

SUSSEX BOOKENDS

A WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE SUSSEX CHARACTER

Thursday is St George's Day, when we celebrate the patron saint of England who manfully slew the fearsome dragon. Several saints have Sussex connections, notably St Richard of Chichester, St Anthony with Alfriston and St Cuthman with Steyning, whose statue sits opposite the village's eighth-century St Andrew's Church, which he is said to have raised.

Cuthman probably began life elsewhere (possibly Bosham), transporting his widowed mother from place to place in a wheelbarrow, seeking charity. He yoked himself to the barrow with a rope, when this broke he wove another from willow, pledging that when that one broke it would be a sign to build a church on that exact spot. The auspicious site turned out to be Steyning and he fulfilled his promise. As the building neared completion, Cuthman struggled to place a roof beam. A stranger appeared and helped him, asking his name, Cuthman was told, 'I am he in whose name you are building this church.'

Blue Yonder

I love this time of year as it means I can visit once again the Arlington Bluebell Walk and Farm Trail, at Bates Green Farm, Arlington. To stand among literally thousands of bluebells, especially in the warmth of a spring morning, is quite intoxicating. The blooms seem to shimmer with bright intensity in the light, all the while exuding a heavenly heady perfume. They are all English

bluebells too! The walk can be enjoyed by all ages and all levels of ability as there is excellent wheelchair and mobility scooter access. Open daily (except Mondays 20th, 27th April and 11th May) 10am-5pm until 13th May. Call 01323 485151 for details or visit www.bluebellwalk.co.uk and consult their helpful blog giving up-to-date information on the conditions and flowers.

Out & About in Sussex

Now we are well settled into British Summer Time it is much easier to spring out of bed in the mornings. So why not make an extra special effort next Saturday morning and join experts from the Sussex Ornithological Society for their Dawn Chorus Walk at Sheffield Park?

The walk through the beautiful parkland begins at 5am and lasts for a couple of hours. Learn how to recognise

the individual songs of the numerous species, or simply enjoy the sheer exhilaration of the chorus. And just think how much you'll enjoy a hearty breakfast afterwards! Call 01825 790231, cost £8.

If you can't make next Saturday, a similar event is planned for Sunday 3rd May at Bateman's, Burwash, details 01435 882302. The cost of £15 includes an egg and bacon bap, orange juice and coffee.

Saints & Sinners Quiz

1 With which saint was the devil in combat when he dug the Devil's Dyke?

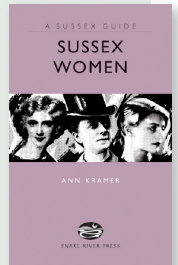
2 Which Hastings resident was known as 'The Great Beast'?

3 Who founded the Chailey Heritage Craft Schools?

4 Which fearsome monster lived in St Leonard's Forest?

5 What is the name of the female life-saver who rescued over 30 swimmers at Bognor?

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 Women* by Ann Kramer, worth £8.99. The answers will be posted on the Snake River Press website (www.snakeriverpress.co.uk) next Saturday.



Lost words

Word of the Week
Gooden, or Goodening:

The custom of going from house to house for doles on St Thomas's day (21st December). This was done by the women only, and a widow had a right to a double dole; the presumed object being to obtain money or provisions for the enjoyment of the approaching festival of Christmas.

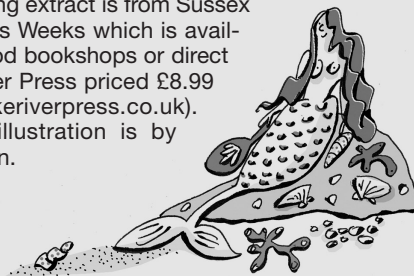
Thus writes the Rev. W.D. Parrish in his *A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect*, but what exactly is a 'dole,' let alone a double one? And do you think Goodening was just an old Sussex form of 'trick or treat'? Email your suggestions to: editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk The answer will be posted at: www.snakeriverpress.co.uk next Saturday.

SUSSEX BY THE SEA

'Sussex has not only inspired a great deal of music, but it is also arguably unique in having its own county anthem, *Sussex by the Sea*. This stirring march song is proudly performed by "the men from Sussex" at any opportunity - it has been adopted by the county regiment as their regimental march, and as the school march for Christ's Hospital, it is the battle cry of Brighton and Hove Albion football club and Sussex cricket team, and it is sung at many of the Sussex bonfire celebrations.

Its enduring popularity both within and beyond the bounds of the county is no doubt due to its rousing opening fanfare and tuneful chorus as much as its (admittedly rather dated) patriotic lyrics, all of which were written by William Ward-Higgs - who was, however, not a Sussex man.'

This illuminating extract is from *Sussex Music* by Marcus Weeks which is available from all good bookshops or direct from Snake River Press priced £8.99 (visit www.snakeriverpress.co.uk). The delightful illustration is by Maddy McClellan.



Live & learn

St Richard, a gifted scholar and lawyer, was Bishop of Chichester from 1245-1253. This simple prayer is attributed to him on his deathbed. It is still recited today all over the world.

Thanks be to you, my lord,
Jesus Christ,
For all the benefits you have given me;
For all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
O, most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
May I know you more clearly;
Love you more dearly;
And follow you more nearly,
day by day.

We would love to hear from readers of similar interesting facts, stories and legends relating to characters who lived in the county. Email: editorial@snakeriverpress.co.uk