

SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

Why not combine an enjoyable five-mile circular walk with tea and cakes in one of Rottingdean's charming tea shops this weekend? The walk begins at the Roedean Cafe from where you head towards the famous school, take the footpath behind and drop down into Ovingdean. Now progress over Beacon Hill, past the imposing windmill, and go down into Rottingdean village. After some restorative refreshments head for the beach and take the Undercliff walk back to Roedean. The perfect combination of gentle downland and rolling sea.

This is just one of the varied walks featured in 20 Sussex Walks by Pat Bowen. Pat's original walk routes let you experience every aspect of the rich Sussex countryside from coast to high heathland. Her text will keep you entertained along your way with historical anecdotes, nature notes and folk stories. Each walk is graded from easy (like the Rottingdean route) to medium and challenging and includes a map.

Live & learn

Next time you travel on the London to Brighton railway line (built between 1838 and 1841) bear some of these fascinating facts in mind.

It cost £2,634,059.00 (or £57,262 per mile).

A first class ticket cost 14s 6d, second class 9s 6d and third class 6s (this involved travelling in some considerable discomfort; third-class carriages were open to the elements, whatever the weather).

Balcombe Viaduct was completed in 1842 and has 37 arches.

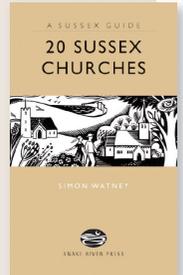
We would love to hear from readers of similar interesting, quirky or strange facts relating to the county. Email us at: editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk

Churchyard Quiz

- 1 Which Regency 'dipper' is buried in St Nicholas Churchyard, Brighton ?
- 2 Which Goon is buried at St Thomas the Martyr, Winchelsea?
- 3 Where is Elizabeth David's headstone?

- 4 Bloomsbury artists Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant are buried in which Sussex village?
- 5 Which female gardener is buried at Withyham?

Email your answers, along with your name and address to: editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk. The sender of the first set of correct answers received wins a copy of 20 Sussex Churches by Simon Watney worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at www.snakeriverpress.co.uk next Saturday.



Sussex Celebrity

Dorothy (Dot) Levitt Early 1900s

In 1905 Brighton onlookers were astonished when a raffish young woman established the women's world speed record, driving an 80-horsepower Napier in the annual speed trials. It was Dorothy Levitt, a secretary and society girl, and she caused a sensation, achieving a speed of 79 mph (128 kmph).

Surprisingly little is known of 'Dot', as she was called, (including her life dates) but she was the first known British woman racing driver, the first to hold the ladies' world land-speed record and she pioneered the sport for women. She raced all over Britain, in Europe and more locally at Bexhill.

Off the racing track Dot always drove with an automatic Colt - essential for a single woman driving alone. She also advised carrying a mirror with a handle on it; 'to occasionally hold up to see what is behind you ... you can, with the mirror, see in a flash what is in the rear, without losing your forward way and without releasing your right-hand grip of the steering wheel.' This wonderful woman invented the rear view mirror some years before it was commercially produced in 1914.

From Sussex Women by Ann Kramer, published by Snake River Press.

Lost words

“ In these credit-crunched times we are all inclined to make do and mend a bit more but none of us I'm sure want this to lead to being known by our word of the week!

Word of the Week

Curmudgeon: A mender of old clothes. A curmudgeon originally meant a hard-bargainer, a miserly fellow, and probably this meaning of the word is connected with mending old rags in a miserly manner.

Email your thrifty words to editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk. The most interesting ones will be posted at www.snakeriverpress.co.uk next Saturday.

Out & About in Sussex

The Sussex Wildlife Trust is hosting what promises to be some truly magical Evenings With Badgers throughout June. Wildlife photographer David Plummer will be conducting the evenings on June 9, 11, 16 and 18 starting at 6pm at Rusper Village Hall.

After an introductory talk participants go down to the woods where they should

hopefully have an opportunity to watch these most delightful of creatures. Booking (and torches!) are essential. The evenings cost £16 for members and £20 for non-members and end around 11pm.

Look out for the trust's An Evening with Nightjars coming up June 30 and July 7. Call 01273 497561 or visit www.sussexwt.org.uk

Surprising Sussex

Sussex never fails to surprise. Did you know that the first automobile races in Britain were held in the county? The 8th Earl de la Warr hosted them at Bexhill-on-Sea on May 19 1902. Later the glamorous Dorothy Levitt raced there in 1907 (see above).

Later this summer the Bexhill Museum will be reopening after a period of

refurbishment and among the exhibits will be a new motor heritage gallery. Watch this space for more details as they become available.

Another date for your diary is June 18 when several Snake River Press authors will be giving talks and signing books at Borders Bookshop in Brighton. More information in next Saturday's Bookends.