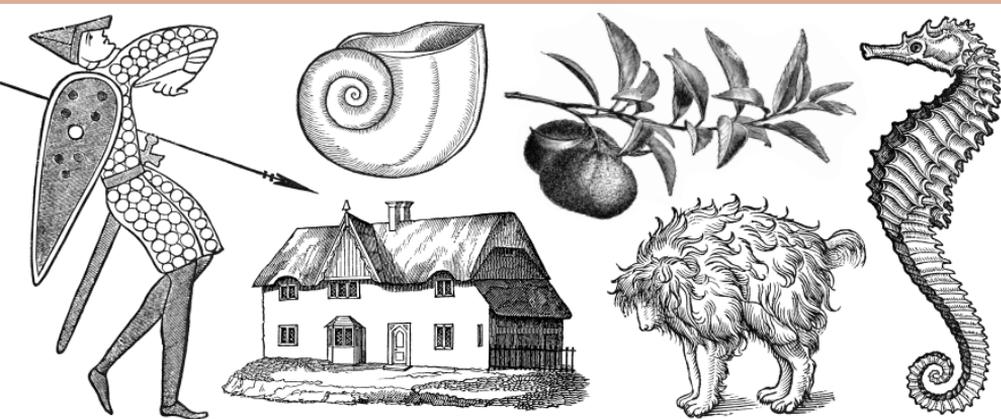


A SUSSEX GUIDE

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# A SUSSEX MISCELLANY



SOPHIE COLLINS



SNAKE RIVER PRESS



## SNAKE RIVER PRESS

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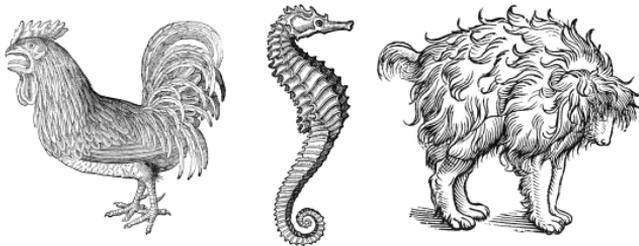
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### **DEDICATION**

*For Ted, who won't be druv*

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## SUSSEX STATISTICS

*I love England, especially the English countryside.  
We had a cottage in Sussex. I love those cottages.*

RICHARD WIDMARK, AMERICAN ACTOR

How long has SUSSEX *been* Sussex? There was a kingdom of the South Saxons from the fifth century onwards, and a document recorded ‘*Sud Seaxe*’ – the South Saxons – in 722. By the time THE DOMESDAY BOOK was being written up in 1086, this had become *Sudsexe*, only a step away from the modern county name.

### Two coats of arms

The two parts of the county have had individual coats of arms for centuries. As early as 1611, the RED SHIELD for East Sussex, and the BLUE SHIELD for West Sussex (both with six golden martlets), were in use.

The martlet is a heraldic bird that is always shown without feet, and is often equated with the swallow. In the Sussex arms, the six martlets represent the six ancient ‘rapes’ or sub-divisions of the country, which existed before the Norman invasion.

Today, each Sussex crest has a golden Saxon crown in its top half, and a wavy line, symbolic of the county’s bond with the sea, divides this from the martlets below.

✚ **EAST SUSSEX**’s crest is similar to the banner of the ancient Kingdom of Sussex in the sixth century. It shows a crown above a wavy bar, with six martlets in the lower half. The colours are gold on red.

✚ **WEST SUSSEX**’s version is gold on blue, and also has the martlets and the Saxon crown, but is topped with a crest of oak leaves and acorns. These additions were imported from the Surrey coat of arms when parts of that county were incorporated into West Sussex in 1974. Subsequent redrawings of the county boundaries left Gatwick Airport as the only remaining Surrey takeover within Sussex boundaries, but the oak leaves remain.

One rather complicated pedigree for the martlets claims that they reflect the power of the lords of Arundel in Sussex, the French word for swallow being ‘*hirondelle*’ which sounds like ‘Arundel’.

### A county divided

Although West and East Sussex were recognised as distinct areas as early as the twelfth century, and were organised as separate entities by the sixteenth, formal separation did not

come until the 1880s. In 1888, as a part of the Local Government Act, the two parts were formally divided into two administrations.

**Measuring up**

✦ **WEST SUSSEX** is divided into seven districts:

1. Adur, 2. Arun, 3. Chichester, 4. Crawley, 5. Horsham, 6. Mid-Sussex, and 7. Worthing. Its county town is *Chichester*.

✦ **EAST SUSSEX** is divided into six districts:

1. Brighton and Hove, 2. Eastbourne, 3. Hastings, 4. Lewes, 5. Rother, and 6. Wealden. Its county town is *Lewes*.

✦ **WEST SUSSEX** comes out ahead (it's bigger, has a higher population, and an extra district), but by only a narrow margin.



**Place names**

ANGLO-SAXON place names still rule in Sussex. Here are a few of the commonest prefixes and affixes in original form, with examples of the places by which they are identified:

- Becc** a brook or stream (*Bexhill*)
- Burh** a hill, or citadel  
(*Burghersh, Pulborough*)
- Denu** a valley (*East Dean, Marden*)
- Ea** a marsh (*Winchelsea, Selsea*)
- Feld** a plain or flat place (*Heathfield*)
- Folde** a field (*Slinfold*)
- Ham** a village, an enclosure  
(*Beddingham*)
- Hou** a hill (*Piddinghoe*)
- Hurst** a wood (*Nuthurst*)
- Ig** an island (*Thorney*)
- Mersc** a marsh (*Peasmarsh*)
- Stede** a station, a place  
(*East Grinstead*)
- Tun** a dwelling, a close (*Alfriston*)
- Wic** a village, a dwelling place  
(*Terwick*)

A complete review of English place names was conducted in *The Place Names of Sussex*, published in 1929/30 for the English Place-name Society. Helena Hall published a short version in her update of the Reverend Parish's *Dictionary of Sussex Dialect*, updated in 1957, from which this is a selection.

	AREA IN SQ KM		POPULATION IN 2005	
	Ranked in England & Wales		Ranked in England & Wales	
✦ <b>WEST SUSSEX</b>	1,991	30th in size	764,300	27th in size
✦ <b>EAST SUSSEX</b>	1,792	33rd in size	752,900	28th in size

## MORE STATISTICS

### The South Downs Way

THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY, stretching between Water Lane in Winchester in Hampshire and the west end of the seaside promenade in Eastbourne in East Sussex, is one of the best-known walkers' paths in Britain. Measuring around 100 miles (160km) from one end to the other, it covers the landscapes of both East and West Sussex in all its variety, and covers a large chunk of Hampshire for good measure. Its highest point is DITCHLING BEACON, at 814ft (248m), and it passes near to most of the county's most scenic spots and interesting towns.

#### UNUSUAL HERITAGE

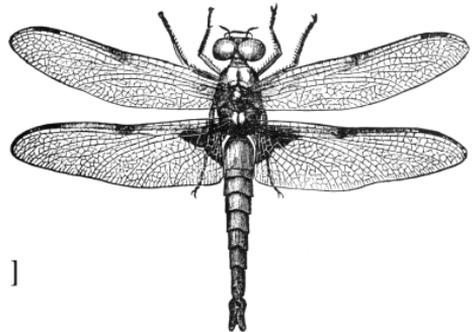
*Something that has shaped the history of Sussex and many of her great estates is the unusual inheritance practice of BOROUGH ENGLISH. Technically known as ultimogeniture, this means that the youngest surviving son of a family inherits its estate – the opposite of the far more common state of primogeniture. This has been a marked custom from medieval times. It is not unique to Sussex (parts of Middlesex, Suffolk and Surrey also use it), but it is unusual in Britain overall.*



### Sussex wildlife

Sussex is rich in FAUNA and FLORA, and some plants and insects that are quite easily found there are rare or (in formal terms) 'nationally scarce' elsewhere. The top ten in this category in the Sussex Rare Species Inventory are:

- ROUND-HEADED RAMPION  
(*Phyteuma orbiculare*, see p18)
- FROGBIT  
(*Hydrocharis morus-ranae*, waterplant, also known as waterpoppy)
- ADONIS BLUE  
(*Lysandra bellargus*, butterfly)
- LONG-WINGED CONEHEAD  
(*Conocephalus discolor*, cricket)
- DOOR SNAIL (*Macrogastra rolphii*)
- HAIRY DRAGONFLY  
(*Brachytron pratense*)
- RUDDY DARTER  
(*Sympetrum sanguineum*, dragonfly)
- VARIABLE DAMSELFLY  
(*Coenagrion pulchellum*)
- WHITE-LEGGED DAMSELFLY  
(*Platycnemis pennipes*)
- DOWNY EMERALD  
(*Cordulea aenea*, dragonfly)



**Saxon Sussex**

Even career historians have problems sorting out the early rule of Sussex.

We know that the SAXONS were making inroads into southern England by the third century because the Romans were building forts to protect the coast against them, but these early Germanic invaders didn't arrive, like DUKE WILLIAM OF NORMANDY, in one neat fleet with a date. Instead they gradually took over, and although the history between the third and the ninth century has numerous gaps, it tells of increasing Saxon influence.

The source of much early information is the ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE, a text that was compiled entry by entry between the earliest years after Christ and the twelfth century, but which can largely be dated back to a manuscript dated 891. It was much added-to over the centuries and little of the text it contains can be independently verified, but it claims that a figure called Ælle became first *bretwalda* – chief or king – of the South Saxons in the fifth century.

A list of some of the indefinite rulers from this vague period of history follows, partly because of the wonderful resonance of the Anglo-Saxon names, and partly because it demonstrates that power was in a constant state of flux.

☛ *Many of the reigns overlap, sometimes because power was shared, sometimes because the records mention more than one leader for the period in question:*

DATE OF REIGN . . . *King, bretwalda  
or ealdorman*

?c.660-?c.685 . . . . . *Ædelwealh*  
 ?c.683 . . . . . *Eadwulf*  
 ?c.683-?c.685 . . . . . *Ecwald*  
 ?c.685 . . . . . *Andhun*

✦ From c.686 to 726, the kingdom came under the overall rule of neighbouring Wessex:

692-717 . . . . . *Nodhelm*  
 692-700 . . . . . *Watt*  
 717 . . . . . *Aedelstan*  
 740 . . . . . *Aedelberht*  
 760-772 . . . . . *Osmund*

✦ From 771 to 825, the kingdom was placed under the rule of Mercia:

772 . . . . . *Oswald*  
 765-772 . . . . . *Oslac*  
 765-791 . . . . . *Ealdwulf*  
 765-772 . . . . . *Ælfwald*

✦ From 825, the kingdom was back under Wessex:

825-839 . . . . . *Ecqberht*  
 839-858 . . . . . *Ethulwulf*  
 858-865 . . . . . *Ethulbert*  
 865-871 . . . . . *Ethelred*

✦ On the death of ETHELRED, we finally get back into more familiar territory with the accession of his son, who became ALFRED THE GREAT.

## SUSSEX FOSSILS

*'His rise and fall are a salutary example of human motive, mischief and mistake...'*

EDITORIAL ON PILTDOWN MAN, NATURE, 1954

Sussex is particularly rich in FOSSILS, but for centuries the local people who came across them, lying among rockfall on the shore, or under the blades of their ploughs, did not know how to identify them, believing them to be giants' bones, or dragons' teeth (which, of course, in a sense, they were). Fittingly, it was a Sussex man, the doctor and naturalist GIDEON MANTELL, who was one of the first to attempt to categorise his findings into a specific sort of animal.

SITE	PERIOD OF FOSSILS	HOW LONG AGO?
<b>Bracklesham Bay</b>	<i>Eocene</i>	40-50 million
<b>Eastbourne</b>	<i>Cretaceous</i>	85 million
<b>Folkestone</b>	<i>Cretaceous</i>	100 million
<b>Hastings</b>	<i>Early cretaceous</i>	140 million
<b>Littlehampton</b>	<i>Cretaceous</i>	75-100 million
<b>Peacehaven</b>	<i>Late Cretaceous</i>	80-85 million
<b>Seaford</b>	<i>Cretaceous</i>	70-100 million
<b>Seven Sisters</b>	<i>Cretaceous</i>	70-100 million

### Eight great fossil sites

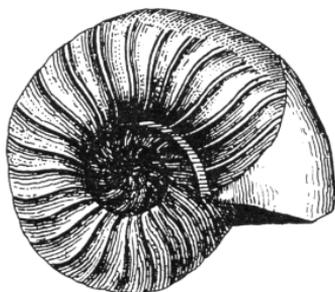
Should you want to fossil-hunt, check the rules first: some sites encourage amateurs, others forbid them!

The immense lengths of the classified prehistoric periods are almost impossible to grasp. The CRETACEOUS period overall lasted just over 71 million years, so the dates given in the table relate to the fossils actually found on each site – to the nearest five million years or so.

### Ammonite houses

Falling outside the familiar architectural orders, a sudden – and brief – fashion for capitals in the form of AMMONITES (those curled shell fossils found all along the rocky Sussex coastline) flourished in the early nineteenth century. Just a few appeared in London, but the Sussex father-and-son builders, AMON WILDS & AMON HENRY WILDS, introduced a number in fossil-mad Sussex, including them

on terraces in Brighton and, in Lewes, on the elegant façade of Castle Place on Lewes High Street. It may be that they appreciated the pun of Amonite on their name, or they may simply have been following the contemporary craze for antiquarian themes in their work.



### The Piltdown scandal

One of the most famous associations between palaeontology and Sussex is the discovery – and later discrediting – of ‘the man who never was’:

PILTDOWN MAN. No-one knows for sure who perpetrated the fraud, but in 1912, CHARLES DAWSON, a respected bone-hunter uncovered a skull at Piltdown which seemed to combine the characteristics of earlier and later specimens, having the large cranium and high forehead of modern man and a primitive jaw much closer to Neanderthal remains. Dawson died in 1916, and by the early 1950s the skull (and a later example, also uncovered at Piltdown by Dawson) had

been discredited, and it was acknowledged that *Eoanthropus dawsoni* had actually been formed from the top part of a human skull and the jawbone of an orang utan. Who perpetrated the fraud, and why, has never been established – suspects have ranged from Dawson himself to a number of his colleagues, and the list even includes an intriguing appearance from SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, himself an amateur palaeontologist.

### The naming of parts

It was GIDEON MANTELL, a Sussex doctor, who ‘created’ the first named dinosaur. An enthusiastic naturalist and fossil hunter, when huge teeth and bone fossils were found at Cuckfield in the early 1820s, he noticed that they resembled those of the iguana, but were around twenty times the size. From this came the name IGUANADON, used ever since. The term ‘dinosaur’, from the Greek *deinos*, ‘fearfully great’ and *sauros*, ‘lizard’, was coined in 1842 by the scientist RICHARD OWEN.

### THE BRICKWORKS DINOSAUR

*The village of Rudgwick has its very own dinosaur, the remains of which were found in the local brickworks in 1985. In 1996, Polacanthus rudgwickensis was acknowledged with its own classification – it was an armour-plated, spike-backed herbivore, resembling a five-ton armadillo. Its remains can be seen in the museum at Horsham.*

## THE SUSSEX COASTLINE

*'When I gaze on the sea, I want to be on it, over it,  
across it – there is no home for me here'*

CHARLES LAMB

**R**ocky and rugged, with shingle beaches often overhung by towering cliffs, the Sussex coastline is just as picturesque as the DOWNLAND LANDSCAPE, and can offer as much in terms of folklore and history. The play of light on the coastal landscape inspired TURNER, among others, to create lasting memorials of its splendour. The more pragmatic smugglers and fishermen looked instead at what trade could be brought from the sea.

### The Sussex Cinque Ports

Because more than five names crop up whenever the CINQUE PORTS are discussed, there is sometimes confusion as to which are the 'real' ports.

The original five, granted privileges in return for maintaining ships for the king's use if necessary, were: **1. HASTINGS**, **2. NEW ROMNEY**, **3. HYTHE**, **4. DOVER** and **5. SANDWICH** – so only one, Hastings, was in Sussex. As time went on and the trade in the ports grew, names were added to the list – RYE and WINCHELSEA became Cinque Ports, also, and a number of 'Limbs' were added as extensions to existing members.

A government post, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, was created at some point in the twelfth century; the office still exists, with an official residence at Walmer Castle, but is now solely an honorary role.

### Smuggling in Sussex

SMUGGLING was one of the foremost businesses in Sussex through the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century. One nineteenth-century wit claimed that all Sussex men were either shepherds or smugglers.

#### Here are some facts & terms

**[OWLING]** the original term for smuggling, referring first purely to the smuggling of wool.

**[TUBBING]** the conveyance of contraband goods in 'tubs', often disguised with a top layer of licit goods.

**[DERRICKING]** the technique by which goods were hauled up a cliff face from an inaccessible beach.

**[CONDEMNED HOLE]** the dump in Hastings where the remains of smugglers' boats were left, having been cut into pieces. In fact, the upended bows

and sterns of the boats were often used to make huts for the town's fishermen

[150] the total number of excisemen employed by the government to foil smuggling in Sussex and Kent in the early eighteenth century. At this period, the number of smugglers pitted against them was probably in the thousands.

[3 MILLION] the number of pounds of tea it is estimated were smuggled in the first half of the eighteenth century. This was three times the total of tea brought in legally.

### **The strange lure of Beachy Head**

BEACHY HEAD is one of the most beautiful places on one of the prettiest stretches of coastline in southern England. Why it should also have become one of Britain's most popular locations for would-be suicides remains a mystery, but records stretching back to the seventeenth century show that people have always seen it as a jumping site as well as a beauty spot. In more recent times the mere fact that it is known to be popular with would-be suicides probably only increases its charm. And the numbers seemed bent on rising: from an average of 6-7 deaths per year in the 1950s, the figure had risen to an average of 17 by the end of the 1990s. However the trend may recently have been reversed – after further rises between 2002 and 2005, a steep decrease to only 7 deaths

in 2006 has been attributed to the CHAPLAINCY TEAM, a band of volunteers linked to a number of local churches, who patrol the cliff-top during the day and into the evening. There is also a strategically sited telephone box with a hotline direct to the SAMARITANS, the charity that helps those in emotional distress. With ever-increased efforts in place, over time Beachy Head may regain its role as a breathtaking beauty spot – and no more than that.

### **How to make Brighton rock**

How do the letters get into the rock? It's complicated:

1. Boil water, sugar and glucose syrup until it coagulates into candy.
2. Colour quantities of the mixture with red and pink, leaving the largest quantity white. Work while the candy is still warm.
3. Make each letter by putting together small units of square-ended red candy rods two metres long into the shape of the letter. Support the shape with rods of plain white candy.
4. When all the letters have been formed, put them around a circular rod of plain white candy. Separate them with more rods of plain white.
5. Roll the 'pipe' of rock in a border of plain white candy.
6. Roll the 'pipe' of rock in an outer, very thin layer of pink candy.
7. Pull the rock out until it is the right diameter.
8. Chop the cylinder into the foot-long sticks of classic seaside rock.