

SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

Why wait until January to start making some life-changing resolutions? Finding definitive answers to the problems of climate change is, as we all know, not easy. However, there is something of a consensus on the positive effects that keeping things local can have; whether this is holidaying nearer to home, supporting local businesses or eating local.

For we Sussex residents the latter is hardly a privation as we have some of the best local food and drink producers in the country. Why not make a concerted effort to eat local by visiting (on the train or bus of course!) Lewes Farmers Market tomorrow? This market (usually held on the first Saturday of each month) is one of the best in the region.

If you live or regularly find yourself in Eastbourne then I recommend the amusingly named shop Local Roots & Wellie Boots, just by the library. They stock an interesting and varied range of local produce and also do locally-sourced veg boxes.

Live & learn

Christmas is the traditional time for gathering round the fire and telling ghost stories. Here are a few Sussex ghosts to whet your appetite!

Tuckvar House in Alfriston boasts a tall ghostly woman who is seen wandering up and down the stairs and in the larder. Michelham Priory has a grey lady in Tudor dress, while the Grey Lady of Pevensey Castle is seen walking the parapets in fading light. She is believed to be the ghost of Lady Pelham, a supporter of the Earl of Bolingbroke in the conflict for England's crown at the end of the fourteenth century.

There are lots more thrilling ghostly happenings in *A Sussex Miscellany* by Sophie Collins.

Sussex Quiz

1 With which American poet did W.B. Yeats spend time in Ashdown Forest?

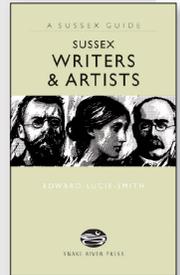
2 Eric Ravilious was an Official War artist in which conflict?

3 Which writer's mother worked as a housekeeper at Uppark?

4 Frank Brangwyn is associated with which Sussex village?

5 Which writers founded the Hogarth Press?

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 *Sussex Writers & Artists* by Edward Lucie-Smith worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at www.snakeriverpress.co.uk next Saturday.



Sussex Celebrity

Stella Gibbons

1902-89



Stella Gibbons was born in London, the daughter of a doctor, and became famous for one novel, her first, *Cold Comfort Farm*, published in 1932. Though not written in Sussex, it offers a delicious, unforgettable fantasy about rural life in remoter parts of the county. It offers a rustic counterpart to E.F. Benson's comedies about Sussex small-town life, which belong to the same epoch, but is a good deal sharper in tone.

The name 'Cold Comfort Farm' was suggested by a friend and derived from a real place of that name near Hinckley in Leicestershire. Gibbons nevertheless decided to set her story in Sussex, in the fictional village of Howling. One reason for this may have been that Sussex represented a kind of rural idyll more directly accessible, in the physical sense, to Londoners such as her briskly commonsensical heroine Flora Poste.

Read more of Gibbons and her heroine in *Sussex Writers & Artists* by Edward Lucie-Smith.

Lost words

It would seem that fairies don't only appear on top of Christmas trees. In his *A Dictionary of Sussex Dialect* the Reverend W.D. Parish gives the following definitions,

Fairy-Rings: Circles of grass which are higher, and of a deeper green than the grass which grows around them; attributed to the dancing of the fairies.

'Ye elves ...you demi-puppets that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites...' *Tempest, Act V, sc. 1.*

Fairy-Sparks: Phosphoric light seen on various substances in the night-time.

Out & About in Sussex

The spectacular annual Burning of the Clocks celebration has become something of a Brighton tradition and perfect antidote to the season's excesses.

People of all ages are invited to create their own lanterns made from paper and willow, dress brightly (and warmly) then join the procession through the streets

of Brighton. The finale takes place on the beach with a great firework display and a giant bonfire. Throw your lantern on the fire and make a wish for 2010.

This free family event takes place on Monday evening between 6.00-8.00 pm. For more information call **01273 571106** or visit www.burningtheclocks.co.uk

Eccentric Sussex

In An Eccentric Tour of Sussex, Peter Bridgewater highlights an interesting aspect of the endlessly fascinating county town of Lewes.

Druid activity and pagan spirituality in Lewes are alive and well. Modern Druidry focuses on a love of nature, expressing spirituality through ancient Celtic traditions celebrating the cycle of the

seasons. The Long Man of Wilmington is a popular pagan venue and the South Downs in general provide lots of healing energy. Walk the Downs around Lewes and you have a 95% chance of seeing Celtic shenanigans. The head honcho of the Druids lives in the town and is a well-respected international speaker on the subject.