

# SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

At last the days are getting longer, birds are singing and the first signs of spring are gradually beginning to show in the garden. This is the month when hibernating gardeners begin to make plans for the year ahead. However, if one of your resolutions for 2010 was to start growing some of your own vegetables, then few could blame you if the freezing temperatures of late have rather squashed your enthusiasm for being outdoors. Fear not, as now is the perfect time to start sowing seeds.

If lack of experience is holding you back then help is at hand over at Nymans, near Handcross, on Friday 19 March. Between 11am - 12.30pm the Grow Your Own Vegetables Workshop provides guidance and encouragement to get you started on this most rewarding, productive and money-saving of pastimes. The course costs £10, plus the usual property entrance fee. For full details call **01444 405250** or visit [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).

## Decimus Burton

The architect Decimus Burton (1800-81) is responsible for the elegant Adelaide Crescent, which must rank as one of the most impressive sights to be seen along Brighton seafront. His work combined a keen understanding of state-of-the-art engineering techniques with admiration for the classical tradition.

Among his most noted London buildings are the Palm

House at Kew Gardens, the Athenaeum Club and the Constitution Hill Arch at Hyde Park Corner (home to the stately Duke of Wellington equestrian sculpture by Matthew Cotes Wyatt).

Burton's choice of career meant he successfully followed in his father James's footsteps, as Burton senior created much of the East Sussex town of St Leonard's.

## Out & About in Sussex

The riverside Ropetackle development in Shoreham rather split local opinion when it was built a few years ago. Some residents were in favour while others felt it would dominate the townscape.

Most, however, welcomed the incorporation into the site of the eponymous Ropetackle arts and performance centre. The venue presents a very varied programme of music, comedy, films and workshops.

Next Friday, 19 March at 8pm, Neil Innes will appear on the Ropetackle stage and it promises to be an entertaining evening. Innes has collaborated with many a legendary name, including The Bonzos, Monty Python, The Beatles, Paul Simon and Mick Jagger, and will be performing from his A People's Guide to World Domination tour. For details call **01273 464440** or visit [www.ropetacklecentre.co.uk](http://www.ropetacklecentre.co.uk).

## Garden Quiz

**1 Which Lewes house was home to John Evelyn?**

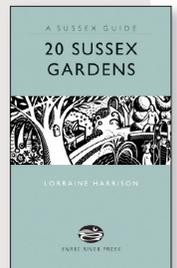
**2 Did Christopher Lloyd garden at Great Dixter or Wakehurst Place?**

**3 Which fruit is the Gage family associated with?**

**4 What type of fruit is a Crawley Beauty?**

**5 Who wrote The Glory of the Garden?**

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 20 Sussex Gardens by Lorraine Harrison worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.



## Lost words

“Here at Sussex Bookends we always love to hear from readers, especially on matters concerning our county's old dialect words and phrases.

Velda Reed recently contributed the following: 'My husband speaks very Sussex and calls something not quite straight as a bit wib wob, and something which wobbles about or stands uneven as tinnanning, or a bit tin tan.'

Continuing this theme in his A Dictionary of Sussex Dialect the Reverend W. D. Parish cites the use of the word 'bumblesome' for something that doesn't quite fit or is hunched up.

If you know other similar fascinating old words or phrases do send them to [editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk](mailto:editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk)

## The Angel of Eastbourne John Bodkin Adams (1899-1983)

Half a century before Dr Harold Shipman, Sussex has its own angel of death in the portly figure of Eastbourne's Dr John Bodkin Adams. When he was arrested on 19 December 1956 on suspicion of murdering 81-year-old Edith Morrell by morphine injection six years previously, he was the wealthiest doctor in England.

Despite being brought up amid the fundamentalist austerity of the Plymouth Brethren, he had no qualms about luxurious living. He was beneficiary of more than 132 wills, raking in over £45,000 in cash, plus jewellery, shares, silver, antiques and luxury motors. And there are countless witness accounts of his walking off with little, and sometimes quite large, expensive items from his patients' houses, while they were still warm under the morphine cosh he had administered. When questioned about Morrell's death he chillingly replied 'She wanted to die - that cannot be murder... It is impossible to accuse a doctor.'

To find out what happened at Adams' 17-day trial at the Old Bailey in 1957 read all about this in Salacious Sussex by Viv Croot.

## Live & learn

Native plants and flowers have long been used by herbalists for medicinal purposes, yet their uses are often complex, confusing and surrounded by superstition.

Yarrow, also known as 'the devil's plaything', was a key ingredient in many spells and charms, and was revered in the past as a holy plant, yet it has an odd reputation: believed to be excellent medicine, but unlucky in certain applications.

It stops bleeding and lowers fevers, and a bunch tied to a baby's cradle will repel witches and bad luck, yet it is still sometimes regarded with unease. Unique to Sussex is the belief that it should not be planted on a young man's grave for fear of giving him unquiet dreams and not allowing the dead to rest.