

# SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

## Out & About in Sussex

So many of the lovely plants that grace our gardens only reached these shores because of the often fearless travels of intrepid plant hunters in previous centuries. Nymans, at Handcross, is acknowledging their efforts from May 27-31 with guided walks and trails for their Plant Hunters Week (call 01444 405250).

However, something a little more roguish is being celebrated at Bateman's near Burwash from today. Join in their Smuggler's Treasure Trail to find hidden loot in the garden and discover why it was smuggled. A prize will be awarded to the best hunter. Call 01435 882302 or visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

## Sussex coast quiz

1. How long is the Sussex coast, 50, 76 or 105 miles?

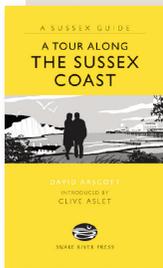
2. What is the name of the round towers that can be found dotted along the Sussex coast?

3. Which river meets the sea at Littlehampton?

4. At which seaside resort can you still find a glamorous lido that would look more at home in Hollywood than in Sussex?

5. Several Sussex resorts have a Grand Hotel but where was the Grand in which the French composer Debussy wrote his masterpiece La Mer?

Email your answers, along with your name and address to: [editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk](mailto:editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk). The sender of the first set of correct answers received wins a copy of *A Tour Along the Sussex Coast* by David Arscott worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.



Writers often find their work a lonely business, which is why a group of them got together 40 years ago this year to form The Society of Sussex Authors. Today its members meet six times a year in Lewes to hear a speaker and to exchange ideas, experiences, views and, of course, the occasional gripe.

'Call it mutual support,' says David Arscott, the hon. secretary. 'The sort of work our members do is extremely varied, but the common denominator is that we all know how tough it can be getting our work accepted, having it properly marketed and getting decently paid for it.'

Most of the society's members are writers, but there are editors, indexers and illustrators among their number too. 'We're always looking for new members,' David says, 'the only stipulation is that you should have done some work professionally in the field.' An anniversary garden party is being planned for the summer. In the meantime, prospective members can check out the society at [www.room153.lewesonline.com](http://www.room153.lewesonline.com)

## In Prinny's back garden

The second Gardens Week at the Royal Pavilion starts on Monday. An exciting and varied programme of talks, tours, practical workshops and family activities will run until May 31.

Highlights include talks by the renowned garden designer Andy Sturgeon and by Ben Law. Ben will be familiar to viewers of TV's Grand

Designs as the woodsman who built a beautiful sustainable house over in West Sussex.

A must for all would-be gardeners is the event entitled *A Garden for Under £100*, run by experts from Plumpton Horticultural College. So no excuses not to start growing!

For more information call 03000 290900 or visit [www.royalpavilion.org.uk](http://www.royalpavilion.org.uk)

## Live & learn

In days gone by wherever there was coastline you would find smuggling, and Sussex was certainly no exception. Here are a few smuggler's terms.

**Owling:** the original term for smuggling, referring first purely to the smuggling of wool.

**Tubbing:** the conveyance of contraband in 'tubs', often disguised with a top layer of licit goods.

**Derricking:** the technique by which goods were hauled up a steep cliff face from an inaccessible beach.

We would love to hear from readers of similar interesting, quirky or strange facts relating to the county. Email us at: [editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk](mailto:editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk)

## Lost words

“ **Bittle-battle:** The game of stoolball.

In his dictionary of dialect the Reverend W.D. Parish wrote of this old county game: 'There is a tradition that this game was originally played by the milk-maids with their milking stools, which they used for bats; but this word makes it more probable that the stool was the wicket, and that it was defended with the bittle, which would be called the bittle-bat; hence the word bittle-battle.'

Do you know any other old Sussex sporting terms, legends or stories? If so email them to [editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk](mailto:editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk). The most interesting ones will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.

## PLANT HUNTERS

Many of the great gardens of Sussex are beneficiaries of the expeditions of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century plant hunters. Indeed the wealthy owners of gardens such as Wakehurst Place and Leonardslee sponsored several of the famous hunters of their day, including Frank Kingdon-Ward, Harold Comber and George Forrest.

Highdown Gardens, outside Worthing, was created from a bare chalk pit by Sir Frederick Stern (1884-1967). Stern subscribed to several expeditions including Reginald Farrer's 1914 forays to Yunnan and Kansu in China. Many of Highdown's magnolias, lilies, rhododendrons, azaleas and wisterias originate from stock brought back from abroad, including a Judas tree grown from seed from Afghanistan.

Stern developed many worthy strains of iris, eremurus and daffodil, but is probably best remembered for the rose 'Wedding Day.' It is a large Rambler with white fragrant blooms and flowered for the first time on the Stern's wedding anniversary, hence its name. All who struggle to garden on chalk should take comfort from Stern's excellent book *The Chalk Garden*, first published in 1960.

Read more about the great gardens and gardeners of Sussex in *Inspiring Sussex Gardeners* by Lorraine Harrison, published by Snake River Press.