

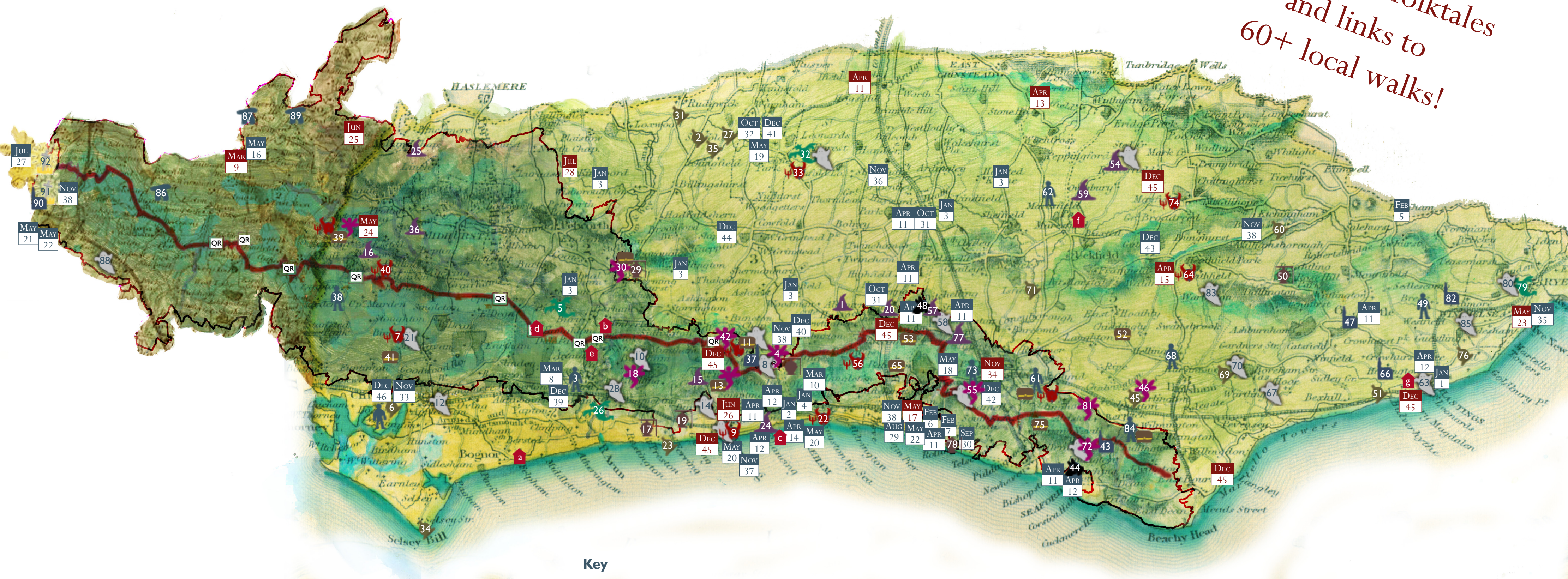


# A Map of Sussex and South Downs Folklore



By the Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy.  
Based on research by Prof. Jacqueline Simpson.

*With 130+ folktales  
and links to  
60+ local walks!*



## How to use this map:

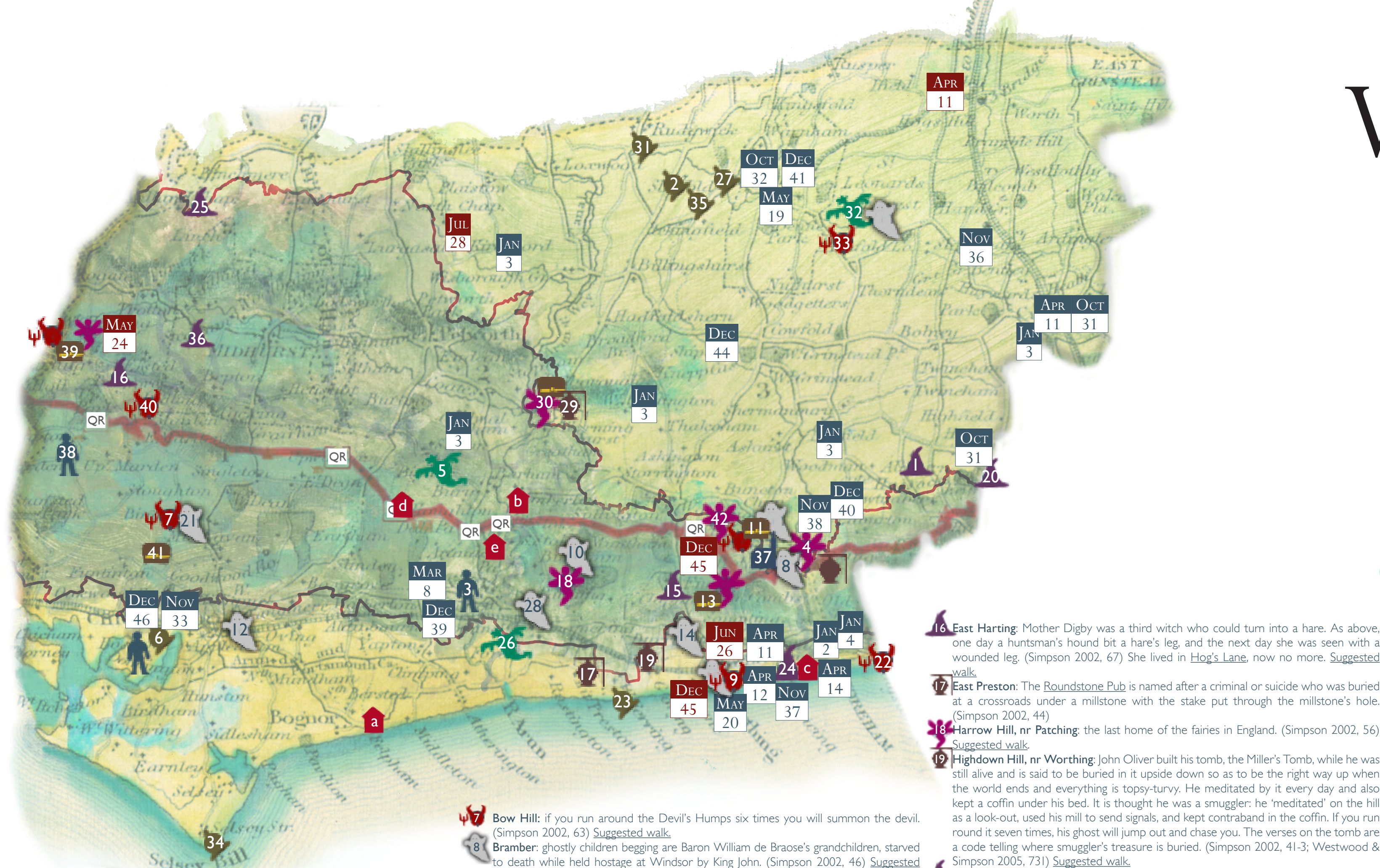
1. Zoom in and click on an icon to be taken to its folktale.
2. Clicking on place-names in the folktales take you to the location on the map (at the top left of your screen).

### Key





# West Sussex



- 1 Albourne:** Dame Prettylegs was a witch who 'hag-rode' horses all night, leaving them exhausted. But she was married to a smuggler, so it might have been he who was borrowing them. (Simpson 2002, 70; Westwood & Westwood & Simpson 2005, 722) [Suggested walk](#).
- 2 Alfoldean:** a bell lies here under a swamp, and can only be raised by a team of white oxen in silence. (Simpson 2002, 20-1) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- 3 Arundel:** Bevis of Hampton was a giant who guarded the gates for the Earls of Arundel, and lived in Bevis Tower. When his time came, he threw his sword, Morglay, and asked to be buried where it fell – in Bevis's Grave (a prehistoric burial mound). His sword can be seen in the castle's armoury. (Simpson 2002, 27-8; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 722) [Suggested walk](#).
- 4 Beeding Hill:** two men once stole a pig and rested here. As they set off again, a fairy's voice said 'Dick, Dick, where be you?' A reply came from inside the bag with the pig: 'In a sack, pick-a-back, going up Beeding Hill.' The two men abandoned the pig. (Simpson 2002, 57; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 723)
- 5 Bignor Hill:** the marks of a dragon's coiled body can be seen here. Some say these are sheep-tracks. (Simpson 2002, 34) [Suggested walk](#).
- 6 Bosham church:** Vikings stole the church bell and tied it to their ship. The monks rang the remaining bells and the stolen bell replied, wrenching itself from the moorings and crashing through the hull, taking the raiders with it. It now lies in Bosham Deep, formerly Bell Hole, and still answers when the church bells ring. (Simpson 2002, 18-19; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 723-5)
- Bevis the Giant** used to wash his dogs here on the way to Arundel from Southampton, and gave the church his staff (maybe the village maypole being stored) (Simpson 2002, 28) [Suggested walk](#).

- 7 Bow Hill:** if you run around the Devil's Humps six times you will summon the devil. (Simpson 2002, 63) [Suggested walk](#).
- 8 Bramber:** ghostly children begging are Baron William de Braose's grandchildren, starved to death while held hostage at Windsor by King John. (Simpson 2002, 46) [Suggested walk](#).
- 9 Broadwater, Worthing:** if you run around the oldest tomb in the churchyard, the devil will jump out. (Simpson 2002, 64)
- 10 Burpham:** A plaque reading 'J.U. 1771' locates the gallows where Jack Upperton was hanged for robbing a post-boy. Said to be haunted by him still, although the only tales are of locals scaring London tourists by pretending to be him. (Hare 2001, 20-3) [See on map](#).
- 11 Chanctonbury Hill:** treasure is said to be buried here. (Simpson 2002, 23) At Chanctonbury Ring you can raise Julius Caesar and his armies by counting the trees, or see a druid or a Saxon killed at the Battle of Hastings. (Simpson 2002, 46) If you run seven times around the Ring on a moonless night/under the full moon/on Midsummer Day/at midnight, anticlockwise/naked/backwards, the devil will come out and offer you a bowl of soup/milk/pomidge or chase you nine miles to the Devil's Dyke. (Simpson 2002, 64; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 729) [Suggested walk](#).
- 12 Chichester:** a Roman centurion haunts the [Castle \(now Chichester\) Inn](#). (Simpson 2002, 46) If a heron perches on the cathedral spire, the Bishop of Chichester will die. (Simpson 2002, 95; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 729) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- 13 Cissbury Ring:** a tunnel is said to go here from Offington Hall, with treasure at one end guarded by snakes. (Simpson 2002, 23-4) The fairies can be seen dancing here on Midsummer's Eve. (Simpson 2002, 56) [Suggested walk](#).
- 14** A former coaching road (Church Lane to Titch Hill) from Lancing to Steyning near here is haunted by a highwayman who was hanged at [Lychpole Manor](#). (Simpson 2002, 44) [See on O.S. map](#).
- 15 Clapham Woods:** from 1975 a few dogs went missing or were injured. A local gamekeeper used to kill any dogs he caught in the woods, but some claimed they were kidnapped by UFOs or sacrificed to Hecate by black magicians. (Simpson 2002, 76) [Suggested walk](#).

- 16 East Harting:** Mother Digby was a third witch who could turn into a hare. As above, one day a huntsman's hound bit a hare's leg, and the next day she was seen with a wounded leg. (Simpson 2002, 67) She lived in [Hog's Lane](#), now no more. [Suggested walk](#).
- 17 East Preston:** The [Roundstone Pub](#) is named after a criminal or suicide who was buried at a crossroads under a millstone with the stake put through the millstone's hole. (Simpson 2002, 44)
- 18 Harrow Hill, nr Patching:** the last home of the fairies in England. (Simpson 2002, 56) [Suggested walk](#).
- 19 Highdown Hill, nr Worthing:** John Oliver built his tomb, the Miller's Tomb, while he was still alive and is said to be buried in it upside down so as to be the right way up when the world ends and everything is topsy-turvy. He meditated by it every day and also kept a coffin under his bed. It is thought he was a smuggler: he 'meditated' on the hill as a look-out, used his mill to send signals, and kept contraband in the coffin. If you run round it seven times, his ghost will jump out and chase you. The verses on the tomb are a code telling where smuggler's treasure is buried. (Simpson 2002, 41-3; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 731) [Suggested walk](#).
- 20 Hurstpierpoint:** in the 18th century Nanny Smart, a witch, could not die until she had sold her life's secrets. A man from Cuckfield, named Old Hockland, bought them for a ha'penny, and she died in a blue flame. (Simpson 2002, 73) [Suggested walk](#).
- 21 Kingley Vale:** the Kings' Graves or Devil's Humps are claimed to be the tombs of Viking leaders buried in 894; the yews mark the battlefield site. The woods are haunted by these Vikings, or by druids, or the trees themselves come to life and move around. (Simpson 2002, 45) [Suggested walk](#).
- 22 Kingston by Sea:** the tree by the old Rectory has a man buried under its roots with a dagger through his heart. If you run around the tree you can summon the devil. (Simpson 2002, 63) [See on Google maps](#).
- 23 Kingston Gorse, nr Ferring:** the bells of an [old church](#), drowned along with its village, still ring under the sea. (Simpson 2002, 20) Park at [Coastal Road](#), at neap tide.
- 24 Lancing:** near the Sussex Pad pub, on [Old Shoreham Road](#), a witch stopped the carters' wagons by invisibly clutching the wheels. The carters would run a knife around their iron wheels as they passed a witch's house to stop her and make her cry out in pain. (Simpson 2002, 69) NB: The Sussex Pad is now closed. [Suggested walk nearby](#).
- 25 Liphook:** A local witch, who could turn herself into a hare (which the locals knew since a dog had mauled a hare and the witch was then seen to have bite marks on her body), was blamed for the disability of a little boy who could only shuffle. By burning something connected to the victim, the child was able to walk again, but during the procedure the witch cried outside and banged on the doors and windows. Another story is of a spectral calf was seen near the water here. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 305) [Suggested walk](#).
- 26 Lymminster:** [Knucker Hole](#), from the Anglo-Saxon *nicor*, 'water monster', held a dragon. Local man Jim Pulk/Puttock baked a poisonous pie for the dragon; unfortunately some of the poison stayed on Pulk's hand and he died wiping his mouth after a celebratory pint. Another version says a wandering knight killed him and was offered the king's daughter by way of thanks. [His tomb](#) can still be seen inside the [church](#), with faint marks supposed to be the hero's sword laid across the dragon's ribs. (Simpson 2002, 34-9; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 732) The church has a stained-glass depiction of the tale. [Suggested walk](#).

- 27 Nowhurst:** see [Alfoldean](#). [Nowhurst Lane](#), RH12 3PJ, on the [West Sussex Literary Trail](#).
- 28 Poling:** at the former [Preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers](#), you might hear ghostly organ music and Gregorian chant. (Simpson 2002, 46) [Suggested walk](#).
- 29 Pulborough:** Toat Tower is said to contain a man buried with his horse, both upside down. (Simpson 2002, 42) Start at [Black Gate Lane](#).
- 30 Pulborough Mount/Park Mound:** treasure is said to be buried here. (Simpson 2002, 23)
- 31 Rudgwick:** see [Alfoldean](#). [Suggested walk](#).
- 32 St Leonard's Forest, nr Horsham:** St Leonard lived here and killed a dragon. Wild lilies sprang up where the saint's blood had dripped, and the nightingales, who had interrupted his prayers, were silenced. It was believed the woods were full of monstrous snakes, and a nine-foot dragon, or serpent, was seen here in 1614. (Simpson 2002, 31-4)
- 33** 'Squire Paulett' is a headless ghost who would cling to passing horse riders until they reached the other side of the forest. (Simpson 2002, 46)
- 34 At Mike Mills' Race**, noted smuggler Mike Mills raced the devil in return for his condemned soul, won and became immortal. (Simpson 2002, 65; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 737) [Suggested walk](#).
- 35 Selsey Bill:** the bells of the sunken cathedral of St Wilfred still ring underwater. (Simpson 2002, 20) Start at [East Beach car park](#).
- 36 Slinfold bell:** see [Alfoldean](#). [Suggested walk](#).
- 37 Stedham:** An old woman here could stop carters' wagons, until the carters cut or flogged the wheels, which cut the woman's hands; she herself admitted this to the carters. (Simpson 2002, 69) Start at [Elsted Road car park](#).
- 38 Steyning:** St Cuthman pushed his mother in a wheelbarrow from Devon to Sussex looking for a heavenly sign to build a church; his wheelbarrow broke at this spot. (Simpson 2002, 17) [Suggested walk](#).
- 39 Telegraph Hill, nr Compton:** Bevis's Thumb, a fine prehistoric long barrow named after the Sussex giant, is here. (Simpson 2002, 28) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- 40 Torberry/Tarberry Hill, nr South Harting:** There's treasure here: Who knows what Tarberry would bear/Would [or Must] plough it with a golden share. (Simpson 2002, 23)
- 41** The fairies can be seen dancing here on Midsummer's Eve. (Simpson 2002, 56)
- 42** This hill was formed when the Devil burnt his lips supping from the Devil's Punch Bowl in Surrey and threw his spoon away. (Simpson 2002, 59) Start at [South Harting village](#); follow [O.S. map](#) to hill.
- 43** **Treyford Hill:** the Devil's Jumps were used by the devil to jump over; which annoyed Thor; who threw his hammer at him. The devil ran away but his jumps are still there. (Simpson 2002, 58-9) Start [by Monkton House](#) (private property).
- 44** **Trundle:** Aaron's Golden Calf or a mass of Viking treasure is said to be buried here, with a ghostly calf to guard it. (Simpson 2002, 22; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 731) Start at [Trundle/St Roche's Hill car park](#) or try this [suggested walk](#).
- 45** **Washington:** There is a story of the Pharisees (or Sussex fairies) who were congratulated for their work by the farmer; which greatly offended them and they never helped him again. (Simpson 2002, 54) [Green Farm](#) is on an old Roman route to Chanctonbury Hill (ref). [Suggested walk](#) (pdf)

## Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy: Who Lived Where?

- a** **William Blake** lived at [Felpham](#) in Sussex in 1800-3. [Suggested walk](#).
- b** **Eleanor Farjeon** rented a cottage near Amberley in 1917-19. Here she wrote *Martin Pippin in the Apple-Orchard* (1921). [Stane Street cottages](#), [Adversane](#), also featured in *Martin Pippin* when they were a malthouse (ref). [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- c** **David Lindsay** (*Voyage to Arcturus*) moved to Shoreham with his wife, where they ran a guest house. [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- d** **Arthur Rackham** bought a [house](#) in Houghton. There is a [memorial to Rackham](#) in Amberley churchyard, with views to nearby Rackham Hill. [Suggested walk](#) (scroll to bottom of web page).
- e** **Mervyn Peake** rented the [School House](#) in Warringcamp in 1940-6 and began writing *Titus Groan*. [Suggested walk](#).



- 43 Alfriston church:** foundation stones first laid in a field near the centre of the village were flung onto a mound on the Tye every night; one day four oxen sat in a cross-shape on the Tye, and the church was built there after this sign. (Simpson 2002, 15-16) [Suggested walk](#).
- 44** On the road from Alfriston to Seaford, a ghostly white dog appears on Midsummer's Eve every seven years and brings death to any who see it. (Simpson 2002, 48) [See on Google maps](#).
- 45 Arlington:** the church bell is hidden underground in 'Bell Hole', a deep pool in Cuckmere River, and can only be raised by six white oxen. (Simpson 2002, 20) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- 46** There is a story of the 'Pharisees' (Sussex fairies) at Burlow Castle, the medieval earthwork. They worked secretly for a farmer by night, and were once overheard complaining about being sweaty. The farmer laughed at them, thus offending them, and had bad luck ever after. (Simpson 2002, 51-3). [See on detailed map](#).
- 47 Battle Abbey church:** William the Conqueror dreamt that his descendants would rule for as many years as the nave was long, so he built it at 500ft. However, every night it was cut back to 315ft long, until the king accepted it. (Simpson 2002, 16-17) [See on Google maps](#).
- 48 Black Dog Hill,** between Ditchling and Westmeston, is haunted by a black dog. (Simpson 2002, 48) [Suggested walk](#).
- 49 Brede:** Sir Goddard Oxenbridge of Brede (whose monument can be seen in Brede Church) was a giant who ate a child every day for supper. One day all the children of Sussex put a vat of beer on Groaning Bridge. The giant drank it and the children took a wooden saw they had made, with East Sussex kids on one side and West Sussex kids on the other, and saved him in half. His severed trunk still haunts the [house](#) and bridge. (Simpson 2002, 29-30) [See on map](#).
- 50 Brightling churchyard:** 'Mad Jack' Fuller is buried in a pyramid-shaped mausoleum here, mummified, bolt upright, on an iron chair with his top hat on and a bottle of claret on a table in front of him. There is broken glass on the floor to put the Devil off. (Simpson 2002, 43; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 726) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- 51 Bulverhythe:** the bells of the old church still ring under the sea. (Simpson 2002, 19) Visit [The Shipwreck & Coastal Heritage Centre](#) (at low tide you can see remains of the 1749 *Amsterdam shipwreck* and prehistoric forest on the beach).
- 52 Chiddingly Place:** a crock of gold was protected by a black hen. When a thief tried to take it, she knocked him unconscious and escaped, bending the iron bars of the [east window](#) as she fled. (Simpson 2002, 23; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 729) [Suggested walk](#).
- 53 Clayton Hill:** the Golden Calf is said to be buried here. (Simpson 2002, 22) [Suggested walk](#).
- 54 Crowborough:** Once a woman's butter wouldn't churn, so her son plunged a red-hot poker in; there was a hissing scream, and the next day local witch Dame Neve was limping with a burnt leg. (Simpson 2002, 72)  
Witch Killick could not die until her familiar spirit was passed on to someone; her daughter tried to avoid this fate by staying downstairs, but the nurse persuaded her to go up and shortly after the witch died, persuading the locals that her daughter now had her powers. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 729) Witch Killick lived at [Slaughterham Ghyll](#), Crowborough Common, now a golf course, which provides a [map](#) of public footpaths. [Jarvis Brook road](#) was haunted by a spectral bag of soot, which chased people down the road (Simpson 2002, 47).
- 55 Cuckmere Valley:** Earthen mounds remained here from 'Burlow Castle', a motte-and-bailey castle, and were considered inhabited by fairies. A ploughman was once asked to fix a fairy's peel (a wooden shovel for putting loaves in the oven) and later found a little bowl of drink. His partner didn't believe him as he hadn't seen it, and the bowl had been smashed, and he laughed at him, which was unfortunate as he then fell ill and wasted away to his death exactly a year later. (Simpson 2002, 51-3; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 722) Walk from [Milton Street, Lewes](#).
- 56 Devil's Dyke:** the devil decided to stop the Weald men's church-building by digging through the Downs, letting the sea in and drowning them all. Clods of earth thrown up by his digging formed Chanctonbury, Cissbury, Rackham Hill and Mount Caburn. An old lady saw him, lit a candle behind a sieve and knocked her rooster awake. The devil thought the sun was rising and ran away, throwing the Goldstone into Hove on the way. One more clod fell from his hoof and became the Isle of Wight, or perhaps he landed so hard in Surrey he formed the Punch Bowl.  
Another version says St Dunstan averted the drowning of the Weald by praying for all the cocks to crow long before dawn. Yet another says the devil died of his exertions, and the two disused ox-steddles at the northern end of the Dyke are the Devil's Grave and the Devil's Wife's Grave. (Simpson 2002, 59-60; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 730) [Suggested walk](#).
- 57 Ditchling:** here was a witch who could turn into a hare. One day a huntsman's hound bit a hare's leg, and the next day she was seen with a wounded leg. (Simpson 2002, 67) An old woman on the Common could stop carters' wagons, until the carters cut or flogged the wheels, which cut the woman's hands. (Simpson 2002, 69) She may have lived near the [Jack o' Clubs house](#). [Suggested walk in the Vistor Info pdf](#).
- 58 Ditchling Beacon:** a spectral hunt, with the cry of the hounds, the horse's hooves, and the huntsman's hom, can be heard here. (Simpson 2002, 48-9) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- 59 Duddleswell:** Dame Garson was another witch who could turn into a hare. Again, one day a huntsman's hound bit a hare's leg, and the next day she was seen with a wounded leg. (Simpson 2002, 67) Alternatively the hare leapt into Dame Garson's house and she said 'Ah boys, you ain't got me yet!' (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 731). She may have lived at [Comerways](#).
- 60 Etchingham:** the church bell is hidden underground where the church moat once was, and can only be raised by six white oxen. (Simpson 2002, 20) [Suggested walk](#).
- 61 Firle Beacon:** a silver coffin is said to be buried here. (Simpson 2002, 23) See also [Wilmington](#). [Suggested walk](#).
- 62 Gill's Lap, Ashdown Forest, and Gill's Ridge, nr Crowborough:** (possibly same spot) named after the traditional Downland giant, Gill. (Simpson 2002, 27) [Suggested guided Pooh walk](#) here.
- 63 Hastings:** the ground of the great battle runs red with every rain, and the ghost of the first man killed haunts the field every anniversary. (Simpson 2002, 46) [Visit English Heritage site](#). In the 1880s a woman thought to be bewitched was advised to burn her wrists with the poker, 'to make the evil spirit fly up the chimney'. (Simpson 2002, 72)

- 64 Heathfield:** if you run seven times round the family vault of the Blunts, the devil will jump out. (Simpson 2002, 64) [Suggested walk](#).
- 65 Hollingbury Hill:** treasure is said to be buried here. (Simpson 2002, 23) (NB: the hillfort is on a golf course). [Suggested walk](#).
- 66 Hollington:** while the church was being built in the village, its stones disappeared each night, until one day someone found them built on the outskirts of the town surrounded by thick woods, the Devil having built it there to put people off visiting. (Simpson 2002, 16) Start at [Church in the Wood Lane](#).
- 67 Hooe:** ghost smugglers haunt the attic of the Red Lion Inn. (Simpson 2002, 46) [Suggested walk](#).
- 68 Horselunges Manor, Hellingly:** one of the Devenish family was an ogre who ate babies. (Simpson 2002, 29-30) [Station Road, BN27 4EU](#). NB: Horselunges Manor is not open to the public.
- 69 Hurstmonceux:** the church bell is hidden underground, and can only be raised by six white oxen. (Simpson 2002, 20) [All Saint's, Church Road, Herstmonceux, BN27 1QJ](#).
- 70** The 9ft-tall ghostly Drummer of Hurstmonceux is thought to have been a smuggler signalling to his colleagues, with the ghost story likely designed to keep other people indoors. (Simpson 2002, 49) [Suggested walk](#).
- 71 Isfield:** Bell Hole Brook holds a bell hurled into the river by Puritans. (Simpson 2002, 20) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- 72 Kingston near Lewes:** between here and the marshes of the Ouse, a goblin, watched by a ghostly black calf, was doomed to spin charcoal without cease. (Simpson 2002, 40) [Suggested walk](#).
- 73 Lewes:** a giant hollowed out the great coombe in the Downs behind the town. (Simpson 2002, 27) Two boys once saw Spring-heeled Jack behind a hedge, but he turned out to be just a sick cow. (Simpson 2002, 28-9) [Suggested walk](#).
- 74 Mayfield:** the Devil thrust St Dunstan's wooden church askew, and put his hoofmarks in the stone of the later church. (Simpson 2002, 17)  
The Old Palace (now part of a [convent school](#)) has some tongs from when the Devil pretended to be a girl to flirt with St Dunstan, and the latter, who was making some horse shoes in his smithy, held the Devil by the nose with the tongs until he gave in and fled, cooling his nose in the Roaring Spring nearby. The tongs finally fell from his nose in Tongdean, Brighton. (Simpson 2002, 61; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 733) [Suggested walk](#).

- 75 Mount Caburn:** a silver coffin and a knight in golden armour are said to be buried here. (Simpson 2002, 22)  
A barrow named Gill's Grave is here, from which the giant named Gill stood and hurled his hammer. (Simpson 2002, 27)  
**76** If you run around the earthworks here you will summon the devil. (Simpson 2002, 63) [Suggested walk](#).
- 76 Pett Level, nr Hastings:** the bells of an old church, drowned along with its village, still ring under the sea. (Simpson 2002, 20) [Suggested walk](#).
- 77 Plumpton:** An old woman here could stop carters' wagons, until the carters cut or flogged the wheels, which cut the woman's hands. (Simpson 2002, 69) [Suggested walk](#).
- 78 Rottingdean:** The [Hangman's Stone](#) is where a sheep-stealer had laid his head for the night, and the next day was found strangled by the rope tethering the sheep. Folksinger Bob Copper's father Jim sold a block of sarsen stone to one of the local gentry for a sovereign, telling him it was the Hangman's Stone. Bob discovered this after showing the same gentleman the real Hangman's Stone in the '50s. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 736, 737-8) [Suggested walk](#).
- 79 Rye:** A centaur-like monster was once seen in a deep pool below [Mountsfield](#). (Simpson 2002, 36) NB: This is a private property.
- 80** Turkeycock Lane: a monk who eloped with a girl was buried alive and the girl died of a broken heart. Their ghosts meet here and the monk tries to sing to her, but (presumably as further punishment) his voice is only that of a turkey gobbling. (Simpson 2002, 47) Turkeycock Lane, TN31 7AT. Try a [guided ghost walk](#).
- 81 Selmeston:** A carter here watched Pharisees (Sussex fairies) feeding his horses until they were so fat they could hardly get about. One fairy said, "Puck, I twets [sweat]; do you twet?" The carter jumped up and yelled "I'll make ye twet afore I've done with ye!" The fairies fled, but then the carter's horses wasted away. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 737) Pookhill Barn, part of [Middle Farm, BN8 6LJ](#). [Suggested walk](#) nearby.

- 82 Udimore church:** this was nearly built on the other side of the river Ree but each night the stones shifted while a voice called out "O'er the mere!", hence the church's position and village name. (Simpson 2002, 16) Start at [Church of St Mary, TN31 6BB](#); footpaths lead to Broadstreet, Icklesham, or downstream to Winchelsea.
- 83 Warbleton Priory:** two skulls kept in the ruins were of a murdered priory owner and his murderer; the floor of the room had an indelible bloodstain, and if the skulls were moved or buried ill luck would fall. (Simpson 2002, 46-7) [The Priory, TN21 9RG](#).
- 84 Wilmington:** The Long Man of Wilmington was a giant, killed by another giant living on Firle Beacon. Some flint mines and quarries on Windover Hill are said to be craters left from their quarrels. The Long Man now lies dead where you see him, or else in Hunter's Burgh, a long barrow on the crest of the hill. (Simpson 2002, 25-6; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 742-3)  
**85** A Roman in a gold coffin is said to be buried under the Long Man. (Simpson 2002, 23) [Suggested walk](#).
- 85 Winchelsea:** highwaymen George and Joseph Weston haunt the roads. (Simpson 2002, 46) [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).

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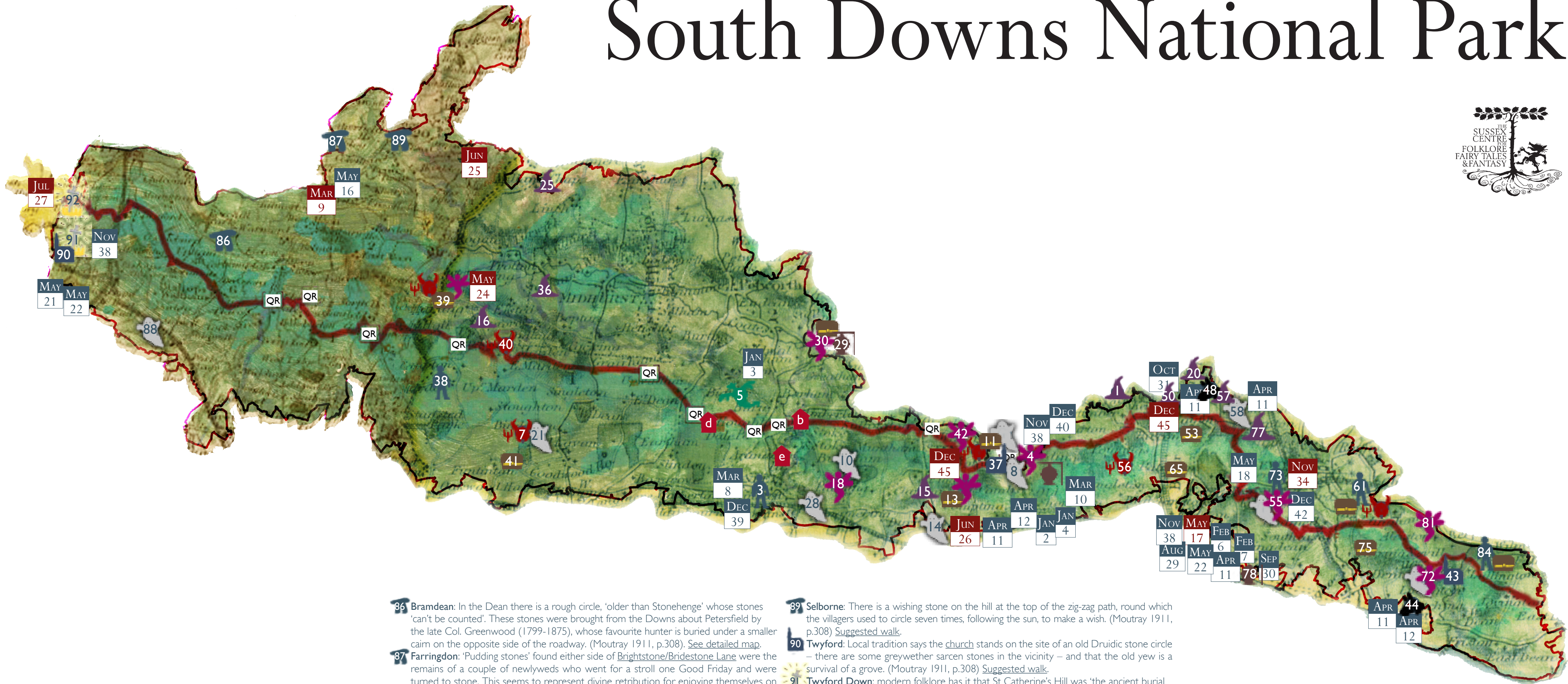
- f** Neil Gaiman, brought up in East Grinstead, lived in [Nutley](#) in 1987-92, and his house there became the setting for his book *Coraline*. [The Ocean at the End of the Lane](#), Portsmouth, is named after his 2013 novel, set in Sussex. [Suggested walk](#) (pdf).
- g** George MacDonald wrote *Phantastes* at [27 Tackleway, Hastings](#), living here 1857-9. [Suggested walk](#).

# East Sussex





# South Downs National Park



- 86 Bramdean:** In the Dean there is a rough circle, 'older than Stonehenge' whose stones 'can't be counted'. These stones were brought from the Downs about Petersfield by the late Col. Greenwood (1799-1875), whose favourite hunter is buried under a smaller cairn on the opposite side of the roadway. (Moutray 1911, p.308). [See detailed map.](#)
- 87 Farringdon:** 'Pudding stones' found either side of Brightstone/Bridestone Lane were the remains of a couple of newlyweds who went for a stroll one Good Friday and were turned to stone. This seems to represent divine retribution for enjoying themselves on Good Friday. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 301)
- 88 Owselbury:** Marwell Old Hall is one of many old houses claiming to be the setting for the Mistletoe Bride, the subject of a ballad by T.H. Bayly (1797-1839). At Christmas, 'young Lovel's bride' plays hide and seek, but despite much searching by her friends and her lover, she is not found. Years later an oak chest is found; under its lid is her skeleton, still in a bridal wreath, where she had hidden years ago. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 302) Visit [Marwell Zoo, SO21 1JH](#).

- 89 Selborne:** There is a wishing stone on the hill at the top of the zig-zag path, round which the villagers used to circle seven times, following the sun, to make a wish. (Moutray 1911, p.308) [Suggested walk.](#)
- 90 Twyford:** Local tradition says the [church](#) stands on the site of an old Druidic stone circle – there are some greywether sarcen stones in the vicinity – and that the old yew is a survival of a grove. (Moutray 1911, p.308) [Suggested walk.](#)
- 91 Twyford Down:** modern folklore has it that St Catherine's Hill was 'the ancient burial ground of Camelot' and King Arthur was laid to rest there. The hilltop resembles a 'sleeping dragon' guarding them. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 313) [Suggested walk.](#)
- 92 Winchester:** The Round Table hanging in the Great Hall of Winchester Castle is said to be the one around which King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table met. It was almost certainly created c.1290, for a tournament to celebrate the betrothal of one of Edward I's daughters, as supported by tree-ring evidence and carbon dating. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 314-15) [Suggested walk.](#)





# The Turning Year

## New Year's Day

**JAN 1 Hastings** (recorded 1870): apples, nuts, oranges and coins were thrown from windows for fishermen and boys to collect. (Simpson 2002, 99)

**JAN 2 Old Shoreham** (19th century): The [Red Lion Inn](#) used to provide a bushel measure of ale, decorated with green paper and flowers, free to all, as a form of wassailing. (Simpson 2002, 99)

## 5th January/Twelfth Night

**JAN 3 Duncton** and many other Sussex villages: 'Wassailing' was performed to ensure a good crop of apples. Dressed in bright, some might say ridiculous, clothes and carrying various 'musical' instruments, they surrounded the largest apple tree, beat it with sticks, sprinkled ale around and sang 'Here stands a jolly good apple tree./ Stand fast, root; bear well, top./ Every little bough/ Bear an apple now;/ Every little twig/ Bear an apple big/ Hats full, caps full/ Three-quarter-sacks full!/ Vwhoops, whoop, holloa!/ Blow, blow the horns! They visited every house with an orchard before stopping at the Cricketers' Inn. Other places, like **West Chiltington** and **Horsted Keynes**, this was performed by the farmers or farmers' children. (Simpson 2002, 100-2)

The [Chanctonbury Morris Men](#) briefly revived apple howling at Fumer's Farm, **Henfield**, in 1977, and the [Broadwood Morris Men](#) did likewise at Redlands Farm, **Kirdford** (Horsham). (Simpson 2002, 102)

## Plough Monday (first Monday after Twelfth Night)

**JAN 4 Shoreham** and other places: 'Bessie' or 'Molly', a man in grotesque clothing, accompanied mummers pulling a plough from house to house asking for money. (Simpson 2002, 103)

## Shrove Tuesday

**FEB 5 Bodiam**: held a [pancake race](#), but various Sussex towns celebrated with cock-fighting and cock-throwing (throwing sticks at a tethered cockerel; whoever stunned him could keep him) until the end of the 18th century. (Simpson 2002, 104)

**FEB 6 Brighton**: In the Lanes people played Cock-in-the-Pot, throwing sticks at a cockerel strung up in a pot; whoever broke the pot kept him. This was apparently English revenge for the cockerel whose crowing woke the Danes just as the Saxons were about to massacre them. (Simpson 2002, 104-5; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 726-7)

## Ash Wednesday:

**FEB 7 Brighton** and elsewhere: opening of the marbles season, which went on until Good Friday, while children also played bat-and-trap and tip-cat. (Simpson 2002, 106)

## 1st March:

**MAR 8 West Sussex**: If from fleas you would be free, Let all your doors and windows open be. East Sussex: If from fleas you would be free, On the 1st of March let your windows closed be. (Simpson 2002, 107)

**Arundel**: meanwhile Arundel people shook themselves on Arundel Bridge to rid themselves of fleas. (Simpson 2002, 108)

## 25 March, Lady Day:

**MAR 9 Titchborne**: In the reign of Henry I or II, Lady Mabella, on her deathbed, asked her husband to set aside profits from his land to feed the poor. Sir Roger pulled a burning brand from the fire and said he would use the revenue of as much land as she could go round before the brand burnt out. Servants carried her outside and she crawled around 23 acres before it burnt out. She was carried back to bed and died, but not before warning that the family's luck would run out if the dole stopped.

In 1796 the dole was stopped, as it attracted too many tramps to the parish, and the family's next generation was only daughters, so the name died out, and in 1803 the house collapsed, scaring the family into starting the dole again. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 311-12)

Where to park: [Titchborne House, SO24 0NA](#). (NB: This is a private property. The dole is given out as a gallon of flour per parishioner.)

## Palm Sunday

**MAR 10 Patcham** (recorded 1831): hundreds of people broke down all the willow trees for 'palm leaves' and then went to the local inn, drank and brawled. (Simpson 2002, 108)

## Good Friday

**APR 11 Battle, Brighton, Burgess Hill, Cuckfield, Ditchling, Seaford, Southwick and Streat** men held marbles tournaments. Battle held theirs against Netherfield. It is still played at **Tinsley Green (Crawley)**. Women would skip in groups, to the point that Good Friday was also called Marble Day and Long Rope Day. (Simpson 2002, 110-11) Where to park: [The Greyhound pub, RH10 3NS](#).

**APR 12 Hastings, Hove, Seaford and Southwick** (until 1910) organised games of kiss-in-the-ring. At Hove they played on a prehistoric burial mound singing 'Hey diddle derry, Let's dance on the Bury'. (Simpson 2002, 111-12)

**APR 13 Hartfield**: in the 17th century Nicholas Smith, the son of a rich squire, roamed the country disguised as a beggar and found no charity until he reached Hartfield. So now there is a charity dole: the rector and churchwarden lay money on what is believed to be Smith's tombstone and call the names of recipients. (Simpson 2002, 112) Where to park: [St Mary the Virgin Church, TN7 4AG](#).

**APR 14 Old Shoreham** had egg-rolling down the hill behind the church, known as Good Friday Hill. (Simpson 2002, 112)

## 14 April

**APR 15 Heathfield**: A certain old woman attends Heffle or Cuckoo Fair: if she is in a good mood, she releases a cuckoo in her apron or basket so that bird can then be heard all over Sussex. (Simpson 2002, 113)

Where to park: [Cade Street, Old Heathfield](#).

## 1 May

**MAY 16 Alesford**: John Duthy mentioned the summer 'Maying on the Nithe' here, with dancers in festive array. *Sketches of Hampshire*, 1839, pp. 111-12.

**MAY 17 Brighton** (until 1896): 'Bread-and-Cheese-and-Beer Day' celebrated the start of the mackerel season: boats would be decorated with flower garlands, and hot bread, wheels of cheese, and barrels of beer and ginger beer were brought to the beach for the fishermen. There was also a Punch and Judy show. (Simpson 2002, 118)

**Brighton** (1930s): children went door to door with paper flowers and ribbons on their clothes, chanting 'The 1st of May is Garland Day; The 2nd of May is Washing Day.' (Simpson 2002, 118)

**Brighton** now celebrates with [Mayday in Albion](#).

**MAY 18 Lewes** (recorded 1875-85): children went to Castle Bank, where their 'garlands' (hoops covered in wild flowers) would be judged by a panel of ladies and the best won a shilling. This has recently been revived by the [Knots of May](#), a women's Morris dance team. (Simpson 2002, 115)

**MAY 19 Horsham**: at Manor House, Mrs Tredcroft would give pennies out for the garlands. Chimneysweeps used to dress up as Jacks-in-the-Green, in evergreen and flowers, and dance all around town. (Simpson 2002, 116)

**MAY 20 Hove, Worthing** and nearby villages (1930s and '40s): 'The 1st of May is Pinch-Bum Day, The 2nd of May is Sting-Nettle Day', as children decided they could pinch each other's bottoms before noon on 1st May, and the next day whip each other with nettles as they were at their best then. (Simpson 2002, 118)

**MAY 21 Otterbourne**: Maypole Field still survives. The children's May Day chant was: 'April's gone! May's come! Come and see our garland.' (Moutray 1911, p.297)

## 29 May

**MAY 22 Otterbourne**: On Shick-Shack Day, those who forgot to wear an oak apple were dunked in the river. (Moutray 1911, p.298)

Many village schools celebrated Oak Apple Day, remembering Charles II escaping by hiding in an oak tree in 1651. Any child not wearing an oak apple or twig was pinched or whipped with nettles. This day was also called Pinch-Bum Day. This was an official public holiday; in **Brighton** the fishermen decorated their boats with oak branches and *The King's Head* was decked out too. (Simpson 2002, 119-20)

## Mayor's Day

**MAY 23 Rye**: The Mayor and councillors scatter hot pennies, as once the town ran out of pennies on this day and a boy was sent to fetch new ones from the mint so fresh they were still hot. (Simpson 2002, 120)

Where to park: [Bedford Place car park, TN31 7LR](#).

## Whit Monday

**MAY 24 Harting** (1812-present): Harting Old Club carry peeled wands, staves and flags around a large beech bough in the square; after the church service they have a meal at the inn and end with a cricket match. (Simpson 2002, 120)

Where to park: Harting parish church, GU31 5QB. See also the [Festivities](#) website.

## 11th June, St Barnabas Day

**JUN 25 Woolmer Forest**: Gilbert White mentions two 'bowers, made of the boughs of oaks', which 'the keepers renew annually on the feast of St. Barnabas', a custom he considered 'to be of very remote antiquity'. (*The Natural History of Selborne*, Letter vii.) This is currently re-enacted by the [Deadwater Valley Trust](#).

## 21st June, Midsummer's Eve

**JUN 26 Broadwater, Worthing**: In recent years, local folklorists and folk singers gather around the tree at midnight hoping to see the skeleton.

## 15th July, St Swithun's Day

**JUL 27 Winchester**: In 862 St Swithun asked to be buried outside Winchester Cathedral, where rain would drip on his grave from the eaves and people would tread on it. In 871 the monks tried to move the body into the cathedral, which resulted in a 40-day downpour. This led to the proverb, if it rains on St Swithun's Day (July 15th), then it will rain for the next forty days. In 971 a shrine was made for him despite the storm; this was destroyed at the Reformation and a new one made in 1962. (Westwood & Simpson 2005, 314) The proverb is still widely known and discussed.

## 25th July

**JUL 28 Ebernoe** Horn Fair: at which the village challenges one of its neighbours to a cricket match. The man who scores the highest number of runs wins the head and horns of the ram being roasted for the village feast. (Simpson 2002, 125-6)

Where to park: [Streels Lane, Ebernoe](#).

## 5 August

**AUG 29 Brighton** (1860s): children built 'grottoes' out of oyster shells, lit by a candle inside, to mark the oyster season (perhaps because 11 days previously, i.e., on this day in the Julian calendar, is St James's Day, whose symbol is the pilgrim's scallop shell). The children begged 'a penny for the grotto'. (Simpson 2002, 128)

## September

**SEP 30 Rottingdean**, Challoners Farm: The last wagon had only a token load of corn sheaves, decorated with flags and bunting. All the workers clambered on and they went to the village, to drink at each of the pubs. The villagers came out to cheer. They finished back at the farm, where an 18-galloon of beer plus crates of lemonade and ginger beer were ready for them. Elsewhere farmers provided a festive supper with pumpkin pie and apple turnovers. 'Turn the Cup Over' was often sung. (Simpson 2002, 131-2)

## 25 October

**OCT 31 Cuckfield, Hurstpierpoint**: boys go around begging money for St Crispin, bonfires are lit. (Simpson 2002, 135-6)

**OCT 32 Horsham**: an effigy was burnt of someone in the town who needed ridiculing. (Simpson 2002, 136-7)

## 1 November

**NOV 33 Chichester** shops were full of small white-iced cakes representing the saints' white robes in Heaven. (Simpson 2002, 139)

## 5 November (still widely celebrated)

**NOV 34 Lewes** Bonfires and torchlit procession, where the original anti-Catholic and political sentiment stayed strong as 17 Protestant martyrs were burnt there by Mary Tudor. (Simpson 2002, 140-1)

How to get there: By train (car parks fill up early and roads close); [this website](#) has more information.

**NOV 35 Rye** (1860s and '70s): people caught those they had a grudge against and tarred and feathered them! (Simpson 2002, 140)

**NOV 36 Slaugham**: (1890s) the bonfire was built around a tall green post that would not burn, called the 'scrag'. After the fire burnt down this scrag was taken to the pub to be 'sold' for drinks. (Simpson 2002, 142)

**NOV 37 Worthing**: in 1852 the Bonfire Boys rolled tar barrels to the beach; this led to a clash with the police. In the 1880s the police gave up trying to control the evening. (Simpson 2002, 141)

## 23 November, St Clement's Day

**NOV 38 Bramber, Brighton, Burwash, Steyning and Twyford** blacksmiths used to make an effigy of their patron saint, St Clement, and put him outside the inn while they had their feast. At Steyning and Bramber they also went door to door asking for apples and beer. (Simpson 2002, 143-4; Westwood & Simpson 2005, 313, 725)

## 21 December, St Thomas' Day/Gooding Day

**DEC 39 Arundel**: the interest of £15, found on the body of a dead vagrant in 1824, was handed out. (Simpson 2002, 149)

**DEC 40 Beeding**: the vicar handed out half-crowns to anyone who sold him evergreens. (Ibid.)

**DEC 41 Horsham** (19th century): gentry gave out food, clothes and money to the poor. (Ibid.)

**DEC 42 Lewes** (1870s): surplus stocks of clothes were left outside shops for those who needed them. (Ibid.)

**DEC 43 Mayfield**: one man saved up all his fourpence pieces to distribute to poor women on this day. (Ibid.)

## 24 December, Christmas Eve

**DEC 44 Shipley**: children went round the village with a decorated basket or china bowl covered in a cloth. In return for a penny or cake, they would let the giver have a peep under the cloth at the decorations. (Simpson 2002, 150-1)

## 26 December, Boxing Day

**DEC 45** 45 Sussex towns had a Mummers' Play, performed by Tipteers or Tipteerers. In it, St George defeats a Turkish Knight. (Simpson 2002, 151) Mummers' plays are still performed by the following groups:

- [Ashdown Forest Mummers](#) (see [on map](#))
- [Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men](#) (see [on map](#))
- [Ditchling Mummers](#) (see [on map](#))
- [Merrie England Mummers](#) (Eastbourne) (see [on map](#))
- [RATCO](#) (Hastings) (see [on map](#))
- [Sompting Village Morris](#) (see [on map](#))
- [Hampshire mummers](#)

## 31 December

**DEC 46 Chichester**: people danced around the Market Cross to see the New Year in. (Simpson 2002, 153)

## Sources:

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**Red icons indicate living traditions.**

**Blue icons indicate past traditions – feel free to revive them!**