



NEWSLETTER

SPRING, 2019

Garden of Peace

The work to enhance the area formerly known as the Magic Circle is now underway and will shortly be formally opened as a Garden of Peace. This reflects the original name given to the area by Frankfort-Moore when he provided a feature between his ornamental and vegetable gardens. The former remains the garden of Castlegate House, whilst the latter is now the Maltings car park. It is hoped that this improved area will be a quiet oasis in which people can sit and that from time to time it might also be used for performances of one sort or another. It has been a Society project, so grateful thanks are extended to the Town and District Councils for their financial contributions as well as the former recommending to the National Park Authority that some of the money provided by the developer as a condition of approving the Premier Inn project could be used for it. Individual contributions from Jim and Michelle Gibson and others have been much appreciated. The actual construction work has been arranged and overseen by the District Council as owners of the land and they will be responsible for its future maintenance.

Awards & Commendations

Every two to three years the Society gives awards or commendations to building work that has been completed in the intervening period which it considers to be of special quality. Earlier this month awards were given to Depot Cinema, with an additional award for the flint-work there and to Hill House on Juggs Road, an example of *Passivhaus* design (*below*)



Commendations were given to Falcon Wharf, the frontage of the Red, White & Blue on Friars Walk, Alexis Dove – shopfront, the Butcher’s glass advertising sign on 40, Cliffe High Street, Priory Barn, Yew Tree Cottage, 200 High Street and to East Sussex Highways for the brick re-paving of St Andrew’s Lane.

The Society hopes that this scheme will encourage other architects and developers to design schemes of equal quality, whilst members are encouraged to submit suggestions to the Society of new work when it is completed for the next round of awards and commendations.

North Street Quarter

The National Park Authority has recently approved the detailed plans for phases 2 and 3 and it is hoped that this will enable North Street Quarter Ltd and the District Council, as joint owners of the site, to appoint a developer to undertake the demolition and construction work of which Phase 1 will be built first. This phase contains the majority of the affordable housing, the health hub and a new underground car park. The Society will be monitoring the work to ensure that it is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Springman House

Details are still awaited of the plans for this site on which it is understood a new fire station is to be provided alongside improved facilities for the ambulance service. The Society has expressed concern at the potential loss of car parking spaces in this part of the town and will be taking a close interest in the plans as they become available.

South Downs Local Plan & Old Malling Farm

The Inspector's report into this plan is currently awaited but it seems likely that the Society's opposition to development continuing to be zoned on the green fields at Old Malling Farm will have been dismissed. That apart, the Local Plan will be an improvement in planning policy terms and the Society looks forward to its adoption later in the year. As far as Old Malling Farm is concerned the Society has already objected to the planning application relating to the layout of the site which agents for the owners have submitted and will try to ensure that the various conditions imposed on developing the site in the Local Plan are complied with.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan for Lewes was adopted by the National Park Authority in April following a referendum in the town when 92% of those who voted were in favour of it. In addition to being used to support or oppose, as appropriate, planning applications in the future, the Plan also contains a number of action points and the Society will be following those it considers a priority with the statutory bodies concerned.

Enforcement Action

The Society is in touch with the National Park Authority or District Council, as appropriate, about infringements of planning decisions where enforcement action appears to be necessary. These include various projects at the former racecourse for which planning permission was refused, the external lighting above Aqua restaurant, and the construction of outdoor seating areas at both the Lamb and Volunteer public houses, all of which were constructed without permission being sought. However, enforcement action can take some time before results are seen as there is a legal process to be followed and the perpetrators often appeal against the action required. Nevertheless it is worth putting possible new cases to the appropriate authorities and members are encouraged to let the Society know if they perceive a building is being constructed without planning permission or in violation of the conditions applied.

In a similar vein members are encouraged to submit reports of highway problems, such as poor quality reinstatements following work that has required digging up the surface.

Grants

Since Christmas grants have been made to two projects. They were a grant of £ 1,586 towards the reconstruction of part of the flint wall beside the entrance to Church End in Cockshut Road and £ 374 for the framing of the banner marking Women's Suffrage, which is now hanging in the Corn Exchange in the Town Hall.

Heritage Open Days 12-15th September

Planning for the 2019 Heritage Open Days weekend began in February: this year's theme is 'The building stones of Lewes' and to date there are three new walks planned – on mathematical tiles, High Street buildings, and the retail history of the town. The 'Flint Man' David Smith will also return to do a special tour.



Two additional houses have agreed to open, as well as some old favourites. It is also hoped that the Law Courts will be open - the first time this has happened for several years.

This woodcut by June Flanagan shows 23 Station Street, (once St. Mary's Lane), at one time the home of Gideon Mantell. It will be open to visitors this year.

The programme will be released in early July- with a leaflet available from the tourist office and other local venues, and online at heritageopendays.org.uk Although all activities are free of charge, some of the buildings and events must be booked in advance: demand is always high, so early booking is advised. If you would like to help with stewarding on the weekend, or the distribution of leaflets and posters, we would like to hear from you: please email us on leweshod@gmail.com

Trees

The spring programme for the Society's Trees Committee has included weeding and mulching the 39 street trees which we have already planted around Lewes. All of them are thriving, and we are grateful to the residents who took such good care with their watering over the hot dry summer last year. We are pursuing permissions and utility surveys for potential planting sites for autumn 2019, including: four trees on the green at Cross Way, "Gateway Limes" by Nevill Road and Kingston Road, and a Lime on Baxter's Field, to replace a fallen tree. We are continuing to apply for grant funding wherever possible, so that we can extend our plans to the many other good suggestions which we have received from members.



Pyrus calleryana Chanticleer
(Ornamental pear tree) on
Houndean Rise



Elm whips now transplanted
at Vert Woods

Meanwhile, the Society has donated and planted nine Elm trees at Vert Woods Community Woodland, near Laughton. In 2014, the Conservation Trust gave the Trees Committee nine elm whips, from cuttings taken from surviving trees in Hove, (a whip being a small sapling about 75 cm in height). After almost five years growing them on in pots, it was clearly going to be some time before they would grow large and robust enough to be suitable for planting as street trees for Lewes, and it was becoming difficult to find nursery growing space. We are very grateful that they have been given a protected space on either side of what will become an avenue of elms. Three of the trees were planted on New Year's Day 2019, and the rest were planted in April 2019. This adds to the growing collection of Elms at Vert Woods, many of which were planted as part of the "Bring Elms back to the South Downs" project. We hope that they will encourage the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly, which breeds on elm species, especially on the edges of woodland rides. The numbers of these butterflies declined in the 1970s when its food source was reduced by the effects of Dutch elm disease

The summary report of the results of our i-Tree Eco Survey of the trees of Lewes makes interesting reading, and has now been published on the "Lewes Urban Arboretum" section of our website:

<https://thefriendsoflewes.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/friends-of-lewes-i-tree-eco-survey-report-2019.pdf>

Books

The Society has recently updated the contents of both the Twittens and Inns books and printed copies of the revised books. These can be bought at the Tourist Information Centre or at Society events.

Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the Society's Annual General Meeting for 2018 are attached. A special welcome is given to John Davey who agreed to become the Society's President following Baroness Kay Andrews completing her term of office.

Legacies

A form of income from which the Society benefits and enables it to undertake projects is legacies. As a legacy given to a registered charity, such as the Society, reduces the liability of an estate for inheritance tax, it is an efficient way of providing that some of your wealth is used by a Society you support rather than passing to the Government. Please therefore consider making such a provision in your will; you do not need to tell the Society that you have done so.

Trips

Arranging the intended trips has proved more difficult than expected. A fresh offer for the autumn will be communicated shortly.

The Society has no events planned in the coming months until the first of the next series of talks in September, details of which will be in the next newsletter in August.

The only Lewes History Group talk currently listed is:

Monday 10 June 2019	David Arscott	Floreat Lewys: the chequered history of Lewes Old Grammar School
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