

April 2020

Positive news stories from the Hampshire South Downs

In these incredibly uncertain and difficult times visitors and local communities are still able to engage with attractions and producers in the Hampshire corner of the South Downs National Park. There's a real sprouting of ingenious projects such as online exhibitions, deliveries to local people, resources to keep the children entertained and educated, virtual tours, a sharing of memories, images and more.

At the experimental archaeology site Butser Ancient Farm lambs have just been born and two of its English goats are pregnant. These are a rare breed with less than 100 registered in this country. The goats will be born in June and they may even be twins! The excitement will be shared on the website through Instagram, Facebook, blogs and twitter. So people who planned to visit can still witness the spring joy of these animals. Butser **will also make more videos for online resources** and are publicising an **'Ask Butser'** service whereby children and young people learning remotely can get in touch through email or social media with questions about Butser, life in the Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman or Saxon periods and they will receive a response. The topics are all related to the National Curriculum for Primary History. Email volunteers@butserancientfarm.co.uk, <https://www.butserancientfarm.co.uk/>

The **Rural Life Living Museum** on the other hand **has opened an online shop with Folksy**, giving people a chance to keep in touch with the Museum by buying a small slice of rural life! This will also help to keep its fundraising

going. The Facebook page is being kept up to date with museum memories etc. And there are blogs with the Museum's news, too. <https://rural-life.org.uk/> <https://folksy.com/shops/RuralLifeLivingMuseum>

And it's easy to keep up with all things Jane Austen through the **Jane Austen's House Museum**, which will be **sharing memories, news, stories, photos and videos on social media to keep people in touch and inspired**. For example, **why not explore which are the best on-screen adaptations of Jane's work?** Jane's Emma believed 'there is nothing like staying at home for real comfort.' So now is the time to **enjoy an on-demand streaming of Emma**, barely a month after it hit the cinema screens.

www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2020/mar/best-jane-austen-film-adaptation-emma/

Or **hear the stories, pictures and views of all things #JaneAusten and her beloved house from the amazing volunteers**. Nicola Scarlett kicks things

off with her 'Musings on Elizabeth Bennet' Read

[buffly/2QLjfi3!#KeepingSpiritsUp](https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/single-post/2020/03/25/From-our-volunteers) or go to [https://www.jane-austens-house-](https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/single-post/2020/03/25/From-our-volunteers)

[museum.org.uk/single-post/2020/03/25/From-our-volunteers](https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/single-post/2020/03/25/From-our-volunteers) **And there's**

exciting news just breaking – newly-acquired collection items are being

launched on the Jane Austen's House website. The new items depict a jilted

fiancee, Austen family friends and a modern tribute to Mr Darcy! Videos of

the collection will be on the website and also shared via social media,

allowing the public a sneak peek at the new treasures, presently closed to

the public due to the Coronavirus. Items include **paintings, a charming**

hand-painted decorative fan, inscribed 'The Devoted to Darcy Forever Fan

Club, (which bears a striking resemblance to Colin Firth) and more. These

new objects are displayed as part of refreshed room displays throughout the

House, which see a focus on Regency dress and needlework, Jane Austen's

family portraits and pastimes, and her love of nature and the outdoors. While

the Museum must remain closed, it wants to give the public a chance to step

into Jane Austen's world and capture a glimpse of what her life was like.

The first 'Treasures from the Collection' videos focus on these new objects,

and can be found at

<https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk>

Chawton House will introduce new ways of enjoying all that is done at the house, the former home of Jane Austen's brother - from the comfort of home.

The first is The University of Southampton's free online course, *Jane Austen: Myth, Reality and Global Celebrity*, which is now open. It is produced in partnership with Chawton House, using its collection. Now is the perfect time to sign up. Jane Austen went from being a moderately successful anonymous novelist in her own time to a global celebrity in ours. On this course participants will explore how that happened, exploring Austen's own literary influences, and her reputation over time.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/jane-austen> And **there's a chance to read through all the Chawton House Novels online**, the transcripts can be found at <https://chawtonhouse.org/the-library/library-collections/womens-writing-in-english/novels-online/>

Chawton House and Jane Austen's House have teamed up to bring people a little cheer during this time. The idea is to **showcase various elements of the two attractions, following the order of the rainbow, inspired by #rainbowsofhope**. They will both **highlight some of their favourite objects in their collections, focussing on the different colours of the rainbow**. They are encouraging other attractions, museums and followers to join in too and Hampshire Top Attractions, which includes Butser Ancient Farm, Chawton House, Jane Austen's House, Gilbert White's House, the Watercress Line, Staunton Country Park and Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Birdworld and Hollycombe Steam Collection, have joined the campaign. Starting on Monday 29 March, for the next seven weeks they'll post images in ROYGBIV order that they find special <https://chawtonhouse.org/>, <https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/>, <https://www.hampshireattractions.co.uk/>

Hampshire Cultural Trust is working with its – all closed – **museums and galleries** on a new programme to make sure it brings people the very best of

arts and culture, wherever they are. This programme will include live streams of exhibitions, a sharing of history and heritage, classes and workshops, education and activities, news and articles, all in virtual form. In this area the **Allen Gallery and Curtis Museum in Alton** are run by Hampshire Cultural Trust. <https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/>

And the **South Downs National Park Authority** is currently collating information about **local food and drink initiatives** still operating to communities across the National Park. It has also introduced lots of ways for people to **connect with nature remotely**. These include **virtual walks of stunning beauty spots** in the National Park which you can join via the Park's video section on Facebook, a **10th anniversary online quiz competition, footage of** otters, reptiles, birds, magical woodlands and chalk grassland to help people enjoy the wildlife of the National Park (via Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), a **newsletter for updates, wildlife diaries from the Sussex Wildlife Trust and online resources for children such as its Learning Zone.**

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/discover/> And you can also get a taste of the stunning landscape of the Downs through Friends of the South Downs, who have produced a number of **videos on YouTube**. It might give you ideas for when lock-down is all over! Try this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzIFDd7rMIQ&list=PLXx1-WZWjGhPhaNQ2I4CX-cWOVSEVqj9F&index=2&t=0s> And this <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqoVHWyfTFk> - both from **the Bald Explorer**, Richard Vobes.

Another great nature initiative comes from the National Trust, who has launched a brand new project. #BlossomWatch is designed to emulate Japan's Hanami – an ancient celebration of the blossom season. People are being asked to join in this marking of the first sign of spring by looking out for trees and bushes in flower, pausing for a moment to enjoy the fleeting beauty of blossom and sharing images on social media. This allows everyone,

including people who don't have access to such wonders, to enjoy this time of the year. The move is part of the Trust's campaign to help people of all ages to become more connected with everyday nature. National Trust properties like Hinton Ampner in East Hampshire are sharing their own beautiful blossom images via social media etc. Share the images on **#BlossomWatch** and tag them via **@nationaltrust** on Instagram and Twitter using **#BlossomWatch** and inserting the name of the place where they live. Plenty of blossom facts and images plus content for all ages can be found at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/blossom-in-the-south-east> And to engage younger children Education volunteer Kirstie Rogers has put together some Spring nature activities to excite and inspire young imaginations. See <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/blossom-nature-activities-for-younger-children>

To get wonderful inspiration of where to stay in the area look no further than **Old Thorns Hotel**. They have put together a **360 degree virtual tour** to allow you to view the entire hotel and resort from your armchair! Walk around the property as if you were there, view hotspots to give you extra information and even use the measuring tool to get dimensions (ideal for wedding and event planners!). The tour even features the hotel cat! <https://www.oldthorns.com/about-old-thorns/old-thorns-virtual-tour/> And, for something different, visit the website of **Two Hoots adult-only glamping and campsite**. This award-winning site has produced a **charming video about its site** and you can get a taste of what to expect from a stay in one of its eco pods or shepherd's huts. Another idea for the end of lock-down! <https://www.twohootscampsite.co.uk/video#video>

The Marketing Collective agency has been supporting struggling tourism businesses through a strong social media campaign and good advice to help them keep in the public eye and then get up to strength once they

open again to the public. One initiative is helping Hampshire gardens now closed to the public – with projects like a 'grow your own' leaflet.

<https://www.themarketing-collective.com/> Link to the Marketing Collective Planner - <https://bit.ly/TMCPlanner> and Tips for working from home: <https://www.themarketing-collective.com/tips-working-from-home/>

And for news of local community initiatives Gilbert White's House, the former home of the eighteenth century pioneering ecologist and naturalist, has teamed up with the local pub, The Selborne Arms, to create a lifeline for the village. They have been providing takeaway dinners from the newly-restored White's cafe, and selling basic items such as bread, milk, and even some toilet roll – an essential service as there is no shop in this rural village. Staff have been delivering things to people who can't leave their houses, and the gratitude from the village has been really overwhelming .

www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk/ And **Applegarth Farm** Is also doing their bit by getting food delivered to the local community. They have set up an online ordering facility for both restaurant meals which can be heated up at home and 70 different shop products that can be added to this order. They have also partnered with 4 other local shops to create a hub of delivery for non-Applegarth, but essential products such as meats and butchery, cleaning products and homeware, vitamins and health supplements.

<https://www.applegarthfarm.co.uk/>

Ends

For press information, interviews or images, please contact: Rachel Shimell, rachel.shimell@gmail.com, 02380 732981

Notes to Editors: East Hampshire

The area of the South Downs that spills into East Hampshire - around Chawton where Jane Austen lived – has quite a different feel from the rest of the new National Park. Hidden away between the cathedral cities of Winchester and Chichester, its steep wooded hills and hidden valleys of watercress farms, lavender fields, vineyards, hop gardens and trout-filled streams, together with its picture-perfect villages and peaceful market towns, make it undoubtedly one of the loveliest parts of rural England. www.easthants.gov.uk/tourism