



THE EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY



Charity No.257870

<http://www.eastgrinsteadsociety.org>

NEWSLETTER

No 138

November 2023

A Note from the Chairman

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter! You will find the usual interesting content, both about the Town, local history, and the Society. As the Newsletter highlights, the Town remains one with a vibrant community as reflected in the May Fair and Community Bonfire, the latter being a very welcome return of an old Sussex custom. The Newsletter includes articles on fascinating historical topics and updates on the Society. In particular, we include our 2024 Speakers Programme, which I hope you will agree has the usual varied mix of subjects.

As mentioned at our last meeting, we will be sending out the papers for the 2023 AGM before the meeting on November 15. This will include my report on the year and the Treasurer's report. As we will have more time due to a less formal meeting on November 15, I am delighted that we will have a talk on interesting residents at Sackville College over the years. Not to be missed!

James Baldwin

Meetings

We have held eight meetings between February and October. All meetings with the exception of one, have been held at Glen Vue Community Hub in Railway Approach which continues to be an excellent venue.

Our varied and interesting programme of talks, with excellent speakers, has attracted an average of 30 members and guests per meeting. Recent talks were:

15 February 2023

Early Years in the Diplomatic Service by Michael Hodge.

15 March 2023

Wakehurst, The Loder Valley by Paul Reader.

19 April 2023

Lady Anne Clifford by Caroline Metcalfe

10 May 2023

Aspidistras and Antimacassars by Kathryn Ferry

14 June 2023

SUMMER DRINKS AND OPEN FORUM

12 July 2023

Sussex Harmony – A Concert of Sussex Music.

13 September 2023

The Origins of Art Nouveau Architecture by Ian Gledhill.

18 October 2023

Ashdown Forest by Pam Griffiths & Charles Sandeman-Allen
from the Ashdown Forest Research Group

Our thanks go to Caroline Metcalfe for stepping in at the last moment in April following the indisposition of the planned speaker. The long-awaited talk on Lewes and Bonfire Night had to be postponed again and is now planned for 18 September 2024.

We had a particularly interesting meeting in July when we were treated to an evening of song from Sussex Harmony, the first of such meetings in recent time. For this, as we expected a larger audience and Sussex Harmony were a sizeable choir, we held the evening in Trinity Methodist Church. Our thanks go to the church for allowing us to use this splendid venue.

Farewell to the Guinea Pigs

The last two surviving “Guinea Pigs” passed away within days of each other in October. This draws to a close an incredible local story of the bravery and courage of wounded airmen and the pioneering skills of plastic surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe at East Grinstead’s Queen Victoria Hospital.

The **Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust** recently posted this message:



Photo courtesy of the East Grinstead Museum

“Sam Gallop

It is with great sadness that we have to report that Sam Gallop, one of the last two surviving members of the Guinea Pig Club, sadly passed away on Tuesday 17th October aged 101 years.

Having survived an Air Crash with severe injuries in 1943, he was first admitted to RAF Hospital Cosford, prior to being transferred to the Queen Victoria Hospital where he spent 18 months under the care of Sir Archibald McIndoe & his team.

Following his retirement working for the Central Electricity Board in 1977, Sam devoted his time to charity work, including setting up Employment Opportunities, a charity recruitment agency to get disabled people into work; it grew from two small rooms in the Bank of England into a UK-wide service. He was the first chair of the Limbless Association, amongst many other charities he supported, for which he was awarded the OBE in 1993, followed by the CBE in 2002.

He also found time to support the Guinea Pig Club, for which he held the post as its last Chairman.

RIP Sam & thank you for your service - Bob Marchant, Secretary of the Guinea Pig Club.”

A further message from Bob Marchant, Secretary of the Guinea Pig Club:

Jan Stangrycuk (aka Jan Black)

"It is with great sadness that we have to report that the last surviving member of the Guinea Pig Club, Jan Stangrycuk (also known as Jan Black) sadly passed away on 22nd October after a short illness. He was aged 101 years.

Jan Black was born in Eastern Poland on 18th April 1922, and was living in Argentina when he answered an RAF advert looking for volunteers to fight.

The ship that brought him and other volunteers to Britain took four weeks as it zigzagged across the Atlantic to dodge the German U-boats.



Photo courtesy of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

On 3rd November 1942 the Wellington Bomber he was flying malfunctioned and crash-landed a few miles from base. When Jan regained consciousness, he tried to free his fellow airman but was unable to before needing to get out himself, where he was helped by local people.

Suffering with Burns to his Face, Scalp & Hands, he was admitted firstly to Nuneaton General Hospital, then RAF Hospital Cosford before being transferred to the Queen Victoria Hospital on 4th January 1943 where he underwent around 10 operations, thus becoming a proud member of the Guinea Pig Club, later saying:

"The friendship I made with the Guinea Pigs will live with me for the rest of my days"

He returned to combat after leaving the Queen Victoria Hospital and stayed in England after the war, taking his wife's surname after their marriage - becoming Jan Black.

After 82 glorious years, and great friendship between the 649 members of a unique club, this brings to an end an era of a Club & its members never to be forgotten.

Bob Marchant
Secretary, Guinea Pig Club
Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust"

East Grinstead Community Bonfire

The East Grinstead Community Bonfire held its inaugural torch-lit procession, bonfire and fireworks on 21 October. The group was only formed in 2022 to try and revive the tradition of Sussex bonfires in East Grinstead. The procession attracted similar organisations from surrounding local towns and villages including Burgess Hill, Lindfield, Crowborough and Isfield. The Sussex Bonfire "season" starts at the beginning of September ending in November with the famous bonfire at Lewes. Holding each society's bonfire on different nights enables bonfire societies to take part in each other's events.



Photo Courtesy of Jay Pearson shows Town Mayor Frazer Visser at the head of the procession

team wear green, representing the Ashdown Forest and rust signifying the iron deposits in our local streams.



The procession culminated at Chequer Mead with a large bonfire and spectacular fireworks display. The group collected over £1,200 during the procession, which was divided equally between their nominated charities: Jigsaw SE and the Greenaway Foundation.

In addition, over £900 was collected at the bonfire, which goes to the East Grinstead Community Bonfire.



The East Grinstead Community Bonfire is keen to attract new members and details can be found on their website at: <https://eastgrinsteadcommunitybonfire.co.uk/about-us/> or on their Facebook page.

Photos Courtesy of Jay Pearson

May Fair - Monday 2nd May 2023

This year's May Fair stall was another success and gave us the opportunity to promote the Society, encourage membership and raise over £400 on the day. Thanks go particularly to Mary Lyons for producing her ever-popular range of jams, marmalades and chutneys and to all helpers on the tombola. We also sold a substantial number of our Town Trails.

The Jubilee Fountain – an Update

As noted in last November's Newsletter, The Society was successful in achieving its aim of partially cleaning the fountain and surrounding paving in time for the June 2022 Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

SE Water has agreed to make the water connection and in February 2022 their contractor "Waterlink" installed a short length of insulated pipe between the main plinth of the fountain and a point just under the first step on the north side. Both ends were capped off for future final connection to the water main.

Our chosen design solution proposes using Italian push-button brass taps as have been used in a number of fountain renovation projects in London. Initially, SE Water were reluctant to approve these taps but after emphasising that the fountain was to be used solely for filling drinking water bottles, we eventually got their agreement to our proposals in June 2023. We ordered four taps with a view to handing two spares over to EGTC who will take over the maintenance responsibility once the fountain is operational. The taps have arrived and have been pressure tested in a mock-up plumbing assembly thanks to Martin Blake from the Rotary Club.

Following approval for the taps, we were then able to complete the detailed Planning and Listed Building applications to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). We were massively aided in this work by the local office of Cowan Architects. Approval from the MSDC Conservation Officer was granted in late August 2023.

Work is underway by a stonemason in creating a suitable housing/support for the push button taps and associated pipework and we are currently waiting for a firm date from SE Water for making the final connection from a nearby water main.

Once the date of connection is clarified we plan to complete the masonry and have a small "launch" ceremony in the spring.

The Town Council has agreed with MSDC, who currently have the maintenance responsibilities for the fountain, that it will take the maintenance responsibilities (and hopefully ownership) once the fountain has been put back into working order. The fountain would then return to the town's ownership as intended by the original benefactor Rev Charles Payne Crawford. The Society has received a Community Grant from MSDC, which it is hoped will go some way to offset the costs of the completion works.

Robin Whalley

Updates from East Grinstead Town Council

On 10 October the East Grinstead Town Council had their regular full Council Meeting. (see recorded proceedings on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWLR9fTaEIY>)

The new **Leader of the Mid Sussex District Council**, Cllr Robert Eggleston was invited to address the Council and reported on a number of topics including:

District Plan:

The District Council is updating the District Plan and a draft will go to the Scrutiny Committee prior to full Council in December and Regulation 19 consultation in January 2024. The absence of a formal plan encourages speculative development.

Green Spaces Maintenance Plan:

This plan has now been set up and includes upgrades at Mount Noddy to the bowling green and other facilities.

Local construction material company Southern Sheeting made a presentation to the Council with an offer of manpower and materials for community projects. They gave the example of litter-picking where they had helped in the past. The company was also in the process of reducing their carbon footprint and offered to share some of their expertise to EGTC if they were considering a similar exercise. The Council were cautious and felt some policy setting was needed first.

In reviewing earlier meetings of the Public Services Committee, Cllr Whittaker noted that the police had been consulted on the continuing issue of street drinkers near King Street. They had responded that they are working with MSDC and the British Transport Police and would act accordingly. EGTC Clerk Julie Holden will also be liaising in these discussions.

The Town Mayor advised that he understood two bids had been received for purchasing Blacklands Farm at West Hoathly. As this site is an area of Development Constraint, the council is watching with interest and hope that the area could continue to be available for youngsters in the future.

Councillor Gibson reported that a joint working group including West Sussex and Surrey County Councils was investigating traffic on the A22/A264 corridor but was not due to come up with conclusions until late 2024!!

Robin Whalley

The East Grinstead Iguanodon by Michael Howgate

The one foot (30 cm.) tall model of the dinosaur *Iguanodon* by the entrance to East Grinstead Museum [Fig.1] has intrigued me for over 10 years. Being a collector and researcher of early models of prehistoric life I knew when I first saw it that it was a rarity. The model depicts *Iguanodon* in the classic, but now old-fashioned, tail-dragging pose reproduced in most pre-1970 Dinosaur books. The model has a small figure of a be-suited gentleman beside it for scale, and the name is embossed in raised letters on the base. Despite its antiquated appearance, for its time, the East Grinstead *Iguanodon* model was a state-of-the-art palaeontological reconstruction.



The model was made in Germany in 1907, and is probably the earliest restoration of *Iguanodon* in a bipedal rather than a quadrupedal pose. It was one of a series of 16 models called "*Tiere der Vorwelt in rekonstruierten modellen*" produced in terra-cotta by the firm 'Etruria' which was based in Seegerhall, near Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, which is on the eastern border of Germany. It would have cost the museum twelve marks and fifty pfennigs, which translates as 12/6 in old sterling silver money [probably about £100 in today's money], the price included packing in a stout box but not the postage.



The complete series of models included 5 dinosaurs.

As well as the *Iguanodon* there was *Brontosaurus*, *Stegosaurus*, *Triceratops* and *Laelaps* (now called *Allosaurus*). According to Dr. E. Schütze, all of the models were "*based on the latest academic research and illustrations*" The description of *Iguanodon* in his article gives a good idea of the contemporary appreciation of the living *Iguanodon*.

"Iguanodon is a remarkable dinosaur from the Wealden period found in Belgium, England and north Germany. The largest species had a length of 10 metres and the smallest was about half that size. A small head was carried on a long neck. The fore-limbs were much smaller and weaker than the hind-limbs and were probably used to collect the plant food the animal lived on. The body was massive with strong hind legs which carried the weight of the body. The strikingly developed tail most likely functioned as support for the body."
[Schütz 1907]

For a fuller description of our changing view of the anatomy and posture of *Iguanodon*, from bulky quadruped, via kangaroo-posed biped back to a horizontally-posed, slimmed down, quadruped see Professor David Norman's very full description in 'The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs' (Norman.1985). *Contribution from Michael E. Howgate*

REFERENCES & NOTES

Schütze, E. 1907 *Tiere der Vorwelt in rekonstruierten Modellen*. Kosmos 4 (11) Stuttgart.
Norman, D. B. 1985 *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs*. Salamander Books. London.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The 1907 'Etruria' model of *Iguanodon*, in the East Grinstead Museum
2. Picture from the magazine 'Kosmos' which features the 'Etruria' *Iguanodon* (No 3303) with 5 other models in the series.

Orphan Days at St Margaret's from an Earlier EGS Newsletter

A fascinating look back at an early newsletter article on life as an orphan in St Margaret's Convent in 1942 makes rather bleak reading.

The orphan, Daphne Dorling, was ten years old when she entered the orphanage. There were about 30 orphans. They slept in a single dormitory. Meals were taken in total silence. Lessons were taken in huts in the grounds and were seen as a relief from the strict and narrow existence otherwise endured. The orphans were not allowed to play in the grounds

and only walking outside the Convent in crocodile lines and under strict supervision. The orphans had their own classroom and didn't mix with the fee-paying pupils at the Convent school. Daphne stressed 'It was made quite plain to us that we were there on sufferance, and the less anyone saw of us the better.'

A lot of time was spent polishing shoes, with a room set aside for the purpose. The orphans' education was focused on what was required to fit them for a life in service. To this end the only organised pastime was sewing. There were no toys, but the orphans made puppets to play with using their sewing training.

East Grinstead Museum - Notes from Jonathan Parrett

The Museum has had a busy summer, including our speaker nights (which have included talks on the Commonwealth War Graves and Christopher Robin), children's activities and town tours. We've also had an exhibition on the tragedy of the Whitehall Bombing 80 years ago, which runs until the end of the year.

Looking to the future, we have been planning for an upcoming project, which aims to redesign the museum galleries to update them (as the permanent East Grinstead display is nearly 18 years old, and thus legally able to vote and drink.....!!). This project will involve the community in selecting the objects and stories we tell, both in the permanent displays about the town's history, and in our temporary exhibitions. However, in order to make the project a reality, we need funding support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund), which is the first big hurdle we need to cross in the next few months.

Jonathan Parrett – Museum Manager

EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY MEETINGS 7.30pm. All held at Glen Vue Community Hub, Railway Approach – free to members, £5.00 for non-members (reimbursable if joining the Society at the meeting).

Wednesday 13 December 2023 (No meeting in January 2024)	Andy Thomas: Christmas Festive History followed by Christmas Drinks
Wednesday 7 February 2024	Ros Black: Scandal, Salvation and Suffrage
Wednesday 13 March 2024	Roy Watts: The Bluebell Railway
Wednesday 17 April 2024	Ian Everest: Sussex During the First World War
Monday 6 May 2024	MAY FAIR: Society Stall in the High Street
Wednesday 15 May 2024	Robert Pike: Nutley Windmill
Wednesday 12 June 2024	Kathryn Ferry: Arts & Craft Design Around East Grinstead
Wednesday 17 July 2024 (No meeting in August 2024)	Open Forum and Summer Drinks
Wednesday 18 September 2024	Andy Thomas: Lewes & Bonfire Night
Wednesday 16 October 2024	Linda Grace: Helena Hall Diarist- Sussex in the 1940s
Wednesday 13 November 2024	57 th AGM and short talk about Brockhurst and its connections
Wednesday 18 December 2024	Jenny Wilson: Sustainable Gardening and Climate Change

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EXTRA COPIES: Newsletter back issues may be ordered from Hon. Secretary, Alan Ward, 7 Heathcote Drive, East Grinstead, RH19 1LZ 01342 321725 or are available on the Society's website: www.eastgrinsteadsociety.org

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