



Newsletter

August 2022

No 72

Dear Rye Conservation Society member,

Welcome to our latest Newsletter which comes out in late Summer, following a period of drought which has parched this part of the world, but brought an influx of tourists to town.

Since last time we have held a well-attended AGM and Lunch at The Mermaid. The AGM was attended by three special guests, Sally-Ann Hart MP, Simon Richard, Rother Conservation Officer and Andi Rivett, the new Mayor of Rye. They each addressed the meeting giving interesting information about their activities and confirming their support for our objectives. I think it was useful to have their input and we will repeat the format which enabled members to raise matters of interest such as parking restrictions and green issues and reduced the proportion of the meeting devoted to administration.

It was a great shock prior to the AGM to learn of the unexpected and sudden passing of Diana Hajikaku whose work as Treasurer looking after our money and whose learned contributions to our discussions will be a big loss. She was always active looking round our town and pointing out matters that the Society should act upon. I and the Committee send our heartfelt condolences to Kyriacos and his family.

In June we held an enjoyable Garden Party in Andy and Nikki's garden at Little Orchard House and it was good to see so many members there plus a number of visitors including our local MP. We also had six new members joining us which is always rather pleasing.

Your Committee has continued to meet monthly to discuss Planning and conservation matters. We have had the misfortune to lose members of the Committee including Julian Luckett and Mike Stott who retired their positions as Chair of Planning and Planning member respectively. This has left us rather short on planning expertise and means we are on the lookout to build resources. I am glad to say that Julian has stayed on as Vice President but I greatly miss his wealth of expertise on planning matters from which we benefitted for many years.

Some of you may have noticed the missing tiles on the Cornish Bakery in the High Street, it is hoped that these can be replaced with handmade tiles from a local company, Aldershaw. We will organise a visit by Community Bus to the company on **Wednesday September 7, for arrival at 10.30am**, numbers are limited so first come first served. Contact us asap!!

David Beckless

Visit to Tile Makers, Aldershaw Handmade Tiles Ltd Wednesday September 7 10.30

(this following information is from their web site)

Aldershaw specialise in 'Truly Hand made tiles', for the roof, the wall and Terracotta tiles for the floor.

We have been in existence for many years now, situated in 33 acres of ancient woodland in the heart of the Sussex countryside.

For the majority of our products we use Wadhurst clay from our own clay pit here on site, from which we generate six different colour to match practically anything in the region and provide our customers with a palette from which to create the effect that they require.

Each tile is unique and bears the characteristics of the craftsman or woman who made it.

Whilst Aldershaw are not major brickmakers we do manufacture specials, either standard or purpose made and a limited production of Imperial size and 2" bricks together with specialised brick mullion windows air bricks and a host of other products.

Of the many restoration products, mathematical tiles are a significant proportion, these tiles are made in all colours either sanded rubbed or glazed in a range of sizes and profiles. Mathematical tiles have been part of Britain's architectural heritage since the early 1700's. They were probably first introduced to update and make weathertight old timber framed buildings and there are many buildings with tile facades still in existence.

Another major product is our exclusive 'Sussex Terracotta' floor tiles with a range of sizes shapes and colours second to none no project is too small or too large.

In addition to our mainstream products we now have a growing range of glazed handmade wall tiles, items of architectural terracotta and garden terracotta some of which can be bought online.

Here at Aldershaw we care about protecting our Architectural Heritage as much as we do the environment, which is a duty that we take very seriously.

We have a comprehensive programme of waste minimalisation, heat efficiency, heat recovery, CHP, recycling of all waste, recovery and use of surface water for process and other non potable uses.

We are organising a minibus trip for twelve people, so please contact us if you are interested in this visit.

Planning Matters

We continue to monitor planning applications as they appear on the Rother Web Site and advise Rother monthly with our views. We do not have any legal authority but aim to reflect via our committee the views of our members. Apart from individual cases such as conversions of buildings to a new use or the addition/removal of features, we also concern ourselves with larger developments such as those proposed by Martello Investments for Rock Channel or the long standing saga of Tilling Green, where for some years we have awaited proposals for affordable housing. In the latter case it seems that Rye Partnership are pulling out in the hope that someone else will take on the responsibility. Despite outstanding issues of drainage and flood plains it seems this is the only opportunity for any significant new social housing especially as the land is still owned by East Sussex CC.

Rye is fortunate in that it has a fully made up Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which outlines sites for housing, for industry and for green space within the parish. This plan was the work of a Steering Group of Rye Town Council led by Colonel Kimber and this Group continues in its work of updating the plan to meet new legislative requirements. It is partly thanks to the NP that we were able to successfully oppose the building of a new 24 hour BP garage at the top of Udimore Road on a designated green field site.

A recent controversy arose concerning the future of Rye Hire, the freehold of which is held by Rother Council, whilst supportive in general of the need for housing, we felt that the future of the business in this case was more important as it both employs local people and provides an essential service to local tradesmen and

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others in the locality. After many meetings it was gratifying to hear that Rother District Council agreed to extend the lease for Rye Hire to continue in business on the site. It is unlikely that Rother realised the importance of the business to the town before the campaign to “Save Rye Hire” took off.

A Plea for Help

The retirement of a number of committee members has left us a bit short on planning expertise, and we are looking for someone to join the committee who has experience in the planning world preferably for a local council. Such a person would assist us by looking at the local planning applications and help the committee to form a considered and sensible view. Clearly an overall interest in Conservation matters would also be expected and desirable. The amount of time taken up by the role very much depends on the individual but in the first instance just approach one of the existing committee for a discussion or e.mail the Chairman.

Parking in Rye

There has been a consultation taking place on the parking situation in Rye and various recommendations have been made by the East Sussex CC concerning the extension of the controlled parking zone which currently exists mainly in the Citadel. In general terms the Society considers that at least in the area roughly covering the citadel the scheme has been a success in that the number of people parking in the High Street for long periods has been reduced thereby enabling more people to use it. The Council is consulting on the type and number of loading/disabled bays which need further consideration. Also the appearance of parking wardens has reduced slightly the amount of illegal parking. A side effect of the restrictions has been that more vehicles are now parking outside the centre particularly it seems in Military Road leading to congestion there. The Society believes that here should be controls with parking permits for residents as far as the parish boundary in Military Road, beyond where is currently proposed and including North Salts. However it is not clear that the situation in Love Lane and The Grove as yet warrants controls, but we feel the situation there should be reviewed in a year.

Membership Subscriptions

The Committee are grateful for your ongoing support and loyalty even if since COVID there have not held all activities that we normally offer, we are still happy to be in our 50th year in a healthy state with over 200 members. Membership forms for new members are on our web site, www.ryeconservationsociety.org

Subs remain at £6 for a single person or £10 for joint membership. Could you please drop the cash or cheque (payable to Rye Conservation Society) to Andy Stuart, the Society's membership secretary at: Little Orchard House, 3 West St, Rye TN31 7ES. Alternatively you can pay by bank transfer, Rye Conservation Society, Sort Code 30-90-28, Account Number 00710394. Life membership is also available,

Some Appreciation

The Society thanks Judith Blincow and the staff at the Mermaid Inn for enabling us to hold our monthly committee meetings in the Mermaid, their assistance is much appreciated.

We also thank our printers Adams in the High Street for meeting all our printing needs, including the Garden Party poster and Annual Report and Newsletters, often at short notice.

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An Early Piece on the Landgate

THE LANDGATE (From Ancient Rye, An Illustrated Historical Handbook) written by J.L. Deacon and published in Rye in 1914. We will put another extract covering West Street into our next Newsletter.)

This fine old Gate, the only one remaining in an excellent state of preservation, owing to the efforts of the Ancient Buildings Preservation Committee, and the late Mr Hessel Tiltman, F.R.I.B.A., an old Rye boy, who personally supervised the work of renovating this and the old Ypres Castle, thus helping to arrest it from decay.



Through this gate the old coaches formerly passed on their journey to London, and although dating back to the 14th century, it is one of two best gates in the South of England, the other being at Canterbury. The width of the gateway is 12 feet. It had formerly a portcullis, which was pulled down and sold in 1734 and a drawbridge across the ditch; the holes through which the chains ran to lift it are shown in the wall above the external arch.

The old wooden gates, studded with nails, were removed in 1760. There are two massive round towers rising to a height of over 40 feet and these are 25 feet in diameter on the outside and 15 feet within.

In the western tower were stairs leading to the top, on which was a small watch tower built above the main one. Each tower had two apartments. The room over the gateway was used for the machinery of the Portcullis and drawbridge. It had two windows on the north and two on the south side, and a door at the end communicated with the upper apartment of each tower. Over this room was another, 20 feet long and 9 feet wide with a fireplace. There were two arched windows (the faces of the clock now obscure these from sight), the one on the northside enabled the guard to observe the approach of an enemy from the land side and the south window on the sea side.

To gain any idea of the original grandeur of this old gateway, our minds must be carried back to the period of its erection, when no other building existed on the outside of it, and it rose in massive stateliness out of the level and open lands by which it was surrounded; then we at once see that it is a fine example of engineering skill.

In 1460, according to the Records, it needed repairs, probably owing to the damage done by the French, who had again ransacked the town, destroying by fire nearly everything that would burn. The entry of charges is for the repairs of the "Royal Gate, called Landgate Tower."

In 1593, great care was taken with regard to keeping the town free from the plague, and as this was then the principal entrance, an order was made "that from henceforth two persons, every day throughout the town, do ward at the Landgate, from the departing of the Watch till the Watch be set, to see that none be suffered to enter the town who may be suspected to bring infection into the town."

On the death of the Prince Consort, 1861, the inhabitants of Landgate, anxious to show their respect for his many virtues erected a Memorial Clock, having one face on the north and one face on the south front, each being protected by an arched string course, supported by corbels. The two on the north side represent the heads of Edward III and his Queen Phillipa, whose visit to Rye in 1360 we have mentioned, while on the south the heads represent those of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The clock serves its useful purpose though it cannot be regarded as an embellishment from the Antiquarian point of view (*Ed: This was obviously written 19 1914 when the clock was working!*)