

SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

Out & About in Sussex

Brighton Kite Flyers have been flying high since 1976 and their annual Brighton Kite Festival is one of the longest running in the world.

The 2009 festival takes place at Stanmer Park next Saturday and Sunday, 11am - 5pm, so there is still time to get some practice in! Along with some breathtaking flying

displays by internationally recognised kite flyers, there will be stalls selling kites, food and drink and a free children's kite workshop.

This promises to be a great fun-filled event for all the family as few sights are so thrilling as a soaring kite at full speed. For details visit www.brightonkiteflyers.co.uk.

Up in the clouds Quiz

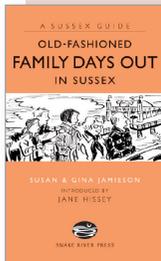
1 Which hill is home to the tomb of eccentric miller John Olliver?

2 What is the name of the group of trees that sits on top of a hill near Findon village?

3 Which satanic ravine is just north of Brighton?

4 What is the name of the lighthouse that sits atop the cliffs near Beachy Head?

5 Which 'mountain' rises above Lewes?



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 Old-Fashioned Family Days Out in Sussex by Susan and Gina Jamieson worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at www.snakeriverpress.co.uk next Saturday.

The Tom Paine Festival begins today and runs until July 14, marking the bicentenary of the revolutionary thinker's death on June 8 1809. Numerous performances, exhibitions and debates have been organised in and around Lewes (visit www.thomaspaineandlewes.co.uk for full details). The following give a flavour of the range of the festival.

At 3.30pm and 7pm today there will be performances of a Mummer's Play written by Mike Turner, which illustrates various aspects of Paine's life in Lewes. It will take place in the open air at Cliffe precinct and if you missed that you can also catch it at 10am and noon next Saturday.

On July 9 at The Royal Oak Robb Johnson and Leon Rosselson will give a rousing celebration in song of Paine's achievements entitled The Liberty Tree (call 01273-478124 price £7). More sedately at Pelham House Hotel there is an exhibition by Paddock Printmakers illustrating locations in Lewes associated with Paine. A book has also been produced and both the prints and books will be on sale.

Up, up and away...

In Old-Fashioned Family Days Out in Sussex Susan and Gina Jamieson enthuse about the pleasures of kite flying at Highdown Hill, just outside Worthing.

Susan writes 'Whether home-made, borrowed or bought, there is something very pleasing and exhilarating about the feeling of the wind tugging at the kite high above

your head. Small children will need help, although try not to let them see you are doing it. In any case, you usually need one person to hold on tight, while the other stands some distance away, to do the launching. If, after those efforts, things literally come down to earth with a bump, be distracted by a bracing walk around the hill.'

Live & learn

A very special evening is promised this Wednesday when The Tudor Ensemble perform at the Etchingam Arts Festival. The concert marks the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's accession to the throne and will include works by Taverner, Sheppard and the errant king himself.

The Ensemble will also perform several pieces from the Robertsbridge Codex (c1360). These works are the earliest known compositions of notated music and were only discovered in the mid-nineteenth century among manuscripts unearthed at Penshurst Place. For more information call 01580 860701.

On another Sussex note the sixteenth-century composer John Taverner is not to be confused with the contemporary John Tavener, who lives in the county.

Lost words

“ I never tire of thumbing through the Reverend W.D. Parish's A Dictionary of Sussex Dialect as I always find something illuminating or amusing, for example,

Mesh: The Southdown folk always speak of Pevensy level as The Mesh.

'I went down to Pemsey last week, and walked out on The Mesh. Beautiful place, surely! No hills, no trees, nor nothing to interrupt the view.'

Do the residents of Pevensy still use this term today? We would love to hear from you of current usage so please email to editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk Your comments and examples will be posted at www.snakeriverpress.co.uk next Saturday.

Sussex Celebrity

THOMAS PAINE 1737-1809

Wikipedia describes Thomas Paine as 'English pamphleteer, revolutionary, radical inventor, intellectual and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States', somewhat surprisingly he is also closely associated with Lewes, the county town of East Sussex. Although born in Thetford, Norfolk, Paine spent 7 years in the town working as an excise officer, married local girl Elizabeth Ollive and was an active participant in the local political debating society The Headstrong Club.

In 1774 he went to America, where his pamphlet Common Sense (1776) was published, arguing for complete independence. He served in the army and became secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. Back in England he wrote The Rights of Man (1791-2), in support of the French Revolution.

He moved to Paris and was elected a Deputy the National Assembly. His suggestion of offering the French king asylum in America led to his imprisonment. Released in 1796 Paine returned to the US in 1802 where he remained until his death. One of his most quoted phrases conveys much of his revolutionary zeal, 'Lead, follow, or get out of the way.'