

Welcome to Gatwick

Discover what's on our doorstep



Charleston, East Sussex




CULTURAL LEGENDS

9 cultural legends who lived near Gatwick Airport

The historically rich counties of Sussex, Kent and Surrey have been home to many famous folk through the ages. Take the opportunity to peek into the homes of Romantic poets, political greats and world-renowned naturalists.

Here are 9 cultural legends to get to know better.

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1. The Bloomsbury Group: Charleston, East Sussex

It's easy to see the appeal of this idyllic farmhouse at the foot of the South Downs for the creative Bloomsbury Group, which included writer Virginia Woolf and her artist sister Vanessa Bell. For the eminent artists, authors and thinkers of the early 20th century, every surface in the house became a canvas for self-expression and the walled garden a natural space for developing new ideas.

Admire the well-preserved painted walls, furniture and more on a 1-hour small group tour. In art critic Clive Bell's study, look out for the distinctive door panel featuring an acrobat by painter Duncan Grant.

 **Website:** www.charleston.org.uk

 **Open:** Year-round, Wednesday – Sunday.


 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Charleston is 30 miles (50km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 45 mins by road, or 30 mins by rail to Lewes station then a 15-min taxi.


2. Rudyard Kipling: Bateman's, East Sussex

The family home of Jungle Book author Rudyard Kipling is packed with intriguing curios from his childhood in India and subsequent travels. You'll get a personal insight into the man through the heartfelt letters to his children on display. And don't miss his book-lined study, with the desk strewn with papers as though he's just gone downstairs for lunch.

Kipling was enthralled by the history of his enchanting Jacobean house. It's thought it was first owned by a local iron master. In 1634, when the house was built, and stretching back to pre-Roman times, the Wealden iron industry was thriving.

 **Website:** www.nationaltrust.org.uk/batemans

 **Open:** Year-round, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Bateman's is around 40 miles (60km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel time is approximately 1 hour by road.


3. Virginia Woolf: Monk's House & Cuckmere Haven, East Sussex

Monk's House was a rustic country retreat for Mrs Dalloway author Virginia, her husband Leonard and visiting Bloomsbury Group intellectuals. As well as Virginia's Writing Lodge in the garden, you can see the bedroom she had built while writing feminist essay, A Room of One's Own.

Virginia loved exploring the surrounding Sussex countryside on foot, including Cuckmere Haven. The tranquil valley, where the River Cuckmere meanders magnificently into the sea, opens up to views of the iconic Seven Sisters cliffs.

 **Websites:** www.nationaltrust.org.uk/monks-house | nationaltrust.org.uk/cuckmere-valley

 **Open:** March – October.

 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Monk's House is 30 miles (50km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 1 hour by road, or 40 mins by rail to Southeast station followed by a 20-min taxi.


4. Winston Churchill: Chartwell, Kent

Step back into the 1930s, to the family home of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. As you walk round the house and gardens, imagine his wife

Clementine relaxing in the drawing room, Winston swimming in the outdoor pool and his daughters playing in The Marycot – the miniature house he built for them.

As well as offering themed insights into Chartwell, the new House Highlights tours give visitors exclusive access to Churchill's most private space – his bedroom. Although simply furnished, the books by his bedside and pictures on the wall reveal much about his character.

 **Website:** www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell

 **Open:** March – November; some days in winter including Christmas; gardens and estate open all year.


 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Chartwell is 20 miles (30km) southwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 35 mins by road, or 35 mins by rail to Oxted station followed by a 15-min taxi, or 1 hour 5 mins to Sevenoaks then a 20-min taxi.


5. Jane Austen: Austen Trail, Kent & Box Hill, Surrey

English author Jane Austen had family links to the region through her father George, born in Tonbridge, and later her brother Edward, who lived at Godmersham Park. Follow Kent Movie Map's Austen Trail and visit 17th-century Squerryes Court, which featured as the family home in Emma; it's now a wine estate. Or stroll in the formal gardens at Groombridge Place, just like Keira Knightley playing Elizabeth Bennet in Pride and Prejudice.

Walk up Box Hill in the Surrey Hills to appreciate the beautiful views that inspired Jane's pivotal picnic scene in Emma. In the summer, the rare orchids and colourful butterflies make it extra special.

 **Websites:** www.kentfilmmoffice.co.uk/kent-movie-map/austens-in-kent | www.nationaltrust.org.uk/box-hill

 **Open:** Squerryes Court: June – October for a limited number of tours. Groombridge Place: weekends, bank holidays and school holidays. Box Hill: year-round.

 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Squerryes Court is 20 miles (30km) southwest of Gatwick. Travel time is approximately 40 mins by road. Groombridge Place is 20 miles east of Gatwick. Travel time is approximately 45 mins by road. Box Hill is 15 miles northwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 35 mins by road, or 25 mins by train then a 5-min bus and 15-min walk.

6. Charles Darwin: Down House, Kent & Leith Hill Place, Surrey

Explore the home of the world's most celebrated naturalist and stand in the room where he wrote On the Origin of the Species – now considered the foundation of evolutionary biology. Elsewhere, you can dress up in Victorian finery as him or his wife Emma – there's a profile picture!

Head to the parkland at Leith Hill Place in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to hunt for Darwin's wormstone. A frequent visitor, he left it as an experiment, eventually concluding that earthworms were burying the stone by excavating soil and moving it above the surface. While you're there, climb to Leith Hill Tower; at 313m (1,029ft) it marks the highest point in South East England.





EXPLORE THE HOME
OF THE WORLD'S
MOST CELEBRATED
NATURALIST

Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/home-of-charles-darwin-down-house

Open: March – November; some days in winter including Christmas; gardens open all year, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Ightham Mote is 25 miles (40km) northeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 45 mins by road, or 1 hour 5 mins by rail to Sevenoaks station then a 15-min taxi.

7. Aldous Huxley: Watts Chapel, Surrey Hills

Aldous Huxley, author of dystopian novel *Brave New World*, which imagined a genetically-engineered future, was born in historic market town Godalming. Nearby, in the village of Compton, you'll find his final resting place. Wander down the yew tree path to the ornate red brick Watts Chapel – his family grave lies in the cemetery.

Be sure to visit Watts Gallery while you're there. It was designed, according to the ethos of the Arts and Crafts Movement, by a local architect, and built using Surrey tiles. Today you can still admire the oil paintings and sketches of founder George Frederic Watts, dubbed the English Michelangelo.

Website: www.wattsgallery.org.uk

Open: Year-round, excluding Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Watts Chapel is 30 miles (50km) northwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 1 hour by road, or 40 mins by rail to Guildford station then a 10-min taxi.

8. General James Wolfe: Quebec House, Kent

Enter the childhood home of General James Wolfe, whose brave actions in the Battle of Quebec in 1759 won America for the British and lost him his life. Immersed in the Georgian era, you'll see the toys he would have played with as a young boy and brush past the aromatic healing herbs his mother would have planted in the kitchen garden.

There's a 2-mile (3km) walking trail from Quebec House to Chartwell House, the home of another cultural legend – Winston Churchill. The British Prime Minister led the country to victory in World War II and stoked morale with his rousing speeches.

Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quebec-house

Open: Wednesday to Sunday, April – October.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Quebec House is 20 miles (30km) northeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 40 mins by road, or 40 mins by rail to Oxted station then a 10-min taxi.

9. Percy Bysshe Shelley: Worthing, West Sussex

The romantic poet, married to Mary Shelley of *Frankenstein* fame, was born near the Sussex market town Horsham. A short journey away, in the seaside town of Worthing, you'll find a Blue Plaque on Warwick Street marking the building where two of his earliest works were printed. He was set to inherit Castle Goring nearby, but drowned at sea just before his 30th birthday.

While in Worthing, see if you can find the blue plaque marking the house (long since demolished) on Esplanade Court where Oscar Wilde stayed to write his popular play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. And spot the memorial at Beach House Park to the homing pigeons that carried important messages during World War II.

Website: www.discoverworthing.uk

Open: Year-round.

Getting there from Gatwick airport: Worthing is 35 miles (60km) southwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 50 mins by road, or 50 mins by rail to Worthing station. 40 mins by rail to Oxted station then a 10-min taxi.

OUR PARTNERS:

Gatwick Airport

www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/flying-in/discover-local/

Surrey

www.visitsurrey.com

South Downs National Park

www.southdowns.gov.uk

Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

www.surreyhill.org

West Sussex

www.experiencesussex.com

West Kent

www.visitsevenoaksdistrict.co.uk/see-and-do

East Sussex

www.visitengland.com/things-to-do/east-sussex

The information in this guide is intended to assist visitors in choosing suitable places to visit. Information has been curated and produced by the Gateway Gatwick Group in good faith. Details were correct at time of going to press (July 2019). Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information shown in this publication, the Gateway Gatwick Group does not accept responsibility or liability for any of the claims made nor the information stated, especially opening times and dates.

The project was produced and funded by the Gateway Gatwick Group. A tourism partnership designed to support the local visitor economy around Gatwick Airport. Contributing partners include: Coastal West Sussex Partnership, Coast to Capital, East Sussex County Council, Gatwick Airport, Gatwick Diamond Initiative, Experience West Sussex Partnership, Rural West Sussex Partnership, West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council), South Downs National Park Authority and Surrey Hills AONB and Enterprises.

Thank you to all that provided photos, in particular: National Trust images – Chris Jonas