

# SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

## Out & About in Sussex

I never cease to be amazed at the breadth of events staged throughout the summer at National Trust properties. There truly is something for everyone.

For example, at Nymans tomorrow there is an open air production of Shakespeare's Othello. Set against the the picturesque ruins of the old house, this should make a

stunning atmospheric backdrop. By contrast next Friday evening there is a guided Bat Walk in the Nymans woods (call 01444 405250 for full details).

Meanwhile over at Standen all vegetable enthusiasts can attend demonstrations and tastings at Kitchen Garden Day tomorrow. Call 01342 323029 for information.

## The Miscellany Quiz

1 Which Sussex town was home to Rodin's sculpture *The Kiss*?

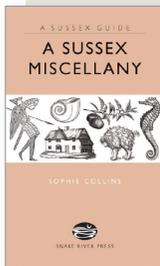
2 Who wrote *The Young Visitors*?

3 What is *Stoolball*?

4 Is a 'swimmer' a suet pudding or a sponge cake?

5 Edward James of West Dean collected works of art by which group of artists, the Surrealists or the Pre-Raphaelites?

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 Sussex Miscellany* by Sophie Collins worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.



On this day in 565 St Columba first reported seeing the Loch Ness Monster, and so began a legend that still gives a considerable boost to the Scottish tourist industry each year. Sussex is not without its mythical monsters, the dragon that is said to haunt the shadowy glades of St Leonard's Forest is one of the most fearsome yet recorded in the county. A very detailed description was given in a 1614 pamphlet and makes for interesting reading!

'This serpente ... is reputed to nine feete ... in length ... a quantitie of thickness in the middest and somewhat smaller at both ends. The former parte, which he shootes forth as a necke, is supposed to be an elle long ... The scales along his back seem to be blackish, and so much as is discovered under his bellie appeareth to be red ... He rids always as fast as a man can run. There are likewise upon either side of him discovered two great bunches so big as a large foote-ball, and (as some thinks) will in time grow to wings. God, I hope, will ... that he be destroyed before he grows to fledge.'

## Still time to have fun

The school summer holidays are sadly nearing their end. If you are usually an inventive parent but are fast running out of imaginative things to do with the children, then why not pick up a copy of *Old-Fashioned Family Days Out* by Susan and Gina Jamieson, published by Snake River Press, £8.99. This delightful book is full of fun things to do

with children of all ages.

These trips are perfect for these credit-crunched times as all are free of expensive entrance fees, just the cost of getting there. Picnicing at Balcombe Viaduct, kite flying on Highdown Hill and fossil hunting at Pett Level are just a few of the great outings to be done during the last days of the summer holidays.

## Live & learn

Those who pass through Ringmer may be puzzled by the central appearance of a tortoise on the village sign. But Timothy Tortoise is famous in the area; in 1740, he was bought from a sailor at Chichester for half a crown and came to live with Mrs Rebecca Snooke at Delves House in Ringmer. Mrs Snooke's nephew was the naturalist Gilbert White. He enjoyed making a study of Timothy on his annual visits to Ringmer. On his aunt's death he took the tortoise to live with him at Selbourne and notes and observations on the 'old Sussex tortoise' can be read in his great work, *The Natural History of Selbourne* (1789).

From *A Sussex Miscellany* by Sophie Collins.

## Lost words

“ In his *A Dictionary of Sussex Dialect* the Reverend W.D. Parish is fulsome when defining the unusual word 'shuck'.

**Shuck:** Another form of the perfect tense of the verb to shake.

**Shuck:** To undress; to shell peas etc.

**Shuck:** A husk or pod.

One word, so many meanings! Do you know any other Sussex words with multiple meanings? 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.

## TO TWITCH OR NOT TO TWITCH

To avoid annoying keen bird-watching friends, read the following from *Bird Watching in Sussex* by Rob Yarham!

If there is one thing guaranteed to upset a bird-watcher, it is being called 'twitcher'. Except, of course, if they are on a 'twitch'. I'll explain the semantics of this, particularly for anybody who works in the local or national news media - the worst perpetrators of the 'twitcher' fallacy.

Those of us who watch birds are properly called 'bird-watchers'; so far, so good. But there is a particular branch of bird-watching which goes by the name of 'twitching'. This is the pursuit of a particular rare bird, found by someone else and sometimes at great lengths, that one hasn't seen before or rarely sees. Naturally, for those bird-watchers who like to build a 'year list' - seeing the most species they can in one year - 'twitching' is a must.

A further linguistic refinement has been to identify more closely those who might 'twitch', if the fancy took them, but generally enjoyed observing any species of bird - no matter how common - and their behaviour. Many, myself included, prefer to be identified as 'birders', which is really a more 'hip' word for bird-watcher. Right - that's all clear then.