

# SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

## Out & About in Sussex

Young children often reach a fever pitch of excitement in the weeks of frantic activity that precede Christmas. By contrast the days following New Year can often seem rather flat.

Only a few more days of the school holidays remain so do try to take some time to get out and about and enjoy some of the simpler pleasures the county has to offer. As long as the rain stays away you can

wrap up warm and take a ride on the coastal bus down to Rottingdean (or walk along the undercliff) and enjoy the rockpools.

If after spending an enjoyable time on the beach (see feature below for some ideas) you find the cold gets too much then warm up in the endlessly fascinating Grange Museum in the village. And all this for free!

The National Trust is undoubtedly one of our national treasures. It has more members than all the three main political parties combined, which I think says quite a lot about the nation's priorities! Many who are not members or regular visitors to Trust sites often think they all close over the winter months but this is not so.

Why not chase away the winter blues with a bracing romp around the grounds at Bodiam Castle, near Robertsbridge, then climb the ramparts and take in the view? Starting today and running every weekend throughout January and February the grounds will be open from 10.30am until 3.30pm. If you arrive before 1pm adults enjoy half-price admission. (Call 01580 830196 for more details.)

A date to put in your new diary is Tuesday January 12 when there is a lecture lunch at Nymans, near Handcross. Entitled The Great Polar Explorers, it features the adventures of Ernest Shackleton and Captain Scott. A perfect subject for winter. Call 01444 405250 to book or visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/southeast](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/southeast).

## Rottingdean Quiz

1 Which Rottingdean writer wrote the Just So Stories?

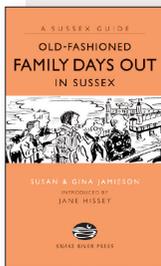
2 Is Rottingdean famous for smugglers or burglars?

3 Who wrote National Velvet?

4. Which artist designed the stained glass windows in St Margaret's Church?

5 What type of music is the Copper Family of Rottingdean famous for?

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 Old-Fashioned Family Days Out in Sussex by Susan and Gina Jamieson worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.



## Flora Robson

If you venture into St Nicholas' Churchyard to seek out the grave of Phoebe Hessel, do take the time to look in the porch at the memorial to the actress Dame Flora Robson (1902-84).

Dame Flora was a Brighton resident, first living at 14 Marine Drive, then at 7 Wykeham Terrace, just down the hill from the church. This

is now marked with a plaque. A well-respected character actress she made many distinguished appearances playing regal roles such as the Russian Empress Elizabeth in Catherine the Great (1934) and Elizabeth I in Fire Over England (1937).

She was made a Dame of the British Empire for her services to the theatre in 1960.

## Live & learn Lost words

The following words appear on a gravestone in St Nicholas' Church in Brighton.

'IN MEMORY OF Phoebe Hessel who was born at Stepney in the Year 1713. She served for many Years as a private soldier in the 5th Reg. of foot in different parts of Europe and in the year 1745 fought under the command of the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND at the Battle of Fontenoy where she received a Bayonet wound in her Arm. Her long life which commenced in the time of QUEEN ANNE extended to the reign of GEORGE IV by whose munificence she received comfort and support in her latter years she died at Brighton where she had long resided December 12th 1821 aged 108 Years.'

Here's another little-known Sussex custom you may not be familiar with, taken from A Dictionary of Sussex Dialect by the Reverend W.D. Parish.

**Old-Father:** The person who gives away the bride at her wedding.

Among the labouring classes in Sussex it is not the custom for the bride to be accompanied to church by her father. The bridal procession is very simple, and consists usually of four persons only - the bride and bridegroom, the bridesmaid, and the old father, who is usually the sweetheart of the bridesmaid if she is a single woman (which is not necessarily the case).

## ROTTINGDEAN ROCKPOOLS



To avoid disappointment before setting out, consult the tide tables and don't go down to the rocks in bad weather when the sea can be treacherous. Equipment really depends on what you feel like carrying. Some suggestions: buckets, nets (not necessarily big ones), a small pot or two, a grown-up's hand to hold on slippery rocks, a pocket guide to the seashore.

The chalky cliffs on this stretch of coast extend out into the sea, giving the water its particular slightly milky quality. A lesson in coastal erosion can be delivered in the guise of having fun! The remains of the eroded cliffs now provide hours of rockpooling pleasure. However, rocks can be horribly slippery and scratchy. Bring plasters! The pools are often deeper than they look, and the tide can come in with surprising speed.

Get more ideas for family fun in Old-Fashioned Family Days Out in Sussex by Susan and Gina Jamieson, published by Snake River Press, £8.99.