

RYE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

OFFICERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS AND TRUSTEES 2017

Vice-Presidents

Kenneth Bird
Robert Bromley
John Pope

Executive Officers

John Griffiths, Chairman; 01797 223594, *johngriffiths@freeuk.com*
Julian Lockett, Vice Chairman; 01797 252114, *millhousenorthiam@sky.com*
David Bookless, Hon Secretary; 01797 224650, *ryeconservation@gmail.com*
Diana Hajikakou, Hon Treasurer; 01797 224046, *kyriacos2010@hotmail.co.uk*
Wayne Jones, Planning Liaison; 01797 229795, *waynethurstonjones@me.com*
Andy Stuart, Publicity & Membership Secretary; 01797 223831, *nikiandandy@hotmail.co.u*
Rae Festing BEM, Assistant Events; 01797 223952

Executive Committee Members

Andrew Bamji	227961, <i>bamji@btinternet.com</i>
Mike Stott	224614, <i>mstott@btinternet.com</i>
Allan Thomson	<i>allan.r.thomson@gmail.com</i>

Planning Committee Members

Julian Lockett, Chairman
Alan Dickinson
Rae Festing
John Griffiths
Wayne Jones

Honorary Consultants

Alan Dickinson	Historical
Nicola Frith	Legal Advisor
John Royle	Maritime Affairs

Trustees:

John Griffiths
David Bookless
Diana Hajikakou
Andy Stuart

Front cover: The ancient Landgate with foliage and flag pole. Taken in early evening by Julian Lockett, despite the time shown by clock. An earlier post card picture appears at the end of this Report

RYE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

**NOTICE OF THE FORTY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
to be held in The Town Hall Council Chamber, Rye, at 11.15am on Friday 27 April
2018**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 21 April 2017
3. Matters arising
4. Reports from the Chairman and Officers; other reports
5. Treasurer's Report and approval of Accounts for the year 2017 (Section 2.4)
6. Elections: Executive Officers and Committee Members. (See note 1)
The Committee wishes to re-appoint Robert Bromley, Kenneth Bird and John Pope as Vice-Presidents. The post of President remains vacant for the time being.
7. Any Other Business (see note 2)

Notes

1. Any member who wishes to nominate another member for the Executive Committee should apply to the Hon Secretary for a nomination form, which must be returned to him at least fourteen days before the meeting.
2. Any member wishing to raise a matter under Any Other Business must notify the Hon Secretary at least fourteen days before the meeting.
3. Please bring your copy of this report with you to the AGM as spare copies may not be available.

*David Bookless, Hon Secretary
Top Flat, Faraday House
The Mint, Rye
East Sussex TN31 7EW
Tel: 01797 224650, email: ryeconservation@gmail.com*

1. Minutes of the 45th Annual General Meeting, 21 April 2017

The 45th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in the Council Chamber, Rye Town Hall, on Friday 21 April 2017, chaired by Mr John Griffiths and attended by 50 members and guests.

1.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Rae Festing, Sheila Bowler, Jen Tomkinson, David Tomkinson, Basil Phillips, Amy Breeds, Rosemary Bagley, Kyriacos Hajidakou and Alan Dickinson.

1.2 Minutes of the 44th AGM

These were approved; there were no matters arising.

1.3 Reports from Chairman and Officers

John Griffiths welcomed the members to the meeting and said they could read comprehensive written reports from himself and the other officers in the 2016 Annual Report. He reported there had been few changes to the Executive Committee and none to the Planning Committee. We had been sorry to lose Mike Slavin who, with Val, decided to move from Rye Harbour to Rochester and we would miss his expertise on all aspects of energy policy.

John Spencer had taken up an offer to join the Executive Committee which brought his considerable expertise to the Committee having been closely involved with the preservation of the ancient Winchelsea arches.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their support and encouragement during the year.

He emphasised that during the year financial restraints, lack of staff and well meaning bureaucracy had been frustrating for Rye Conservation Society who among many other things wished for the Landgate Arch to be properly maintained, the pump housing in Church Square to be repaired and the approach to Rye improved.

Finally he thanked all members for supporting and participating in the activities of the Society including the visits, the Summer Garden Party and the Christmas Party.

Andy Stuart, Publicity and Membership

Andy referred to the Annual Report which contained his written summary of the year. At the meeting he emphasised the assistance of others in the writing and distribution of the quarterly Newsletters. In particular he thanked John Griffiths and his printing facility which enabled the production and the volunteers who did the distribution.

He confirmed that membership stood at around 270 paid up members and encouraged people to take up life membership of the Society.

Julian Luckett, Chairman of the Planning Committee

Julian referred members to his detailed written report. He emphasised that 2016 had seen a number of significant planning applications either rejected or withdrawn which highlighted the difficulties that were developing in Rye taking account of Environment Agency flood requirements and the need for high design standards in and around a historic town.

In April the application by Amicus Horizon for the redevelopment of the former Tilling Green primary school site had been withdrawn, following reconsideration of the economics taking into account all aspects of the scheme to meet flood plain and social housing requirements.

The plans for the redevelopment of the former Gristmill Pine site had been refused on grounds of height and lack of parking provision. Again the economics of redevelopment have led to an impasse although if the parking proposals can be addressed the Committee suspected that the developer will return to the fray.

The saga of The Landgate continued throughout the year. We remain convinced that, in the end, The Landgate will need to be preserved as a managed ruin and that this will need to be financed by Rother who retain responsibility.

Julian reported to the meeting that there had been 77 planning and listed building applications during the year of which the Conservation Society had objected to 18. He thanked the members of the Committee for their time, input and often sharp and pertinent comments.

Wayne Jones, Planning Liaison Officer

Wayne at the AGM expanded upon his written report to confirm that there had been progress with the renovation plans for the water pump in Church Square. It had been agreed that the Society and Rye Town Council would jointly fund the renovation and it should be completed in 2017.

He reported that he had had a good working relationship with the Enforcement Officer at Rother Planning Dept which had helped in dealing with some of the blight caused by posters and banners spreading through the Town. He was pleased that some shop keepers had asked for advice on good practice for shop frontages.

Mike Slavin, Community Energy

Mike said that having to move from the Rye area after a very happy 22 years has been a big wrench and was the reason for his resignation from the Committee – but thanked fellow Committee members and the Society members as a whole for helping make his time with the Society so enjoyable and productive.

He referred members to his written report.

John Griffiths, Events

John said that full details of the various events were in the written reports but he highlighted the trip made to Canterbury that had been an excellent and educational day out culminating in Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral where we had been welcomed by the Dean.

Both the Summer Garden Party and the Christmas Party had been very well attended by members. He thanked Andy and Niki Stuart for providing the venue for the garden party, superb food thanks to Rae Festing, Jen and David Tomkinson and Niki presiding in her own kitchen.

The RCS Awards Presentations had been moved to the Christmas Party from the AGM which seemed a success in giving the party a focus. Again our thanks went to Jen and David for providing an excellent choice of party food and to Kyriacos Hajikakou for selecting the wine and running the bar.

Andrew Bamji, Highways Forum

Andrew referred members to his detailed written report on the activity. He had to report that there had been little progress in the past year. It seemed unlikely that there would be any progress combating illegal parking until regulations are enforced by traffic wardens since the police now have few resources to tackle all but dangerous parking situations. It seemed that attempts to issue unofficial parking leaflets to offending drivers had met mostly with abuse and did not seem a practical way forward.

He advised the meeting that several repeat offenders are local residents so it seems that we will have to put up with illegal parking until or unless there is decriminalisation.

He added that there had been calls for lower speed limits on the A259 in town but there is no local power to change the limits on trunk roads. He said that Highway issues can be reported direct to East Sussex CC via their web site.

Julian Lockett, Awards

It had been decided to present awards at the Christmas Party held at the Town Hall. So it was fitting that the first award was given to Rye Town Council for their Town Steward initiative. The award was accepted by Deputy Mayor Michael Boyd, who thanked the Society and said that the Town Council hoped to expand on the scheme in the future.

Our second award was given to Mr & Mrs Paul Osbourne for Hawthornedene, their new house on Military Road. Although just outside of the Rye Parish boundary, the Society's remit covers the surroundings and the setting of Rye, to which the new house was considered to contribute.

John Royle, Maritime

John said that he was keeping a close eye on the Environment Agency and referred members to his report.

1.4 Treasurer's Report

Diana presented the Treasurer's Report to the meeting which confirmed the Society being in a satisfactory financial position although subscription income had fallen slightly. However expenditure had been lower and thus net assets had increased compared with 2015.

She thanked Mervyn Hayes for auditing the accounts.

There being no questions on the accounts, they were unanimously approved, proposed by Nicola Frith and seconded by Judith O'Connor.

1.5 Election of Officers

No new nominations for membership of the Executive Committee had been received. All the present Committee put themselves forward for re-election, as follows, and the Chairman proposed that they be re-appointed en bloc.

Chairman, John Griffiths
Vice Chairman, Julian Lockett
Honorary Secretary, David Bookless
Honorary Treasurer, Diana Hajikakou
Membership and Publicity Officer, Andy Stuart
Chairman of Planning Committee, Julian Lockett
Planning Liaison Officer, Wayne Jones
Assistant Events, Rae Festing
Committee Members, Andrew Bamji, Mike Stott.

These appointments were seconded by Nicola Frith and approved unanimously.

It was proposed that the vice presidents be reappointed en bloc.

Kenneth Bird
Robert Bromley
John Pope

Proposed by Andrew Bamji and seconded by Judith O'Connor.

1.7 Any other Business

Colonel Kimber questioned whether the Society was not a bit negative about the Neighbourhood Plan and that it could have been more involved. After discussion it was agreed that excellent work had been done by Colonel Kimber and the Council on the NP and that Andy Stuart had been involved from the start. The Society would make full comment at the consultation stage in 2018, but broadly supported the objectives of the NP.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm followed by the Annual Luncheon at the Mermaid Inn.

David Bookless, 3 May 2017

2. Rye Conservation Society Forty-sixth Annual Report for 2017

2.1 *Chairman's Report*

Years ago I had cause to look up the family papers of Field Marshall Garnet Wolseley, 1st Viscount Wolseley, and to see his complaints concerning the state and lack of progress regarding the marble tile floor at his Apartment in Hampton Court Palace. With four deliveries of post each day several letters were exchanged by post in a day.

Now we have email. This has brought about a whole new way of running a Committee. A fact is gleaned and sent for comment to the whole Committee at the touch of a button. Replies can be considered before being sent. They are then on record. Highly efficient but lacking the social contact and feel of a meeting.

I think that in the Society we are able to make the most of emails and committee meetings.

The Executive Committee, elected at the AGM, act on behalf of the members. I am delighted to say that during the year I have been assisted by a first class team with a wide range of expertise and considerable experience.

Planning matters have been an important aspect of the Society's work as I am sure you will realise when we receive the Chairman of Planning's report. It may be wiser to have a Chairman of Planning who comes from outside Rye (as is the case) and takes an overview and is not seen as only concerned with the citadel.

There have been a number of successful events which are reported on separately.

My main disappointment has been the lack of any action to get the Landgate repaired. Rother still do not seem to realise that when they were forced to take over responsibility for the Landgate from Rye Corporation in 1973 they also took over responsibility for its maintenance. The body responsible for seeing this work carried out correctly is the same Rother District Council. The Society has been constantly reminding Rother of the Society's grave concern and of Rother's legal responsibilities since 2011. It is good to see the emergence of the Friends of the Landgate.

John Griffiths

2.2 *Secretary's Report*

It was my second year as Secretary of the Society and I hope that I have become more proficient at the task with greater experience. It was daunting at first with most of the Committee having been involved in the Society for many years, but they all made the new boy feel at home and in particular I should thank John Griffiths our Chairman for his help and advice. It will be a big loss for the Society when he takes his well earned retirement following the AGM.

The Society was fortunate this year to receive a generous bequest from the late Paul Blomfield who was Chairman of the Society for sixteen years from 1995 to 2011 and then a

Vice President. His legacy should enable us to finance some improvements to the townscape. This year we co-funded with the Town Council the repairs to the wooden pump housing in Church Square and we will be considering further similar activities.

I have been most impressed by the expertise shown by Julian and his colleagues on the Planning Committee who perform a fine role in evaluating the Planning applications that come up for eventual decision by Rother. These applications range from small alterations to property to proposals for major housing developments. It seems that some people think the Society is here to prevent development but in my experience that is not the case. Where proposals are well thought out and in keeping with the townscape the Society will normally be supportive as can be seen by the Awards that have been given to excellent work in recent years. There will always be debate, hopefully constructive, about particular developments.

The Committee had much debate this year about the proposed Rye Harbour Nature Reserve building and about the new Care Centre which in both cases they decided to support although not unanimously. It is surely good that our committee represents people with different views and can hold proper full discussions before making recommendations. Of course we are an advisory group and Rother planners take the final decisions.

As I write this we are very concerned about the proposed new BP filling station at the top of Udimore Road which seems a completely inappropriate site for the development. It concerns me that BP have hired expensive consultants to assist their Appeal to Rother which shows how important it is for the Society and its members to be vigilant concerning developments which may harm our unique small town.

Thankfully the Society is not all about work, but arranges visits and social events for members. There is the Summer Garden Party for which many thanks are due to Andy and Niki for offering use of their lovely house and garden, the Christmas Party in the Town Hall where this year we were visited by Home Secretary and local MP Amber Rudd who stayed for the Awards presentation and to talk to members. I would like to thank David and Jen Tomkinson who provided delicious food for these events. John also arranged for us to visit historic parts of Brighton Kemptown and the wonderful Sussex Weald and Downland Museum which proved interesting and stimulating.

2.3 Treasurer's Report

Rye Conservation Society was the recipient of a generous bequest and a number of new life members joined the Society. In addition the two bank accounts were merged hence a larger figure in the current account than might have been expected. This put the Society in the position of being able to make a substantial contribution towards the refurbishment of the pump housing in Church Square and to update the website for which professional assistance was required. Events and outings continued to be well attended. Overall, the Society remains in a satisfactory financial position with money in reserve for contingencies or one-off expenditure.

The balance sheet as of 31st December, 2017, appears on the following pages.

Diana Hajikakou.

RYE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2017

Assets at 31.12.17	£
Bank balance LloydsTSB	22661.14
Charity Deposit Account	0.00
Less debts (3)	134.00
Total assets	22527.14

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2016 AND 2017

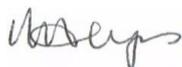
Income	2017	2016
Events & outings	4249.52	3440.05
Subscriptions	1113.00	818.00
Donations	50.00	00.00
Gift Aid	179.56	164.85
COIF interest	7.58	46.90
Sundry	0.00	224.00
Bequest (4)	9069.56	---
Total Income	14669.22	4693.80
Income minus Expenditure	7719.11	844.08

Notes

- (1) Includes bequest and balance from COIF account
- (2) COIF Charity account closed 27/3/17, £11071.57 transf. to Lloyds TSB)
- (3) Uncashed Cheques
- (4) Bequest of £9069.56 received on 27/2/17

Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017 prepared by Hon. Treasurer,
Mrs D J Hajikakou

I have examined the income and expenditure accounts of the
Rye Conservation Society for the year ended 31 December 2017
and have compared them with the books and vouchers supplied.
In my opinion they are correct and in accordance.



Independent Examiner, Mervyn Hayes 9 March 2018

Assets at 31.12.16	£
Bank balance Lloyds TSB	3785.29
Charities Deposit Account	11063.99
Less debts (3)	41.25
Total Assets	14808.03

Expenditure	2017	2016
Events & Outings	2590.36	1838.48
Affiliation fees	174.00	80.00
Insurance	181.50	197.10
Printing/Stationery	38.34	281.14
Post/telephone	0.00	53.00
Administration	27.31	0.00
AGM/Awards	1641.60	1400.00
Sundries	2297.00	0.00
Total Expenditure	6950.11	3849.72

2.4 Planning Committee Report

During 2017 the Planning Committee considered and commented on some 84 planning and listed building applications, up slightly on 2016, and I would like to thank the members of the Committee who give their time and expertise.

Of the applications we considered, we objected on various grounds to 18, less than 25%. Our grounds for objection included lack of sufficient information, inappropriate design in form and scale and potential loss of historic fabric as well as issues regarding access and, in some cases, the lack of appropriate parking provision.

There were a small number of cases where Rother granted consent despite our objections. Consent was granted to the extension of the opening hours for the Grapevine on Conduit Hill despite our and others' concerns as to noise. We objected to the extension to Rye Nursery purely on design grounds but it was approved.

In the case of the small shop on Winchelsea Road and the development of the Skinner's site, our concerns were to do with parking and access. In both cases East Sussex Highways, the statutory consultee, approved the schemes despite our local knowledge of what is likely to happen.

As a committee we were pleased to see the development at Hilders on Rye Hill refused on design grounds. We hope that this is the beginning of a move towards higher design standards although we understand that the refusal will be appealed.

Four major applications were received during the year. The first was for the proposed BP filling Station on Udimore Road beyond the roundabout. The Society strongly objected to this application because of its effect on the landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the setting of Rye, the loss of amenity for local residents and the potential effect on the traffic along Udimore Road. East Sussex Highways was of the view that the additional traffic would not be an issue but Rother refused the application on the basis of landscaping and amenity issues.

The Plutus Development scheme for 72 dwellings on the former Thomas Peacocke site was lodged in August. Little had changed from the scheme presented at the public event the previous year and the Society reiterated its grounds for objection.

Earlier in the year Rye Tennis club submitted an application for three covered courts on a site right over the parish boundary in Playden. Because this very large building, the same size as the big sheds along Rye Harbour Road, would have a significant effect on the setting of this area of Rye, the Society has objected. Rother initially recommended refusal but requested additional information, which is still awaited.

Another scheme that proved to be controversial was the new Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Discovery Centre which would have an effect both on the Nature Reserve and Rye Harbour, which is such an important part of the setting of Rye. The full Executive Committee considered the scheme, as it does for all major applications, and although the decision was not unanimous it was supported as the majority felt that it was a very good scheme which would bring benefits to the whole region and hopefully be an inspiring educational experience for visitors.

Finally, at the end of the year, an application for a care home within Rye Foreign was submitted by Rye Hospital. This was a finely-balanced decision but, having taken all matters into account, the Society supported the application. It has now been revised to address concerns in respect of the adjoining houses.

This last application serves to show how planning issues are rarely clear-cut and almost always come down to a matter of balancing different issues, which can be contradictory, as well as the personal interpretation of design by members and officers.

Julian Lockett

2.5 Planning Liaison Report

Whilst over the last year attention has been quite rightly focused on the issue of the Landgate, residents and interested passers-by will have noticed that the seemingly never-ending saga of the Church Square (Pump Street) pump has finally reached a conclusion. It was restored at the end of last summer and we hope that members will agree that it is a vast improvement on its previous sorry state. All that remains is for an appropriate plaque to be designed and displayed alongside.



Old Pump housing



New pump housing

As ever, we continue to monitor the appearance of the town and its environs. The High Street, Strand and surrounding areas have caused us some concern this year for a variety of reasons: inappropriate colour schemes and use of materials, decaying woodwork, obtrusive ventilation systems and incomplete renovations, to mention just a few.

We have met with Hush Heath, the new leaseholders of the Ship Hotel and are hopeful that they will agree to fund and renovate the badly rotted sign above the door which used to depict a large sailing vessel believed to be the Madeira Pet built in Rye in the 1850s.

In all cases we have kept in close contact with Dan Bevan, Rother Planning Enforcement Officer. Unfortunately, Dan suffered a very serious motorbike accident in November which left him hospitalised and then he had to undergo a lengthy convalescence. I am pleased to report that Dan returned to work in early March and is now ploughing his way through "thousands" of emails.

Wayne Jones

2.6 Membership and Publicity

Membership. Numbers have remained roughly stable in the last year, which is good news. However, we can always do with more new members, and as one of the most efficient and successful marketing strategies is ‘member get member’, if you know anyone who might be interested in joining please encourage them to do so.

In the meantime, I would like to welcome the following as recent members: Mr T Cuthbert, Mr & Mrs R Dalton, Mr & Mrs D Hawkins, Ms H Kojevnikov, Mr K McCarthy & Mr A Thomson, Mrs H Medlik, Mr C Rooth, Ms J Vinter & Mr F Bochicchio, Mr & Mrs I Webb-Wilson, Ms S West & Mr G Bennett and Mr & Mrs L Wood.

Publicity. We have had excellent coverage in the local news organs for our Pump restoration and conservation in Church Square, in conjunction with Rye Town Council, which was conceived by and led by our very own Wayne Jones!

We have also had positive coverage for our involvement in the Landgate, which has recently seen Rother District Council sign off a welcome £74k budget for urgent repairs to stabilise the monument.

Once again, I would like to give a big thank you to those brilliant volunteers who have helped me with the distribution of newsletters, pounding the pavements and driving the roads to far-flung places – Helen Griffiths, Denny Nicol, Jill Johnson, Gill & Paddy Harvey and Anne Wood. Their help is much appreciated.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to the Society’s chairman John Griffiths. While the newsletter carries my name as editor I have to say that I am the George Osborne of the operation – I turn up very occasionally (when other commitments allow), whilst John does the job. Writing articles, chivvyng other contributors, laying out the text, writing headlines and then printing the newsletter in Rye’s Fleet Street, namely Watchbell Street – all are done by John! John is Harold Evans and Brenda Dean rolled into one!

Lastly, returning to membership, I would like to say a big thank you to all our members. Your involvement and subs are what keeps the Society going.

Andy Stuart

2.7 Events

By one of those strange pieces of tradition the Chairman of Rye Conservation Society arranges the events.

My aim has been to make the events enjoyable and educational and to take advantage of there being a group of us to visit a place not normally open to the public which members could do on their own at any time.

The pattern developed into picking a town, contacting the local society, arranging to meet some of their members over coffee on arrival (I soon found that coffee was essential). With

the coffee came a talk about the local successes and problems. Then a walk about parts of the town with our group split into three or four, each with a local guide.

Then a pre-ordered lunch for the whole group, a visit to an adjoining place and the coach back to Rye.

Our Spring visit was to Brighton and then to Kemp Town. The problems of Brighton are from major planning conflict and high rise buildings to graffiti everywhere.

Then lunch at a favourite 'watering hole' of Kemp Town residents, a talk by the Chairman of the Kemp Town Society and a look at the main features, including the largest crescent in Europe. As a keyholder the Chairman let us into the large central garden and through the tunnel to emerge on to the Marina.

Andrew Bamji, a member of our Executive Committee, wrote an excellent report on the day reproduced below which was first published in our Newsletter of August 2017.

Our visit to Brighton: 30 May 2017

Our visit began in the Brighthelm Centre where we were welcomed by members of the Brighton Society, originally established in 1974 to oppose the proposed redevelopment of Brighton Station and which has subsequently been a very active contributor to plans (or opposition to plans) for other developments that would have materially altered the built environment of Brighton.

We were greeted by the current Chairman, Jeremy Mustoe, with his three colleagues who were to guide us, and over coffee Malcolm Dawes gave a brief exposition on some of Brighton's major redevelopment proposals. Some were appalling and with some (including the plans for the station) the Society's objections were successful. However it was clear that planning rules were not always adhered to. Many of us think we know Brighton well, and even visit often, but our attention is not always diverted from shops and the old centre to look critically at some of the eyesores which now disfigure the townscape – although some of the unsuccessful schemes would have made things even worse. Malcolm drew our attention in particular to the Beethan Tower – a 42 storey monster over the station – and designs by Piers Gough and Frank Gehry. The Society successfully opposed the demolition of the Royal Victoria Children's Hospital, Hove Library and the Hippodrome; the first two have been restored for re-use, but the Hippodrome remains derelict. Further major developments at the Marina are currently being opposed. Height issues are a major stumbling block but planning decisions have been inconsistent.

More details of the Society's work can be found on its website at <http://www.brighton-society.org.uk/>

Following the talk the party split into three groups.

Group one toured parts of Regency Brighton including 1795 Percy & Wagner almshouses, a pleasure ground, curving crescent, Gothic Revival church, slums, brewery, elegant houses and interesting architecture. A wonderful social history. Plus, we compared the architecture of some later buildings including a 1930s cinema.

Group two was taken around the historic Old Town of Brighton between the seafront and North Street and included the well known Brighton Lanes - a warren of narrow passages, specialist shops and historic buildings. Two major new developments are proposed within this area at West Street and new lanes - Hannington's Lane and Puget's Lane - which were shown during the slideshow presentation.

The third group visited the North Laine and included a look at Brighton Station. The area called North Laine was until the mid Twentieth Century the main location of local industries. The walk included a meander through the terraced streets, twittens and narrow alleys looking at the

traces of past industries. Included in the walk was Brighton Station seen in its hillside context, which was extensively restored as one of the first projects of Network Rail. On the way to the coach pick-up point the group walk through some of the streets that have become a mecca for small independent traders.

We were struck by the shabby and unkempt appearance of buildings and streets, perhaps reflecting the steady subdivision of residential buildings and the large student population. There is a major problem with graffiti, whether or not one likes the Banksy "Kissing policemen" on the Astoria's facade (the original, on a pub wall, was sold for a large sum; is this an original or a copy?).

We returned to our coach for an excellent lunch on the edge of the Kemp Town Estate, at Busby and Wilds (recommended!). The name reflects the original architects of the Kemp Town scheme. We had a brief talk from Simon Smith, Chairman of the Kemp Town Society, on the history of the development (begun in 1825), which is much smaller than its surrounding parliamentary constituency. It never made a profit. Thomas Kemp, its originator, ran out of money and the well-known Thomas Cubitt, responsible for many of the Bloomsbury squares in London, completed the development. Many widowed owners were unable to maintain the grand buildings, so that at one stage there were 30 schools, of which only one now remains. One of our party was reminded by our visit that she had been to school there.

The development (square, crescent and two terraces) now has only 5 houses that remain in single occupation, with others divided into up to 12 flats. Maintenance of the houses and the Enclosure, the park-like centre which is open only to residents and guests, remains in the hands of the residents, but the estate has a managing agent and several houses were in the process of being redecorated. Perhaps painted stucco is not a good idea in a marine environment; repainting every five years (with all the necessary scaffolding) will lead to many more poverty-stricken widows!

The houses are not uniform, reflecting the different builders and dates. Lewes Crescent is the largest Regency crescent in Europe, larger than Bath's Royal Crescent. It has houses in threes, with each third house having Corinthian columns, Arundel Terrace to the East is the most grand but the whole is listed Grade 1. We were led through the tunnel from the Enclosure to the esplanade, now in council ownership, and the contrast in the standard of upkeep between the privately managed estate and the rest was notable.

The Kemp Town Society also campaigns on planning issues (see <http://www.kempton-society.org.uk/>), and it was notable how intrusive were the huge blocks of apartments on the Marina.

Returning via Middle farm at Firlie, where cream teas, ice creams and plant purchases were enjoyed by all, we returned to our own conservation area in good order, well schooled in Brighton's architecture, heritage and planning problems and quite proud, perhaps, that our town is so much cleaner and tidier!

John and Helen Griffiths had planned and reconnoitred a superb visit, and we are grateful to them and our Brighton guides who freely and enthusiastically gave of their time.

Our Autumn visit on 11 October broke all our own rules. We visited the Weald and Downland Living Museum at Singleton, near Chichester. Our main reason for the visit was to see the four architecturally important modern buildings. They have all been designed to show the use of a variety of traditional local materials in a modern architectural manner.

First is the world famous award winning Gridshell building designed by Edward Cullinan Architects working with Buro Happold engineers. It was completed in 2002. The other three buildings were opened in May that year. Known as the Gateway Buildings the Museum raised some £6m. including £4m. from the Heritage Lottery to pay for their construction.

The buildings include a visitor reception area, a permanent exhibition explaining the aims and work of the museum and a new cafe.

Christopher Strangeways wrote an excellent summary of the visit and background information on the Museum which was published in the Society's November 2017 Newsletter and reproduced below.

Rye Conservation Society visit to Weald and Downland Living Museum

The main purpose of the visit was to see the new Gateway Centre. It was opened in May this year at a cost of £6 million - £4 million from the Heritage Lottery and the rest from donations. Designed by [ABIR architects](#), the series of wooden-frame buildings provide a gallery space, café and other facilities for both visitors and staff. It is clearly a very high-quality construction and has an attractive location at the lower end of the site, next to the artificial lake, and works well as a Gateway to the museum from the car-parking area.

The Museum's 40 acres provide a beautiful setting for a collection of historic buildings dating from 950 AD to the Victorian era, all saved from demolition. The site is within the South Downs National Park, close to Goodwood racecourse, and occupies a corner of the West Dean Estate. It was the estate's eccentric owner, Edward James, who gave the land to Roy Armstrong and his small group of volunteers in 1967. The Sixties was an era of architectural vandalism and Roy Armstrong had been appalled at the destruction of fine medieval buildings in Crawley and other parts of the South-east. Inspired by the "Open Air" museums in Sweden and elsewhere, he had been looking for a suitable site to preserve Wealden traditional vernacular architecture. The land he was offered is outside the Weald so the area of interest was extended to include the Downs. As well as preserving doomed buildings he wanted the museum to raise awareness of the built environment and to preserve the traditional crafts and industries associated with their construction and maintenance. Old industrial skills were also to be preserved and there is now a working mill and blacksmith on the site.

Most of the houses are furnished with original artefacts that demonstrate the way of life of the occupants. Overall the impression is that one could quite happily live in these houses although we would probably miss some comforts of the 21st Century.

A recent addition to the Museum was the construction in 2002 of the innovative Gridshell building. This was designed by Ted Cullinan and the [Cullinan Studio](#) and was the first of its kind to be built in Britain. Some members of our group were given a tour of the building and its large basement storage area. The spectacular upper interior space known as the Jerwood Gridshell Space is used as a conservation workshop and for training. The basement houses a large collection of tools and artefacts of rural life.

There is a strong emphasis throughout the museum on the contribution made by volunteers. Since the foundation of the museum by the small group led by Roy Armstrong, the local community have been much involved in making the museum the success it is today. At every stage during our visit we were able to turn to helpful and well-informed volunteers who answered every type of question – such as how the medieval occupants relieved themselves in the middle of the night and how the smoke on the floor at the centre of the hall escaped without a chimney. The volunteers in the mill and the smithy were all too happy to explain every detail of their trade including the origin of the phrase "rule of thumb" – it was the miller's way of precisely calibrating the gap between the millstones by rubbing the flour (Wikipedia disagrees).

Trips of this kind are regularly arranged by Rye Conservation Society and was meticulously organised by the hard-working chairman John Griffiths. As the weary but contented group travelled home in the coach it was John again who was reminding them of the next Society event – the Christmas Party on Friday 1 December 6.00 pm 'till 8.00 pm in Rye Town Hall.

Christopher Strangeways

Our summer event, the Annual Garden Party, was once again in the beautiful garden of Little Orchard House in West Street where Andy and Niki Stuart kindly allowed us to use their house and garden. Superb catering was by Jen and David Tomkinson.

The end of our year or perhaps it is the beginning of Christmas is marked by the Society's Christmas Party held in Rye Town Hall. Amber Rudd our MP and Home Secretary attended and commended the Society on the work it was doing. Again, our thanks to Jen and David Tomkinson for their superb catering.

The event included the presentation of the Society's Annual Awards.

John Griffiths

2.8 Rye Highways Forum: report for 2017

The Highways Forum has continued its work with some success. However, members of Rye Conservation Society must bear in mind that what seems important to us may not fulfil the strict criteria used by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Highways England for “necessity”, and also that the costs of any changes are high and may be unaffordable in the current financial climate. Even a consultation exercise may cost several thousand pounds.

The introduction of tighter speed limits in Rye is not justified by risk. Surveys elsewhere in the country have also shown minimal sustainable benefit from such restrictions; in Manchester the average speed reduction was 0.7mph. The Forum was advised that the cost of implementing a town-wide 20mph limit would run to seven figures. However it may be possible to purchase a portable speed monitoring device, and it has been suggested that the 30mph advisory sign on New Road might be moved 2-300 metres towards Camber, thus allowing vehicles to slow sensibly before the edge of the built-up area.

The Forum is concerned that the Jempsons rebuild has created a blind spot on Station Approach and so has significantly altered the risk to pedestrians. This will be monitored. Adding lights to the current crossing would be very expensive (estimate £100,000). Road works (marking of white and yellow lines and resurfacing of the A259 through Rye) have been delayed by bad weather.

There is one major success – Rother District Council (RDC) has finally agreed in principle to the decriminalisation of parking. Members of the Forum and Rye Town Council attended a briefing meeting at which it was clear that the introduction of civil parking enforcement (CPE) was not a question of if, but when. ESCC’s planning process for introduction is already well advanced, and once RDC has ratified the proposal it will take approximately 18 months to implement. This is good news for the centre of Rye; nonetheless there are concerns that CPE will push parking to the margins of the town, and impact adversely on users and residents of Military Road and Love Lane. The Forum will remain involved with the planning process. RCS’ unhappiness over the problems at the junction of the High Street and West Street (“Cashpoint Corner”) is ameliorated by news that both the NatWest and Lloyds Banks will close. Parking for these will diminish significantly, especially as Jempsons has installed two new cashpoints outside its entrance.

Vehicles often find it difficult to turn from the High Street into Market Road. It has been suggested that the access is closed by a (removeable) bollard and that Market Road becomes two-way between Cinque Ports Street and Meryon Close. This would enable removal of the double yellow lines in the High Street opposite the turning, with the addition of five parking spaces. If members have any views on this, or other matters, please contact me.

Members are reminded that road issues can be reported directly to ESCC via the Highways division website at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/contact-us/report-a-problem/report-a-problem-on-a-road-path-or-verge/>. The system works well both for potholes and pavement damage; for the former, a new rapid repair system has speeded up response times.

Andrew Bamji

2.9 Awards 2017

Last year the Society Awards highlighted projects that celebrated what makes Rye unique and different, from its historic buildings to the details that make its High Street so different and attractive in contrast with the increasingly bland and faceless shopping streets of most towns.

For many years the future of The Monastery has concerned all the residents of Rye so it is with great pleasure that we said ‘a new star has arisen, not in the East, but on Conduit Hill’. Our first award therefore went to Alex MacArthur for the refurbishment and reuse of The Monastery and for the simple but very imaginative signage.

At a time when all shopping streets look increasingly the same, Rye’s High Street and its range of historic shop-fronts are a vital element in its enduring appeal. Our second award therefore went to Rosie Furnival for the exemplary redecoration and signage of Fig at No 2 High Street. The use of colour in articulating the shop-front and the sophistication and integration of the signage was considered particularly successful.

Finally, among the elements that we need to preserve are the many fragments of visible history that help to illuminate Rye’s past. Our third award was given to Helen Broomfield for the retention of the old shop lettering below that wonderful bay window during the recent refurbishment at The Apothecary.



The Monastery



The Fig Cafe



The Apothecary

Julian Lockett

2.10 *Maritime Affairs*

26 Commercial vessels traded into and out of Rye Wharf over the period April 2017 to March 2018 which is about average for the trade in recent years although the ships are bigger and bring in a higher tonnage. The M/V Lady Mary carried 2969 tons of aggregate, the biggest into Rye so far. Cargoes have been furnace bottom ash and aggregates (imported) with grain and beans exported.

The Government have shelved for the time being a proposal to hive off the Environment Agency's management of the harbour to the Canals and River Trust (ex – British Waterways) on the grounds of cost.

Other proposals reported on are:

Rye Bay Protection Area (SPA). This would prohibit fishing during the spawning season in certain areas of the bay from the shoreline to 3 miles out. But this is still being deliberated.

Rye Bay Conservation Zone (MCZ). This is much more restricting and controversial and could ban trawling altogether in designated areas. Evidence of social and economic damage (fishermens' livelihoods) is still being collated and DEFRA has not yet decided whether this area will go forward to public consultation.

Other news: The shallow hot spots within the harbour which tend to silt up are currently receiving their quadrennial maintenance dredging. You may have seen the Dutch barge Van Oord attached to its tandem generator chugging up and down the river using their hydrostatic dredging technique, which seems very effective at Rye where the tides run fairly quickly in and out and keep disturbed mud in suspension. The barge sucks up river water and squirts it out through nozzles under the boat, so on each ebb tide the liquified sludge is dispersed out of the harbour mouth to sea.

John Royle

2.11 *Conservation Society Web Site*

For some years the Committee has been concerned that the Web Site has not been kept up to date and thus did not perform its purpose of providing users information about RCS matters. This year it was decided to get the site rewritten from scratch and in December the new site went live. We kept the same web address, ryeconservationsociety.org, and put a bigger emphasis on planning applications. The intention is that members will be able to visit the site and see upon which applications the RCS have made a considered opinion.

The site will also cover the social activities of the Society and supplement the Newsletter in providing information on all our future plans as well as providing an archive of older material such as the Newsletters. It will also enable us to readily explain policy to the membership and hopefully help to increase our membership by providing access to application forms.

Members are encouraged to comment on any aspect of the site as we build upon what we recognise is just a start. I would like to thank Jen Sinclair who provided the professional assistance to get us up and running.

David Bookless



The Landgate in early times (compare with front cover)



Part of the Weald and Downland Museum

**CONSTITUTION
OF
RYE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

1. NAME

The name of the Society shall be Rye Conservation Society.

2. AIMS and OBJECTIVES

The Society is established for the public benefit for the following purposes in the area comprising the Civil Parishes of Rye Town, Playden, Rye Foreign and East Guldeford, also the Civil Parish of Icklesham (Rye Harbour Road and Rye Harbour and Camber Castle areas only), which area shall hereinafter be referred to as "the area of benefit".

1. To protect and enhance the visual and historic environment and setting of the town of Rye and its immediate environs (see area of benefit), particularly in relation to its setting in the marsh and the quality of life therein, to the benefit of residents, visitors, businesses and their employees.
2. To stimulate public interest in the area of benefit.
3. To promote high standards of planning and architecture in the area of benefit.
4. To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features and buildings of historic or public interest in the area of benefit.

In furtherance of the said purposes but not otherwise the Society through its Executive Committee shall have the following powers:

1. To promote research into subjects directly connected with the objects of the Society and to publish the results of any such research.
2. To act as a coordinating body and to co-operate with the local authority, planning committees, sanitary, drainage and all other local and statutory authorities, voluntary organisations, charities and persons having aims similar to those of the Society.
3. To promote or assist in promoting activities of a charitable nature throughout the area of benefit.
4. To publish papers, reports and other literature in print, electronically or by any other media as deemed appropriate by the Committee.
5. To make surveys and prepare maps and plans and collect information in relation to any place, erection or building of beauty or historic interest within the area of benefit.
6. To hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions.
7. To educate public opinion and to give advice and information.

8. To raise funds and to invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscription, donation or otherwise; provided that the Society shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for its primary purposes.
9. To take and accept any gifts or property, whether subject to any special trusts or not.
10. To sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or funds of the Society as shall be necessary.
11. To borrow or raise money for the purposes of the Society on such terms and on such security as the Executive Committee shall think fit, but so that the liability of individual members of the Society shall in no case extend beyond the amount of their respective annual subscriptions.
12. To recommend to the appropriate body the listing of any building of special architectural/historic interest.
13. To subscribe to any body or organisation that, in the opinion of the Committee, furthers the causes which coincide with the Society's objectives.
14. To do all such other things as are necessary for the attainment of the said purposes.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to all who are interested in furthering the purposes of the Society. No member shall have power to vote at any meeting of the Society if his subscription is in arrears at the time. Corporate members shall be such societies, associations, educational institutions or businesses as are interested in furthering the purposes of the Society. A corporate member shall appoint a representative to vote on its behalf at all meetings but, before such representative exercises his or her right to vote, the corporate member shall give particulars in writing to the Honorary Secretary of such representation. The subscriptions of a member joining the Society in the three months preceding 31 December in any year shall be regarded as covering membership for the Society's year commencing on 1 January following the date of joining the Society.

4. SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscriptions shall be:

	Annual	Life
Individual members	£6.00	£75.00
Joint subscription for two members living at the same address	£10.00	£100.00
Corporate members	£15.00	n/a

or other such reasonable sum as the Executive Committee shall determine from time to time, and it shall be payable on or before 1 January each year. Membership shall lapse if the subscription is unpaid three months after it is due.

(Rates as agreed at the 33rd AGM held on 24 April 2005).

5. MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting shall be held in or about April of each year to receive the Executive Committee's Report and audited accounts and to elect Officers and Members of the Committee. The Committee shall decide when ordinary meetings of the Society shall be held and shall give **21 days' notice** of such meetings to all members. Special General Meetings of the Society shall be held at the written request of members representing not less than 10 per cent of the existing membership of the Society and whose subscriptions are fully paid up. Twenty members personally present shall constitute a quorum for a Meeting of the Society.

6. OFFICERS

Nominations for the election of officers shall be made in writing to the Secretary 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. Such nominations shall be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. The elections of Officers shall be completed prior to the election of further Committee members. Nominees for election as Officers or Committee members shall declare at the Annual General Meeting at which their election is to be considered any financial or professional interest known or likely to be of concern to the Society.

The Officers of the Society shall consist of

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Honorary Secretary
- Honorary Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Chairman of the Planning Committee
- Planning Liaison

all of whom shall relinquish their office every year and shall be eligible to be re-elected at the Annual General Meeting. A President and Vice Presidents may also be elected at a General Meeting of the Society. The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill casual vacancies occurring among the Officers of the Society.

7. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the management and administration of the Society. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers and **not more than four other members**. The Committee shall have power to co-opt further members (who shall attend in an advisory and non-voting capacity).

The President and Vice Presidents may attend any meeting of the Executive Committee but shall not vote at any such meeting. In the event of an equal number of votes being cast, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote. Nominations for election to the Executive Committee shall be made in writing to the Secretary 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. They must be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. If the nominations exceed the number of vacancies, a ballot shall take place by a show of hands unless a poll is demanded by not less than two-thirds of those present. The Executive Committee shall meet not less than six times a year at intervals

of not more than two months and the Honorary Secretary shall give all members not less than seven (7) days' notice of each meeting. The quorum shall, as near as may be, comprise one third of the members of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee may, by majority decision, expel with immediate effect until the next AGM any committee member whose actions, in the view of the Committee, are prejudicial to the best interests of the Society or who shall have, without the prior written consent of the Committee, disclosed confidential information to any third party.

8. COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee may constitute such committees from time to time as shall be considered necessary for such purposes as shall be thought fit. The Chairman and Secretary of each committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and all actions and proceedings of each committee shall be reported to and be confirmed by the Executive Committee as soon as possible. Members of the Executive Committee may be members of any committee and membership of a committee shall be no bar to appointment to membership of the Executive Committee. Committees shall be subordinate to the Executive Committee and may be regulated or dissolved by the Executive Committee.

9. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

It shall be the duty of every Officer or member of the Executive Committee or other committee who is in any way directly or indirectly interested financially or professionally in any item discussed at any Committee meeting at which he or she is present to declare such interest and he/she shall not discuss such item (except by invitation of the Chairman) or vote thereon.

10. EXPENSES OF ADMINISTRATION AND APPLICATION OF FUNDS

The Executive Committee shall, out of the funds of the Society, pay all proper expenses of administration and management of the Society. After the payment of the administration and management expenses and the setting aside to reserve of such sums as may be deemed expedient, the remaining funds of the Society shall be applied by the Executive Committee in furtherance of the purposes of the Society.

11. INVESTMENT

All monies at any time belonging to the Society and not required for immediate application for its purposes shall be invested by the Executive Committee in or upon such investment, securities or property as it may think fit, subject nevertheless to such authority, approval or consent whether by the Charity Commissioner or the Secretary of State for Education and Science as may for the time being be required by law or by the special trusts affecting any property in the hands of the Executive Committee.

12. TRUSTEES

Any freehold and leasehold property acquired by the Society shall, and if the Executive Committee so directs, any other property belonging to the Society may be vested in trustees who shall deal with such property as the Executive Committee may from time to time direct. Any trustees shall be at least three in number or a trust corporation.

The power of appointment of new trustees shall be vested in the Executive Committee. A trustee need not be a member of the Society but no person whose membership lapses by virtue of paragraph 3 hereof shall thereafter be qualified to act as a trustee unless and until reappointed as such by the Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary shall from time to time notify the trustees in writing of any amendment hereto and the trustees shall not be bound by any such amendments in their duties as trustees unless such notice has been given. The Society shall be bound to indemnify the trustees in their duties (including the proper charge of a trustee being a trust corporation) and liability under such indemnity shall be a proper administrative expense.

13. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at an Annual General Meeting of the Society, provided that 14 days' notice of the proposed amendment has been given to all members, and provided that nothing herein-contained shall authorise any amendment the effect of which would be to cause the Society at any time to cease to be a charity in law.

14. NOTICES

Any notice required to be given by these Rules shall be deemed to be duly given if left at or sent by prepaid post addressed to the address of that member last notified to the Secretary.

15. WINDING UP

The Society may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of members voting at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the Society confirmed by a simple majority of members voting at a further Special General Meeting held not less than 14 days after the previous meeting. If a motion for the dissolution of the Society is to be proposed at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting, this motion shall be referred to specifically when notice of the Meeting is given. In the event of the dissolution of the Society, the available funds of the Society shall be transferred to such one or more charitable institutions having objects similar or reasonably similar to those herein before declared as shall be chosen by the Executive Committee and approved by the Meeting of the Society at which the decision to dissolve the Society is confirmed. On dissolution, the minute books and other records of the Society shall be deposited with the East Sussex County Council Record Office.

(As amended at the 42nd AGM held on Friday 25 April 2014).

NOTES

DIARY DATES FOR 2018

Friday 27 April, 11.15am	Annual General Meeting Rye Town Hall Annual Lunch (12.30) The Mermaid Inn, Tudor Room
Sunday 8 July, 2.30 - 5pm	Annual Garden Party Little Orchard House 3 West Street Rye TN31 7ES
Late September	Visit to be arranged
Friday 7 December, 6 - 8pm	Christmas Celebration Rye Town Hall

The Purposes of the Society

The Society was founded in 1972 and under the Constitution, which it later adopted, is concerned with the area comprising Rye Town, Playden, Rye Foreign, East Guldeford and the Rye Harbour area of the Civil Parishes of Icklesham and Camber.

The principal objects of the Society within that area are: to stimulate public interest in the area, to promote high standards of planning and architecture, and to secure the preservation, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest.

In the course of promoting its work the Society has secured registration as a charity. It is a member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Association of Small Historic Towns and Villages and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Registered Charity No 283888