

THE EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY

Charity No. 257870



www.eastgrinsteadsociety.org

NEWSLETTER

No. 128
April 2018

New members

We are pleased to welcome Alan Porter and Mike Hollins to the Society. We were delighted that the Open Forum in March was well attended with interesting discussions of planning and heritage issues which are reported below.

Joan Roberts & Barbara Stovold

Celebrating Fifty Years of the East Grinstead Society

After a great deal of discussion, the Committee has decided that there should be a tangible memorial of our 50th year. They are therefore investigating the possibility of producing an illustrated map to be situated at the station, clearly indicating the walking route to the historic High Street.

There will also be some 'fizz' and cake to celebrate our birthday after our AGM in November !

Our very own 'Fake News' revealed !

We all know that '**Urban Myths**' arise that are then accepted as truth by those who hear them without questioning them.

We have an example of one of these in our own back yard !

The East Grinstead Programme card for 2017 stated that in September 1945 **Alfred Wagg bought East Court** with its 48.9 hectares for £16,700, intending it to become a memorial to the people of East Grinstead, who lost their lives in World War II.

The house and its surrounding two hectares, was then sold **to East Grinstead Urban District Council (EGUDC)** for £6576.00 for use as its Headquarters.

This was not correct.

Our **Town Clerk, Mrs Julie Holden**, recently wrote to me to point out the error of our ways and asked us to correct this information. So here it is – and she does have the deeds to prove it!

The **EGUDC bought the house, terraces and land to the north, directly from Godfrey Williams in 1946**. The Manor Charitable Trust (MCT), of which Alfred Wagg was one of the Directors, purchased the remaining land and shortly afterwards it became owned by the East Grinstead War Memorial Company (EGWMC).

The house and what is now East Grinstead Town Council land was never owned by MCT or Alfred Wagg.

I also consulted Michael Leppard , who agrees that the Town Clerk is correct and points out that this matches with what he stated on the subject in '100 Buildings of East Grinstead'.

Any rumours that Mr Wagg anonymously subsidised the purchase of the house, cannot be substantiated.

Nick Beale

County Local Committees (CLC)

Have you ever wondered what these committees are and what they do?

We asked our President, Margaret Collins, to explain their purpose.

The aim of establishing the County Local Committees was to bring decision making closer to the community. There are eleven CLC's in West Sussex. Our own **North Mid Sussex CLC consists of five County Councillors, who represent the five local Divisions.** Meetings are held three times a year, last approximately two hours, starting at 7pm, and are open for anyone to attend. The venues vary between East Grinstead Library and Community premises in the surrounding villages.

Local residents may also raise issues before the meeting for inclusion on the Agenda. The agenda includes an update on progress made on issues, which have been raised at previous meetings.

The CLC meeting I attended on the 21st March dealt with the following topics :
Grants

From 1st April, there will be a reduction in the **County Council money** available and the method of **grant allocation** is changing. Groups will be encouraged to use '**Spacehive**' for **Crowdfunding on the internet**, which reaches many more people, particularly businesses. '**Spacehive**' is for community projects and gives the opportunity to promote a project to the local community. The local CLC will then decide which projects it will support and put in a pledge to fund up to £5000 per project. Library staff will be trained to help people access the scheme.

School Transport

There was a presentation on the County Council's **School Transport Policy.** Meetings are being arranged with the **bus companies** to investigate the possibility of a closer working partnership to help pupils under eight years of age, who live under two miles from their home to their closest school, and over eight year olds who live under three miles distance.

Highways

I asked some of the questions raised at our **Open Forum.** The **Highways Area Manager** said that he would inspect and address, **Rice's Hill, the steps leading from Institute walk to the cinema car park and the flooding in Queen's Walk.** This latter issue may be a **Planning enforcement matter, which is the responsibility of MSDC.**

The **Legal Secretary** agreed to request the County Council Legal Department to look into the **ownership of the steps alongside the War Memorial in the High Street** in order to extend the hand rail. The Highways Area manager will carry out an inspection and report back.

There were many other questions about the poor state of local pavements and road surfaces. The problem of **speeding and parking in Ship Street** was also raised.

Health

We were informed that **Judges Close and Moatfield GP surgeries** will be joining together as one organisation in the coming year on the Moatfield site, which will be expanded.

I hope that this report gives you a flavour of what is discussed at these meetings. Do come along to keep in touch with what is happening in our town and also Countywide.

Margaret Collins

More Initials to Decode...

Having discovered the meaning of '**CLC**' do you know the meanings of these initials, used in local government and planning ?

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. SSSI ? | 6. DP ? |
| 2. HRA ? | 7. NPPF ? |
| 3. CPO ? | 8. SHELAA ? |
| 4. SANGS ? | 9. NP ? |
| 5. TPO ? | 10. CPRE ? |

(Answers at the end of this Newsletter !)

Open Forum

Nic welcomed everyone to the annual discussion meeting and opened proceedings by announcing that the **District Plan** has been passed by the **Inspector who has made some recommendations** to ensure that it is 'sound'. Once these are agreed it will go to Mid Sussex District Council for approval.

However, **more houses are still needed in the District and MSDC will be holding talks in Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead** and with the 36 parishes in the District to decide their location. A site of 500 houses at Hassocks has been proposed but has yet to be decided.

Nic also reported that **Outline Planning Permission has been obtained for 200 houses on the site at Hill Place Farm**. The question of the number of affordable houses on this site has apparently yet to be agreed.

This news set the ball rolling for discussion, with a question being raised on the fact that **the granting of permission for this site has breached the existing Town boundary and has set a precedent for further problems in this area**. It was pointed out that the land on the other side of the Turners Hill Road to Hill Place Farm is in the A.O.N.B. and should therefore be protected from development.

Concern was expressed over the lack of 'affordable housing' in the area and although the Developer's document for the Hill Place Farm site mentions 'housing for the most needy in society', it remains to be seen whether the 60 houses allocated are truly 'affordable'.

It was reported that the developer '**Welbeck Homes**' are looking at a site on **Imberhorne Lane** next to the school. Their proposal includes moving **Imberhorne Lower School from Windmill Lane** to this site and then developing the area vacated.

This is still just a proposal but concern was once again expressed that the **infrastructure in the town will not support these increases in population**. East Grinstead Town Council has set up a committee to carry out an '**infrastructure review**', to take account of the 'infrastructure deficit', which is something the Society has been concerned about for some time.

Problems in our area are further exacerbated by the position of **Administrative Boundaries**. Nic cited an example on the **Crawley Down Road**, where **MSDC** has given planning permission for houses to be built but **Tandridge DC** has refused permission for a road to the site.

The next topic raised was the ongoing **parking problems** in the Town. The new building, ' **McIndoe House** ' in **Garland Road**, is causing considerable problems with the lack of parking for residents. The Society had pointed out this problem when Planning Permission was applied for but building went ahead regardless.

The ongoing saga of the **lack of a handrail on the steps by the War Memorial** was again raised, when a member described the distress of an elderly member of the public, unable to negotiate these steps without help. Nic reported that ownership of this area cannot be established, even by the Land Registry Office, and the Society cannot extend the handrail, as this would mean accepting responsibility for any accidents.

The difficulties caused by the demolition and rebuilding work in Queens Walk, is the subject of considerable concern, as the drains are overflowing and flooding the pavement after heavy rain. Councillors have been liaising with the developer and the Society will write to the Town Council about this problem.

Other examples of poor maintenance of pavements were mentioned including ; **Woodbury House**, where there appears to be subsidence even though the surface has been tarmaced; **Rice's Hill**, which is technically a public footpath but is in a bad state of repair;(Nic has written to WSCC about this but has received no reply.) and the steps half way down **Institute Walk, leading to Upper King Street** which are also in a poor condition.

A member advised that there was a '**Roads and Travel**' section on the **WSCC website, where road and pavement problems may be advised**. Nic commented that after reporting the dirty state of the 30mph signs on Imberhorne Lane via this site, they had been quickly cleaned.

Nic then brought up the question of the **Society's 50th Anniversary celebrations**. A tea party had been suggested, together with planting a commemorative tree at East Court. The tree could not be planted until November and the Committee were exploring dates for a tea party in the summer. He invited other suggestions and the question of **signage from the Railway Station to the old part of the town** was raised. Sign boards, markers and a trail were suggested, which the committee will explore.

A member of the **East Grinstead and District Cycle Forum** commented that they were trying to improve the signage from the Worth Way to Forest Way. EGTC are setting up a working group to develop **walking and cycling routes round East Grinstead**.

The subject of the **May Fayre** was raised and Nic asked for volunteers to man our Information Stall and Tombola. Donations of jams and preserves for sale and prizes for the Tombola would be welcome and may be brought to the Society's meeting before Monday 7th May.

A comment was made on the poor quality of our **local Newspapers, the 'EG Courier' and the 'EG Gazette'**. There was a lack of local news and comment as their circulation area was now too great.

It was reported that Felicity Hall of **Arts East Grinstead** (formerly Nadfas) was trying to get a **pedestrian crossing from the MSDC Car Park to Chequer Mead**. This was felt to be an excellent idea, which members hoped would not be held up by lack of funds.

Nic closed the Open Forum and thanked everybody for their contributions to the discussion.

Joan Roberts

Rebuilding Bodies and Souls

A talk by Alex Sewell ; a volunteer speaker from East Grinstead Museum

Alex introduced his topic with a brief history of the life of **Archibald McIndoe**, who was the ground breaking plastic surgeon working at the Queen Victoria Hospital from 1938 – 1947.

He was born in Dunedin in 1900 and after graduating in surgery, went to study at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, from 1924 – 1930. He distinguished himself by being the only doctor in his year to be awarded a Fellowship.

McIndoe then worked with his cousin, Sir Harold Gillies, who was a pioneer plastic surgeon in WWI, at St Bartholomew's hospital in London from 1930 – 1938. Following the Spanish Civil war and fears of a further European war, the Government became convinced that air power would play a vital role in the coming conflict.

In 1938 he became **Consultant Surgeon to the Royal Air Force** and chose to work at the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, which had been built in 1936 as a state of the art medical unit.

At the height of the **Battle of Britain from July to October 1940**, McIndoe and his staff worked round the clock dealing with 30 casualties a day. Most of the injuries were to the hands and faces of the fighter pilots, due to the positioning of the fuel tank and the difficulties of escaping from a burning cockpit with a canopy of perspex above them.

The **'holistic' treatment** of patients was McIndoe's forte and he encouraged the airmen to visit the town, its bars, cinemas and the homes of local people. **East Grinstead earned the name 'The Town that didn't stare'**. The men formed the **'Guinea Pig' club**, as that is what they were, with many treatments being pioneering in this field.

McIndoe needed a record of his operations, as they were being performed, and he therefore recruited **Molly Lentaigne as his medical artist**, after her rapid sketch of him at a local party. Many of her drawings may be seen at the exhibition in the Museum.

McIndoe was knighted in 1947 and went to farm in Kilimanjaro. This was not very successful and he returned to London, dying at the age of 60 of a heart attack.

There is now a permanent exhibition 'Rebuilding Bodies and Souls' at East Grinstead museum.

Barbara Stovold

Laura Alice Sansom

Society members were saddened to hear of the death of Laura on 28th October 2017 aged eighty nine. Laura was the daughter of the landlord of 'The Sportsman' at West Chilton. She attended Lewes County Grammar School for Girls and during the War worked as a Civil Servant in London.

She was a long-time member of the Society, serving as a committee member and latterly as Chairman and on the Planning Committee.

She was a stalwart of Ashurst Wood Women's Institute and her hobbies included family history and casting horoscopes.

She was an enthusiastic supporter of many East Grinstead Institutions, making generous donations to Chequer Mead, East Grinstead Library and the Town Museum.

She spent a great deal of her time working for the good of the town and was most concerned to preserve its heritage.

Joan Roberts

Answer to 'Initials Quiz'

- 1. Site of Special Scientific Interest**
- 2. Habitat Regulations Assessment**
- 3. Compulsory Purchase Order**
- 4. Suitable Area of Natural Green Space**
- 5. Tree Preservation Order**
- 6. District Plan**
- 7. National Planning Policy Framework**
- 8. Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment**
- 9. Neighbourhood Plan**
- 10. Campaign to Protect Rural England**

EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY MEETINGS 7.30pm, Main Hall, East Court -
£1.00/member, £3.00/non-member

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Friday 20 th April 2018 | Whatever happened to Christopher Robin ?
'Did that small teddy bear overshadow his life ?' a talk
By Gilly Halcrow |
| Friday 18 th May 2018 | Gales, Greenhouses and Global Warming by local
Meteorologist, Ian Currie |
| Friday 15 th June 2018 | Secret Sussex Gardens by Leslie Chamberlain, an
active supporter of the National Garden Scheme. |

EAST GRINSTEAD MUSEUM SPEAKER EVENINGS at EG Museum 7pm Free

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Thursday 26 th April 2018 | The Once & Future Guinea Pig Club by Emily Mayhew |
| Thursday 17 th May 2018 | Mr Andrew Brown Retired Maxillo Facial Surgeon, Title
tbc. |
| Thursday 21 st June 2018 | 'RAMC: What have we learned from 10 years in
Afghanistan ?' by Lt/Col Tania Cubison |

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EXTRA COPIES: Newsletter back issues may be ordered for £1.00 each from Mr J.W. Bridle, 7, Dexter Drive, East Grinstead, RH19 4SU

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