

# Birch Cottage Guest Handbook

Important Telephone numbers

Emergency services- Police, Fire or Ambulance Dial 999

## Medical Services

There is an NHS walk in service in Hastings which we have used for minor medical requirements.

Address: Station Approach (near Hastings main station), Hastings, TN34 1BA

Telephone No: 01424 884410 Approx 25 minute drive

## Accident and Emergency Services

Hastings Conquest Hospital

Address: The Ridge, St Leonards-on-sea, Hastings, TN37 7RD

Telephone no: 01424 755255 Approx 25 minute drive

Ashford William Harvey Hospital

Kennington Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent, TN24 0LZ

Telephone no: 01233 633331 Approx 35 minute drive

## Veterinary Services

Cinque Ports Vets Rye

Address: Cinque Ports Square, Rye, TN31 7AN

Telephone No: 01797 222265

Check in time is 4 p.m. Check out time is 10 a.m.

There is a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit in Birch Cottage.

There are smoke and CO2 detectors throughout the property.

There is a no smoking policy in the property.

## **Keys and key lock**

There will be one set of keys in the lock safe on arrival and one set in the property. The second set has a key fob which opens the five bar gate into the property. To open the gate just press the button on the left of the fob marked with an arrow, the gate shuts automatically behind you.

Should you require additional sets of keys please ask.

The five bar gate will usually be locked overnight but the fob will still open the gate. During this time however the green buttons will NOT open the gate.

## **Key Code**

**Will be provided on contact from you 2 days prior to your arrival.**

## **Security**

The main gate to the driveway is controlled by the green buttons located inside and outside the property near the gate.

## **Parking**

Please make sure all visitor vehicles are parked in the bays provided for BirchCottage adjacent to the property. There is ample room for two cars.

If you have more vehicles arrangements can be made to accommodate them.

## **Linen and cleaning services**

We provide all bed linen for guests as well as one bath sheet and hand towel per person in addition to this we provide a separate hand towel in each bathroom. beach towels are also provided, one per guest.

For two week stays or longer a change of all towels and bed linen take place on a weekly basis.

## **Cesspit**

Like many country properties, Birch Cottage waste water travels to a cesspit on the grounds of Carpenters Meadow. Cesspits work very well as long as the balance of bacteria and water is allowed to perform its function. For this reason, we ask that only toilet paper is flushed and also you use the ECO products provided for cleaning and dish washing and never put bleach or any antibacterial products down the sinks or into the water system.

It is very important that the system isn't blocked with non human product, as such sanitary bins are provided in both bathrooms alongside the usual waste bin. Please do not flush face wipes, baby wipes, nappies or anything else down the toilet that should really be going into a bin. The system will block if this occurs which isn't pleasant for anyone.

## **Dogs**

Are welcome in all parts of the property and the garden. Please use the Poo bin provided to clear any doggy deposits. We would ask people to use common sense in leaving dogs in the property, if you do decide to do this then the dogs must be crated both for the health and sanity of the dogs in a strange environment and also to prevent damage to sofas, beds etc.

We provide throws for the furniture in the lounge when we have four-legged friends staying as we appreciate many of them like to sit on the sofa as much as we humans do. We also provide one large dog mat to lay on the floor and a couple of towels specifically for when they come in wet or with muddy paws, please make use of these if you need them.

Please keep your dog/s on a lead whenever leaving or entering the property including getting them into and out of your vehicle. This is purely to keep them safe as unfortunately delivery drivers don't always slow when they enter the premises and we would hate there to be any accidents. We keep our own dogs under strict control in the unlikely event they are at the front of the house in the driveway.

## **Rubbish & Recycling**

There are rubbish and recycling bins in the kitchen, these can be found in a pull out unit on the central island. Please use them accordingly, as in most places now we have collections every other week. If the bin in the kitchen becomes full you can empty it into the wheelie bins for the cottage. These can be found outside, green (recycling) black (rubbish).

## **Health and Safety**

We ask our guests to use common sense regarding health and safety especially with small children. There are locks on all doors and gates. The driveway at Birch cottage is shared so vehicles may be present. When leaving the property, all doors and windows should be closed to protect from unwelcome visitors and rain!!

The BBQ can be used by guests during their stay, please take care when using and never let children near the BBQ.

## Facilities at a glance

Hairdryer

Bath towels

Hand towels

Beach towels

Bed Linen

Wi-fi access

Sky TV main living area & both bedrooms

Hot Tub

BBQ

Iron & Ironing Board

Clothes airer

Outside clothes line

Household cleaning products provided.

**Travel Cots & high chairs are available. Please ask if you require these.**

## Technical

### Smart TV's

In the lounge and both bedrooms., have access to Netflix and Amazon Prime, you can also sign into your own accounts if you wish, just remember to sign out before you leave.

### Wi-fi password

Wireless Network Name: **BTB-GFCGNP**

Wireless Key: **tUKNV73YyJDdxg**

## Supermarkets.

The closest large supermarket is **Jempsons** which is located opposite Rye Station.

Address: Station Approach, TN31 7AF

Opening Hours:

Monday to Saturday 6am to 10pm, **Closed Sundays.**

A smaller supermarket is **Co-op** near Winchelsea beach. (Alcohol available)

Address: Sea Road, South East, Winchelsea Beach TN36 4NA

Opening hours:

## **Banks**

There is a **Nationwide** building society in Rye High Street with an ATM outside.

**Jempsons** also has an ATM at the entrance and there is an ATM next to the **Co-op** at Winchelsea beach.

## **Petrol Stations/Garage services**

There is strangely only one petrol station in Rye, **Costcutters**, located on the A259 as you come over the bridge entering Rye, turn right at the roundabout. There is another petrol station on the A259 towards Ashford, approximately 5 miles from Rye which is usually cheaper than Costcutters if you are heading that way. Hastings, as the main town in the area has petrol stations

## Birch Cottage

Is located near the villages of Udimore and Winchelsea in East Sussex, both about a mile away. The main town of Rye is 3 miles away and Hastings is 13 miles away. Birch Cottage was created over 2 years by Nina Mahaffey, to provide holiday accommodation to visitors to the area. It lies in the grounds of Carpenters Meadows which was built in 1967. From 1988-2002 Spike Milligan, the well-known comedy genius, author and poet lived at Carpenters Meadow.

The incredible views to the South span from Dungeness nuclear power station in the East (15 miles) over the English Channel, the citadel hill of Winchelsea village to the town of Hastings in the West. The sandy beach of Camber Sands lies near Rye (3 miles) while the pebble and sandy beach of Winchelsea is the closer. (1 mile)

Birch Cottage and Carpenters Meadow lie on 'Dumbwoman's Lane'. According to the local legend, an unfortunate lady who lived there had her tongue cut out during the times when smuggling was rife in the area from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Whether it was as punishment for notifying the local customs officers to the deeds of the notorious 'Winchelsea smugglers' or to prevent her alerting them after witnessing them, the truth is unclear. The signs 'Dumbwoman's Lane', at the top and bottom of the lane are frequently used as photo spots and occasionally taken away completely by visitors apparently.

## Spike Milligan

**Terence Alan "Spike" Milligan** KBE (16 April 1918 – 27 February 2002) was a comedian, writer and actor.<sup>[1]</sup> The son of an Irish father and an English mother, his early life was spent in India where he was born. The majority of his working life was spent in the United Kingdom. He disliked his first name and began to call himself "Spike" after hearing a band on Radio Luxembourg called Spike Jones and his City Slickers.<sup>[1]</sup>

Milligan was the co-creator, main writer and a principal cast member of *The Goon Show*, performing a range of roles including the popular Eccles and Minnie Bannister characters. Milligan wrote and edited many books, including *Puckoon* and his seven-volume autobiographical account of his time serving during the Second World War, beginning with *Adolf Hitler: My Part in His Downfall*. He is also noted as a popular writer of comical verse; much of his poetry was written for children, including *Silly Verse for Kids* (1959). After success with the ground-breaking British radio programme, *The Goon Show*, Milligan translated this success to television with *Q5*, a surreal sketch show which is credited as a major influence on the members of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. He was the earliest born, longest lived and last surviving member of the Goons. Milligan's 1960 application for British citizenship and 1961 application for a British passport were blocked by his refusal to pledge an oath of allegiance to the United

Kingdom, his adopted home for most of his adult life.<sup>[2][3]</sup> When the Commonwealth Immigrants Act removed Indian-born Milligan's automatic right to British citizenship in 1962,<sup>[4]</sup> he promptly became an Irish citizen,<sup>[5]</sup> exercising a right conferred through the automatic retroactive Irish citizenship of his Irish-born father.

## Local area

### Rye

**Rye** is a small town in the non-metropolitan county of East Sussex, within the historic County of Sussex, England, which stands approximately two miles from the open sea and is at the confluence of three rivers: the Rother, the Tillingham and the Brede. In medieval times, however, as an important member of the Cinque Ports confederation, it was at the head of an embayment of the English Channel and almost entirely surrounded by the sea.

Rye is officially a civil parish but with its historic roots has the status of a town; at the 2011 census it had a population of 4773. During its history its association with the sea has included providing ships for the service of the King in time of war, and being involved with smuggling gangs of the 18th and 19th centuries such as the notorious Hawkhurst Gang who used its inns such as The Mermaid Inn and The Olde Bell Inn, connected by secret passageway.

Those historic roots and its charm make it a tourist destination, and much of its economy is based on that: there are a number of hotels, guest houses, B&Bs, tea rooms and restaurants, as well as other attractions, catering for the visitor. There is a small fishing fleet, and Rye Harbour has facilities for yachts and other vessels. It has more antique shops than any other town apparently!

### Hastings

**Hastings** is a historic town and borough in the county of East Sussex, within the historic county of Sussex, on the south coast of England. The town is located 24 mi (39 km) east of the county town of Lewes and 53 mi (85 km) south east of London, and has an estimated population of 90,254,<sup>[2]</sup> which makes it the 66th largest settlement in the United Kingdom.<sup>[3]</sup>

Historically, Hastings can claim fame from the Battle of Hastings, and later because it became one of the medieval Cinque Ports. Hastings was, for centuries, an important fishing port; although nowadays less important, it still has the largest beach-based fishing fleet in Europe. The town became a popular spot for 'taking the waters'(therapeutic bathing in the sea) in the 1760s, and then, with the coming of the railway, a seaside resort.

## Winchelsea

**Winchelsea** is a small town in the non-metropolitan county of East Sussex, within the historic County of Sussex, England, located between the High Weald and the Romney Marsh, approximately two miles (3 km) south west of Rye and seven miles (12 km) north east of Hastings. The town stands on the site of a medieval town, founded in 1288, to replace an earlier town of the same name, sometimes known as **Old Winchelsea**, which was lost to the sea. The town is part of the civil parish of Icklesham. It is claimed by some residents that the town is in fact the smallest town in Britain, as there is a mayor and corporation in Winchelsea, but that claim is disputed by places such as Fordwich. The mayor of Winchelsea is chosen each year from amongst the members of the corporation, who are known as freemen, rather than being elected by public vote. New freemen are themselves chosen by existing members of the corporation. Thus, in its current form, the corporation is effectively a relic of Winchelsea's days as a 'rotten borough' (when Winchelsea elected two MPs but the number of voters was restricted to about a dozen, sometimes fewer). The corporation lost its remaining civil and judicial powers in 1886 but was preserved as a charity by an Act of Parliament to maintain the membership of the Cinque Port Confederation. The mayor and corporation in Winchelsea now have a largely ceremonial role, together with responsibility for the ongoing care and maintenance of the main listed ancient monuments in the town and the Winchelsea museum.<sup>[1]</sup> Winchelsea constitutes neither a local government district, civil parish nor charter trustees' area.

## Winchelsea church St Thomas

The first recorded mention of the church of St Thomas in Old Winchelsea came in 1215. It was named in honour of the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered in his own Cathedral in 1170. The town was then a flourishing seaport on the shingle, but in 1250 it was battered by a phenomenally high tide which 'flowed twice without ebbing with a horrible roaring and a glint as of fire on the waves.' Thirty-seven years later further floods virtually destroyed the town and changed the course of the River Rother.

Spike Milligan's famous grave 'I told you I was ill', albeit in Gaelic, lies at the North end of the Winchelsea cemetery which often draws a small crowd.

Winchelsea town should not be confused with Winchelsea beach, the latter being the houses along the coast road.



## Beaches

The closest beaches are Winchelsea and Camber Sands.

Camber Sands is a long sandy beach with dunes with summer activities and shops. The tide range can result in ½ mile differences in beach! Despite the very shallow water slope (where one can be 50 yards in the sea and only in knee deep), the tides must be respected. Flags advising of the dangers are used on the beach by the coastguard. Parking fees apply in both car parks. Dogs are allowed on the beach during winter months but only on the west side during summer months.

Winchelsea beach is a pebble/sandy beach with relatively few amenities. There is no charge for parking. At high tide, the water shelves quickly allowing swimmers to swim close to the shore. The two hour window at low tide reveals a sandy strip perfect for dog walking. There is also a path close to the shore that passes the remnants of the Mary Stanford Lifeboat station and details the tragic history along to the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Bird Watchers will be especially interested in this walk.

## Food

The closest pub is The Plough in Udimore which serves good food and is dog friendly.

### **The Plough**

[www.theploughrye.co.uk](http://www.theploughrye.co.uk)

Address: Udimore Road

Udimore

TN31 6AL

Turn left at the top of Dumbwomans Lane onto Udimore Road, 1 mile away.

**Rye** has enough pubs and restaurants to keep you well-fed and watered. There are too many to list but a couple of the top spots might well be:

### **The Standard Inn**

[www.thestandardinnrye.co.uk](http://www.thestandardinnrye.co.uk)

**Address: The Mint, off the High Street, Rye**

Situated in the heart of the citadel, The Standard Inn, one of the most loved and popular pubs in Rye has reopened its doors to welcome back old regulars and make new friends alike.

Years of plaster board and bitumen have been pulled away to reveal the gem of the 15th Century pub with beautifully carved beams and warming open fires for cold frosty days.

As featured in The Times 'Britain's 25 best places to eat at the weekend', they have built a reputation for delicious seasonal cooking, using abundant local produce such as lamb from the Salt Marshes to fish caught and delivered daily from Rye Harbour. Along with an interesting and varied wine list they have a great selection of craft beers and local ales including our own Standard Inn Farmer Ale.

### **The Mermaid Hotel**

[www.mermaidinn.com](http://www.mermaidinn.com)

**Address: Mermaid Street, just off the High Street, Rye**

The Mermaid has cellars dating from 1156 and the building itself rebuilt in 1420. The rooms offer sloping ceilings, creaking floorboards, numerous staircases and no doubt a few ghosts! Experience a drink in the Giant's Fireplace Bar and imagine how the Hawkhurst Gang, local smugglers in the 1730s and 1740s, caroused in the bar. Can you see the secret passageway entrance?

The panelled restaurant provides an ideal ambience for the Rye tourist with two bar/lounges to enjoy an after dinner drink.

## Seafood

As you imagine on the coast, you can buy some of the finest and freshest seafood often caught overnight. Whether it is lobster, prawns, scallops or every type of fish, Rye and Hastings can entertain you.

**Rye Bay Fish** is located just over the bridge, 73 New Road, on the entrance to Rye itself by the bowling green.

**Hastings Rock-a Nore** in Hastings old town is home to **RX Fisheries** which has an exceptional wet fish display and produce, they will dress crab & lobster if you ask nicely, and also butterfly your trout. Turn left at The Stade on entrance to Hastings on the A259. [www.rxfisheries.co.uk](http://www.rxfisheries.co.uk) 01424 445239

**Fish Hut**

8-9 Rock-a-Nore Road

Hastings

TN34 3DW

## Fish & Chips

**Marino's Fish Bar**

37-38 The Mint, Rye, TN31 7EN

[www.marinosrye.toughtakeaway.net](http://www.marinosrye.toughtakeaway.net)

Tel: 01797 223268

Arguably the best fish and chips for some miles, this is usually confirmed by the long queues on Friday & Saturday evenings. Currently they run an online collection service.

## Indian Food

**Mahdi Spice**

Takeaway/Delivery & Eat In

50 Cinque Ports Street

Rye

TN31 7AN

[www.mahdispice.co.uk](http://www.mahdispice.co.uk)

01797 222830

## Chinese Food

**Oriental Delight Rye**

Chinese Takeaway/Delivery

01797 229583

## Days Out

Hastings old town is worth a visit. Much of the drama series 'Foyle's War' was filmed here. Hastings is still a working fishing town and the best place to pick up the freshest catch is Rock-a-Nore on the seafront. There is a large selection of seaside amusements which provides endless fun for children.

## Gardens

### Great Dixter

Northiam

TN31 6PH

[www.greatdixter.co.uk](http://www.greatdixter.co.uk)

01797 252878

### Sissinghurst Castle Garden

Biddenden Road

Cranbrook

TN17 2AB

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden)

01580 710701

## Castles

### Dover Castle

Castle Hill Road

Dover

CT16 1HU

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

0370 333 1181

### Bodiam Castle

Robertsbridge

TN32 5UA

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodiam-castle](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodiam-castle)

01580 830196

**Battle Abbey**

Butter Cross

High Street

Battle

TN33 0AE

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

**For the young, whatever their age****Drusilla's Park**

Alfriston Road

BN26 5QS

[www.drusillas.co.uk](http://www.drusillas.co.uk)

01323 874100

**Knockhatch Adventure Park**

Hailsham Bypass

Hailsham

BN27 3GD

[www.knockhatch.com](http://www.knockhatch.com)

01323 442051

**Rare Breeds Centre**

Woodchurch

Ashford

TN26 3RJ

[www.rarebreeds.org.uk](http://www.rarebreeds.org.uk)

01233 861493

**Blue Reef Aquarium**

Rock-a-Nore Road

Hastings

TN34 3DW

[www.blureefaquarium.co.uk](http://www.blureefaquarium.co.uk)

01424 718776

## Zoo's

### Howletts Wild Animal Park

Bekebourne Lane

Littlebourne

Canterbury

CT4 5EL

[www.aspinallfoundation.org/howletts/](http://www.aspinallfoundation.org/howletts/)

01227 721286

Port Lympne Reserve

Aldington Road

Lympne

Hythe

CT21 4LR

[www.aspinallfoundation.org/port-lympne/](http://www.aspinallfoundation.org/port-lympne/)

01303 264647

**Ashford outlet centre** is an excellent day trip for shopping. Most well-known brands are represented here at discounted prices.

For the past 88 years the **Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway** has been an integral part of the landscape of the Romney Marsh. Known as "Kent's Mainline in Miniature", our World Famous one-third full size Steam & Diesel locomotives have powered their way along the 13½ miles of track from the Cinque Port town of Hythe, terminating in Dungeness; a National Nature Reserve and one of the largest shingle landscapes in the world. With 4 stations in between, all within walking distance of a beach, our railway provides you with an opportunity to explore this unique corner of Kent. Coast & country walks, with all manner of wildlife & flora to be seen, cycle rides, medieval churches and iconic Lighthouses are all on our doorstep. With excellent catering facilities available at some stations, our ever-popular Model Railway Exhibition, 1940's Museum and Play Park at New Romney Station, good station shops, free car parking and facilities to assist our Disabled visitors, RH&DR is the perfect any-weather day out.