

# SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

## Out & About in Sussex

If the weather is good today why not join the National Trust team at 2pm for an informative and enjoyable two-hour walk along the Cuckmere River? Entitled Cuckmere Climateers, it is a circular walk that will focus on the effects of climate change on this most lovely of Sussex valleys. Find out how changing weather patterns affect the local flora and fauna. Call

01323 871318 or visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk) for more information.

Why not combine the walk with a visit to Alfriston Clergy House (open 10.30am - 5pm), a stroll around St Andrew's Church (known as the 'Cathedral of the Downs'), followed by a browse in the Much Ado Bookshop in Alfriston High Street?

## Sussex Quiz

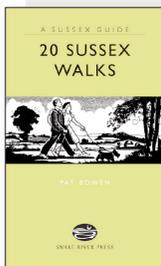
1 Which artist is associated with Petworth House?

2 Name the writer whose mother was housekeeper at Uppark.

3 Which Sussex town was the fictional home of Miss Mapp?

4 Which novel features the fictional Sussex village of Howling?

5 Where was Daisy Ashford living when she wrote *The Young Visitors*?



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 Walks by Pat Bowen worth £8.99. The correct answers will be posted at [www.snakeriverpress.co.uk](http://www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.

In last week's Garden quiz one of the questions asked which fruit is associated with the Gage family. The answer is the greengage but this is only part of the story! In case any of the county's inhabitants are tempted to plant plum trees as a patriotic act, I feel I should try to correct a much propounded misapprehension.

It is often cited that this tasty plum was introduced into England by the Gage family at Firle. However, current thinking supports the theory that the first French 'Reine Claude' plum trees to arrive in England were actually destined for Sir Thomas Gage's residence at Hengrave Hall, Suffolk.

En route from France, the labels became detached from the trees and Sir Thomas's gardener relabelled them 'Green Gage'. Similarly the popular 'Victoria' plum is said to be a chance seedling originally found in a garden at Alderton in Sussex, yet no such village exists in the county. Such is the stuff that myths are made of! If you want to plant trees of true Sussex origin then why not try the apples 'Afriston', 'Crawley Beauty' or the 'Wadhurst Pippin'?

## Fear not!

If you really fancy a day out with a difference why not try confronting some of your animal-related fears at Drusillas Park, Alfriston tomorrow?

Their Phobias Day will help old and young alike get close up and personal with their (very friendly) spiders, snakes and other creatures that often rather unfairly induce a flesh-

creeping response in the uninitiated. Who knows, once you have become life-long buddies with your new furry (or indeed scaly) friend you may decide to partake in the park's Adopt an Animal scheme. All proceeds go to supporting their care and conservation programme. For details call 01323 974100 or visit [www.drusillas.co.uk](http://www.drusillas.co.uk).

## Live & learn

'Dr Brighton', Richard Russell of Lewes, was one of the first to advocate the healthy properties of sea bathing (and, indeed, sea drinking) in the 1730s, but a host of others swiftly followed him, and villages previously peopled by fishermen and farmers found themselves in the middle of a building boom.

Brighton was pre-eminent by the early 19th century, made fashionable by the royal connection, but Eastbourne, Hastings, Worthing and Bognor all enjoyed massive growth, and the modern notion of the seaside as a place for rest and relaxation was born.

First-time visitors to Hastings then, as now, are often intrigued by the tall black buildings found to the east of the beach. These are the fishing fleet's 'net shops' used for drying nets.

## Lost words

“ If until now you thought Tom was just a popular boy's name, then read on.

**Tom:** any cock bird, as a tom-turkey or tom-parrot. 'I bought two hens and a tom off old Miss Cluckleford, but I don't know as I shall make out much with 'em, for they don't seem none of 'em inclined to lay.'

**Tom-Bacca:** Traveller's joy. *Clematis vitalba*; also called boys'-bacca, because the boys cut the small wood in pieces to smoke like cigars.

**Tommy:** bread.

These lost words are all taken from *A Dictionary of Sussex Dialect* by the Reverend W.D. Parish (published by Snake River Press £8.99).

## COMMERCE & CASTLES



Lewes is a rare gem, in many ways a quintessential English country town, small, compact and relatively unspoiled, complete with its ruined castle, its surviving coaching inn, some fine townhouses and still largely 'uncloned' shops, though now without its market. It seems to fulfil all the needs of a town at exactly the right size for a distinctive community in which everyone seems to know everyone else.

William Morris at the end of the 19th century thought Lewes looked like a box of toys from the brow of the hill above Falmer but it is now in danger of being enlarged out of recognition. The town piled high above its castle and its break-neck streets and tangle of little alleys, 'twittens', and the remains of its walls are reminders of its origin as a fortified town. The Downs surround it, their invigorating breezes pervade it, and there is the smell of the sea to recall that it was once a seaport.

Read more in *The Shaping of the Sussex Landscape* by Peter Brandon, illustrated by Grahame Baker Smith (published by Snake River Press, £8.99).