



# NEWSLETTER

## Winter 2026

Dear members,

Bexhill Heritage's restoration team has been a little chilly recently but several of us have been finding important things to do on most Mondays.

Our pre-spring cleaning of the Bandstand and Shelters No.3 and 4 has been completed. The shelters will be revisited in the coming months for some minor repairs on Shelter No.4 and for some re-painting of Shelter No.3's most exposed surfaces. We're also engaging professional help for some minor timber replacement on the most exposed side of Shelter No.3. The Bandstand was repainted last year and is still in good condition apart from the ridge crest which needs repainting.

Repair and maintenance are vital if we are to keep our restored buildings looking their best. A cared-for building is also less likely to be damaged.

Meanwhile, Shelter No.2 continues to wait patiently for the substantial remedial work needed to bring it back to life. Currently we are negotiating with architects, contractors and potential funders to get this complex restoration underway at a realistic cost. We're working hard behind the scenes to realise our aims and will update members as soon as possible.

Progress continues on our two bus shelters. This will accelerate as soon as we get some 'painting weather' – dry and with a temperature of at least 9 degrees. It seems that we can have one but not both! But spring is now here and our wait will be over.

Bexhill Heritage is hosting a full programme of Bandstand concerts during the summer. We have music on every Friday afternoon during June, July and August as well as seven larger concerts on selected Saturdays and Sundays from May 23<sup>rd</sup> through to September 19<sup>th</sup>.

All programmes will be posted to our website. Again, this year, I'm pleased that Bexhill Heritage's concerts are included in the Bexhill Festival of Music.

There are too many empty bandstands across the country but ours will not be one of them. As long as it's busy and vibrant, people will appreciate and protect it.

If you would like to help support our Bandstand, join our team - telephone or text us for more details.

*Steve Johnson*

Steve Johnson  
Chairman

### The Biennial Civic Pride Awards 2026

One of Bexhill Heritage's most important tasks is to showcase developments and restorations across the town that demonstrate care and respect for our landscapes and buildings. There were several nominations from members and, combined with committee suggestions, twelve worthy winners were selected.



Impressive heritage buildings included Wells shoe shop in Sackville Road (above left), which is now the longest established in Sussex having been founded in 1904. Four generations of Wells family have been meticulous in maintaining this wonderful shop. Visit Charles Wells & Sons to see the lovely Victorian stained glass interior panel and the best example of a 1950s shop front in Bexhill.



The Beach Garden (above middle) was chosen as the standout *Open Space*, the Pelham (above right) as the best *Meeting Place* and Heringtons Solicitors (left) as the best restoration in our *Services* category.

Above all it was a very positive occasion attended by many enthusiastic members and happy representatives from each of our carefully selected buildings or open spaces.

I'm grateful to the Mayor, Councillor Paul Wilson, for joining us in full regalia and presenting the awards so graciously.

All photos of the event can be viewed here:

[bexhillheritage.com/civic-pride-awards-2026](http://bexhillheritage.com/civic-pride-awards-2026)



## Architecture Spotlight



The Thatched House, Pinewoods

This house was the home of John Benjamin Sainsbury (1871-1956), eldest son of John James Sainsbury (1844-1928) who founded the J Sainsbury grocery business in 1869.

Mr. Sainsbury commissioned H.R. Farnfield to build the house in the early 1930s for the sum of £17,000. Mr. Sainsbury spent an additional £1,000 on landscaping; this included converting an existing footpath into a small road lined on both sides with rhododendrons.


His head gardener, Mr. Osbourne, lived in the onsite cottage (now known as The Lodge, Collington Rise).


During his retirement, Mr. Sainsbury was a well-known figure in the village, often taking a morning walk from his home through Little Common and around Collington Lane. He was a significant benefactor to the local community, including donating £600 to help establish the village community association.

Today the house has been converted into 5 apartments, retaining most of its original external features.

Is this the last remaining thatched dwelling in Bexhill?

Next **Members' Meetings** will be held on the following dates:

 **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 7:00pm**  
Senior Citizens Club, 45 Eversley Road  
Speaker: Alison Smith on 'Make your Mark', create your personal archive to hand over what really matters.

 **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 7:00pm**  
Senior Citizens Club, 45 Eversley Road  
Speaker: Alastair Stewart on 'Rother Valley Railway'.

**AGM**

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## Community Orchards

Rother District Council has some external funding to plant community orchards locally. They have chosen two possible sites – the top of De Moleyns Close and an area within Barrack Hall Park. The idea is to plant a mix of fruit and nut trees during March and carry out complementary enhancements to increase the value of these sites to the community and to wildlife as part of the 'Bexhill-in-Bloom' initiative.

If you could help with planting or help to tend the trees until they are fully established, please email Rebecca Owen:

[rebecca.owen@rother.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.owen@rother.gov.uk)

## George Herbert Gray Memorial Bus Shelter

Restoration work is continuing at the bus shelter on De La Warr Road with the final coats of paint being applied to the interior and exterior wood.



We've also designed and installed a new interpretation board, finally giving

George Herbert Gray the recognition that Bexhill Borough Council intended for him 97 years ago when the shelter was built.



Gray (1856 - 1929) was a prominent architect, estate agent, and civic leader who played a foundational role in the development of modern Bexhill-on-Sea. He was a partner in the firm of Riches and Gray, estate agents, and served as the Agent for the De La Warr Estate for approximately 30 years.

## Bank Chambers, Town Hall Square

Do any members know the residents of Bank Chambers (right)? We'd like to arrange a quick view of any internal heritage features for a Historic England officer.



Please email:

[edmund.bird@bexhillheritage.com](mailto:edmund.bird@bexhillheritage.com)

## Security Fencing Stolen



Half the security fencing protecting Bexhill Heritage's latest renovation project has been snatched in broad daylight from Bexhill's eastern promenade.

The 10 metal fencing panels, their black stabilising feet and Bexhill Heritage's information boards were dismantled and loaded on to a flatbed truck or into a large van in just 10 minutes during broad daylight on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March between 11:09 and 11:19am.

There must have been many passers-by on the promenade that Tuesday morning wondering why 'contractors' were taking down the security fencing and quickly driving away.

Please do get in touch if you can tell us more about the thieves or their vehicles. We've reported the crime to Sussex Police who will be pleased to receive any information as will we.