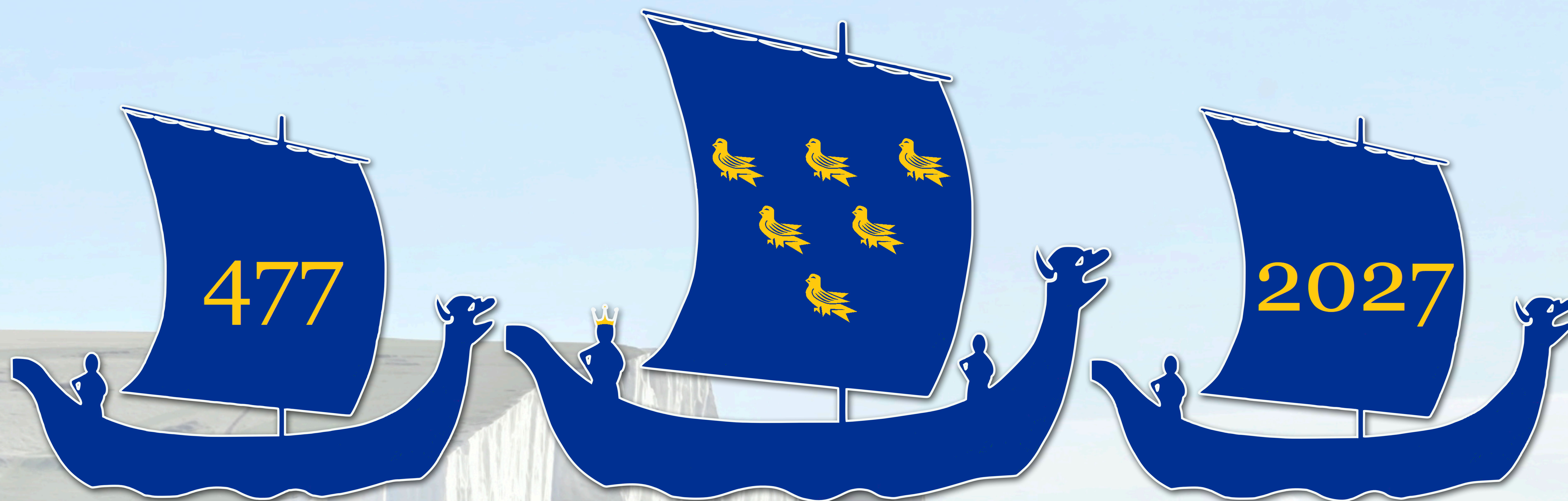




SUSSEX 1550

— SUSSEX DAY — WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE 2027 —

Celebrating the 1550th Anniversary of Sussex



“This Eden which is Sussex still”

Hilaire Belloc, ‘Four Men: A Farrago’, 1911

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SUSSEX 1550 – AN INTRODUCTION

2027 will see the 1550th anniversary since our beloved Sussex was traditionally founded, in the year 477, and we believe this is worthy of great rejoicing and festivities!

The 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', a set of annals compiled in the late 9th Century, states Sussex was established, as an independent Kingdom, in the year 477 by King Ælle and his three sons, Cymen, Wlencing and Cissa, who arrived on the coast in three ships at a place called 'Cymenshore'.

Let's celebrate the wonderful County of Sussex and its cherished customs, traditions, and heritage. We have so much to be proud of, and our unique ways deserve to be observed in a large fashion and as an act of togetherness.

These celebrations are to take place on the week of Sussex Day, Wednesday 16th June 2027, inclusive of the weekends either side – Saturday 12th until Sunday 20th June 2027.

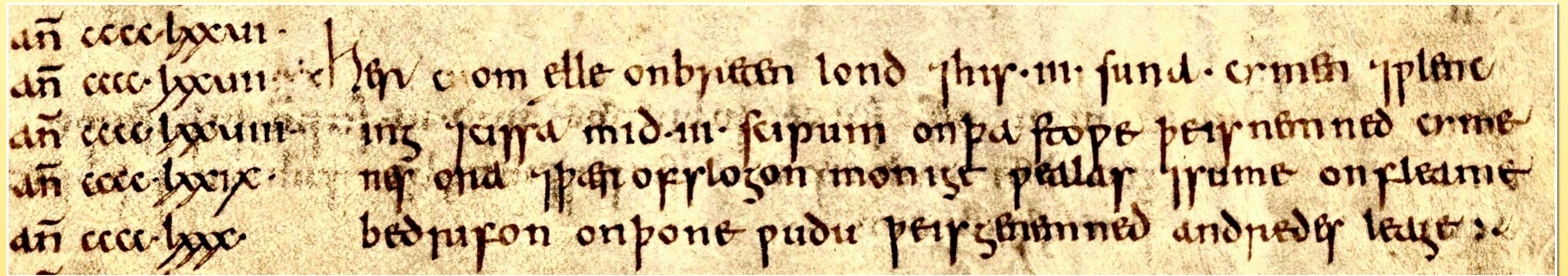
- 🔥 Co-ordinated Beacon / Bonfire Lightings at 9pm on 16th June
- 🎈 Street Parties
- 🎪 Village Fetes
- 🐥 + Any other Sussex related events and activities

Let's give existing Sussex Day celebrations a real boost in this special anniversary year!



The Old School House, Netherfield, courtesy of Brady Brooks-Ells

THE BEGINNING...



The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 'A', 'Parker Chronicle'. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173, fol. 4r

aṅ cccc.lxxvii. Her cūm eḷle on breten lond 7 his .iii. suna. cymen 7 plenc
in3 7 cissa mid .iii. scipum on þa stowe þe is nemned cyme
nes ora

“In the year 477

**Here came Ælle to Britain and his three sons, Cymen and Wlencing
and Cissa with three ships, landing at a place which is named Cymenshore”**

The County of Sussex started its life as the independent and sovereign Kingdom of the South Saxons. According to tradition, Sussex was established in the year 477 by King Ælle and his three sons – Cymen, Wlencing and Cissa, who arrived on the coast in three ships at a place called 'Cymenshore'.

This is recorded in the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', a set of annals compiled in the late 9th Century during the reign of King Ælfred the Great.

King Ælle, Henry Hollebon, Eastbourne, 1941



The location of Cymenshore, named after one of Ælle's sons, is unknown. The long-established legend is that this was situated at Selsey Bill on the Manhood Peninsula. Other possible locations suggested have been Pagham and West Wittering – also located on the Manhood Peninsula, Shoreham, or potentially between Seaford (historically the estuary to the River Ouse) and Cuckmere Haven. Here, there is greater archaeological activity for the period between the 5th and 7th Centuries.

King Ælle, 'Britannia Anglo-Saxonum Heptarchia', Joan Blaeu, 1645



Three Saxon Ships, 'History of the Anglo-Saxons', Francis Palgrave, 1867

SUSSEX 1550 – BEACONS

Given Sussex's deep-rooted bonfire traditions and its position along the South Coast, there's no more fitting way to observe its 1550th anniversary than the co-ordinated lighting of beacons and bonfires, together on Sussex Day.

WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE 2027

@ 9PM

A unifying simultaneous symbol – marking this milestone year in Sussex's rich and illustrious history!



BBC

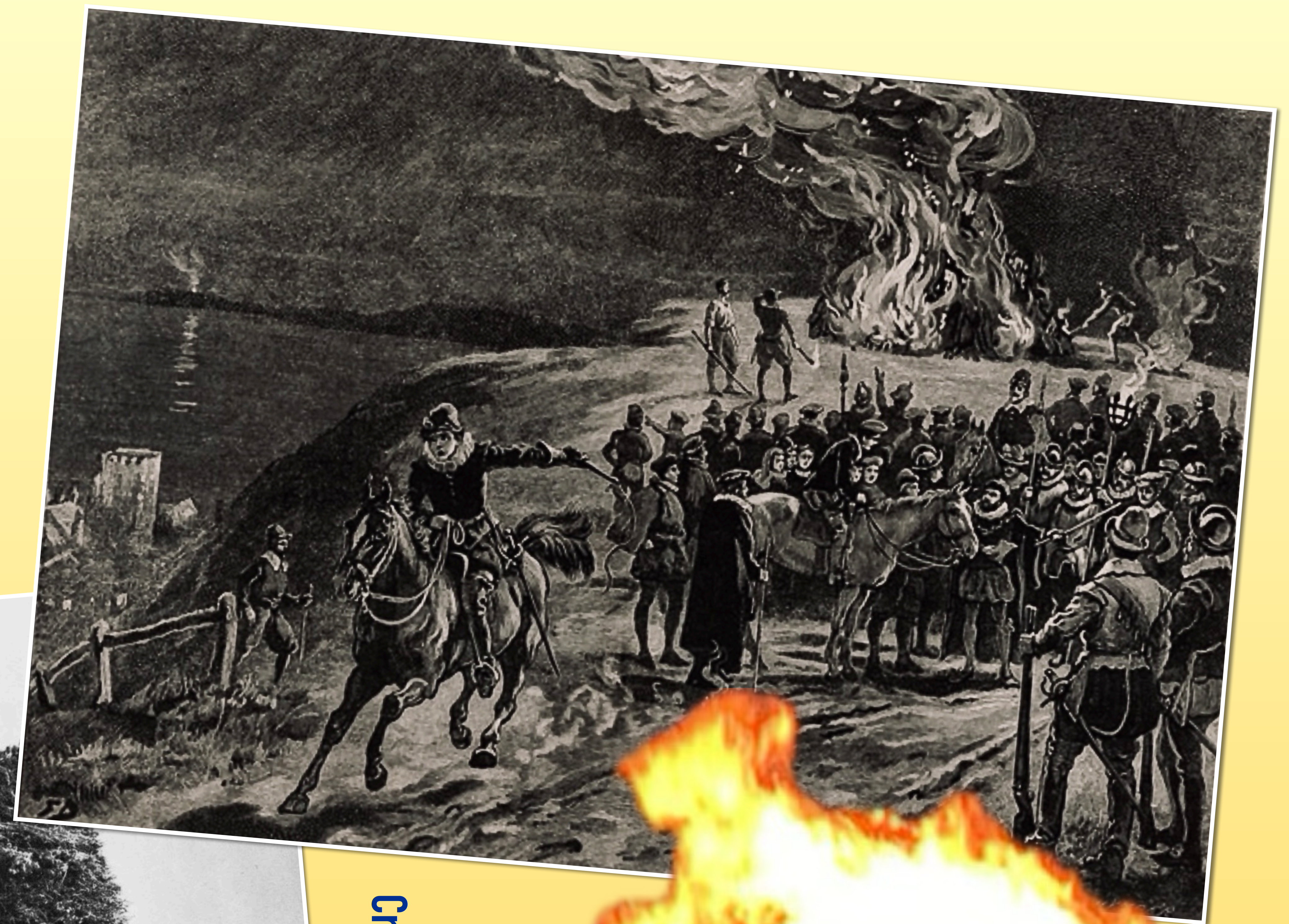


Crowborough Beacon, 1897

Please see:
[BEACON & BONFIRE
LIGHTING GUIDE](#)

To register your beacon or bonfire, please contact beacons@sussex1550.com

Local bonfire in Sussex, courtesy of Bliss Griffin



'Lighting the Beacon Fire', Edward Whymper, 1888



Cade Street Beacon, courtesy of Bliss Griffin

SUSSEX 1550 – CELEBRATIONS

Host a street party or village fete to mark the 1550th anniversary of Sussex, on weekends either side of Sussex Day – Saturday 12th, Sunday 13th, Saturday 19th, or Sunday 20th June 2027.

To organise a street party, you will need to co-ordinate with your local authority – please find relevant links below:

[Adur](#)

[Arun](#)

[Brighton & Hove](#)

[Chichester](#)

[Crawley](#)

[Eastbourne](#)

[Hastings](#)

[Horsham](#)

[Lewes](#)

[Mid Sussex](#)

[Rother](#)

[Tunbridge Wells](#)

[Wealden](#)

[Worthing](#)

[GOV.UK – Street Party Guidance](#)

Fly the official County Flag of during the week of Sussex Day, inclusive of the weekends either side – Saturday 12th until Sunday 20th June 2027.

Rosemary Gardens, Petworth, courtesy of Brady Brooks-Ells



Sussex Day fete at Chiddingfold, courtesy of Esther Brooks-Ells



Observe Sussex 1550 via any other Sussex related event or activity – a Stoolball match, a game of Toad in the Hole, reciting ‘Sussex by the Sea’ or local poetry, proclaim the ‘Sussex Charter’, enjoying county-based food, drink, produce and recipes – the list goes on, the possibilities are endless . . .

Disclaimer: The co-ordinators of ‘Sussex 1550’, the ‘Sussex Flag group’ or their supporters can not be held responsible for individual events, and remain the responsibility of their respective organisers to ensure they have the relevant insurance and risk assessment in place for the event they are running.

SUSSEX DAY

'Sussex Day' is held each year on 16th June to celebrate the county's rich heritage, history, unique culture, and traditions. The date aligns with Saint Richard's Day, honouring Saint Richard of Chichester, the county's patron saint.

The concept of a dedicated county day was proposed by the late Ian Steedman of Worthing. Inspired by the way patron saints' feast days serve as national celebrations in Britain and Ireland, he suggested in 2006 that Sussex should adopt the 16th June – already marked by churches across the county – as its own day of recognition.



The Council House, Chichester, courtesy of Esther Brooks-Ells



Sussex Day celebrations, courtesy of Brady Brooks-Ells

The idea quickly gained support, and by 2007 the 16th June was officially recognised as Sussex Day. Today, it is widely marked by local authorities across Sussex, with residents celebrating their shared identity and pride in the county with great enthusiasm each year.

THE SUSSEX CHARTER

'Reading the News', Frank Dadd, 1925



Traditionally, at 12 noon every Sussex Day, the Sussex Charter, written by Ian Steedman, is read aloud, usually by a town crier, in towns and villages across the county.

" For all the people of the ancient Kingdom of Sussex!

Let it be known: the 16th of June of each and every year shall be known as Sussex Day.

Sussex Day shall be celebrated according to the rites and traditions of Sussex.

Let it be known all the people of Sussex shall be responsible for the maintenance of those boundaries that join to those of our neighbours.

Let it be known all the people of Sussex shall be responsible for all the environs within those boundaries.

Let it be known, the people of Sussex shall recognise the inshore waters that lie inside a line drawn from Beachy Head, and extending to Selsey Bill as being, the Bay of Sussex.

Let it be known, the people of Sussex will undertake responsibility for the general well being of our neighbours.

Let it be known the people of Sussex shall be guardians of our wildlife.

Let it be known the people of Sussex will, through custom support all local business.

Finally, let it be known, as guardians of Sussex, we all know Sussex is Sussex... and Sussex wunt be druv!

In God we trust.

God Save the King! "



BBE

SAINT RICHARD

'The English Saints of the English Calendar', Frank A. Smallpeice, 1893



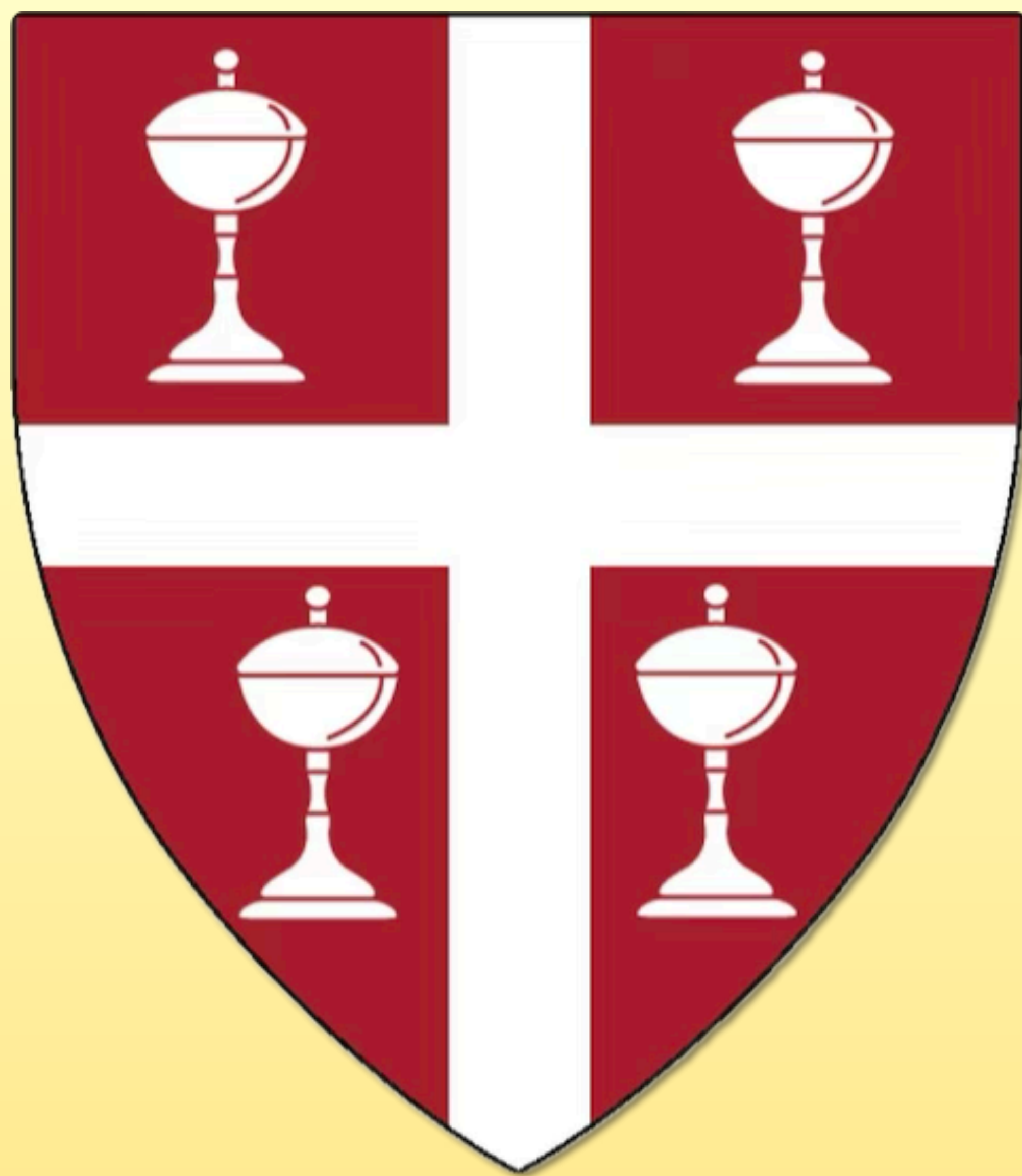
Sussex Day is celebrated on 16th June, the feast day of Saint Richard of Chichester. Born in 1197 in Wyche (now Droitwich, Worcestershire), Richard came from a gentry family but chose a religious life over land and marriage. He studied and taught at Oxford, then continued his education in Paris and Bologna. By 1235, he was Chancellor of Oxford, and later served under Archbishop Edmund Rich at Canterbury.

After Edmund's death, Richard became vicar of Deal. In 1244, he was elected Bishop of Chichester, though King Henry III opposed him. The Pope confirmed Richard's appointment in 1245, but the king withheld church lands and even banned people from helping him. Richard lived simply, relying on friends, and travelled his diocese, practically the entire County of Sussex, on foot.

As bishop, he was strict with corrupt clergy and defended church rights. He also emphasised charity, once suggesting his own possessions be sold to feed the poor. He died on 3rd April 1253 in Dover, and was buried in Chichester. Richard was canonised in 1262. His remains were moved to a shrine on 16th June 1276, establishing that date as his feast day.



Cross of St. Richard, courtesy of Brady Brooks-Ells



One miracle tells of consecrated wine he dropped during Mass that did not spill, symbolised by cups on his coat of arms, which can also be seen in the form of an armorial banner – known as the Cross of Saint Richard.

Richard became patron saint of Sussex in the 15th Century. He is also the patron saint of coach drivers. From the 13th to the 16th Century, most folk in Sussex prayed to him daily and often left gifts in their wills to his shrine – an important place of pilgrimage.

May I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly,
day by day.

Closing lines of the Prayer of Saint Richard

Seal of St. Richard of Chichester, 13th Century



St. Richard of Chichester, Black Bourton Church, Oxfordshire, 13th Century

THE OFFICIAL COUNTY FLAG OF SUSSEX



Official County Flag of Sussex – Public Domain

The official County Flag of Sussex features six gold ‘martlets’ – heraldic, mythical swallows – set against a blue field. This emblem dates back at least to 1611, when cartographer John Speed included it in his atlas ‘Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine’, where it symbolised the historic Kingdom of the South Saxons.

In heraldry, the martlet is traditionally depicted without feet, symbolising constant movement and tireless effort. Because it can never land, it has come to represent perseverance, diligence and an

enduring commitment to keep striving without rest or conceding.

Heraldic symbols often originated from influential local families, and Sussex’s martlets are widely believed to have come from the arms of Sir John de Radynden, a 14th Century ‘Knight of the Shire’ (a medieval Member of Parliament). His coat of arms displayed six silver martlets on a blue shield. These arms are engraved above the gate to Bodiam Castle, built in 1385. Sir John played a prominent role in the county – serving in Parliament, organising coastal defences, and leading military efforts in France with a force of Sussex soldiers and archers. As his troops likely rallied under his banner, the symbol would have become closely associated with Sussex. Over time, it is considered to have been adopted more broadly in official county use.



Sir John de Radynden, courtesy of Mia Barrett

This connection is commemorated in Preston Park in Brighton, where a plaque marks the site of Radynden Manor and notes that his arms were later assumed by Sussex.

Traditionally, the six martlets are said to represent Sussex's six ancient divisions, known as 'rapes' – Chichester, Arundel, Bramber, Lewes, Pevensey, and Hastings.

The symbol gained wider recognition in the 19th century, when it was adopted by groups such as the Sussex Archaeological Society and Sussex County Cricket Club, and has since been embraced by many local organisations.

The county flag emerged from a campaign led by residents Brady Brooks-Ells, with his father, Dave Ells. Following detailed historical research, the design was officially registered as Sussex's flag on Friday 20th May 2011. It was first flown publicly on Saturday 28th May 2011 atop Lewes Castle and is now widely displayed across the county.

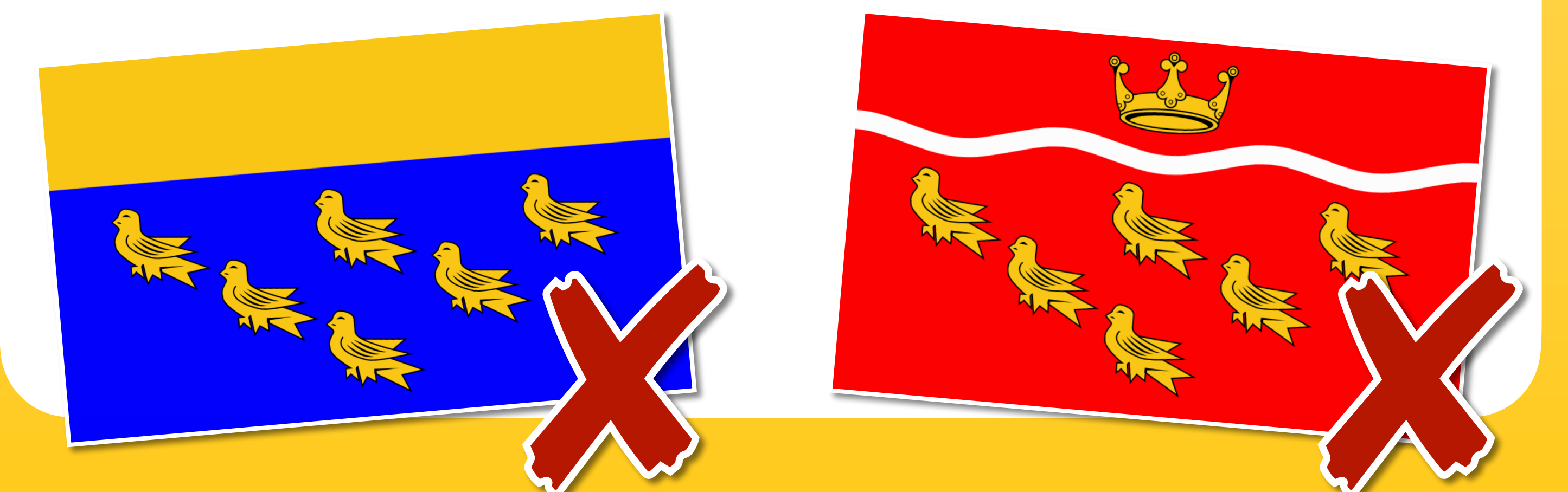


Lewes Town Hall, courtesy of Brady Brooks-Ells



'Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine', John Speed, 1611

Please note: several commercially available flags are in fact banners of current or former local authorities. These designs do not represent Sussex itself or its population and, aside from use by those authorities, by law, should not be displayed.



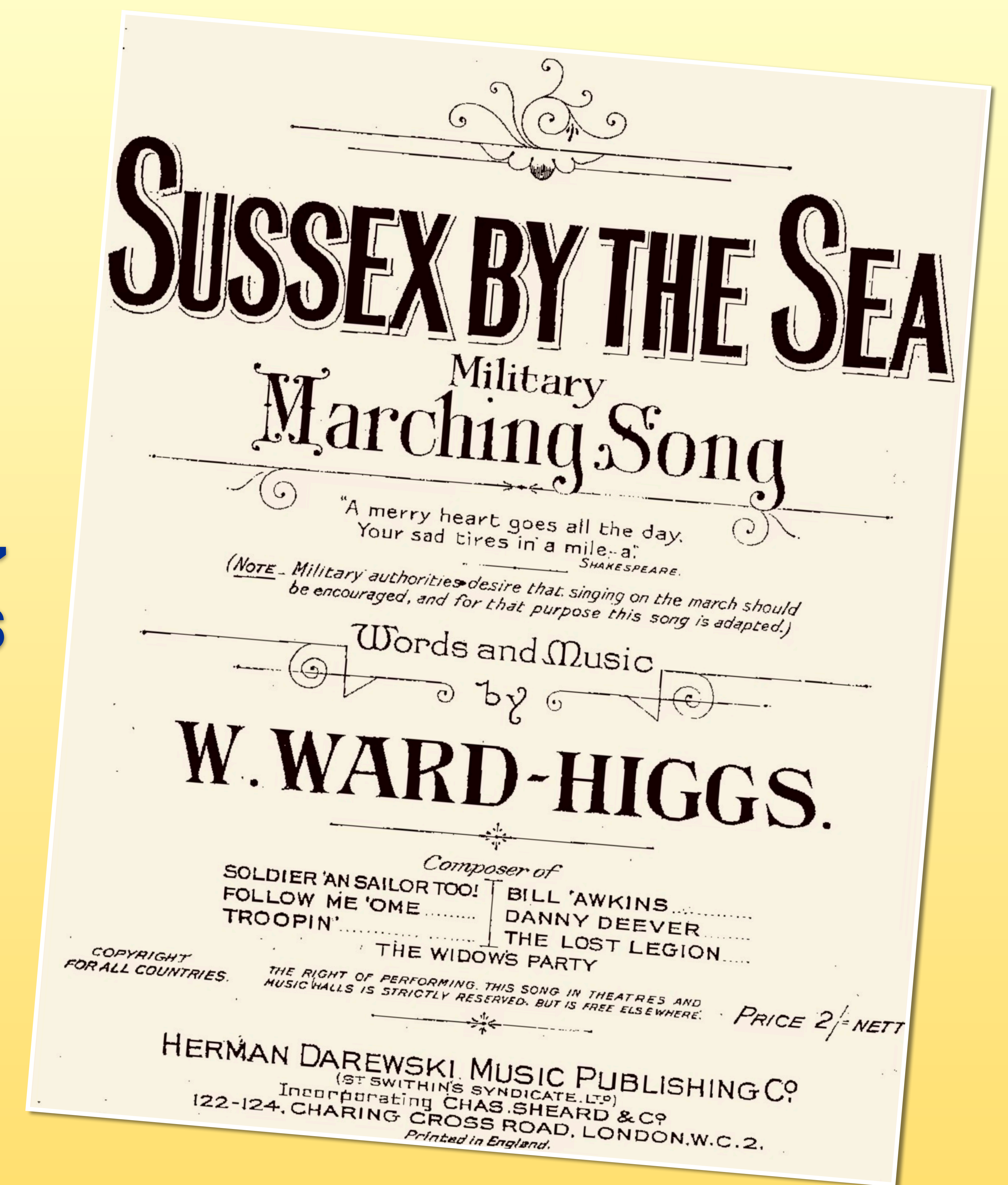
SUSSEX BY THE SEA

'Sussex by the Sea' is the county anthem of Sussex, composed in 1907 by William Ward-Higgs.

Ward-Higgs lived at Hollywood House in South Bersted, near Bognor Regis, from 1902 to 1908. During that time, he developed a strong affection for his adopted county and the Royal Sussex Regiment. His famous march was likely inspired in part by Rudyard Kipling's 1902 poem 'Sussex', particularly the final line: "In a fair ground — yea, Sussex by the Sea!" Ward-Higgs had already set several of Kipling's barrack-room ballads to music.

The song's exact origins remain a bit of a mystery. Some believe it was born purely out of Ward-Higgs's admiration for Sussex, while others suggest he actually wrote it in 1905 to mark the wedding of his sister-in-law, Gladys, to Captain Roland Waithman of the regiment. Both stories are plausible.

Another tale claims that once published, copies were sent to Waithman, who performed it around September 1908 at concerts in Ballykinlar Camp, where his battalion was stationed. However it began, the tune quickly marched into popularity – becoming the official quick march of the Royal Sussex Regiment and accompanying local soldiers as they headed toward the battlefields of the First World War.



Now is the time for marching, now let your hearts be gay,
Hark to the merry bugles sounding along our way.
So let your voices ring, my boys, and take the time from me,
And I'll sing you a song as we march along of Sussex by the Sea.

Chorus:

For we're the men from Sussex, Sussex by the Sea,
We plough and sow and reap and mow, and useful men are we;
And when you go to Sussex, whoever you may be,
You may tell them all that we stand or fall for Sussex by the Sea.

Refrain:

Oh Sussex, Sussex by the Sea! Good old Sussex by the Sea!
You may tell them all that we stand or fall for Sussex by the Sea.

Up in the morning early, start at the break of day;
March till the evening shadows tell us it's time to stay.
We're always moving on, my boys, so take the time from me,
And sing this song as we march along of Sussex by the Sea.
Cho. and Ref.

Sometimes your feet are weary, sometimes the way is long,
Sometimes the day is dreary, sometimes the world goes wrong;
But if you let your voices ring, your cares will fly away.
So we'll sing a song as we march along of Sussex by the Sea.
Cho. and Ref.

Light is the love of a soldier, that's what the ladies say;
Lightly he goes a-wooing, lightly he rides away.
In love and war we always are as fair as fair can be,
And a soldier boy is the ladies joy in Sussex by the Sea.
Cho. and Ref.

Far o'er the seas we wander, wide thro' the world we roam;
Far from the kind hearts yonder, far from our dear old home;
But ne'er shall we forget, my boys, and true we'll ever be
To the girls so kind that we left behind in Sussex by the Sea.
Cho. and Ref.

The anthem soon became a favourite amongst the general population and is still sung across the county today. You'll hear it at sporting events, bonfire celebrations, and performed by brass bands – a much-loved iconic tune that continues to bring people together.



Worthing Seafront, courtesy of Brady Brooks-Ells

WE WUNT BE DRUV

“We Wunt be Druv,” the county motto of Sussex, translates as “we will not be driven.” It expresses a long-held sense of independence among the people of the county – a belief in a strong character and resistance to outside control.

This idea is often symbolised by a pig lying down, or “couchant” in heraldic terms. For centuries, the animal has served as a visual shorthand for the motto. The association is not accidental: the pig, commonly linked with stubbornness, mirrors the image Sussex people have cultivated of themselves – steady, self-willed, and not easily swayed

The phrase appears in historical writings, including those of Edward Verrall Lucas and Robert Thurston Hopkins, both of whom repeat the notion that a “true Sussex crest” features a pig couchant with the words “I wunt be druv.” Earlier still, Revd. Douglas Parish of Selmeston recorded it as a commonly used local maxim in the 19th century.

Its origins are often linked to the Weald of Sussex, an area that historically operated with a degree of autonomy compared to other parts of the county. This independent character is reflected in events such as the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and Jack Cade's Rebellion in 1450, when local populations actively resisted authority.

The prominence of the pig in Sussex culture also has practical roots. For centuries, pigs were central to rural life.



A 'Sussex Pig', Henry Hollebon, Eastbourne, 1941



Seasonal “pannage” saw them driven into the woodlands of the Weald to feed on acorns and beech mast, a practice dating back to prehistoric times. By the time of the ‘Domesday Book’ of 1086, swine populations in Sussex were remarkably high, with approximately $2\frac{1}{3}$ pigs for every human – highlighting their economic importance.

This deep association is further supported by recent

WE · WUNT · BE · DRUV

All folks as come to Sussex
Must follow Sussex ways –
And when they've larned to know us well,
There's no place else they'll wish to dwell
In all their blessed days –

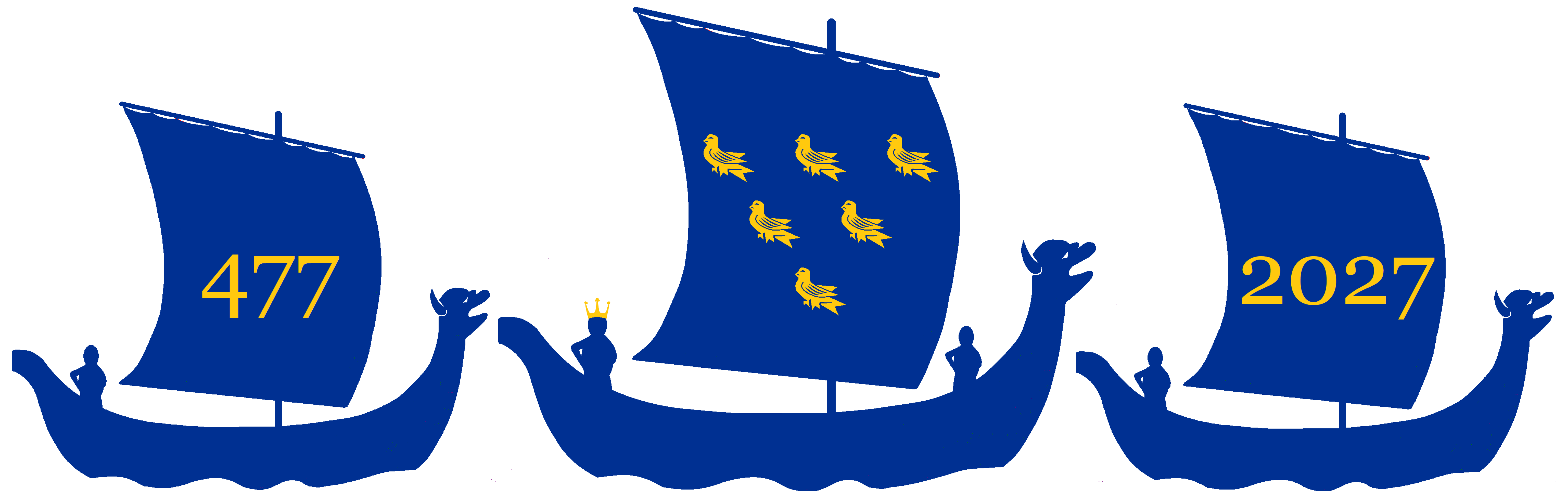
There ant no place like Sussex,
Until ye goos above,
For Sussex will be Sussex,
And Sussex won't be druv.

archaeological finds – particularly Iron Age and Roman pig figurines discovered in Sussex – suggesting that the animal may have held symbolic value long before the motto emerged.

Even into the 19th century, the connection endured in local customs, such as the gifting of “Sussex Pig” jugs at weddings, often inscribed with the phrase “We Wunt be Druv.”

Taken together, the motto and its porcine emblem reflect a continuity of identity: a proud county shaped by its landscape, its history, and a persistent cultural emphasis on self-determination.

SUSSEX 1550 – LOGO



SUSSEX 1550

— SUSSEX DAY — WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE 2027 —

The Sussex 1550 logo portrays the county's foundation story. It is free for anyone to make use of.

Downloadable versions available here...

[.PNG Image File](#)

[.SVG Vector File](#)

[.PDF Document File](#)

SUSSEX 1550 – SUPPORTERS

LEAD PROMOTERS



ONLINE MEDIA DESIGN AND SPONSOR



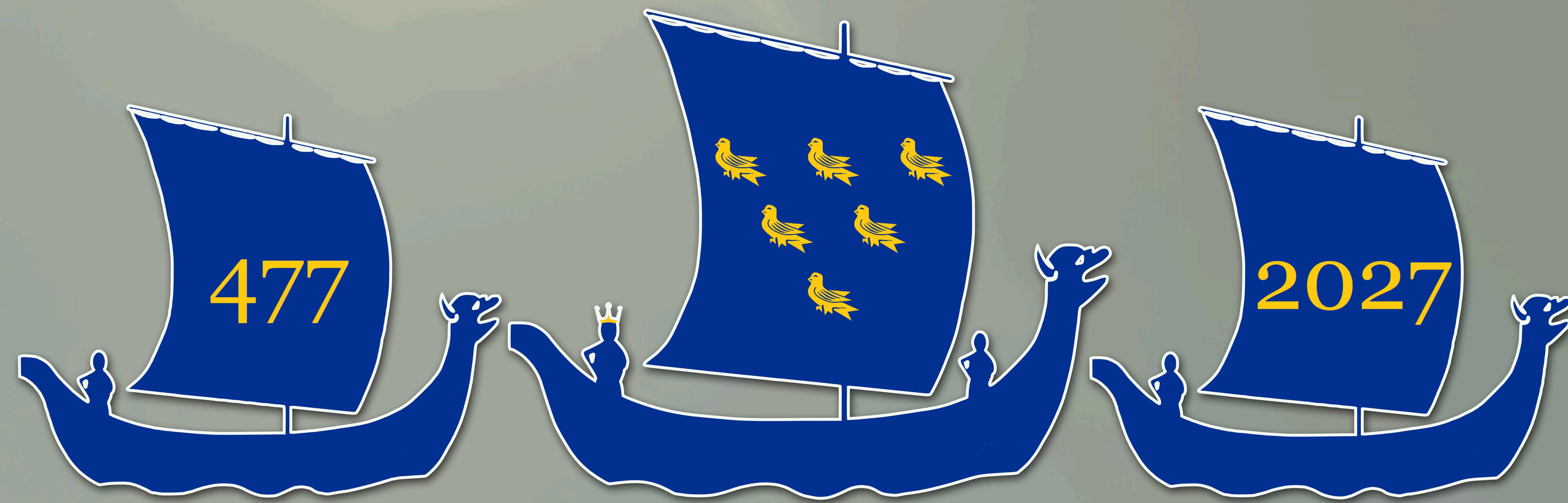
SUSSEX PARTNERS



HISTORIC COUNTIES



Chichester, Upper Beeding and Burwash, courtesy of Brady Brooks-Ells



SUSSEX 1550

—SUSSEX DAY—WEDNESDAY 16TH JUNE 2027—

WE · WUNT · BE · DRUV

Celebrating the 1550th Anniversary of Sussex

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