



# Newsletter

September 2019 No 66

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## Rye Conservation Society's Visit to Charleston, Home of the Bloomsbury Group in Sussex

The Conservation Society is organising a coach trip from Rye to Charleston, a National Trust property situated in the South Downs National Park. Charleston was from 1916 the home of artists Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, who were key members of the Bloomsbury Group in Sussex. We intend to book a guided tour which will enable a group of members to explore Charleston's house, garden, galleries, shop and cafe. This autumn's exhibition is Post-Impressionist Living: The Omega Workshop. The date will be **Thursday 7 November**, leaving Rye station car park at 9.30am. More information about the Charleston property and activity can be found on their web site <https://www.charleston.org.uk/>

There is a nice cafe where you can buy a snack lunch at your own cost. Please advise if you are likely to want this option. The gift shop could be a good source of Christmas gifts.

Spaces for this tour are limited to thirty, so please book early as below

*The cost of the tour and the coach will be £30 to include welcoming tea or coffee and biscuits.*

*Please send cheques made out to "Rye Conservation Society" for the above amount per person to David Bookless, 3 Faraday House, The Mint, Rye TN31 7EW by **Friday 25 October**.*

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## Parking Consultation

East Sussex County Council has opened a formal parking consultation concerning the proposal to bring in Parking Zones in and around the Citadel with parking meters and wardens. The Consultation runs to Friday 27 September. ESCC lists the following benefits that will be achieved by the introduction of CPE:

- reduce and ease congestion

- improve traffic flow, so benefiting the economy and the environment
- maintain access for the emergency services.

The Conservation Society broadly supports the proposal. It is hoped this will deter the current parking free-for-all in the centre of Rye which makes life difficult for residents, particularly the elderly, disabled and people with pushchairs and walking aids who are forced into the road by

inconsiderate motorists parking on the pavement. We are advised the scheme would come into force in 2020 and be reviewed after twelve months. We do have concerns about the size, siting and number of parking machines and a have advised accordingly. A longer term fear is that even more cars than now will seek to park for free in surrounding streets such as Military Road. Perhaps the parking zone will need to be extended.

These proposals apply to on-street parking only and do not concern car parks which are either run by Rother or are privately owned, but we believe that motorists and visitors should be encouraged to use car parks rather than drive around town looking for road side parking.

## Memorial at Rye Airfield

Rye Conservation Society contributed towards a new stone memorial which was unveiled by Colonel Anthony Kimber on 4 September.

Rye and District Royal British Legion (RBL) coordinated the final installation and unveiling of a stone memorial with a plaque provided by the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust at the side of a lay-by on the Camber Road. This commemorates a “landing ground” used from 1916 to 1919 by the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) for the forward deployment of home defence aircraft to counter the German Zeppelin airship threat.

At the site, Colonel Anthony Kimber as President of Rye RBL explained the background. Canon David Frost from St Mary’s Rye and RBL Chaplain gave a short dedication. Donors, including Rye Town Council, the Kimbers, David and Sandie Pawseys and the Rye Conservation Society unveiled the stone. Neale East as Chairman, RBL, laid a wreath and Elizabeth Kimber said an RAF prayer. Rye Conservation Society member Andy Stuart spoke about his relative, Captain Peter

Stuart, who was killed flying in the RFC. Guests included the Leader of East Sussex County Council, Cllr Keith Glazier and the Mayor of Rye, Cllr Michael Boyd.

(*This piece taken with thanks from Rye News*)

## The Landgate

Some members have noticed that, despite the work carried out last autumn, foliage has reappeared on the Landgate including a rather large bush. It seems that not all the roots were dealt with at the time so we have brought this to the attention of Rother councillors and others. Longer term we hope that we can continue to meet with interested parties and plan for the future of the structure. The Mayor, Michael Boyd, is very keen to promote fundraising with the Society and others to protect the Landgate, to fix the clock and restore the lighting.

## Thomas Peacocke Site

The Society continues to oppose the latest plans by Plutus Developments for this site. In August revised proposals were submitted by Rother for 72 units of which 43 would be houses. There is still no social housing component which is in conflict with Rother’s Core Strategy 2014 and with the recently-adopted Rye Neighbourhood Plan. We also are concerned that the plans would remove the whole of the woodland from the site and that only 92 car parking spaces are to be provided. Flooding would be avoided by raising the whole site by as much as 1.6m involving steps at the front and rear of the majority of dwellings and the need to import vast quantities of fill onto the site.

Our comments on planning applications may be accessed on [www.ryeconservation.org](http://www.ryeconservation.org) for members to read in full. This site also has links to the Rother site which lists all planning applications both current and historic.

## RCS Awards

At the Christmas Party on December 6<sup>th</sup>, we will present RCS Award/s to people who we think have improved the built environment in Rye. Members are encouraged to submit suggestions to the Society which have in the past ranged from pubs to houses to cobbles!

Each year the Society likes to make a number of Awards for buildings or works which have improved the appearance of Rye and its surroundings.

We are therefore inviting nominations for the 2018 Rye Conservation Society Awards.

Proposals will be welcome for the following:

- **A new building of architectural merit**
- **An alteration or refurbishment of an existing building**
- **The re-use of an historic building for a new purpose**
- **A good example of sensitive redecoration and use of colour**
- **Repair using and demonstrating craft skills.**

Suggestions need to be submitted **31 October**.

They should be sent, preferably by email, to the Chairman: David Bookless [ryeconservation@gmail.com](mailto:ryeconservation@gmail.com) (or by post to 3 Faraday House, The Mint, Rye TN31 7EW).

The Executive Committee will consider the entries and Awards will be presented at our Christmas Party.

## George fire

The Society was shocked by the scale of the fire which engulfed The George on the early morning of 20 July. Photographs showed the scale of the

blaze and it was thanks to the hotel staff and the emergency services that there were no casualties. We express our sorrow for the scale of the severe damage to the owners, staff and customers.

The hotel is important both as a tourist venue and as a local employer and its closure for restoration for however long it takes represents a serious loss to the community. The building itself contains many historical features dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The elegant ballroom is likely to have been badly damaged by water if not by fire.

It is hoped that full restoration can take place but we are concerned that, at the time of writing, the sky can still be seen through the roof and that that there are many tiles precariously balanced. While recognising the probable scale of the task, we hope that at least a temporary support structure and cover can be put up before the arrival of autumn storms. There is concern currently that pedestrians could be at risk and the Society has written to the local authorities.

As rebuilding will take time we have encouraged the authorities to consider a temporary loading bay to replace the one in front of the hotel as there is nowhere else in the High Street and vans are parking in Lion Street and elsewhere, blocking access and causing confusion.

## Bethel Chapel

The Bethel Chapel in Military Road is for sale and members of the Committee were concerned as to its future development. It appears that the pews have already gone but the pulpit is still there. This building was a working Chapel until late 2018 and has an interesting social history

“the then Mayor of Rye caused a spiritual conversion which led to her becoming a Baptist and founding the Bethel Strict and Particular Baptist Church in Military Road in 1858.”

The chapel lies within the Rye Conservation Area

and we understand that, in pre-application advice given by Rother, the building is considered to be a non-designated Heritage Asset. In order to provide additional protection, the Society has lodged an application for Statutory Listing.

The potential fate of the building has highlighted the need for a local list of non-designated Heritage Assets which we identified as an Aspiration in the Rye Neighbourhood Plan. The Society is investigating how this could be progressed to enable the whole of Rye to have a say.

## Rye Arts Festival 2019

The Society is once again supporting the Rye Arts Festival by sponsoring a talk.

### **Kate Bradbury - Wildlife Gardening for Everyone.**

*Saturday 28 September 3-4pm Rye Methodist Church*

Kate Bradbury is passionate about organic, wildlife-friendly gardening and gardens on a small patch of land in Brighton. She is the author of The Wildlife Gardener, and writes for a number of publications including the Guardian. She can occasionally be heard talking about garden wildlife on Gardeners' Question Time.

## Litter Bins

In the corner of Church Square near the start of Watchbell Street, there is an open litter bin dating from 1989. Most Rye bins have covers to make it more difficult for seagulls to get at them otherwise, as in Church Square, they can cause a considerable mess. This looks particularly bad in this very scenic location, annoying residents and tourists and causing extra work for the operatives.

Apparently many of Rye's bins need replacing, but the Committee believes that we should offer to sponsor a replacement for this one with a cover and a plaque. We hope that we can get this sorted before the seagulls return next Spring.

## Fire prevention

The fire at The George has highlighted the vulnerability of historic buildings and, with winter coming on and the heating season beginning, we would like to remind members that Sussex Fire Brigade advises that, depending on the frequency of use and the quality of the wood burned, owners of open fires and wood-burning stoves should have their chimney/s swept at least once a year. Some insurers such as the NFU require a certificate from an approved chimney sweep. It is also vital that you have a carbon monoxide detector. Better safe than sorry!

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