Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930)

In his late forties Sir Arthur Conan Doyle settled in Crowborough with his second wife, where he spent the last 23 years of his life. Although best known as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, he also wrote novels, short stories, plays and non-fiction.

Where Conan Doyle lived

Born in Scotland in 1859, Conan Doyle first studied medicine at Edinburgh University and worked as a ship's doctor before setting up a medical practice in Plymouth in 1882. Here he began writing stories in his spare time. He worked as a physician in the Boer War and was knighted in 1902.

After his first wife Louise Hawkins died, Conan Doyle married Jean Leckie in 1907. Later that year they bought a house called Little Windlesham in Crowborough, close to Jean's family. After adding a billiards room and other extensions, they renamed it Windlesham.

Sherlock Holmes first appeared in 'A Study in Scarlet' published in 1887, but several of the later stories were written at Windlesham. Like Conan Doyle, Dr. Watson is a medical doctor, writer, and has served in the British Army.

Conan Doyle played many sports, including golf on the neighbouring course with writer Rudyard Kipling. Late in life Conan Doyle became interested in spiritualism and lectured internationally on the subject.

When he died in 1930 he was buried in the rose garden, as was his wife who died ten years later. Their remains were moved to Minstead churchyard in Hampshire when Windlesham became a home for the elderly.
A statue of Conan Doyle was erected in Crowborough in 2001.

**Sussex in Conan Doyle's books**

Conan Doyle wrote in a summerhouse in the garden or in his first floor study at Windlesham. In his Professor Challenger story 'The Poison Belt' he describes the view from his study across Crowborough Common to distant Rotherfield.

In 'The Valley of Fear' Holmes investigates a murder at Birlstone Manor in Sussex involving his enemy Professor Moriarty. The manor is based on Groombridge Place, which Conan Doyle often visited to take part in seances with the owners Louisa and Eliza Saint. In his non-fiction book 'At the Edge of the Unknown' Conan Doyle talks about the ghost of an ostler he saw at Groombridge.

Conan Doyle used his experience as a ship's doctor in the 'Adventure of Black Peter'. Holmes and Dr Watson stay at the Brambletye hotel in Forest Row as they investigate the murder of a retired sea captain.

Three of the Holmes stories are about crimes in West Sussex, including 'The Five Orange Pips', 'The Musgrave Ritual' and 'The Sussex Vampire'. In later stories the detective has retired to the Sussex coast, but occasionally gets involved in cases such as 'The Lion's Mane' and 'His Last Bow'.

![Map of England with Sussex highlighted](image.png)
Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who first appeared in publication in 1887. He was the creation of Scottish author and physician Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. A brilliant London-based "consulting detective", Holmes is famous for his intellectual prowess and is renowned for his skillful use of astute observation, deductive reasoning and forensic skills to solve difficult cases.


All but four stories are narrated by Holmes' friend and biographer, Dr. John H. Watson; two are narrated by Holmes himself ("The Blanched Soldier" and "The Lion's Mane") and two others are written in the third person ("The Mazarin Stone" and "His Last Bow"). In two stories ("The Musgrave Ritual" and "The Gloria Scott"), Holmes tells Watson the main story from his memories, while Watson becomes the narrator of the frame story.

Conan Doyle said that the character of Holmes was inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell, for whom Doyle had worked as a clerk at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Like Holmes, Bell was noted for drawing large conclusions from the smallest observations.
Sussex, from the Old English('South Saxons'), is a historic county in South East England corresponding roughly in area to the ancient Kingdom of Sussex. It is bounded on the north by Surrey, east by Kent, south by the English Channel, and west by Hampshire, and is divided for local government into West Sussex and East Sussex and the city of Brighton and Hove. The city of Brighton & Hove was created a unitary authority in 1997; and was granted City status in 2000. Until then Chichester had been Sussex's only city.

The divisions of West Sussex and East Sussex were first established in 1189, and had obtained separate administrations by the 16th century. This situation was recognized by the County of Sussex Act 1865. Under the Local Government Act 1888 the two divisions became two administrative counties.

The appellation Sussex remained in use as a ceremonial county until 1974, when the Lord-Lieutenant of Sussex was replaced with one each for East and West Sussex. The whole of Sussex has had a single police force since 1968.

Although it retains a strong identity, most people say West Sussex and East Sussex today and even use them in lists of traditional counties sometimes.
Dr. John H. Watson is the British Doctor who becomes the friend, assistant, and flatmate of the famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He accompanies Holmes on 58 of his published adventures and narrates all but four of the tales.
Watson is described as an intelligent man, if lacking in Holmes' insight. He serves as a foil to Holmes: the ordinary man against the brilliant, emotionally-detached analytical machine. Conan Doyle created a clever literary pairing: two vivid characters, different in their function and yet each useful for his purposes.