



NEWSLETTER 237 November 2008

Have you ever wondered?

What was on the corner of Regency Square before the 1960's block of flats called Abbots?

Why do the house numbers in Russell Square start at 11?

What went on in Russell Mews before the BUPA office?

Who was the Margaret in St Margaret's Place?

Society member Suzanne Hinton has the answers to these and many other questions about the history of our area. With the help of photographs from the James Gray Collection she will take us on a wander around our area to see what it was like in the past.

Her talk will be part of our winter social evening at 7:30 pm on Thursday 4th December. There will also be refreshments and a raffle.

The venue will be the Fishermen's Chapel in St Paul's Church, West Street. We have not had an event here before, but it is easy to find. The entrance is on the west side of West Street, south of the car park entrance.

The chapel is at the back of the church so you walk down a corridor and turn right at the end.

The i360 is no more

How about that for an attention grabbing headline? What it actually means is that the developers who are planning to build the observation tower on the shore end of the old West Pier are now calling it "The Brighton Tower".

The reason for the change of name is to make it easier to find a major sponsor. So it will become "The XXX Brighton Tower", where XXX is the name of a big company that we all know and love.

This is just one of the changes announced at an upbeat meeting of the West Pier Trust at the Holiday Inn Hotel last week.

Plans for the tower are well advanced and we were shown photos of David Marks, its architect, standing next to large sections of steel tubing which are being fabricated in Holland ready to form the tower once work starts on site.

Other new plans include a smart restaurant and an events venue as part of the building at the base of the tower. In answer to a question from society chairman, Roger Hinton, we were promised that this would not increase the size of the building above that shown in the existing plans.

Nor would the "Sky Bar", which will operate in the observation pod in the evenings, be anything but smart and sophisticated. The pod will also be available for parties and weddings.

This all adds up to the expectation that about 40% of the tower's income will come from sources other than tickets sales for a ride to the top and back.

So what's the hold up?

Where are the cranes and lorries? You've guessed it – the credit crunch. If the money was available

today, the project could start tomorrow and be finished in 21 months.

The original plan was for half of the finance to come from private investors and half from the banks. The banks are no longer interested, so the promoters are looking for private investment to finance the whole project. All they need is a few very rich people who feel lucky.

But where has the money come from for those steel tubes and all the expensive consultants who have helped put the project together? This was the question posed at the meeting by society committee member Margaret Brisley.

The answer was that it has all been provided by David and Julia Marks, the architects. They have sold their share in the London Eye to get this project started.

So will it ever happen? Who knows? But if you had been at the meeting, you would certainly have come away knowing that a lot of people believe it will.

A Date with Ptolemy

Earlier in the year TV architect Ptolemy Dean spent a few days in and around Regency Square with a TV crew.

The result is a programme called "Britain's Vanishing Views" which is to be broadcast between 12 noon and 12:30 pm on Tuesday 2 December on Channel 5. Its aim is to celebrate the view from Regency Square before it disappears behind the Brighton Tower.

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The Esca Bar is no more

The bar on the corner of Preston Street and Regency Square is now called Oxygen. It is run by the same people who run the Oxygen Bar in West Street. Council officers have persuaded them to remove the two bins that are obstructing the pavement in Regency Square and store rubbish from the Preston Street bar at their West Street premises.

This is very good news. We have been campaigning for two years to get these bins moved.

“A Funny Thing ...

... Happened on the Way to the Forum” by Stephen Sondheim has been described as the funniest musical ever written.

It will be the Christmas production at the Little Theatre in Clarence Gardens. We are planning a Society outing to see it on Wednesday 17 December. It starts at 7:45 pm and tickets cost £7.50.

If you'd like to come please send the money for your ticket(s) to Ros Boulden, 8 Abbots, 129 Kings Road Brighton BN1 2FA, by 5 December at the latest.

Locks Stolen

Residents around Clarence Square became fed up with the behaviour of young people in the garden during the evenings; so they persuaded the police that the gates should be locked at dusk.

This worked well until the locks were stolen, more than once! The police are now considering fitting key pad locks. Designated residents would be given the code number so they could continue to open the garden each morning.

If you have any views on this proposal, let us know and we will pass them on to the police.

New Year Breakfast

The Society's famous New Year breakfast will be held once again at 10 am on Thursday 1 January 2009, at the Regency Restaurant on the south west corner of Regency Square.

It's very informal. Take a seat at the long table; order and pay for whatever you fancy, from a cup of coffee to a “full English”. The local gossip is free!

The Sad Tale of the Paint on the War Memorial

You may have seen a photograph in the Argus recently of local councillor Jason Kitcat looking closely at the paintwork on the war memorial in Regency Square. Several members of the Society committee were standing behind him looking “concerned”.

When the memorial was renovated earlier in the year we were told that the rather tacky looking paint would “weather” to look like metal.

Now it seems to be peeling off and looks a right mess. The property management people at the Council are saying that there has been a “failure of the paint system”. The paint itself seems to be discolouring and the manufacturers have been asked to come and look at it.

The contractors who did the work have agreed to make it good in whatever way is necessary, at their own expense.

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Graffiti Artist feels the pinch

The police have arrested a graffiti artist and are working with the Council to identify a number of his “tags”. They also have intelligence about a number of other prolific taggers and are hoping to make further arrests.

Season's Greetings



This will be the final newsletter of 2008. So the Society's committee wishes a happy Christmas and a good new year to all our members.

There are quite a few Society events over the next few weeks so here's a summary – put them in your diary now, so that you don't forget!

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 2 December at 12 noon:
Regency Square hits the small screen in “Britain's Vanishing Views” on Channel 5.

Thursday 4 December at 7:30 pm:
social evening at St Paul's Church with an illustrated talk by Suzanne Hinton called “Glimpses of the Past”.

Wednesday 17 December at 7:45 pm:
“A Funny Thing Happened ...” at the Little Theatre. Book a ticket by **5 December!**

Thursday 1 January at 10 am:
New Year breakfast in the Regency Restaurant. Bring your friends!