlight the importance of everyone being able to access and feel welcome in protected landscapes. In March 2024, we published the results of a study conducted in collaboration with the University of Bedfordshire. This study has helped us understand the diverse ways in which communities spend time in green spaces and the countryside and identify some of the



barriers people face. As a result, we are now planning to work with those communities to develop solutions to ensure that everyone can access the Chilterns. Learn more about this study and some of the initiatives already driving inclusivity on pages 6–7.

Working with local communities is at the heart of our work in the Chilterns and I'm excited to see how people are being supported to enhance their local landscape through the Mend the Gap programme. Working to heal the scars of electrification of the Great Western Railway, the project is working with local communities, farmers, charities and others on a range of projects such as creating a community garden, improving nature in school grounds, planting hedgerows and restoring rare chalk grassland.

I also invite you to explore the inspiring work of our citizen scientists in "Tracking the Impact" on pages 22–23. These volunteers have spent the past four years conducting surveys to better understand the local state of nature and contribute to national conservation efforts.

Finally, it's a privilege to work with an incredibly talented and passionate team, and to collaborate with the many wonderful organisations who feel the same passion for this special place as we do. I hope our magazine helps you to enjoy it too!

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Elaine King".

Elaine King,
Chief Executive



Chilterns evolution

unveiling the new Chilterns National Landscape



The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has a new name – Chilterns National Landscape. We spoke to Chief Executive Officer – Dr Elaine King – about this change of identity and what it means for the Chilterns.

Is the recent rebranding exercise just “window dressing” or does it signal something more significant?

EK: It is about visuals, and what people see, but there's definitely a lot more behind it. The rebrand is actually part of a bigger change happening right across the country. The Landscapes Review published in 2019 recommended that AONBs should be rebranded as “National Landscapes”. This recommendation has now been taken forward, backed up by research which has shown that the term “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” is not well understood among the public, and in particular younger people. And all the AONBs had very different logos, so we weren't visible to the public as a coherent network of landscapes. We now have a consistent brand that is recognisable across the entire family of National Landscapes.

These special landscapes were designated for the nation because of their “natural beauty”, which is a measure of their scenic quality, including the legacies of people's interaction with the landscape, historic places, artistic and literary associations, their geology and topography, in addition to the richness of nature and biodiversity. If we are to have the impact that we want, and to be able to benefit as many people as possible, there needs to be greater public awareness that protected landscapes exist and that they have so much to offer. And we want people to know about all the great work that is happening.

It is important to highlight too that the rebrand is also about us having greater visibility to government. We want to make sure that a range of government departments and agencies recognises the value that these wonderful landscapes bring to the nation so that we are properly resourced to help achieve its ambitions, for example on reversing declines in nature, tackling the impacts of climate change and improving people's health and wellbeing.

But the Chilterns is still designated as an AONB – isn't that going to be a bit confusing?

EK: In terms of what's currently written in legislation the Chilterns is indeed still an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. And as a Conservation Board, we are still the

statutory body set up by the government to promote the conservation, enhancement, understanding and enjoyment of the AONB. So, we are still legally the Chilterns Conservation Board, or to give it its formal name: “The Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,” but in the future the relevant legislation will be updated. And going forward, rather than looking inwards, we will be actively projecting ourselves as one of a network of 46 National Landscapes in England and Wales.

So, there will be less chance in future of people mistaking the Chilterns National Landscape team for the Chiltern Society and vice versa?!

EK: Indeed! That does happen quite a lot. As a charity that cares for the Chilterns, the Chiltern Society is one of our key partners and we work very closely with them. The big difference is that the Chiltern Society is a charity and we are a public body, but the important point is that we have a shared aim to conserve and enhance this wonderful landscape. As separate organisations we play to our respective strengths, and it works very well. I'm sure the National Landscape rebrand will help to make the distinction clearer.

So does the rebrand mean that all the existing roadside Chilterns AONB signs will need to be replaced?

EK: Yes, ideally, but that can't happen immediately. Cost is one issue, but we also don't want to introduce any new signs in the wrong places, so there will be a need to take account of the outcome of the boundary review that Natural England is currently conducting, which we expect to result in the Chilterns National Landscape being even bigger. And of course, the logistics is a matter for the relevant local authorities and National Highways to consider as well.

This year not only sees the introduction of the new brand identity but also the fifth anniversary of your appointment as Chief Executive Officer. Over the time you've been in post, there has been much debate nationally about how protected landscapes should be managed and funded, much of it precipitated by the Landscape Review. Do you feel that the current direction of travel gives some cause for optimism?



EK: Yes, I do. The government has recognised that National Landscapes are underfunded, and it is currently exploring a new funding formula to address this problem. So, I'm hopeful we will receive more funding from the government in the future. We certainly need a funding settlement that will allow us to plan for the longer term. One of the key purposes of the rebranding is to show that we have the ambition and the ability to do more if we are given the resources needed to do so.

But I don't in any way underestimate the scale of the challenge that lies ahead. The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. For example, the State of Nature Report, published in September 2023, reported that one in six species are at risk of being lost in Great Britain. And of course, there is so much pressure for new development to support the growth agenda, particularly here in the southeast of England. And even though we have a statutory duty to look after the Chilterns, we don't own any land. So, everything we do is done in partnership or through advocacy and advice, whether it be working with farmers, landowners, voluntary organisations or local authorities, and that's why every five years we create a management plan that guides our collaborative work with all our partners.

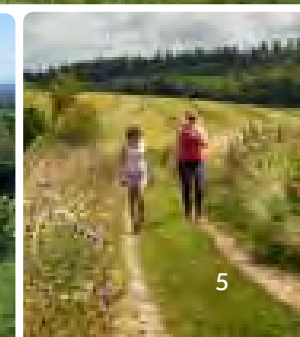
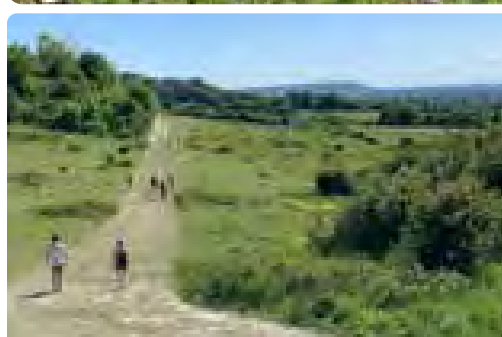
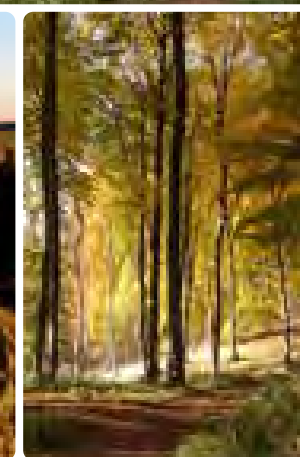
Can you provide an example of this collaboration?

EK: Our work with the farming community gives a good illustration. It is worth bearing in mind that around 60% of the Chilterns is farmland, and so schemes that support farmers to manage their land in a way that encourages access, helps to reverse the decline in nature or conserves and interprets heritage assets are absolutely vital. For example, the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme provides an opportunity for us to give farmers grants to improve their land for nature and for people. We also support several "farmer clusters" where like-minded farmers come together to share experience and expertise.

I'm grateful that we have some very committed and expert partners and I'm extremely fortunate to work with such a passionate and knowledgeable staff team. The new brand identity will undoubtedly be helpful to us all as we strive to showcase the delights of the Chilterns and the work that we do collectively to protect and enhance this precious landscape

Thanks for talking to us Elaine

EK: You're very welcome.





My Chilterns, Your Chilterns, Everyone's Chilterns

The Chilterns National Landscape spans 833 km² of countryside that is protected for the benefit of the nation – and that means for everyone. While the physical and mental health benefits of greenspaces and the countryside are well-documented, stark inequalities exist in both access to these areas and the health outcomes they bring.

Chalkscapes, a report by the University of Bedfordshire and the Chilterns National Landscape, found that only 33% of people visit green spaces weekly, with older individuals, those facing deprivation, and people from minority ethnic backgrounds visiting the least. Barriers include lack of information, transportation costs, safety concerns, lack of facilities and dog worries. To address these challenges, the Chilterns National Landscape is seeking funding to expand upon the report's findings and develop community-driven activities. Some ideas include using local radio stations and producing leaflets in different languages about places to go and things to do.

Whilst this work progresses, it is important to recognise the fantastic organisations, groups and volunteers who are already providing inclusive and welcoming ways for people to explore the Chilterns countryside. Here's just a small selection of those who are leading the way.

WALKING GROUPS LEADING THE WAY

Abdul, a walk leader from High Wycombe, founded **Chiltern Charity Walks** group to raise money for charity. The group hosts weekly walks, typically covering 7 to 8 miles at a relaxed pace, with a packed lunch stop. "It's about being out enjoying the countryside with like-minded people, while helping charities along the way," Abdul said. Each walk costs £5, and all proceeds go to charity.

Chiltern Young Walkers is a friendly and sociable walking group aimed at people in their 20s and 30s, offering leisurely strolls to challenging hikes across the Chilterns, often within 30 minutes from Aylesbury, Hemel Hempstead or High Wycombe.

With over 5,800 members, **Chilterns Explorers** organises guided walks across the Chilterns and beyond, starting at a convenient tube or railway stations.

Visit: www.chilterns.org.uk/getting-together for more information and opportunities to join.



Chiltern Explorers. Credit: Colin Wharton

WELLBEING WALKS

In the Chilterns, many wellbeing walks are easily accessible from towns and villages and ideal for those who enjoy group walks with trained leaders. Walks vary from 10 to 90 minutes, often ending at a café for a chat and refreshments.

Mike Fayers, from **Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)**, has seen significant growth in the Bedfordshire health walks programme, with over 1,196 walks attracting 23,000 participants in 2023. "Most of the participants would not walk on their own," he said. "So, the health walks are vital for getting people out walking regularly." Mike emphasised that the chance to socialise and connect with others is a key factor in the success of the walks. "Even participants who are no longer able to join the walks still join us at the café for a drink and a chat with the friends they'd made on past walks."

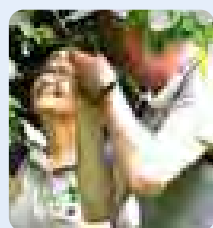
Additionally, **Walk Works** led by Liz and Caroline, offers sociable weekly walks in the Southern and Thames Valley countryside, promoting wellbeing through outdoor activity. The focus is very much on sociability, meeting new people and having fun! Usual price £10 person.



Explore various health walks, including buggy walks and women's groups at: www.chilterns.org.uk/nature-for-health.

COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FOR ALL

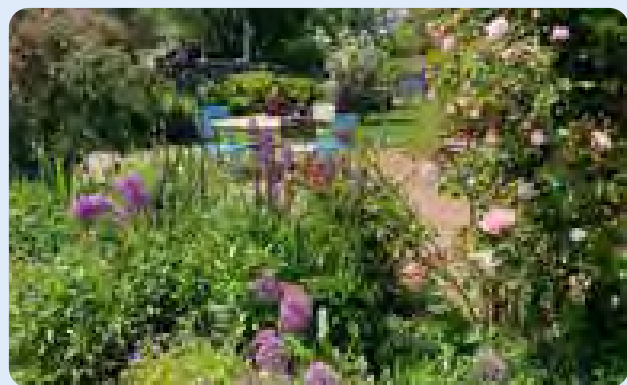
There are a variety of accessible experiences on offer across the Chilterns, **Natural Inclusion** offers groups and individuals a chance to deepen their experience of nature using all of their senses, learning from visually impaired guides. When Chilterns-based Andy Shipley (right) experienced a decrease in his residual vision, he noticed a corresponding increase in the use of his other senses and a growing appreciation for non-visual aspects of the natural world. Sight loss isn't necessarily a negative thing," said Andy. "It enables you to access the natural world in a much richer way. Natural Inclusion enables those of us with sight loss to share that with those who haven't had that experience because they're reliant on their sight."



Berkshire Vision and Bucks Vision organise walks and tandem cycling, offering visually impaired members and sighted volunteers the chance to explore the countryside together.

For those seeking interactive experiences, the **Burnham Beeches Sensory Trail** provides

a unique sensory stroll. This trail incorporates tactile and acoustic sculptures, inviting visitors to touch, listen, and even sit on the installations, enhancing their connection with the natural environment. Similarly, **Lindengate**, near Wendover, offers a captivating 6-acre secret garden complete with a Nature Reserve, Ponds, Heritage Orchard, Kitchen Garden, and Sensory Garden. Here, visitors can immerse themselves in a sensory-rich environment, discovering hidden sculptures and heritage-based art scattered throughout the site.

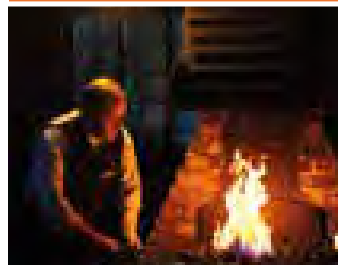


Nature enthusiasts with limited mobility will find accessible options at **College Lake Visitor Centre**, a Wildlife Trust nature reserve near Tring. The centre features a wheelchair-accessible bird hide, providing a tranquil space for birdwatching.

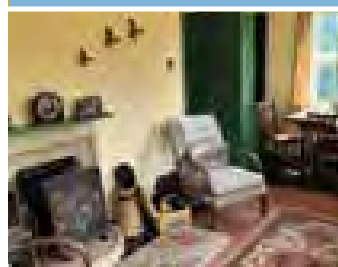
To learn more about these accessible experiences and discover additional opportunities for nature exploration in the Chilterns, visit www.chilterns.org.uk/accessible-chilterns.



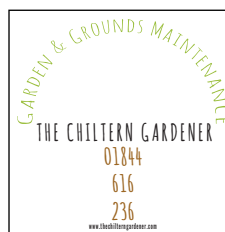
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MEND the GAP

How the scars left by the electrification of the Great Western Mainline line are being healed.

BY RUTH STAPLES-ROLFE & SARAH HEBBES



When work to electrify the Great Western Mainline began in 2015 the masts and gantries installed left scars across not one but two National Landscapes – the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs. Today, as a result of the hard work of local residents and two National Landscapes teams, a programme has been established to help heal those scars, and enhance and enrich the areas affected for wildlife, residents and visitors. Funded by Network Rail, the programme covers a 20km railway corridor that stretches from the outskirts of Reading up to Didcot and extends 3km either side of the line. It is delivered by the Chilterns National Landscape team in partnership with the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and the Railway Action Group and is an exciting example of cross-boundary collaboration.

What does Mend the Gap fund?

- Mitigation work, primarily in the form of tree planting and hedgerow restoration, to soften the visual impact of the electrification.
- Enhancement work to conserve and enhance the landscape's natural beauty and increase understanding of it.



WORKING WITH SCHOOLS TO DEVELOP LANDSCAPE LITERACY



Credit: Learning through Landscapes



Mend the Gap is supporting schools in the programme area to access funding to strengthen student engagement with the National Landscapes and enhance their school grounds. Industry leaders Learning through Landscapes and the Visionaries will support young people and teachers to develop proposals for small grant funding from the programme.

BRINGING LANDOWNERS AND FARMERS TOGETHER FOR GREATER IMPACT

On a wet day in Whitchurch-on-Thames, more than 35 farmers and landowners in the south Chilterns came together to discuss how they could work together to enhance the region's landscape.



Participants owned or managed a diverse variety of land types, from forestry estates to grazing pasture, and large-scale arable farms to small private meadows, and during an enthusiastic workshop session discussed topics such as regenerative agriculture, habitat creation and connection, and monitoring programmes. The day finished with the creation of an informal steering group which will now keep the group connected and drive forward plans to work towards common goals that will positively impact the landscape and wildlife of the area.



MENDING THE GAP THROUGH COMMUNITY GARDENING

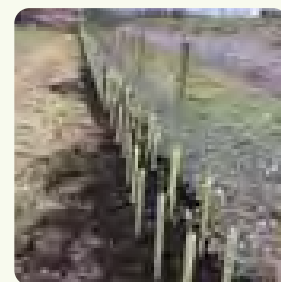
South Stoke, a Thames-side village in the south Chilterns, is being supported by Mend the Gap to develop a community garden and growing space that will benefit both the local community and local wildlife. The project is being led by the Parish Council, supported by local residents

Situated on a hectare of land which the Parish Council has recently taken on a long-term lease, and adjacent to the railway line, the garden will include areas for community growing, a school learning area and wildlife enhancements for everyone to enjoy.



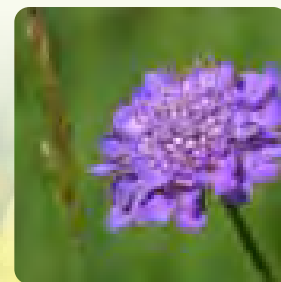
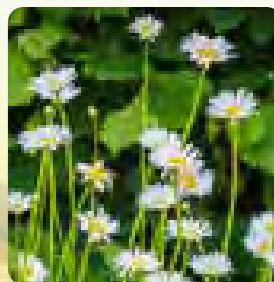
PLANTING AND RESTORING HEDGEROWS TO SCREEN THE SCARS

Planting trees and hedgerows to mitigate the visual impact of the gantries and other electrification equipment is a key priority for Mend the Gap. In 2023, planting began in the South Stoke area, where over 990m of hedging has been planted to date. All the tree and hedgerow species planted are native to the area and have been specifically chosen for their value to wildlife as well as their suitability for the local landscape. Where possible, "signature" trees such as black poplar, wild pear and disease resistant elm, which were once common along the Thames corridor, have been planted.



RESTORING RARE CHALK GRASSLAND

A farm in Streatley is re-introducing local native wildflowers to around 86 hectares of grassland in an exciting trial for chalk grassland restoration. Rectory Farm, which has both donor sites (to provide the wildflower seed) as well as the restoration site itself, has been supported by Mend the Gap to harvest seed from target plant species on the farm. Species expected to benefit from the work include bird's-foot trefoil, blue fleabane, cowslip, fairy flax, field scabious, harebell, lady's bedstraw, ox-eye daisy, rough hawkbit, salad burnet, small scabious, wild basil and wild thyme.



This is just a snapshot of the range of projects Mend the Gap is supporting – you can read about lots more at www.mendthegap.uk

Lights, camera, action!

Filming in the Chilterns

BY FIONA SKEGGS

Whether it's a wartime epic, a riverside murder mystery series, or Olivia Coleman shouting expletives at Timothy Spall, there's something inherently exciting about seeing the main character of the latest blockbuster hit walking down your local high street.

With its ancient beech woodlands, historic houses, chalk escarpments, and quintessential English villages just a short drive from London, the Chilterns National Landscape has a long-standing history of providing locations for film and television productions.

Filming is a major source of income for locations in the Chilterns, but it isn't just the land and property owners who benefit. Many local businesses gain from visiting production companies by providing services like transport, security, and equipment hire.

Pippa Cawdron, film office manager at Hertfordshire Film Office, said the proximity of four of the UK's largest film studios – Pinewood, Elstree, Sky, and Warner Bros. – is what makes filming in the Chilterns National Landscape so appealing.

"Being a film-friendly area makes things much easier for production companies," she said. "We can provide wraparound services like catering, construction and accommodation, and companies have access to a lot of great local talent."

Film offices provide a centralised, one-stop shop for production companies looking to film in the Chilterns National Landscape. From scouting locations and issuing permits, to liaising with the police and marketing local services, film offices promote the Chilterns as a filming location while protecting the environment and minimising disruption to communities.

Filming in England, an organisation funded by the British Film Institute, offers free comprehensive production support to feature films and TV dramas. Their team works closely with film offices and local authorities to offer a seamless service and are on hand to help at every stage of the process, from early development to post-production.

They have a vast locations database to help production companies of all sizes find the perfect locations for their projects, and both Bucks and Herts film offices also have free, online locations databases. Anyone can register their land or property to show their willingness to welcome film crews in the future.

"We get asked for many different types of locations from farmland with scenic views or barns, empty warehouses, industrial settings to ordinary family homes," said Ruth Bryant, film officer at Buckinghamshire Film Office.

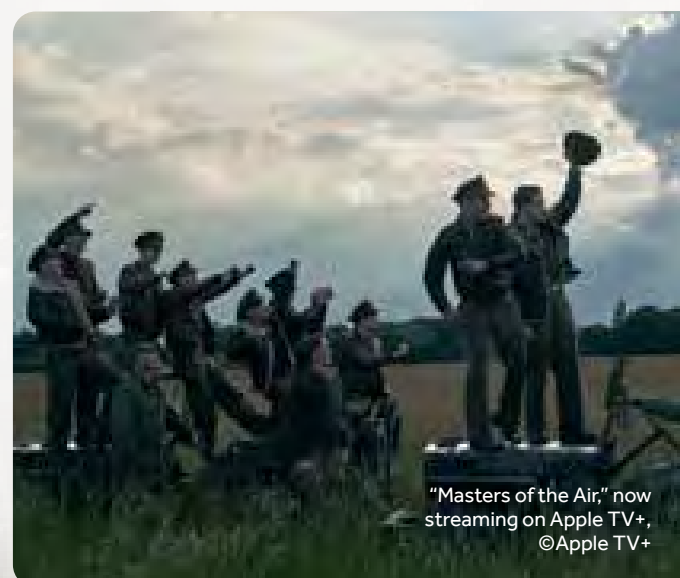


Vanessa Kirby at West Wycombe Estate in "Napoleon", now streaming on Apple TV+, ©Apple TV+

"It is not only grand manors and stately homes that productions look for," she said. "Buckinghamshire has also been used as a substitute for other places such as London or the US in various time periods; this means Location Managers search for properties in a wide range of architectural styles from Tudor properties with exposed beams to post-war housing."

Period architecture is found throughout the Chilterns in both quiet, rural settings and in bustling town centres.

Amy Greenland, film office manager at Dacorum Borough Council, said Hemel Hempstead Old Town high street is often described as the prettiest street in Hertfordshire. "It is a fantastic place for filming to transport audiences back to a past era with its Victorian, Georgian and Tudor architecture," she said.



"Masters of the Air," now streaming on Apple TV+, ©Apple TV+



Old Town Hemel Hempstead High Street during filming for "Masters of the Air", ©Filming in England

Sandbags and vintage signs recently transformed the Old Town high street's modern-day shopfronts into World War Two air raid shelters for Apple TV+ drama, Masters of the Air. The show, which stars Barry Keoghan and Austin Butler, follows a group of US Air Force bombers during the war and was filmed at many locations across the Chilterns including Bovingdon Airfield, Chalfont St. Giles, Hemel Hempstead and Bledlow.

Other notable recent releases filmed in and around the Chilterns include Wicked Little Letters, which sees Coleman and Spall in a heated exchange outside the Judges Lodgings in Aylesbury, The Marlow Murder Club, the latest crime detective series from Death in Paradise creator Robert Thorogood – Marlow's vibrant Thames-side properties, shops and churches all feature as Samantha Bond and her team of amateur sleuths seek answers to a mysterious string of murders – and West Wycombe Park becomes 18th Century France in Ridley Scott's historical epic, Napoleon.



Filming "The Marlow Murder Club" in Marlow, ©UKTV

So, while a road closure or town centre production set may disrupt your day, it's important to remember that filming promotes growth in the local economy and helps properties, like West Wycombe, fund much-needed restoration projects.

We're proud that the Chilterns National Landscape is such a popular filming location, and we hope to see the beautiful Chilterns on the big screen for many years to come.

The Marlow Murder Club first aired on UKTV in March 2024 and is available on demand on UKTV Play. For more info and to register a location, visit:

Filming in England: filminginengland.co.uk

Bucks Film Office: buckinghamshirefilmooffice.com

Herts Film Office: hertfordshirefilmooffice.co.uk



WADDESDON

A French-style Château with richly decorated interiors, a world-class art collection and beautiful gardens



Visit us waddesdon.org.uk
Waddesdon Manor,
Buckinghamshire

Image: Waddesdon Image Library, Merriman Photography



Great Missenden | roalddahlmuseum.org



Join Daws Hill Vineyard for a Tour and Tasting, Workshop or Experience

Visit dawshillvineyard.co.uk for more details

A family run vineyard in the Chilterns. Specialising in English Sparkling Wine



CHILTERN VELO

A warm and welcoming Cafe styled as the perfect pit stop for cyclists and walkers.

Hawridge Common, Chesham, HP5 2UQ

www.chilternvelo.co.uk

Discover the wonderful CHESS VALLEY

Just 30 miles from London, and easily accessible via the Metropolitan Line or trains from Marylebone, the Chess Valley is one of the most beautiful spots in the Chilterns.



The landscape is rich in wildlife and has a long and fascinating history. Discover the site of a Roman farm villa at Latimer, pass the 13th century Chenies Manor, or visit the watercress beds at Sarratt – the only commercial watercress farm left in the Chilterns. Dotted around the hilltops are many rural villages with ancient churches, photogenic greens, and alluring pubs with cosy bars for Sunday roasts or shady gardens for summer drinks.

WALKING IN THE CHESS VALLEY

Beautiful and accessible, the Chess valley offers some of the best walking in the country. Take a stroll beside the River Chess or head up into the hills for some steep climbs and stunning views.

One of our most popular routes, the Chess Valley Walk, is a 10-mile linear walk from Rickmansworth to Chesham. For those looking for something on the shorter side, there are several small, circular walks along the route that all start at train stations and range in distance from 3 to 6 miles.

For more details and to download walk routes, see www.chilterns.org.uk/chessvalley

EXPLORE THE CHESS VALLEY

1 Chorleywood House Estate

Picnic by the River Chess and walk through the woods, gardens and formal parklands of this magnificent estate, which now surrounds a privately-occupied Victorian mansion.

2 Sarratt

A secluded village blessed with three country pubs: The Cricketers and The Boot, both on the village green, and the Cock Inn in Church Lane.

3 Chenies

The privately-owned Tudor Manor House and its attendant church form the focal point of this pretty village, once largely owned by the Dukes of Bedford. The Bedford Arms and Red Lion pub complete the picture. Easy access from here down to the River Chess.

4 Frogmore Meadows Nature Reserve

A rare example of a traditionally managed wildflower meadow, on the River Chess: alive with colour, birdsong, butterflies and bees.

5 Latimer

17th and 18th century cottages cluster around a small village green. Latimer House, now De Vere Latimer Estate, was the World War II espionage centre where wired walls captured revealing conversations between German prisoners.

6 Ley Hill

At the top of the hill, The Crown pub and village beacon look over the cricket ground to open reens and woodlands that are perfect for walkers.

7 Chesham

A Walkers are Welcome market town with walks leading straight into the countryside. Head to the High Street for cafes and eateries. Look out for the monthly Local Produce Market, the outdoor pool at Chesham Moor, The Elgiva Theatre and The Drawingroom music venue. See visitchesham.org.uk

8 Chiltern Velo Café, Hawridge Common

A perfect pitstop for cyclists and walkers.

9 Hawridge & Cholesbury

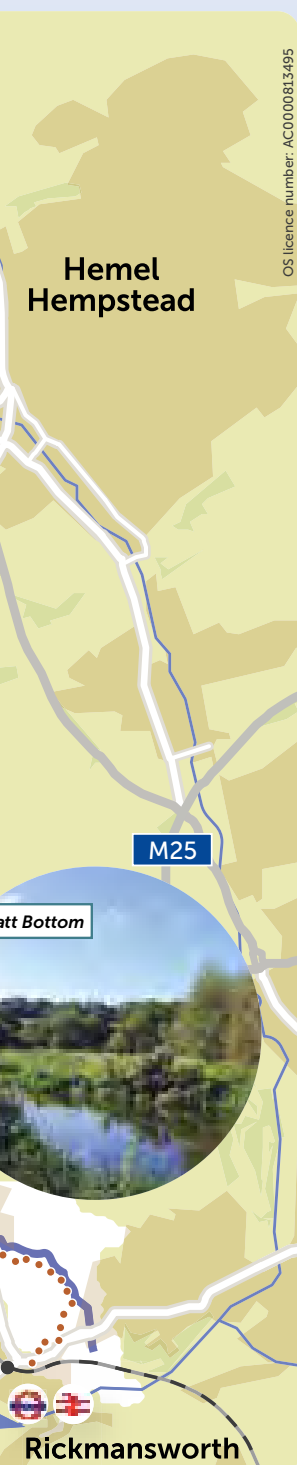
Two close-knit, ancient hilltop villages with character cottages, a private windmill, cricket pitch, the Full Moon pub and the 105-acre Hawridge & Cholesbury Commons, rich in beechwoods and wildlife Cholesbury's Church of St Lawrence is encircled by the still-impressive Cholesbury Camp Iron Age hillfort.

10 The Lee

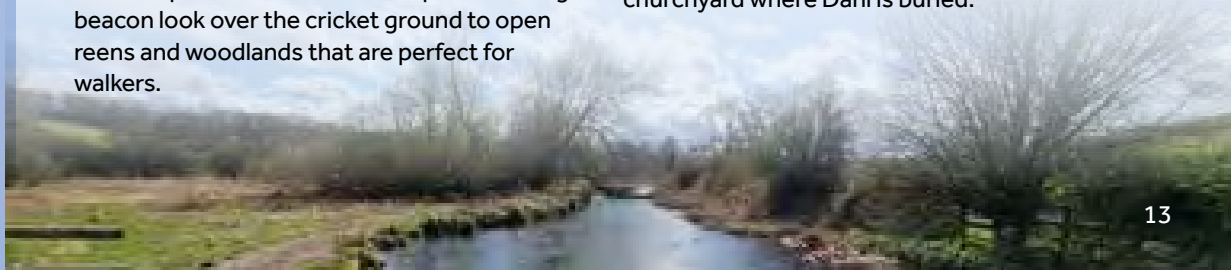
Arthur Lasenby Liberty, founder of Liberty's of London, remodelled this picturesque village around an idyllic green, even relocating its Cock & Rabbit pub. Lanes lead off to the community-owned Shop at The Lee and the 13th-century Old Church and its successor, also partly funded by the Liberty family.

11 Great Missenden

Visit The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre for awesome activities for all the family and follow the Roald Dahl Village Trail to the churchyard where Dahl is buried.



OS licence number: AC0000813495





Seeding sustainability

BY GARETH CLAY

The Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme in the Chilterns, 2021 – 2024



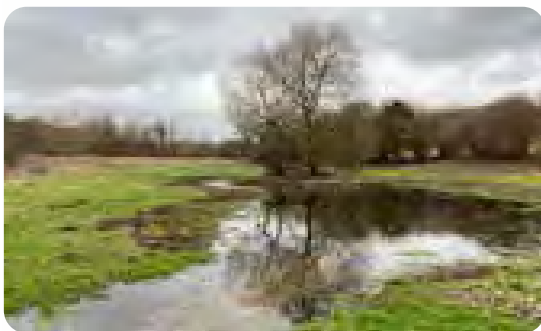
Since June 2021, the Chilterns has been benefitting from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme. The initiative has helped farmers and land managers with projects that support nature recovery, climate change mitigation, providing opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and learn about the Chilterns, or protecting and improving the character of the landscape.

By the end of March 2024 there were 107 applications and 100 of those were approved, totalling approximately £1.35m in grant funding (with an average grant size of £13,500).

As the funding draws to a close at the end of March 2025, now is a good time to highlight some of the fantastic work and projects undertaken by farmers and land managers in the Chilterns so far.

REVITALISING THE HAMBLE BROOK

In the Hambleden valley, Farming in Protected Landscapes funding has helped with work to restore the chalk stream and associated wetland habitat.



Chalk streams are a big priority for the Chilterns National Landscape and other partners, and the funding is one part of a larger collaboration of organisations and landowners including: Colestrop Farm, Chilterns National Landscape, the Environment Agency, and the National Trust. The work (coordinated by Adrian Porter of Chilterns National Landscape), used gravel and large pieces of dead tree trunk, to re-naturalise this rare winterbourne stream and also created linked, adjacent wetlands to support additional wildlife even when the channel itself next runs dry.

INITIATIVES FOR DEER POPULATION MANAGEMENT

You may remember reading in the last edition of Outstanding Chilterns magazine, that high deer numbers in the Chilterns are proving to be a problem on many levels. Woodland ground flora and regeneration can be severely impacted by their browsing and grazing along with a reduction in species inhabiting the shrubby understorey layer of woodlands (such as hazel dormouse). Deer also impact hedgerows and crops. Consequently, Farming in Protected Landscapes has contributed to several deer management projects such as chiller facilities to try to increase the numbers that can be culled.

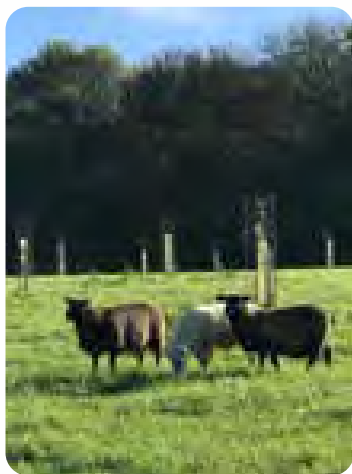
FARMING WITH NATURE IN THE NORTH CHILTERNS FARMER CLUSTER

In the north Chilterns, the funding has been used to support a new farmer cluster. With help from Nick Marriner of Chilterns National Landscape, 15 enthusiastic farmers from the Dunstable and Luton area are carrying out supplementary winter bird feeding, enhancing an extensive network of hedgerows, auditing their soil and farm carbon, and meeting with a wide range of experts to help them with further changes.



NURTURING NATURE AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE CREATION OF NEW ORCHARDS

Orchards are a traditional landscape feature of the Chilterns, and many farmers and landowners have taken advantage of Farming in Protected Landscapes funding to help establish new orchards stocked with traditional and heritage varieties. In many cases, the orchards are also grazed by sheep. The orchards will become more ecologically valuable over time, supporting pollinators and birds. In addition, the orchards are already proving their worth as local communities learn about their value and, in many cases, help to care for and manage them.



UNVEILING THE SECRETS OF BLEDLOW CROSS

The Bledlow Cross on the Carington Estate is one of four chalk carvings in the Chilterns and the only one that potentially has great age (possibly 9th/10th century), but it has been overgrown and largely invisible for a long time. This Farming in Protected Landscapes project (coordinated by Dr Wendy Morrison) is physically revealing the monument and its landscape setting. The project will also uncover the facts about its creation and role in the history of Bledlow Ridge and the wider Chilterns area. The Chiltern Society and Chiltern Rangers have worked together on this project along with a wide range of volunteers.



ROOTED IN COMMUNITY: CREATION OF A NEW PLANT NURSERY



On the Penn Estate, Chiltern Rangers have used Farming in Protected Landscapes funding to establish a community plant nursery which will grow native trees and shrubs of local provenance. The local plants will be used for habitat creation and enhancement projects across the Chilterns, which will help to reduce biosecurity risks and reduce carbon emissions compared to sourcing plants from further afield. Investment in the site has included deer fencing, rainwater harvesting, raised beds, a new polytunnel, site storage and welfare facilities. Chiltern Rangers staff are being assisted by skilled and trained volunteers as well as people of all ages and abilities from the wider community, including schools and colleges. The nursery will be a place for people to learn and volunteer all year round.

EXPLORING AGRICULTURE: FARM FIELD TRIPS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Farming in Protected Landscapes has also supported numerous school visits to a variety of farms, working with the Country Trust and with individual farms directly. As well as getting out in the Chilterns landscape, these visits have helped children learn more about where food comes from, how the land is managed and the wildlife that can be found.

Given that the funding has helped with so many farmer and landowner projects at the same time as helping to achieve strategic goals for nature recovery and climate change in the Chilterns, we are hopeful that similar funding may continue beyond March 2025. For now, we can celebrate the successes and say a big well done to all those who have initiated projects, worked hard, participated, co-funded and got involved. None of this would have been possible without the expert help and input from the Farming in Protected Landscapes assessment panel made up of farmers and others from the Chilterns National Landscape community members.



Take a seat & discover Chilterns chairs!

BY HELEN WALSH



You may think of the Chilterns as rolling chalk slopes, tall beechwoods and sleepy villages, but behind this tranquil vista, there lies a fascinating history of industry and activity that shaped the landscape and the people who worked and lived in it.



During the 1800s, the Chilterns were alive with furniture-making, woodware, straw-plaiting, lacemaking and, later in the century, with beading and other 'fancywork'. Chair-making, in particular, is intricately linked with this part of the world, and High Wycombe and the surrounding areas are synonymous with traditional wooden chairs, such as the Windsor – affordable furniture for the cottages of the time.

FROM FIELD TO FURNITURE

At the start of the 19th century, most men worked as labourers on local farms or estates, but by the mid-1800s, many were employed in the growing local chair industries. Workshops and factories flourished in the villages and small towns of the area, spurred on by trade with London and a growing disposable income.



By 1877, around 150 chair factories and workshops were operating in High Wycombe and surrounding villages, making around 4,700 chairs each day.

Image above: Chair 'Bodger' at work using a pole lathe to turn a chair leg for the chair making industry. Location unknown. December 1949. ©Bucks Free Press

At this time, the famous beech woods of the Chilterns were filled with the rasps of saws and the hum of lathes as men worked to make woodware, timber, and at the craft of "bodging". Bodgers used a pole lathe to make turned chair parts (legs, spindles and stretchers) for local furniture factories where the chairs were assembled and polished. These men built rough huts in the woods to shelter themselves and their lathes. Many of the woodlands were managed by large estates who would sell their trees to the bodgers. The landowners' woodsmen or the bodgers cut, coppiced and replanted the beech, looking after the supply that helped the furniture industry to thrive here.

WOMEN'S WORK IN THE CHILTERN

While the men worked in the woods and factories, women and children laboured at lacemaking for clothing or straw-plaiting for hats. As these crafts declined in the mid-19th century, they took over some of the furniture jobs traditionally done by men, such as caning and rushing.

View of seven women at work, caning the backs and bottoms of chairs, in the factory of Wm. Birch, Leigh St, High Wycombe. December 1935. ©Bucks Free Press



Caning is the art of weaving the seats and backs of chairs using the stem of the rattan palm, which grows in South East Asia, Australia and Africa. Rushing or 'matting' involves weaving lengths of rush to create chair seats – a tougher and dirtier job than caning.

The women often sang as they worked; the extract to the right is from a song telling of a young man whose heart was broken by a caning girl – listen to the full song at www.chilterns.org.uk/intheirownwords

*For underneath her arm she had
A small bundle of cane.
I nearly broke my heart,
Never wish to see her again.
That blue-eyed girl,
With her hair in curl,
I met with a bundle of cane.
And then we did agree to meet,
Again on Tom Burts Hill.
To talk of happy moments,
Love and sweet the memory still.*



Explore & enjoy

Top images © Stuart King & Wycombe Museum

DISCOVERING THE LIVES OF LOCALS

Forming part of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme, the Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes heritage project has been researching how the people involved in Chilterns' industries went about their daily lives. This research – mainly carried out by volunteers – has been showcased through events, exhibitions, stories, books, and videos, and includes a set of oral histories, *In Their Own Words*, that capture the essence of times gone by.

Helena Chance, the Woodlanders' Lives project lead, worked closely with the volunteers. "We have been so lucky to work with such a remarkable team of people with so much enthusiasm, expertise and diligence," she said. The project uncovered a wealth of information about how the people of the Chilterns once lived, which Chance said will now be stored in the Buckinghamshire Archives and available for others to build upon.

Local craftsman and journalist Stuart King has helped immensely with the Woodlanders' Lives' project. Born in Holmer Green, he has studied and recorded information about local furniture and craft traditions for much of his life. Volunteering with the project, King led a bodgers' pub tour, demonstrated pole-lathing at events and uncovered stories on local crafts. He says it's a great privilege to share his knowledge and expertise with others and is pleased that all the research will be archived.

chilterns.org.uk/woodlanders



"The past can soon be forgotten," he said. "Here, the voices and local experiences of many of the folk who helped shape our Chilterns way of life can be revisited."

CHAIRS TODAY

High Wycombe was once considered the "Furniture Town", an international centre with brands like Ercol, Parker Knoll and G-Plan at the forefront of furniture-making. Today, it still boasts several successful factories and workshops, including William Hands and Greengate.

To celebrate this long tradition, Chalk, Cherries and Chairs are pleased to be presenting a Chair Festival in partnership with Wycombe Museum during July 2024. Look out for talks, family events and pop-up installations. As part of the festival, Wycombe Museum are running an exhibition called *The Art of the Chair* from March until February 2025, showcasing the designs and marketing that made Wycombe chairs famous across the globe!

www.chilterns.org.uk/chairfestival



Mass production chair-making. Amersham. October 1964. ©Bucks Free Press

FIND OUT MORE

Read more about the roles women played in Chilterns industries in our book, *Hidden Hands: 100 Years of Women and Work in the Chilterns*

www.chilterns.org.uk/chilternsstories

Explore the connections between Chilterns pubs and chair-making through our bodgers' pub tour

www.chilterns.org.uk/woodlanders

Pop along to Wycombe Museum to discover local chairs

www.wycombemuseum.org.uk

Chalk, Cherries & Chairs

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs (CCC) is an ambitious Landscape Partnership Scheme connecting local people to the wildlife and cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns.

A whole host of interweaving projects make up the Scheme, including the Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes project which researched the past lives and crafts of local people. The Scheme is funded primarily by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and the HS2 Community & Environment Fund and is hosted by Chilterns National Landscape.

www.chilterns.org.uk/chalkcherrieschairs



Discovering the charms of West Wycombe

a hidden gem in the Chilterns National Landscape

BY MARY TEBJE

Writer of 'Micro Travels with Mary' www.marytebje.substack.com

Three miles west of High Wycombe, tucked away in the Wye Valley, is a unique 18th century Italian-inspired Chilterns landscape, built to impress and entertain. Beside which is clustered a tiny village of the loveliest cottages creeping up the hill towards the biggest show-off structure in the region; an 18th century mausoleum to perhaps one of the most notorious and eccentric men in English history.

West Wycombe is not one place, but a jigsaw of quite different, but complementary pieces that make up this delightful Chilterns village. Once an important stop for weary travellers heading to and from London by stagecoach along pitted and muddy roads, the high street was packed with hospitality options, although chances are you'd have had to share your bed with a stranger. In 1767, there were 17 public houses listed in the village, and today you can stop to enjoy a pint of something local, or cuppa and cake in one of the tea shops. At least that hasn't changed!



PAGAN WORSHIP

Sir Francis Dashwood was a very busy man; building roads, a fine country house, a church, mausoleum and elaborate cave system where he entertained, all using materials hewn from the hillside (by the locals at a shilling a day). Visible for miles is the church of St Lawrence; a commonplace name for churches that supersede places of pagan worship. The golden ball that still rises above the tower had space for six Georgian partygoers inside. Were they saying their prayers? The church is typically open on Sunday afternoons from March until the end of September.



Beneath the ground, partying continued in the caves, whose unusual design was inspired by Sir Francis Dashwood's visits abroad. The caves extend 0.25 miles (400 m) underground, with the individual caves or chambers connected by a series of long, narrow tunnels and passageways. The Hellfire Caves are open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11am – 5.30pm.

 **The caves are not wheelchair/pushchair accessible.**

Hellfire Caves, Church Lane, West Wycombe, HP14 3AH
www.hellfirecaves.co.uk

Getting to West Wycombe



Parking available beside the Walled Garden at West Wycombe Cafe, HP14 3AP.



Accessible toilets open 7am to 6.30pm, Monday to Sunday with baby change, Church Lane, HP14 3AH.



No.40 Red Rose Travel routes between Thame and High Wycombe, and No.130 Redline bus routes between Aylesbury and High Wycombe with single bus fares capped at £2 per journey until December 2024.



Dogs to be kept on leads around livestock.

A HOME FIT FOR A PRIME MINISTER

Just a few miles from West Wycombe, Hughenden Manor is a National Trust property that fully deserves a visit. The country home of Victorian Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, offers a vivid and entertaining insight into his personal and political life. The formal garden has been recreated, and there's an interesting Second World War room in the cellars.

FIND YOUR INNER CREATIVE WITH JOHN AND VANESSA

Inside the new Walled Garden Cafe, you will find artists John and Vanessa offering classes and courses where the "doing" can be more important than the finished product itself. They really enjoy the creative process unfolding as their students become more confident. Aged between 5 and 85, their students develop into potters by the end of the workshop, often bringing their own Chilterns landscape inspiration to the former potting shed – now the pottery shed. Led by trained potter John and trained illustrator Vanessa, the duo offer aspiring potters ways to improve techniques, painting and finishing. They help students realise their creative ideas into finished ceramics by inviting you to come in, slow down, to focus on creativity and to try something new.

www.walledgardenpottery.com/ Telephone: 07903 124531 Insta @walledgardenpottery



INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE

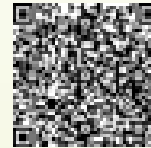
Walk through the countryside estates of West Wycombe, Hughenden Manor, Bradenham and Naphill Common, and enjoy the seasonal colour of the beech woods, snowdrops and bluebells, alongside fantastic views and historic monuments.

The 2.5-mile circular West Wycombe woodland walk takes you uphill through woodland to enjoy far-reaching views, returning downhill to pass the Dashwood Mausoleum and Hellfire Caves.



This route is stile-free but not suitable for wheelchair users.

Scan QR code to view the walk route:



The 4.4-mile circular Bradenham beechwoods walk takes you from the pretty Bradenham village into the Bradenham Estate and a classic Chiltern landscape of hills topped with beech woodlands, gently rolling valleys, and bluebells in spring.



There are some gates and several steep, short climbs.

The popular Red Lion Tea House serves breakfast, light lunches and afternoon tea. It also has a small, licensed bar.

www.redliontearoom.co.uk

Scan QR code to view the walk route:



An Enchanting Soft Play Haven

We are so excited to welcome you into the enchanting world of Clara's Corner, our cherished soft play haven designed for children seven and under, located at The West Wycombe Walled Garden, Buckinghamshire.

Why Clara's Corner? Our personal journey as parents led us to this moment. Inspired by our daughter's need for a space where her imagination could run wild and free, we created Clara's Corner.

It's a realm where the wonders of childhood are celebrated, a playground rich with adventures like slides, rope bridges and lovable woodland characters. More than the joy of play, we were driven to construct a haven of health and safety. We've poured our hearts into every detail, from the non-toxic, sustainable materials to the surplus sheep wool padding to the state-of-the-art fresh air filtration system. Each element within Clara's Corner is deliberately chosen with the utmost care, reflecting our deep commitment to the well-being of all children who come to explore and grow with us, helping to create the best citizens of tomorrow.



Clara's Corner

Dispelling myths about misunderstood moths

BY LINDA SEWARD



Common Nettle-tap
(*Anthophila fabriciana*)

Mention the word “moth” and some people will frown before telling you how much they hate moths for making holes in their best woolly jumpers. Many simply have no interest in them or consider moths to be pests. Others find their nocturnal flutterings repellent, as if they are performing some devilish deed. Why are moths so misunderstood when they are so essential to the health of the natural world?

Perhaps moths have a flawed reputation because many are small, somewhat drab and nocturnal. Conversely, butterflies are large, multicoloured and fly in the daytime when we are more aware of them. But start studying moths and you'll realise that there is a new world of wonder to experience. And there are some quite large and colourful moths that can put a butterfly to shame.

Moths and butterflies belong to the family Lepidoptera. These winged insects both go through a four-stage life cycle: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa, adult. There are a few differences between them, mainly the way they hold their wings and the structure of their antennae. However, a key difference is that moths outnumber butterflies by around eight to one. With over 160,000 different species of moths, 2,500 of which live in the British Isles, it is curious that they are so overlooked, especially when you reflect on the many ways they enhance our environment.

It appears cruel to say that one of the best contributions moths make to our planet is as a food source. Adult moths provide nourishment for bats and night flying birds. Moth larvae are an essential part of the diet of garden birds, insects, spiders, frogs, toads and lizards, as well as small animals like shrews and hedgehogs, providing a rich source of protein for them.

The presence of moths is a good indicator of a healthy ecosystem because areas that support moths will also sustain other invertebrates, which in turn benefit a range of creatures. It is thought that declining numbers of

farmland bats and cuckoos may be due to the falling numbers of the moths available for them to eat. Because moths are so sensitive to environmental changes, they are like the canary in a coal mine when it comes to informing us of the overuse of pesticides, irresponsible farming, climate change and air pollution.

Moths are pollinators of wild plants and food crops—their hairy bodies allow them to easily pick up and transport pollen. There are many day flying moths that pollinate flowers while doing their best to evade predators, either through disguise or by being eye-catching. Cinnabar moths are often mistaken for butterflies with their colourful red wings and have a unique way of protecting themselves from predation. The eye-catching black and yellow caterpillars feast on ragwort which contains poisonous toxins—these make the caterpillars and adult moths toxic themselves (and they taste terrible). Their bright colours act as a warning to potential predators. Other moths disguise themselves because they are so tasty—this is why so many are brown or green—so they can blend into the background vegetation.

Hummingbird Hawk-moths are quite large and their darting flight resembles the hummingbirds for which they are named; they extend their long tongues to feed on flowers such as lavender and verbenas and can be seen all day long.

Nocturnal moths are specialists at pollinating plants with white flowers and those that have a fragrance—which makes sense since these flowers are

easy to find in the dark. Moths do not have a nose, but smell through their bristly antennae as well as through receptors on their feet and mouthparts. This comes in handy for finding flowers as well as mates; some male moths can “smell” females from many miles away.



Just 0.08% of UK moths eat clothes – that's only two species out of 2500 UK moths! And it's the larvae that eat your woolly jumpers, not the adults. Do an energetic spring clean, wash your wool sweaters and store them in airtight bags to prevent moths from munching your clothes.

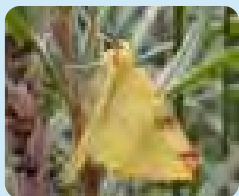
Most of us encounter moths desperately trying to enter our well-lit homes or encircling external lights. The mystery of their attraction to light has long puzzled scientists. This behaviour is called positive phototaxis. It seems that moths often use the light of the moon and other celestial bodies to navigate in a straight line, turning so they can retain the same angle to the light source. Electric lights confuse and disorientate them because their rays radiate in a circular way, making the moths spiral around the light. This makes it appear as if they are attracted to the lights when they are only bewildered.

Hummingbird Hawk-moth
(*Macroglossum stellatarum*)

Lepidopterists exploit the lure of light when they wish to survey and count moths by using traps (which do no harm). A moth trap is a specially designed box with a light that stands upright inside a funnel and shines all night to attract night-flying creatures who drop down into the box onto cardboard egg cartons. The moths snuggle into the depressions as they await morning. When the lid is removed, the moths can be counted and photographed for identification purposes before being released into vegetation, well out of the prying eyes of avian predators.

I haven't touched on the myth that butterflies are more colourful than moths. Just looking at the images on these pages will convince you that moths have beautiful markings and vibrant colours. It is essential that we protect and treasure these overlooked and misunderstood insects.

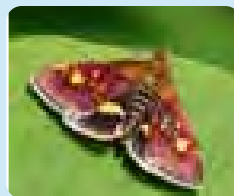
KNOW YOUR MOTHS



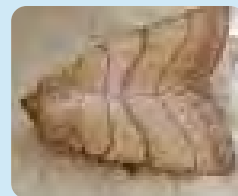
Brimstone Moth
(*Opisthoptis luteolata*)



Green carpet (*Colostyia pectinataria*)



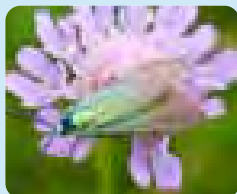
Mint Moth (*Pyrausta aurata*)



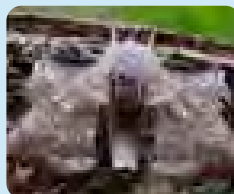
Treble Lines (*Charanyca trigrammica*)



Centre-barred Sallow
(*Atethmia centrugo*)



The Forester (*Adscita statice*)



Poplar Hawk-moth
(*Laothoe populi*)



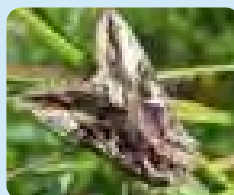
Yellow Shell
(*Camptogramma bilineata*)



Dwarf Cream Wave
(*Idaea fuscovenosa*)



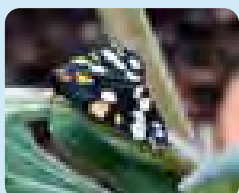
Hebrew Character
(*Orthosia gothica*)



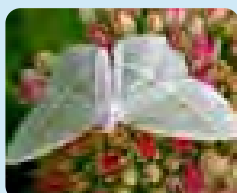
Silver Y Moth
(*Autographa gamma*)



Sycamore (*Acronicta aceris*) caterpillar



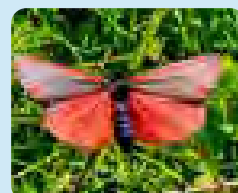
Scarlet Tiger Moth
(*Callimorpha dominula*)



Light Emerald (*Campaea margaritata*)



Small Elephant Hawk Moth
(*Deilephila porcellus*)



Cinnabar Moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*)

I'd like to thank Peter Cuss for checking this article; he has also written a beginner's guide to moth trapping, available on the Butterfly Conservation Upper Thames Branch website.

For further information, contact Butterfly Conservation Upper Thames Branch: www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/moths which has lots of useful information. You can join the Facebook page Butterflies and Moths of the Upper Thames region, which will enable you to share your finds and receive help with identifications: www.facebook.com/groups/458565932924345

You can contact me through my website: lindaseward.com or follow me on Instagram: [instagram.com/quiltmaniac1](https://www.instagram.com/quiltmaniac1)



Building a picture of our wildlife



BY HELEN WALSH

WHAT IS CITIZEN SCIENCE?

To look after nature, it is imperative that we understand it. We need to know things like where our wildlife lives, how big populations are and how they may change over time, and what might be threatening our species and habitats. There are scientists already employed to find this data and interpret it, but they just can't collect as much information as they need on a local level to build a complete picture and spot trends. This is where local people come in – using their knowledge and skills on the ground to fill the gaps.

By working with volunteers, scientists can cover more ground and gather more data. So-called "citizen science" is a growing area of research in the conservation sector, with local people collecting information about species and habitats over both time and space, gradually building up a long-term picture of our world – the more information we have, the better we can protect it.

Citizen science is not only about the data, though. Well-run programmes can help to foster relationships between conservationists and local communities, building support and a volunteer base, and helping people to understand the importance of their own patch for wildlife.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT IN THE CHILTERNs?

The chalk escarpment, rolling downlands, intimate valleys and ancient beech woodlands of the Chilterns National Landscape form an iconic landscape type. This rich tapestry is home to a whole host of special wildlife, from the brown trout in globally rare chalk streams to the water voles that run along their banks, the rare orchids of chalk grasslands to the chalkhill blue butterflies that flit around their flowers.

Yet, this landscape is under threat from challenges like climate change and development, making it important to understand how our plants, animals and habitats are responding both to these negative pressures and to the positive actions organisations, landowners and farmers take to counteract them. By gathering data from lots of sources, we can see local, long-term trends while contributing to datasets on a national level. This creates an evidence base that underpins decisions and actions to help nature's recovery.

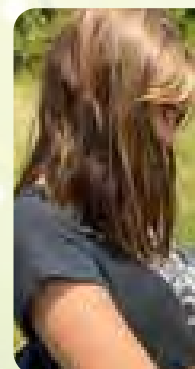
WHAT CITIZEN SCIENCE IS HAPPENING IN THE CHILTERNs?

In the central Chilterns, the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme has been developing a landscape-scale wildlife monitoring programme called Tracking the Impact, hosted by Chilterns National Landscape and primarily funded by The National Heritage Lottery Fund and HS2 Community & Environment Fund. This programme works with citizen scientists to collect data on breeding birds, plants and butterflies across the region. It has been running since 2020 and extended its coverage in 2023 to include part of the Chess catchment in partnership with the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment project.

More than 225 volunteers are engaged with Tracking the Impact. Each volunteer takes on an area to monitor over the summer months. To ensure coverage of the region, it is divided into 1km "squares" that data is collected from. The project is currently covering a grand total of 78 squares, which is a huge chunk of the Chilterns!

Our volunteers enjoy survey and identification training, events, and mentoring as part of the programme. Many join with little experience, just an enthusiasm for looking after their local patch. The programme offers a full range of training opportunities led by experts, ensuring the next generation of surveyors can develop their skills and confidence.

The data we gain from our surveys is being used to track trends across the landscape over time and inform practical habitat management projects. Our data also supports the analysis of trends across the whole country as we feed to into national monitoring programmes, including the Breeding Bird Survey, Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey, and National Plant Monitoring Scheme.



WHAT ARE THE RESULTS SO FAR?

Since the project started, we have amassed over 20,000 records and our volunteers have paced nearly 3,000 km! All the records collected have been entered into our databases and online interactive maps, so you can see for yourself what species have been recorded and where.

While it's too early in the programme to spot reliable long-term trends, we are starting to build a picture of the distribution and abundance of some of our key Chilterns' species, including birds like yellowhammer and whitethroat, butterflies like Adonis blue and dingy skipper, and plant groups for chalk grassland and woodland.

See www.chilterns.org.uk/trackingtheimpact

TRACKING INTO THE FUTURE

The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme finishes in November 2024, but the Chilterns National Landscape is committed to continuing Tracking the Impact and is currently seeking funding for the 2025 season and beyond. Tracking the Impact is an award-winning programme, often held up as a beacon of good practice. As such, we are working closely with our partners on research into scaling-up such citizen science programmes over a wider landscape area.



GET INVOLVED!

There are opportunities for everyone to get involved in Tracking the Impact, whether you're a seasoned surveyor or have never picked up a pair of binoculars. We offer free training and support, and the chance to make a big difference to wildlife. Nick Marriner, Nature Recovery Manager at the Chilterns National Landscape, helps run the programme and said he finds surveying very rewarding. "As a long-term volunteer surveyor myself, I understand the value of time in the field, helping wildlife," he said, "But the fun of it for me is when I can just immerse myself in watching our amazing wildlife up close."

Find out more: chilterns.org.uk/trackingtheimpact

TRACKING THE IMPACT VOLUNTEER: MARIEKE BOSMAN



- Q.** How did you get involved in volunteering for Tracking the Impact?
- A.** *I had recently left work to care for my mother and wanted to do something about biodiversity loss while also learning about local nature. Tracking the Impact fitted the bill – and I have now been surveying for three years.*
- Q.** What new things have you learnt by being a volunteer?
- A.** *The field training sessions are one of Tracking the Impact's highlights. I have learned so much about the local landscape and wildlife. I can now recognise birds by their song, which adds a new perspective to a walk.*
- Q.** What have you enjoyed the most about volunteering?
- A.** *I have met lots of lovely people who, like me, are both awed by nature and want to help protect it. Nothing beats learning about local species of birds from an engaging expert on top of a Chilterns hill as the sun is rising.*
- Q.** What would you say to someone who is considering volunteering for a citizen science project like this?
- A.** *If you love nature, want to learn about it and protect it, then citizen science is a good way to go, particularly if it is set up as well as Tracking the Impact!*
- Q.** What is your favourite thing to do in the Chilterns?
- A.** *I love drawing and painting the flowers I find, whether in a verge near home or in a nature reserve.*



Chalk, Cherries and Chairs (CCC) is an ambitious Landscape Partnership Scheme that aims to connect local people to the wildlife and cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns.

Outstanding crossword

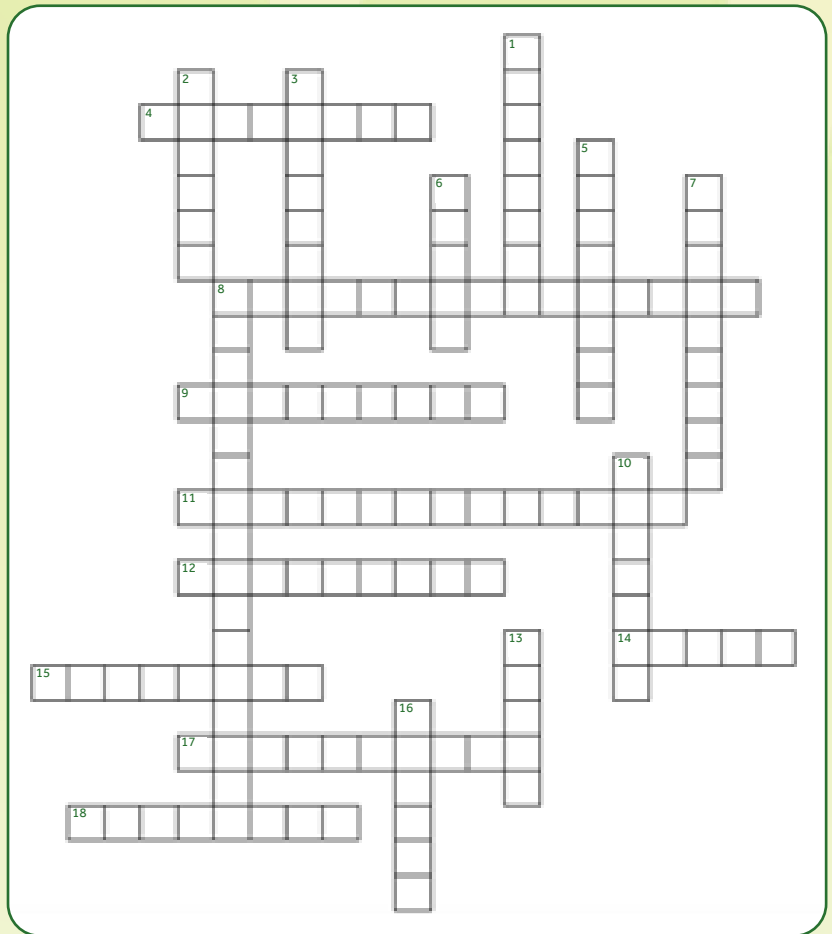


ACROSS

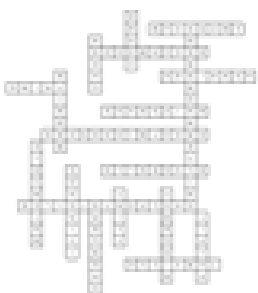
- 4 A charming village famous for its appearances in the Vicar of Dibley and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, among others (8)
- 8 A historic village known for its literary connections: John Milton is said to have written at least part of Paradise Lost here (8,2,5)
- 9 These vibrant flowers carpet the Chilterns woods in spring (9)
- 11 Roald Dahl's home and inspiration for many of his stories (5,9)
- 12 Zoological park, home of real and chalk lions (9)
- 14 Home of the Natural History Museum's smaller cousin (5)
- 15 A vast National Trust property with ancient woodlands and rolling hills (8)
- 17 These ancient woodlands are a hallmark of the Chilterns landscape and supplied High Wycombe's chair making industry (10)
- 18 This charming two-part market town with an abundance of arts and crafts architecture lies nestled in the heart of the Chilterns (8)

DOWN

- 1 The official country residence of the UK Prime Minister (8)
- 2 _____ Hill. A chalk hill with an Iron Age hillfort, one of a number in the Chilterns (6)
- 3 An ancient route that winds through the Chiltern hills (8)
- 5 _____ Beacon. Site of oldest hillfort in the Chilterns and location for stunning views. (8)
- 6 Often used with brick, plentiful local building material that produces characteristic Chilterns buildings (5)
- 7 Endangered rodent, lives near Chilterns chalk streams (5,4)
- 8 An ancient administrative division within the Chilterns that provides the only method for MPs to resign, by being made its steward & bailiff (8,8)
- 10 Majestic bird of prey with a forked tail, successfully reintroduced to the Chilterns in the 1990s (3,4)
- 13 Chalk stream (one of nine found in the Chilterns), flows through Chesham towards Rickmansworth (5)
- 16 _____ Hill. A prominent viewpoint with a memorial to the Boer War (6)



CROSSWORD ANSWERS



A LEGACY OF COMFORT: CELEBRATING 120 YEARS WITH HYPNOS BEDS

This year Luxury British bedmaker, Hypnos, celebrates its 120 year anniversary. Hypnos, is a family-owned fifth generation bed makers with workshops based in Buckinghamshire. As proud Royal Warrant holders, Hypnos has a reputation for making the most comfortable beds in the world.

Hypnos' expert master craftsmen use traditional skills making all their beds by hand and combine this with design innovation using the very finest natural, organic and sustainable materials. Each bed is made to order and is tailored to meet personal comfort levels, size, and design. Passionate about combining comfort with integrity, Hypnos became the first carbon-neutral bedmaker in the world in 2013, and has received the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development. Their responsibly made mattresses are also designed to be recycled.

Visit the Hypnos showroom at Longwick Road, Princes Risborough, HP27 9RS

hypnosbeds.com

AMERSHAM MUSEUM RE-OPENING WITH 'A NEW VIEW'

On Saturday 9 March 2024, Amersham Museum launched its new exhibition space inspired by Austrian artist Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (1906-1996) and funded by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust.



Dorothy, Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, 1945, oil on canvas, Amersham Museum

Marie-Louise in Amersham

The inaugural temporary exhibition focusses on the Vienna-born artist who moved to Amersham in 1940. Based around the museum's six paintings by Marie-Louise, the exhibition explores her time in Amersham, her intimate circle and her community on Chestnut Lane, who often became the subjects of her vivid, dramatic portraits. The exhibition also includes works created through our community learning programme, including self-portraits by families from the South Bucks Jewish Community.



Amersham Museum's building in its early days as envisaged by local illustrator Elly Bazigos.



The 'Armada portrait' of Elizabeth I, 1588, by an unknown English artist. This painting belonged to the Tyrwhitt-Drake family and was first recorded at Shardeloes, Amersham in 1775 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

A New Welcome

From fossils to a taxidermy dormouse, a 1930s dolls house to a 1980s award for black pudding, and medieval Penn tiles to a range of historical maps, visitors can also explore intriguing local objects and their stories in our new timeline display.

Did you know that a version of the famous Armada portrait of Elizabeth I hung at Shardeloes, the ancestral home of the Drake family? Amersham also has a long history of dissent, from the Lollards martyred for their religious beliefs in the early 1500s, to the strong community of suffrage supporters 400 years later. The timeline has been co-curated with local people, particularly the museum's Young Curators. It is illustrated by local artist Elly Bazigos, with her vibrant images taking visitors from prehistory through key moments in the town's history to the present day.

www.amershammuseum.org

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CHILTERNs

Young Explorers



Ecocraft – make your own seed bomb



Seed bombs are small balls of seeds and clay that you can plant or throw into a patch of unused ground (or a pot on a windowsill or balcony) to brighten it up with wildflowers or plants. Why not make some and give them as a gift, they'll keep for several months in a dry place – they're best planted (or thrown) in spring or autumn.

Ingredients:

- ✓ Thick mud or clay (you can get powdered clay from craft shops, just need to mix it with a bit of water).
- ✓ Packets of different kinds of native seeds. You can buy seeds from garden centres, DIY shops or supermarkets, or if you have neighbours with wildflower areas ask them if you can harvest some seeds in the autumn.

What you need to do:

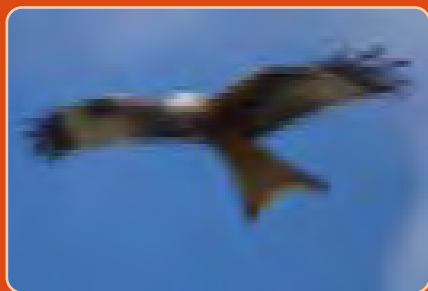
1. Open the seed packets and mix them together in a bowl.
2. Find a flat surface that you can clean afterwards and roll or squash your clay/mud.
3. Sprinkle seeds across the flattened clay/mud.
4. Roll the clay/mud into one or more balls (approximately 3-4 cm).
5. Decide where you want to plant the seed bomb (make sure you have permission).
6. Plant or throw your seed bomb onto the ground.
7. Your seeds should start to germinate (grow) within a few weeks. You may have to be patient. If the weather is dry you might need to water them a bit (rainwater is best if possible).

Then ... tag us in your photos @ChilternsNL



Guess the Chilterns plant or animal

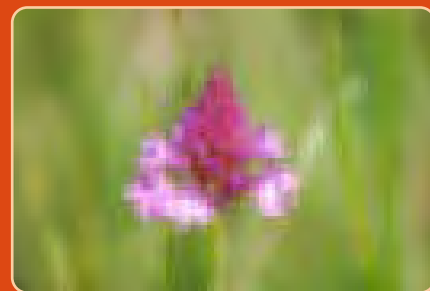
Below you'll find pictures of some plants or animals that you might find in the Chilterns – but our young explorer has forgotten their glasses, so they're a bit fuzzy. Can you help? You can write the answer below the picture.



ANSWER _____



ANSWER _____



ANSWER _____

1: Red Kite 2: Water Vole 3: Orchid

ANSWERS



Trees are good!

We know that trees are the lungs of our planet and that we need to plant more of them to keep our air clean. This is especially important in urban areas, but the countryside also has fewer trees and hedges than it used to. You can never have enough trees!

To mark the Coronation of King Charles III in 2023, Forestry England has been creating new woodlands and planting trees between April 2023 and March 2025. The King has been a passionate supporter of the natural environment all his life, and these new woodlands will give local communities many new places to explore nature – as well as new habitats for wildlife.

The Hawridge & Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society (HCCPS) marked the Coronation by planting five new trees, with help from 14 young representatives (from toddlers to teenagers) of local organisations such as the village school, HCCPS volunteers and the cricket club. They planted three wild service trees and two field maples, which were suggested by John Morris, their woodland advisor, as suitable for the site and to enhance the Commons in spring and autumn.



Want to get in on the action?

The Woodland Trust has free trees for schools – applications close in August 2024 (or earlier if they run out!) so why not speak to your teachers and get an application in for your school? Find out more here: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities

WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOUR TREES WHEN THEY'RE PLANTED!



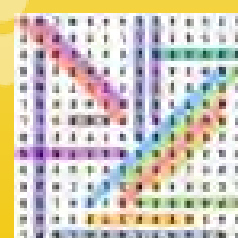
WILDLIFE wordsearch



Can you find the following words in the puzzle?

SPARROW	RED KITE
GENIAN	FOX
COWSLIP	NIGHTINGALE
PASQUEFLOWER	HEDGEHOG
WATER VOLE	ORCHID
BLUEBELL	BUZZARD
BADGER	KESTREL
BEECH	

Answers



We all get recycling. Now let's get it right.

Your food waste is recycled into
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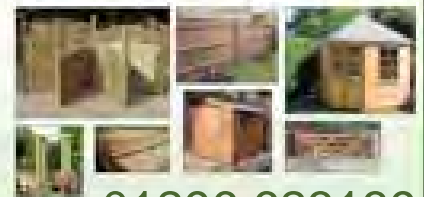
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