

Competition

My Perfect Day in Sussex!

WIN A TWO-NIGHT STAY AT THE FLINT BARNs,
RATHFINNY ESTATE

To celebrate the release of Bradt Travel Guides' new *Slow Travel Sussex* guide by Tim Locke, we are running a special competition to find the most perfect day in the area.

To enter, simply write a description of your perfect day in no more than 500 words. Your day might have really happened or be something imagined: it might include a trip up the British Airways i360 on Brighton's seafront, a paddle down the Cuckmere in a kayak or picking up local produce in one of Sussex's many farmers' markets. Whatever shape your perfect day might take, we want to hear what makes Sussex special to you.

The entries will be judged by a member of the Bradt team, who will choose their favourites based on passion, colour and originality. See overleaf for Tim's description of his own perfect day.

The prizes

The winner will receive a two-night stay for two at the Flint Barns, located on the Rathfinny Wine Estate. (<http://rathfinnyestate.com/flint-barns/>) These historic buildings in the Cradle Valley lie at the western end of the Estate, and have been beautifully restored and extended to the highest standard. Three runners-up will each win a free copy of *Slow Travel Sussex*.

Entry requirements

Your description must be no **longer than 500 words**. The deadline for entry is **31 May 2017** and winners will be notified by **30 June 2017**. Either email your entry to competitions@bradtguides.com (with the subject line 'Sussex competition') or send it to Holly Parsons (Sussex Competition), Bradt Travel Guides, IDC House, The Vale, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 9RZ. Please be sure to include your name, email address and/or a daytime telephone number. For full terms and conditions, see www.bradtguides.com/my-perfect-day



Bradt travel guides

In association with


RATHFINNY

'MY PERFECT DAY IN SUSSEX'

by Tim Locke, author of *Slow Travel Sussex*

It's a bright early summer morning, with the sun yet to break through the mist hanging over the River Ouse: mountain bike tyres pumped up; panniers equipped with spare bits and pieces, including fare from this morning's farmers' market in Lewes – the smoked fish and Sussex cheeses will go nicely with the artisan bread rolls for my picnic somewhere on the Downs. A leisurely start, but I'll catch up by putting the bike on the train as far as Berwick. There the volunteer-run Rambler Bus connects with the Lewes train, picking up a few walkers and taking them into the Cuckmere Valley. I cycle over to Berwick Church, where morning sightseers are marvelling at the bohemian transformation wrought on this simple building by the Bloomsbury Set in the 1940s when they painted the screen and chancel in their inimitable style.



A cart track from the back of the churchyard takes me down amiably towards Alfriston, then a peer into the rural idyll that is the thatched Clergy House and its cottage garden. I'm cycling now up past the entrance to comically tiny Lullington Church, tucked away beyond garden fences. A chalky bridleway up onto the South Downs proper: traffic noise recedes to nothing, then stillness in the blue sky, then the swishing of a summer breeze and the song of an invisible skylark, the Downs' signature tune. I get off my bike to peer over the escarpment edge to see the Long Man of Wilmington, upside-down and nonsensical, but it brings home the ingenuity of whoever etched this giant hill figure, that it works only when viewed from the bottom of the hill. My picnic spot, though, is at the head of Deep Dean, looking down one of the most satisfyingly perfect of South Downs dry valleys, unchanged in centuries.

At Lullington Heath I watch dragonflies sporting round Winchester's Pond, then swoosh through the delicious cool shade of Friston Forest. Perfect timing for a pint of very locally brewed Beachy Head ale at the Tiger Inn, where I park my bike on the village green and put my feet up. Then onto Birling Gap, for a quick paddle in the sea to refresh those parts the Beachy Head beer couldn't reach. There's a grand finale to follow, as the road nearly touches the cliff edge beyond Belle Tout, and after the climb up to Beachy Head, a gloriously effortless glide down to Eastbourne for fish and chips on the beach in the shadow of the Victorian pier, and the train home.

