

NEWSLETTER 318 February 2018

Society AGM: 19 March 2018

Come along to the Sandringham Room at the Metropole Hotel at 7.30 for a pleasant evening with friends and neighbours. Our guest speaker will be

Steve Bax, Chief Executive of the BA i360

Steve will be happy to answer questions. He has already offered a number of free flights on the i360 as prizes for our monster draw. It will take place at about 8.30pm while we have refreshments and nibbles.

The AGM will follow at about 9pm. All welcome.

If you would like to stand as a committee member or would like to recommend a neighbour to stand, do let one of the Society contacts know.

Society Contacts

Acting Chair: Diana Dunn

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Meeting Mr Bax

Steve Bax, CEO of the BA i360 company, spent an hour with the Society's Committee at their last meeting.

Mr Bax agreed with the Committee (and many residents) that the upper deck of the i360 is somewhat bleak. However, there are exciting plans afoot for better use of the deck and more activities on it.

The Committee explained to Mr Bax that the very generous members of the Society raise funds for a Christmas tree and lights, but that the Society does not have the manpower to erect the tree and lights. Mr Bax readily offered some "muscle" from amongst his staff.

Keep an eye on the BA i360 website for the events being planned for 2018:

<http://britishairwaysi360.com/latest-news/>

Watch your step

As you will have noticed, the gardens in Regency Square are in a sorry state.



Broken step = broken ankle?

As all our members will know, the gardens in Regency Square are included in the area entitled to funding from the Section 106 agreement between the City Council and the i360 company. This money is designated to improve

the area around the i360: to the west, east and most importantly to the north – Regency Square.

Members of the Society's committee have spent many hours finding out what local residents and businesses want the gardens to look like. They have spent many hours in meetings with a council officer and a landscape gardener. Still, after two years of planning and effort by the society, no money has been forthcoming.

Our ward councillors, Tom Druitt and Alex Phillips have been most supportive. In early January they attempted to get a response from Nick Hibbert (Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture at the City Council) as Mr Hibbert had failed to respond meaningfully to any communications from the Society. No response to our Councillors has yet been forthcoming.

It is no fault of the BA i360 company who have no powers over how the Council uses the Section 106 monies.

Meanwhile the gardens continue to deteriorate – dangerously as the picture shows. We have asked for urgent action to repair the steps. This will probably have to be at the cost of the Council rather than from Section 106 funds coming from the BA360.

Good Guerrillas

A few public-spirited local residents have been buying bulbs, herbs and small plants and have "secretly" planted them in both Regency and Russell Square. Look out for spring flowers popping up near the composting bins in Regency Square and say a quiet thanks to the people who put them there. We need all the good news we can in our neglected gardens.

Two new composting bins will be placed in Russell Square in the near future. If you have any enquiries about composting contact: gillwales@virginmedia.com



April 2015

The report below, from Newsletter 296 shows just how long the Society has been battling for funds.

REGENERATION OF REGENCY SQUARE

As reported in the March newsletter, the Gardening Sub-committee of the Society is very busy with plans for the regeneration of the Regency Square gardens. This work will be funded by the 1% (annually) of ticket sales which will devolve to the City Council for improvements around the i360 site.



No changes will be made to the gardens until there has been thorough consultation with local people. If you would like to comment on any of the three proposed plans, please do contact any of the three officers listed above or leave a message on the website.

Planning

Russell Mews: The developers of Russell House have applied to have three Conditions removed from their permission to change offices into residential flats. These conditions relate to the windows which overlook properties in Russell Mews itself and in Regency Square.

The developers wish to remove obscured glass from the windows on the south and east of the property. They are also applying to remove a "privacy screen" on the 5th floor balcony which had been imposed as a Condition on the original approval in 2016.

The balcony gives a view directly into windows of the houses from No. 35 to No 42 Regency Square.

The Society is objecting to the removal of these Conditions as the developers undertook to start work on the building knowing what the Conditions were.

51 Regency Square: At a forthcoming Planning Committee the Chair of the Conservation Advisory Group to the City Council will be objecting to the partial demolition of a heritage wall at No 51.

The Chequers Pub Preston Street: You might have looked in awe at the complete removal of the innards of this building. Fear not. All seems on course for the reconstruction of the building as a pub and several flats. The Society welcomes new accommodation.

So far, the Planners have refused permission for the layout of the pub area itself (but not the accommodation) on the grounds that: "The proposed development would substantially reduce the floorspace of the public house at ground floor and basement level and would leave the public house without a cellar / basement storage; this would reduce the ongoing viability of the business and could potentially lead to the closure of the public house."

The Society feels that a vibrant mix of businesses is essential to the success of Preston Street, and so support the refusal in the hope that the developers will submit a new application for an enlarged and viable pub space.

58 Preston Street: The property is being converted into a fast food outlet and a large vent is being installed behind the premises. No planning application has been made. The Society is monitoring the situation on behalf of the residents of Stone Street who live directly below the vent.



Regency Square Bicentenary Book

The launch date of the Bicentenary book will be on Saturday 22nd September and not in August as announced.

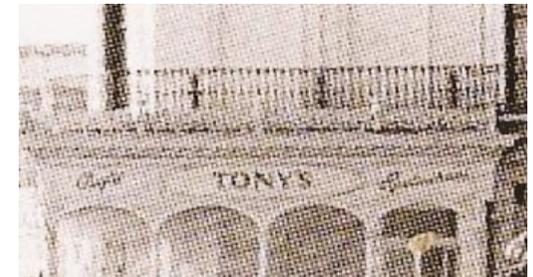
This was for the simple reason that we could not get the two authors and most of the committee in one and the same place at the same time during August.

Put the date in your diary. Weather permitting, the the launch will take place in the top garden of Regency Square. All welcome.

The Regency Square Centenary Fund has now reached wellover £300. Subscribers to the fund who contribute £10.00 or more will receive one free copy of the book on publication in August 2018 and have their name listed in the book. Please make cheques payable to "Bicentenary Fund". Cheques or cash to Nicola Floyd, Treasurer, RSAS, 1 Queensbury Mews, BN1 2FE



Tony's Café



We are still trying to wheedle your memories out of you. Do the names Rooky's club, or Tony's Café on the corner of Regency Square in the 1960s remind you of your misspent youth? We do hope so.

Many thanks to Emilio Savvides of the Regency Restaurant for the photo above.

