

# SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

It is perhaps one of the less savoury sides of human nature but there is no denying that heinous crimes such as murder continue to exercise a gruesome fascination for many. It is a perennial subject for novelists, film makers and television producers. After all, the famous creation of the Sussex writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle spent his days solving terrible crimes, including murder.

New theories concerning unsolved murders from the murky past seem to reappear with surprising regularity. The most 'popular' (for want of a more fitting expression) is the mysterious Victorian Jack the Ripper case and the awful Whitechapel murders. Next Saturday Maggie Bird, Head of the Metropolitan Police Historical Collection, will journey to Sussex to deliver a lunchtime lecture entitled Jill the Ripper? Ms Bird will pose the theory that the murderer may have been a woman. To hear the evidence you'll need to be at Bateman's, Burwash for a 10.30am start. Lunch follows, call **01435 882302** to book, cost £20.

## Pitldown poser

Today is the anniversary of the sensational discovery by Charles Dawson of the Pitldown Man in 1912. Dawson claimed that he dug up the 'primitive' skull, half humanoid, half ape, in Pitldown Quarry.

The unearthing of the ancient bones caused great excitement among the scientific community as Eoanthropus dawsoni (aka Pitldown Man)

was declared to be the 'missing link' in the evolutionary chain. However, the form of the skull was not consistent with later paleontological finds and in 1953 it was proved beyond doubt that Dawson's old Sussex ancestor was nothing more than a shameful hoax. Pitldown Man's fame endures still, with books, websites and even a pub named after him!

## Out & About in Sussex

A fun and creative afternoon lies in store for those who venture out to Brighton Museum tomorrow afternoon. From 2.30 - 4.30pm textile artist Mog Granger will be leading a Knitted Jewellery workshop.

Why not have a go at making something experimental and alternative to give as Christmas presents? Cost £10 and booking is advised. Meanwhile on Friday

evening November 26 at Preston Manor there is a thrilling Ghost Tour around what is claimed to be 'Brighton's most haunted house'! Scary things include Victorian ghost sightings, an 1896 seance, plus some rather more up-to-date spooky happenings. The tour starts at 7.30pm and lasts for an hour (cost £12). Call **03000 290902** to book this and the Knitted Jewellery event.

## County Quiz

**1 Is Pitldown in East or West Sussex?**

**2 Brighton Marina is the largest of its kind in Europe, true or false?**

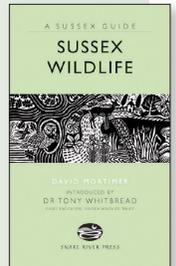
**3 Was Gideon Mantell famous for fossils or fishing?**

**4 Where was Oscar Wilde living when he wrote**

**The Importance of Being Ernest?**

**5 Which Sussex author wrote The Black Narcissus?**

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 Sussex Wildlife by David Mortimer worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.



## Lost words

“ November 25 is St Catherine's Day. There is a charming old word that is associated with the saint's festival, 'catterning', It used to be commonly used in the county and means to go round begging for apples and beer. This rhyme was sung,

Cattern' and Clemen' be here,  
here, here,  
Give us your apples and give  
us your beer,  
One for Peter,  
Two for Paul,  
Three for him who made  
us all;  
Clemen' was a good man,  
Cattern' was his mother;  
Give us your best,  
And not your worst,  
And God will give your soul  
good rest.

## NYMANS WOODS



Cow Wood, Brickyard Wood, Tanyard Wood, Stonepit Wood, Marl Pit Shaw, Furnace Green ... these names, evocative of the uses to which this classic High Weald woodland was once put, today coalesce into the all-embracing name of Nymans Woods.

A path plunges down like the track of a big dipper towards the depths of Cow Wood Ghyll and in places as it does so there are earthen banks on either side. These mark the passage of thousands of journeys on foot by earlier generations of villagers making their daily way to noisy, smelly work in the furnace, the tanyard, the stone or the marl pits.

Read more about the wonderful and varied wildlife sites to be found all over the county in David Mortimer's Sussex Wildlife, illustrated by Hugh Ribbans.

## Live & learn

Most people have read Rudyard Kipling's poem If, but what about his 1900 poem Sussex? Here's just one verse from the total of eleven,

God gives all men all earth  
to love,  
But since man's heart is small  
Ordains for each one spot  
shall prove  
Beloved over all.  
Each to his choice, and I  
rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground - in a fair  
ground -  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

Do you agree with Kipling's sentiments? Email us at [editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk](mailto:editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk) and let us know your views of present-day Sussex.