

SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

A wonderful exhibition opened at Brighton Museum this week, *The Land Girls: Cinderellas of the Soil*. Over 75,000 women joined the Land Army during the Second World War to grow food to feed the nation and this show celebrates their achievements.

As Sussex was a county rich in agriculture, it made an important contribution to the war effort. The army's headquarters were at Balcombe Place (see the item on Lady Denman below), women were trained at Plumpton College and then worked on the Downs. Alongside studying fascinating paintings, photographs and artifacts relating to the period, visitors to the exhibition can try on a land girl uniform and listen to the voices of former land girls telling their stories. The programme of related study sessions includes *Make Do and Mend*, *Keep Calm and Carry On*: the Home Front in Wartime Britain and *Wartime Christmas*. Phone **03000 290900** or visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk for details.

Celebrate Diwali

East Sussex residents really do enjoy an embarrassment of riches when it comes to the varied programme of exhibitions and events on offer from museums and art galleries all over the area.

Tomorrow Brighton Museum is hosting a Diwali Celebration from 2 - 4.30pm at The Old Courtroom, Church Street. The word 'Diwali' means 'rows of lights' and the

Hindu festival is often known as the Festival of Lights.

Although open to all, the celebration will be especially fun for those with young children as among other activities they can try on a sari, have their hands hennaed, sample Indian delicacies and hear the story of Rama and Sita. The event is free to all, call **03000 290902** for details.

Out & About in Sussex

Every Sunday at 11am Jackie Marsh and Geoffrey Mead conduct a guided walk that tells the fascinating story of the sadly delapidated West Pier at Brighton. Called *Piers, Proms and Palaces; The West Pier and Brighton Seafront Story*, the tours will prove illuminating even to long-time residents who think they know all there is to know about the town's seafront's former glory days. Booking is recommended

so call 01273 321499 to reserve a place, cost is £5.

A contrasting trip out can be enjoyed tomorrow at Petworth House and Park as a Fungi Foray is being held between 2 - 4pm. This will involve an enjoyable romp through the glorious parkland looking for some weird and wonderful fungi amid the autumn leaves. For full details call **01798 342207** or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

Sussex Quiz

1 What kind of societies are 'Waterloo' and 'Nevill Juvenile'?

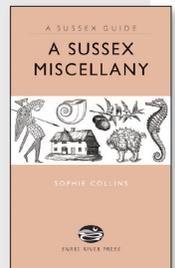
2 Which Brighton pier was erected between 1891-9?

3. Is a 'Swimmer' pudding made from suet or pastry?

4 Where can St Mary's House, built by the Bishop of Winchester, be found?

5 Is the Ypres Tower in Chichester or Rye?

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 *A Sussex Miscellany* by Sophie Collins worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at www.snakeriverpress.co.uk next Saturday.



Lost words

“ In his Dictionary of Sussex Dialect the Reverend W.D. Parish tells us that a common Sussex expression for being slightly deaf is 'thick-of-hearing'. He illustrates this with the following amusing verse,

Old woman, old woman,
will you go a shearing?
Speak a little louder, sir,
I'm rather thick of hearing.
Old woman, old woman,
shall I kiss you very sweetly?
I thank you kindly, sir,
I hear you quite completely.

We would love to hear from readers of other old Sussex rhymes, do email them to editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk. The most interesting ones will be posted at www.snakeriverpress.co.uk.

Sussex Celebrity

LADY DENMAN

1884-1954

Born to privilege and wealth, Gertrude Mary Denman typifies those of her class who devoted huge amounts of energy and time to the good of others. Her interests ranged widely, including the care of wounded soldiers and sailors, promotion of professional women, land settlement and birth control.

In 1916 she was elected chairman of the subcommittee of the Agricultural Organisation Society which founded the Women's Institute. The following year the Institute was placed under the auspices of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, with Lady Denman becoming assistant director of the department responsible for food production by women.

This experience proved invaluable in 1939 when she coordinated the re-establishment of the Women's Land Army, to provide female agricultural workers to grow much-needed food for the nation during wartime. In her typically generous style, she lent her Sussex home, Balcombe Place, to the organisation for use as its headquarters.

Read all about more Sussex inhabitants with interesting horticultural connections in *Inspiring Sussex Gardeners* by Lorraine Harrison.

Live & learn

After years of buying lovely Sussex trugs as presents for others, I have finally acquired my own. And very pleased I am with it too, it is a very handsome replacement for the old plastic bucket I used to use around the garden.

For those not familiar with this classic item, it is an elegant shallow, oval, handled wooden basket originally used as a measure around the farm, but long since appropriated for use in the garden.

It is perfect for carrying tools when weeding, planting or harvesting fruit, flowers and vegetables, and for a host of other tasks. Trugs have been used as 'carriers' in Sussex for at least two centuries and probably longer, and I for one am very pleased to be continuing the tradition!