

# SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

## Out & About in Sussex

Over at the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea tonight there will be a performance by the Heritage Orchestra.

Billed as 'A blast of fresh air across the orchestral landscape', it promises to be stimulating, innovative and entertaining. Conductor Jules Buckley leads the orchestra which is made up of young, forward-thinking

musicians and composers. The evening also features what is billed as 'a risk-taking improvised performance with human beatboxer and musical maestro Beardyman.' And how fitting that all this avant garde entertainment is taking place in a building that is such a Modernist masterpiece. Call **01424 229111** for tickets (priced £14).

## Bird Quiz

**1 Which bird is the Apus apus?**

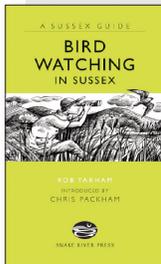
**2 Does the short-eared owl hunt by day or by night?**

**3 Which bird did the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins**

**refer to as 'my cousin'?**

**4 What colour bird does Paul McCartney sing about?**

**5 Name the bird that is associated with the Ancient Mariner.**



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 Bird Watching in Sussex by Rob Yarham worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.

Well there is no denying that our brief Indian summer is behind us now and many long winter nights lay ahead. In an attempt to ward off the gloom that such thoughts can evoke, I have recently been rereading Bird Watching in Sussex by Rob Yarham and I find its mix of lyrical enthusiasm and lightly-worn knowledge just the treat I need at this time of year. This following passage, taken from the chapter on swifts, reminded me that spring really isn't that far off and, like all good things, is worth waiting for. I hope it cheers you up too.

'Each spring, in April and May, after what seems like an eternity since they left for Africa, I watch the sky and listen for swifts, longing for them to return. I don't think there is another bird sound that raises my spirits quite so much. And I am not alone in worshiping the sweeping, scything, screaming, summer-defining swift. For many people, no other bird represents our short, sweet summer in quite the same way. No other bird's flight call appears to say 'This is the summer, seize the day,' as much as the swift's joyful, speed-freak 'Screeeeeeee...screeeeeeee.'

## Beetle mania

Few people who marvel at the wonderful 1889 John Singer Sargent portrait of the actress Ellen Terry in the role of Lady Macbeth, realise that the luminous green dress she is wearing has actual beetle-wings embroidered into the fabric.

Terry enthusiasts should not miss a chance to visit her former home, Smallhythe Place, near Tenterden,

between December 7 - 23 to see her sitting room and dining room bedecked in Christmas decorations (Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesday only, noon to 3pm, cost £2.50).

All proceeds will go to preserving her famous, if somewhat macabre, beetle-wing dress. Call **01580 762334** for more details.

## Live & learn

The Reverend W.D. Parish tells the following amusing tale of the strangely-named fruit, the gaskin.

'A gaskin is a kind of cherry largely grown in the neighbourhood of Rye, which is called indifferently 'geen' or 'gaskin,' having been brought from France by Joan of Kent while her husband, the Black Prince, was commanding in Guienne and Gascony.

In olden days a Lord of Berkeley, finding housekeeping too costly, agreed with the widow of a Kentish nobleman for lodging and maintenance of himself, his wife, her two waiting women, six serving men, and horses for the whole party at £200 a year, but he died before the year was out of eating too many gaskins.'

## Lost words

“ Many surnames with Sussex origins contain the word 'croft,' which is Anglo-Saxon for a small enclosed field near a house.

Apart from the obvious ones of Croft and Crofts the word also forms part of the following surnames;

*Horsecroft*  
*Longcroft*  
*Pycroft*  
*Ravenscroft*  
*Tredcroft*  
*Wheatcroft*

In these examples it is easy to spot the original agricultural connections with these names. If you know of any more do please email them to [editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk](mailto:editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk) as we would be fascinated to know if we have left any out!

## ST MARY DE HAURA



The best monument at the church of St Mary de Haura at Shoreham is an early 18th-century rococo marble cartouche, long exiled on the outside on the west end of the south aisle. This has a ferocious bat-winged skull as a corbel, but is now hopelessly badly weathered. It is exactly the kind of thing Victorian purists most disliked, but it must have looked wonderful in its original condition against the austere ashlar inside.

Read more of this and the many wonderful churches that grace our county in 20 Sussex Churches by Simon Watney, illustrated by Sarah Young and published by Snake River Press at £8.99.